

Change Your Thinking and Change Your Life

"For as he thinks in his heart, so is he."
Proverbs 23:7a

Understanding the Value of _____ Thinking

In his book, *Thinking for a Change*, John C. Maxwell says, "If you are willing to change your thinking, you can change your feelings. If you change your feelings, you can change your actions. And changing your actions – based on good thinking – can change your life." He suggests several reasons why good thinking is so valuable:

1. Good thinking creates the _____ for good results.
2. Good thinking increases your _____.
3. Good thinking produces more good thinking if you make it a _____.

Achieving your potential as a leader comes from making progress, and progress is often just one good idea away. Thinking is about creating a never-ending army of ideas capable of achieving almost anything. A famous playwright once said, "*An invasion of armies can be resisted, but not an invasion of ideas.*"

Discussion: Who are two or three of the best thinkers you know? What separates them from the rest of the crowd?

Realize the Impact of _____ Thinking

Why should you change your thinking? Because it is the difference that will make all the difference in your life! Good thinking can do many things for you: solve problems, create opportunities and lift you above the crowd. It can take you to a whole new level – personally and professionally. It really can change your life. Many people have talked about changing the world, but very few think about changing themselves.

Consider some things you need to know about changing your thinking:

1. Changed thinking is not _____.
2. Changed thinking is _____.
3. Changed thinking is _____ the investment.
4. Changed thinking is the best _____ you can give yourself and others.

A human mind with the ability to think well is like a diamond mine that never runs out. It's priceless. Napoleon Hill says, "*More gold has been mined from the thoughts of men than has ever been taken from the earth.*"

When you make the right changes to your thinking, you will experience the ripple effect. Right thinking changes your feelings, which changes your actions, which ultimately has the potential to change your life. The six lessons in this notebook give direction in how to change your thinking, but it's your responsibility to choose to make the changes.

Here is the progression:

1. Changing your thinking changes your _____.
2. Changing your beliefs changes your _____.
3. Changing your expectations changes your _____.
4. Changing your attitude changes your _____.
5. Changing your behavior changes your _____.
6. Changing your performance changes your _____.

Do you want to succeed where you have failed before? Do you want to go to a level of effectiveness you never dreamed possible? Do you want to become the person you always hoped you could be? If you answered “yes” to these questions, don’t start by trying to change your actions. Start by deciding to change your mind. Nothing else you do will have as great an impact.

Discussion: How do you need to change your thinking in order to break through to the next level?

Master the Process of _____ Thinking

Becoming a good thinker isn’t necessarily complicated, but it does require discipline. Like most disciplines, it can be cultivated and refined. Here is a suggested process for discovering and developing good thoughts that will impact your future.

1. Find a place to _____ your thoughts.
2. Find a place to _____ your thoughts.
3. Find a place to _____ your thoughts by sharing them with other good thinkers.
4. Find a place to put your thoughts into _____.

It doesn’t matter if you are rich or poor. It doesn’t matter if you are educated or uneducated. It doesn’t matter if you are the picture of health or suffer from multiple disabilities. No matter what your circumstances, you can learn to be a good thinker. The only requirement is to be willing to engage in the process every day.

Discussion: Do you have a special thinking place? Do you spend regular time there? If not, where could your thinking place be?

John Maxwell in his book, *Thinking for a Change*, explains eleven thinking skills. Let’s take a look at the first skill.

Acquire the Wisdom of _____ Thinking

Big-picture thinkers are never satisfied with what they already know. They look for opportunities to learn. Big-picture thinkers always are asking questions and listening to the answers. They are good listeners. Big-picture thinkers make an effort to see beyond their own world; they want to see what others are seeing. Big-picture thinkers expand their experience because they expand their world. They accomplish far more than narrow-minded people.

Why should you become a big-picture thinker?

1. Big-picture thinking allows you to _____.
2. Big-picture thinking keeps you on _____.
3. Big-picture thinking promotes _____.
4. Big-picture thinking allows you to see what _____ see.
5. Big-picture thinking keeps you from being caught up in the _____.
6. Big-picture thinking helps you _____ uncharted territory.

Discussion:

- Are you learning from life's experiences?
- Are you gaining insight from other leaders?
- What are other ways you can become a big-picture thinker?

Biblical Case Study: Abraham Sees the Big Picture (Genesis 12)

While followers focus on the immediate challenges, leaders dream of what could happen in the next year, next decade or even the next generation. When God told Abraham to leave the comfort of his home in Haran, his relatives, and everything familiar, so that he might start fresh in another land, Abraham began to see the big picture. He would become the father of a nation and ultimately become a blessing to the whole world.

Abraham was a big-picture thinker because of a God-given vision. Let's observe the criteria for such a vision:

1. It came from God and was based on His _____.
2. It connected with the leader's personal identity and _____.
3. It would give the leader _____ in the lives of others.
4. It would be _____ than the leader ever dreamed possible.
5. It would have impact beyond his or her _____.
6. It would have _____ value.

Discussion: Do you agree with the following statement? "When God blesses you, He has more than you in mind!" Why or why not?

Biblical Case Study: Esau Fails to See the Big Picture (Genesis 25)

Esau is a powerful picture of a leader without vision. Abraham's grandson, Esau, loved the great outdoors. He was so engaged with the present, depending solely on his own strength and resources, he completely failed to see the future.

Some observations about Esau and his nearsightedness:

1. He lived for the _____.

2. He gave up the _____ in order to gain the immediate.
3. He was easily _____.
4. Self-gratification _____ him.

Discussion: What are other reasons that Esau could not see the big picture?

Biblical Case Study: David and the Temple (1 Chronicles 22: 1-19)

David was a big-picture thinker. His vision extended beyond his lifetime. Although he knew Solomon would build the temple, he made preparation for its construction.

Big-Picture Leaders see...

1. Past their own future to _____ that follow.
2. What needs to _____ before others see it, and they are ready for action.
3. God's _____ for a God-sized vision.

Biblical Case Study: Haggai and Rebuilding the Temple (Haggai 2:6-9)

Haggai had a big-picture perspective. He listened to the complaints of his countrymen who did not believe they were capable of restoring the temple. These unskilled laborers had just returned from exile and found their native land in ruins. The temple was only a pile of rubble. Haggai spoke for God and gave the big-picture view of the situation.

The People's Complaints

1. The _____ is too big.
2. The _____ are too small.
3. What we build will be _____.

God's Response

1. The job is _____; let's work together.
2. I am your _____; I own everything.
3. What I fill with My _____ is wonderful.

Assessment and Application

Assessment:

When you look at a situation, do you see the big picture or do you tend to focus on just one aspect?

Application:

The next time you face an issue, problem or project, take the situation to at least three people who can give you insight. List 3 to 5 people in your circle of friends who have deep and broad life experience. Ask them if they would be willing to respond to your questions.