

Possibility Thinking and Reflective Thinking

“Then Caleb quieted the people before Moses and said, ‘Let us go up at once and take possession, for we are well able to overcome it.’ ”

Numbers 13:30

Feel the Energy of _____ Thinking

Leaders who embrace possibility thinking are capable of accomplishing tasks that most people consider impossible. Here are several reasons why you should become a possibility thinker:

1. Possibility thinking opens up other _____ for you.
2. Possibility thinking attracts other possibility _____ to you.
3. Possibility thinking creates new _____ for you.
4. Possibility thinking gives you _____.
5. Possibility thinking keeps you from _____.
6. Possibility thinking creates possibilities for _____.
7. Possibility thinking allows you to dream big _____.
8. Possibility thinking makes it possible to rise above _____.

People with a negative mind-set have two choices. They can expect the worst and continually experience it; or they can change their thinking. How does a person learn the skill of possibility thinking? Begin following these suggestions:

1. Stop focusing on all the things that can go _____.
2. Quit thinking about all the _____ something can't be done.
3. Stay away from _____ thinkers.
4. Avoid “_____.”
5. Look for possibilities in every _____.
6. Question _____ thinking.
7. Find inspiration from great _____.

Discussion:

- What is your response to this statement? “We all live under the same sky, but we don't all see the same horizon.”
- When you look to the future of your ministry, what do you see?
- How will you increase your skill as a possibility thinker?

Biblical Case Study: Ten Spies vs. Two Spies (Numbers 13:1-14:10)

As Israel approached the Jordan River, Moses sent out twelve spies to investigate the Land of Promise. All twelve spies took the journey and explored the land. They had similar experiences, but their reports were varied.

Similarities of the Spies:

All twelve were _____ in their tribes.

All twelve were aware of God’s _____.

All twelve were given the _____ assignment.

Differences of the Spies:

Ten brought a negative report; Joshua and Caleb brought a _____ report.

Ten saw problems; Joshua and Caleb saw _____.

Ten saw obstacles; Joshua and Caleb saw _____.

Ten saw God in light of their circumstances; Joshua and Caleb saw circumstances in light of their _____.

The major difference between those who delivered the majority and minority reports was attitude. The negative attitude of the ten spies resulted in a negative report which had a poisonous influence on the people. As a result, two million people were deprived of their inheritance in Canaan. If only they had listened to the possibility thinking of Joshua and Caleb.

Possibility thinking is a major difference maker in the lives of leaders and has an enormous influence in many arenas of life.

Possibility thinking...

1. Determines our _____ to life.
2. Attracts _____, not whiners, to our team.
3. Is often the only _____ between success and failure.
4. Often turns _____ into blessings.
5. Empowers others to reach their _____.

Discussion: The Law of Magnetism in *The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership* says, “Who you are is who you attract.” If you have a team of negative people, how might your leadership be contributing to the negative atmosphere of your team? Choose one challenging issue this week and practice the skill of possibility thinking with your team.

Biblical Case Study: Elijah (1 Kings 18:18-40)

Elijah grew tired of his people’s spiritual rebellion and was angry with the false prophets. Even though outnumbered 850 to 1 by his foes (1 Kings 18:19) on Mt. Carmel, he confronted them boldly. Like the underdog David, he met the enemy with courage and passion. He possessed possibility thinking because:

1. His God was _____ than all the pagan gods.
2. His faith was stronger than his _____.
3. His _____ outweighed his reservations.

Discussion: For the Christian leader, how is faith a key ingredient in possibility thinking?

Embrace the Lessons of _____ Thinking

Reflective thinking is vital to personal growth. It involves review and evaluation. Reflective thinking helps us learn from mistakes, decide what actions should be repeated and determine what should be changed. Most people would rather act than think. Why not do both? Consider the value of reflective thinking:

1. Reflective thinking helps you gain true _____.
2. Reflective thinking helps you _____ emotional baggage from your thoughts.
3. Reflective thinking makes you more _____ in your decision-making.
4. Reflective thinking brings the _____ into clearer focus.
5. Reflective thinking turns experience into _____.
6. Reflective thinking provides counsel and _____ for your future.

Put the following suggestions into practice if you wish to increase your ability to think reflectively.

1. Schedule time in your _____ for reflective thinking.
2. Find a “thinking place” with a minimum of _____.
3. Take time to _____ past experiences.
4. Ask the following questions every day.
 - What have I _____ today that will help me grow?
 - How can I _____ it to my life?
5. Put your thoughts into _____.

Discussion: Do you take time to think about past experiences and reflect on what could be done differently if you are ever faced with that situation again? If you regularly practiced reflective thinking for one year, how would your life and ministry be changed? Reflective thinking is the only way to gain a true perspective and to learn important lessons from the experience.

Biblical Case Study: Peter (Luke 22:54-62; Acts 2:1-4:22; 1 Peter 1: 13-16)

The Bible is full of stories of leaders who learned from their mistakes. Jacob, David, Peter and others failed God miserably, but eventually served Him effectively. Peter – the one who walked on water, correctly identified Jesus as the Christ, witnessed the transfiguration, saw countless miracles, and heard Jesus teach daily – denied his Lord three times on the night of His arrest. Perhaps no New Testament leader realized more deeply his own failure than Peter (Luke 22:62). Here are some observations about Peter:

1. He was a key _____ of the disciples.
2. He followed Jesus at a _____.
3. He fellowshipped with the _____ crowd.
4. He showed his _____.
5. He _____ his Lord.
6. He realized his _____.
7. He wept _____.
8. He continued to _____ with the other disciples.
9. He ran to _____ the empty tomb.
10. He obeyed the Master's command to wait for the day of _____.
11. He was _____ with the Holy Spirit.
12. His cowardice was replaced with _____.
13. He encouraged other _____ to stand firm in the face of fiery trials.
14. He became a highly _____ leader in the early Church.

Peter learned important lessons the hard way – from failing miserably. Based on lessons learned from experience, he gave clear warnings to other leaders (1 Peter 1: 13-16):

1. _____ your minds. Focus your thinking on Christ.
2. _____ your hearts. Stay close to Christ and stay clean.
3. _____ your lifestyle. Imitate Christ in all of your conduct.

Discussion:

- Do you think Peter's past failures reminded him daily of his need to depend on the empowerment of the Holy Spirit?
- How did lessons from past failures help Peter mature in his faith?

Biblical Case Study: King Saul (1 Samuel 13:1-22; 15:1-35)

Saul seemed to never take time for reflective thinking. He certainly did not learn from past experiences. When Saul realized that his troops were abandoning him, he decided to take matters into his own hands rather than follow the very clear counsel that the prophet Samuel had given to him. The prophet strongly rebuked him for his disobedience. But Saul did not learn from his failure. He committed the very same sin shortly thereafter. He lied to Samuel by arguing, “*But I did obey the Lord.*” Saul stubbornly refused to reflect and learn. The prophet reminded Saul that “*stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry*” and declared that “*the Lord has rejected you from being king over Israel.*”

Discussion: Both Saul and Peter experienced public failure. How did each respond after they were confronted about their failures?

Assessment and Application

Assessment:

When was the last time you stopped to think reflectively about a past experience? Did you write down the lessons learned? How have you applied them in your life?

Application:

At the end of this month, set aside at least two hours to do a review of your activities for the month. As you look at individual items on your calendar, ask the following questions:

- What went right?
- What went wrong?
- What did I learn?
- What can I do differently next time?