

Take Time to Think

- it is the source of power

By Rob McKelvey

When was the last time you actually took some time to think? Sure, you have thoughts all the time. (and if you believe the statistics, and I do, 80% of the approximately 90,000 thoughts you have each day you had the day before) But when was the last time you really dedicated some time to think?

Is thinking important? Well for one thing it, and reasoning, is what separates us from the animals and makes us human. It may be useful to “listen” to your thoughts, even the random ones that keep appearing in our mind and interrupting us. They could be the forerunner of the next best thing since sliced bread. (I have often wondered what was the best thing before sliced bread. Strange thought.)

The Macquarie Dictionary defines thinking as “to form or conceive in the mind; have in the mind as an idea, conception or the like.” This applies to meditation, opinions, recollections, and beliefs as well as new concepts.

The pertinent thing about thinking is to understand the importance of thought, have the desire to think, and to give yourself some time, and a place, to think. We are continually bombarded with sensory input, approximately 2,000,000 bits per second. Obviously we cannot digest all of it. In fact the maximum amount of this bombardment that we can intake is approximately between 100 and 180 thousand bits. No wonder our brains don't have time to think. If we don't take time to give the brain a break, it may break. This can be evidenced by lack of concentration, forgetfulness, exhaustion, and just plain mental fatigue. So, it is important to set aside some time during the day to think. Many of the clients I work with, when I ask to see their diaries, have not set aside time to think during their busy day. So the first thing we do is set up times during the week, appointments with themselves, when they can take time to think or reflect. Think about problems and potential solutions, new strategies, sales performance, your next vacation, management meetings; whatever is important at the time.

I'm sure that all of us can think of times and settings where we have had epiphanies, or earth shattering ideas, or even memories about things we previously could not recall. Everybody has a favourite place or environment, an oasis of tranquillity, where they have had some of their best thoughts. For some of my clients they range from listening to classical music with a glass of red wine, going for a walk at lunch, at the gym, jogging, in a bath, walking on the beach, sitting in church, and lying in bed. What is your favourite setting for thinking?

I want to take a brief moment to address the situation of 80% of our thoughts having occurred the day before or even the day before. Might the reason they continue to recur be because the thoughts haven't been acted upon? Because our mind is so cluttered with input sometimes it is useful to look at

some output. If we can get thoughts out of our brain then there becomes more room for new thoughts to materialise. One thing that I have found useful is to write the thought down on a piece of paper or journal. By doing this the thought, problem, or idea, can be dealt with without the brain chatter that occurs while it remains inside your mind with the other thousand of thoughts. The thought can then have some undivided attention applied to it and a basic decision can be made whether to act on the thought or bin it. Once that decision is made, it becomes part of the realm of “to do” rather than “to think”.

Taking, or I could say making, time to think can lead to renewed clarity, better focus, a quieter brain (still working, just more quietly), less confusion, and more power to think new thoughts. It is amazing how answers come to us when we actually give some time to think about an issue or topic.

I encourage you to set aside some time and a place to think. Give it a try.