



## Thinking Your Way to the Top

*“1500 years ago, everybody knew that the Earth was the center of the Universe; 500 years ago everybody knew that the world was flat: and five minutes ago you thought we were alone on this planet. Imagine what you’ll know tomorrow.”*

*-Tommy Lee Jones, in Men in Black*

Lately I have read a stack of books and articles on improving your attitude through improving your mind. One of the best is *Success through a Positive Mental Attitude*, by Hill and Stone. The result? I am improving the way I look at people and events and thus raising my level of living. It is possible to continue to educate yourself beyond what government or private schools will do for you. Although he lived on the American frontier Abraham Lincoln read voraciously. He became a self-made scholar. He carried a positive attitude with him in life. It helped him overcome a string of election losses before he won the presidency of the United States, twice against seemingly insurmountable odds.

The simple fact is: You are where you are because that is where you've chosen to be, for one reason or another. What are you doing to advance your life on a day-to-day basis? What are you doing to improve the world you live in and the lives of those around you daily? What factors can you control in your thinking to elevate your standard of living? Chris Hodges says, "the way we think often sets our destiny." Here are five steps to help you make the decision, then five keys to managing your thoughts and organizing your thinking process to be a success

**1. Question the acceptance of popular thinking.** Popular thought is usually wrong. It follows trends and fads without any base in the real world. Learn to tell fads from reality. For the past year it seems that everyone is enthralled with the DaVinci Code. Although it is a work of fiction it has found its way into popular thinking and people are changing their entire belief systems. All this based on a fictional book that has created a "buzz." Don't let the "buzz" sting you. Fad/trendy topics and thinking come and go. Learn to base your attitude and vision on tried and true reality. The book of Ecclesiastes says, "There is nothing new under the sun." It is unlikely some new get rich quick scheme or path to prosperity is going to succeed over what you've always known but never applied in your life. It is also unlikely that the constant forecasts of doom and gloom are going to come true in yours or my lifetime. *My advice: Get a life (a real one).*

**2. Unleash the potential of focused thinking.** Imagine the possibilities if you could concentrate on solving your top two problems in life. What if you could give your full attention to your

greatest needs or your wildest dreams? The results would be phenomenal. Yet the media shoots events at us at light speed today. We don't organize our time, so we are at the mercy of every interruption we can't say "No" to. It is increasingly hard to stay focused on your dreams and goals. Take your thoughts captive and make them obedient to your vision. Practice the art of focusing your thoughts for one week on your success goals and watch the improvement in your life. *My advice: Imagine the possibilities.*

**3. Unlock the power of possibility thinking.** What is your greatest dream? What would you do if you truly believed you were invincible? Why are you limiting yourself in your thinking? Start using your imagination to see what you can achieve. Have you ever asked yourself, "What might be...?" or "What if...?" Your world is no bigger than your brain. Enlarge your mind and enlarge your world of possibilities. You can transform yourself by renewing your mind. The best way to start this process is to eliminate the word "impossible" from your vocabulary. People who see themselves as failures use this word too often in their conversations both with others and themselves. *My advice: Never say "impossible" again.*

**4. Embrace the lessons of reflective thinking.** Make it a habit to recall the victories you have experienced in the past. Many people today say to ignore your past and only look to the future, but often we forget what we have accomplished. Begin keeping a journal to document the feelings and desires you have today. It will be interesting to look back on it in three, six and twelve months from now to see where you were and how far you have come. Find a time each day to quietly contemplate your vision and goals. Allow no interruptions during this Quiet Time. Ruthlessly guard it. After three weeks it will become a habit if you stick to it and it will become a time that you look forward to each day. *My advice: Confidence can be found in past successes.*

**5. Experience the joy of unselfish thinking.** Remember, when you are down and depressed, it's not about you. Life is bigger than that. Usually people we are worried about aren't really thinking about us at all. Learn to give of yourself and your prosperity. Kahlil Gibran said, "You give but little when you give of your possessions. It is when you give of yourself that you truly give." The Dead Sea is "dead" because it continually receives and never gives. Few people can name three major lottery winners, but most people can name great philanthropists, like: Stanford, Duke, Stetson, LeTourneau and Newman (Paul Newman gave proceeds from his sales of condiments and dressings to charities every year). *My advice: Decide it's not all about you.*

Henry Ford said, "You won't be remembered for what you received in life, but for what you gave away to others." Try to leave this world a better place when you depart it than when you entered. What ideas can you use to benefit others? What are you involved in that is bigger than yourself? Are you leaving a YOU-shaped hole in the world that will be hard to fill when you are gone? Earl Nightingale said, "You become what you think about." So what does it take to make the decisions and organize your thoughts into a real plan to make your life better?

- **Find a Strategic Plan to control your thoughts.** The best way to defeat a thought is to replace it with a higher thought. Constantly strive to find better ideas and higher thoughts. How are you working toward your goal/vision? Most people have no idea what they want in life. If you are determined to reach your goal the odds are stacked in your favor. Why? Less than a third of the population has written their goal down. 10% know how to get

there and only two will ever try. Hill and Stone in *Success Through a Positive Mental Attitude* say you should control your thoughts and you will succeed in life. Your thoughts direct your path. "As a man thinks, so he is." says the Proverb. You are what you believe you are. Believe in yourself and no one can stop you.

- **Find a Secure Place to do your thinking.** Most people can't think around a cacophony of noise. They need a quiet place or a quiet time set aside during the day to do their best thinking. Solitude has helped many of history's greatest thinkers to organize their ideas. Walden Pond provided a serene environment for Henry David Thoreau to do his best thinking. Do you write down thoughts that come to you in the night or at odd times? A friend of mine has put a dry erase marker board in his shower because that is where his best thoughts and concepts come to him. Wherever your place is make it a habit to get away and think at least once a week.
- **Find Some Person to stretch your thoughts.** Share your ideas with somebody. Develop a Mind Share Group of like-minded or educated people that you can meet with over the course of this year to share and stretch your thoughts. Build a team around your ideas and thoughts. Books are good as well - but not as much as a live person or group. But do read a book at least once a month that reshapes your thinking. Do you know that statistics show that only 57% of Americans read an entire book in 2004? No wonder there is no traffic jam on the road to success
- **Find Soul Purpose to direct your thoughts.** What is your vision, your goal, your dream? What is the unique reason you were put on this Earth? You will hear people say to avoid shortcuts to success. There is a shortcut that I will share with you that will get you there quicker. First, what is a shortcut. A more direct route, right? What is the most direct route to your dream or goal? The one without any distractions or side tracks. There is a shortcut on the road to your Success and it is the most direct route you can take to your dream--without distractions or wasted time.
- **Find Superior Power to Energize your thoughts.** Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) grounds its thinking in a "higher power" most believers see this as God. Find something bigger than yourself. Look for mentors that will keep you going back to your super power base. What drives or motivates you to get up and ACT NOW? Do you simply roll over and go back to sleep when the alarm goes off?

Use this process to change your life this year. The motivation lies within you to change your life for the better. You must *ACT NOW*, or you will be like so many before you, who put off until there is no tomorrow. Barbara De Angelis said, "No matter what age you are, or what your circumstances might be, you are special, and you still have something unique to offer. Your life, because of who you are, has meaning." Your future is yet to be written.

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