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DEVELOPING A MINDSET FOR RAPID INCREMENTAL INNOVATION

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ABSTRACT

Why do so many complicated crises flourish in a world that has the capabilities to solve these significant challenges? Why has it taken so long for the world's developed economies to grow after a deep recession? What are the keys to solving major problems and to grow economies? It seems the means are there, but not the will to understand how we must go about realizing more from the vast human and technical capacity available today. We posit that the path to improvement is for more individuals and organizations to innovate; that is, to improve effectiveness and efficiency in all they do. This improvement starts and ends with individual mindsets.

This paper addresses these issues in a novel and non-academic way. We do this in large part to stress a point that must be made in order for academics to become and remain innovative.

Keywords: Innovation, Innovativeness, Mindsets, Leadership.

Contribution/ Originality

This paper enhances readers' ability to recognize and adapt personal and organizational mindsets toward clearer thinking in order to identify and realize more innovative opportunities. The ideas presented are intended to provoke thinking so that readers learn to rapidly continuously and incrementally achieve the innovation imperative both individually and organizationally.

1. INTRODUCTION

A major factor in the world's inability to effectively move forward to solve the many ills confronting it begins and ends with education. Education that stresses thinking and thinking clearly plus a dose of reality followed by strategic innovation is essential (Friedman, 2005; 2008;

Friedman and Mandelbaum, 2011; Colino *et al.*, 2014). This article combines the work of the last 50 years to provoke thinking and help readers to continuously, rapidly, and incrementally innovate individually and organizationally in their circumstances. All significant change toward innovativeness starts with self-awareness (Service, 2005a; Service, 2005b; Service and White, 2012; Service and Reburn, 2014). Look at who and what you are and how your thinking is framed and guided.

It is clear that the obsession with tech and quick communications are causes for concern. However, just as clear is the fact that technology is neither good nor bad. All right minded individuals will admit that it is not the technology that is the problem or the solution; it is simply what the tech accomplishes that makes it a good not an evil, a success not a failure, a positive not a negative. Yes, clear thinking leads one to use “tech” appropriately and for “good.” Under these concerns we look at the way we think and how we prefer “wish-fulness” over reality in order to make some sense of strategically minding the gaps between where we are and where we need to be. We all think in a skewed fashion and we must realize this before any thinking “outside the box” can be of practical use in guiding innovation and innovativeness.

1.1. On Thinking Clearly

Cognitive biases are tendencies that direct our thinking (mental) preferences (predispositions). Our biased thinking forms opinions, guides decisions, leads us to buy products or services, select a spouse or friend, etc. These “common” biases are not necessarily good or bad; they just are! Our cognitive biases are all too often unknown or at least not considered overtly, yet, they influence our deliberations for arguments, form the base for our frames of reference and mental models, guide our views of others and cultures, and direct our judgments and actions thus helping us determine and justify our place in the world (Chopra and Mlodinow, 2011). Each of our biases directs us to what we think is appropriate and what fits us, our followers, and our situations. Our cognitive biases most often keep us in our known and unknown ignorance (unawareness). These mental favoritisms, guided interpretations, or mathematical weaknesses can keep us from innovating and creating new and different products, organizations, selves, or approaches. Indeed, innovation -- doing something new or different -- is the only way to lift all into improved lives with greater productivity (Peters, 2003; Friedman, 2005).

What are the common cognitive biases (Landsburg, 1993; Dorner, 1996; Dobelli, 2013; Grudem and Asmus, 2013)? In the following pages we describe the more common thinking inaccuracies using labels; but we want to stress throughout this article that understanding beats labeling. If you don't fully understand a category of bias, stop and study the bolded words and ponder anew why those words can change our thinking.

Confirmation biases are the mother of all misconceptions. Humans are great at assessing all information so that our prior conclusions can be reaffirmed. Look for contradictions to what you believe. Write down your beliefs -- worldviews, investments, health care, diet, budget -- and seek

disconfirming evidence. This conformation bias after the fact leads us to the “how I did it” arrogance. When we try to recall why something worked we tend to look mostly at those that succeeded at the highest levels; and we accept their stories or the stories about them as models to follow. A careful reading of [Levitt and Dubner \(2009\)](#), [Gladwell \(2002; 2008; 2013\)](#) or [Sternberg \(1996; 2003\)](#) work on success intelligence show that it is more than someone’s after-the-fact descriptions that led to the mega-accomplishment of billionaires, athletes, and the rich and famous. Avoid the expert bias by remembering that all too often experts know little outside of their expertise and favor what they know. Always look at what the advice giver has to gain. In all decisions consider which authority figures might be exerting the most influence and then understand their reasoning.

These biases often give a false sense of the probability of success; but don’t be held back by the improbable. Just be realistic. Remember that common wisdom can be wrong ([Brooks, 2011](#); [Hall, 2011](#)). Just because most people believe something does not make it so! Often “conventional wisdom” is very unwise. Likewise, ease of use or close at hand biases abound when we use information that is easy to get or examples that are close at hand. Wrong examples or information are often worse than none. Find relevant information by spending time and energy with those that are different from you and do it in a new and different setting.

The cognitive biases just covered lead to fundamental attribution errors. All of us attribute good things to our actions and bad things to luck. Most of the “proofs” we get have attribution errors that, at their core, exemplify false causality. Anyone who has had a statistics course understands that correlation is not causation. Look more closely at linked events, especially within complex economic and humanistic interface activities. Are there alternative explanations? Be keenly aware that the human brain looks for patterns and when it can’t find them it invents them. When you think you have identified a pattern, seek to disprove it.

Don’t accept or reject based on just stories. All stories are after-the-fact and most often incomplete or emphasize what the story teller wants to stress. Stories of success often credit things that make the story teller look good. We shape everything we tell. It is easy to say why or what in retrospect (hindsight is 20-20) but not in advance. Again, we repeat, keep up with your predictions and you’ll see how far off the mark you are. Way too many people are overconfident with very limited knowledge. On the opposite end avoid being overly under-confident. Simply be appropriately confident. Know your circle of knowledge and don’t extrapolate it without hard proof. Superficial knowledge associated with an opinion generally proves that ignorance more often breeds confidence than does knowledge. Warren Buffet has said someone’s forecast of the market says more about them than it does about the market.

Too many choices can weigh you down as can just making a lot of decisions. And, yes, we all have that stubbornly consistent liking bias. Because you associate an alternative with someone you like or admire, or the choice is along the lines of your favorite solution, does not make it right. Being likable is a huge distinctive competency as is looking the part.

No one would play the lottery if we understood that larger rewards don't necessarily justify very small probabilities: probabilities show what is most or least likely. Likewise, just because something is in short supply does not mean it will be valuable. Evaluate all your options based on their price and benefits versus just rarity. But, don't simply hold on to things.

Be sure that what you favor is not simply something related to coincidence. Coincidences happen and when there are billions of people who report on the strangest of these we'll see many reports of things that seem to be too uncommon to be coincidences: Miracles?? Be skeptical of coincidences. We also often see the loss aversion syndrome. Most of us hate to lose more than we like to win and we'll work harder to avoid pain or a loss: consider probabilities and act appropriately. Foot in the door and sunk costs can mislead. Because you allow them in to talk with you, or you have money in it, or its current price is less than you paid, you love it. If they helped me, I'll help them. Don't accept free "stuff" when you think you are going to get asked for something. We seek equity even when we are winners — also applies to revenge! We end this paragraph with the idea that we never know the outcomes of paths not taken.

We do everything possible to think our success is warranted and failures are outside our control. We often do it by framing how we say (or ask) to get the answer we most want to hear.

We see many errors that are related to the most common aversion to anything labeled as arithmetic, math, or statistics. Why doesn't charity work? In part, it is the house-money effect where we treat money differently according to how we got it: won/given versus earned. All things tend to return to the average over time. Stats and probabilities tell us why and our ability to wonder makes us say "why me?"

Most of anything is neglected because we don't hear of it; most businesses fail to be profitable but we hear of the most profitable: know the base rates not examples. Remember that there is no balancing effect to independent events. In life business and investing there are very few really independent events. We understand linear growth intuitively but exponential growth is often confounding. Consider that 2 to the 528th power is a number greater than all the atoms in the universe! Averages can be greatly skewed. e.g., what if you added Bill Gates to the wealth of 100 average citizens? Few people or things are actually exactly average. If you have two groups — one has ultra-rich and the other slightly rich people — if you move the worst of the "ultra" to the "slightly" you increase the average of both groups. Many will fall for the sale when they think it's for half price: this is the false comparison figure/number bias. The law of small numbers assures we can find amazing stats about anything with 13 million businesses, 310 million people in America, 1.4 billion in China, and so on — there are some amazing things out there.

Consider this political explanation: "I'm letting you know that our plan will make it worse before it gets better;" and then when it does get worse you think they were right so you continue on the same plan. No, reevaluate and forget the accuracy of the doom prediction. Just because politicians or corporate leaders identify problems, do not assume they will necessarily solve them.

Our overly informed, media-celeb-centric connected world can cloud our thinking with too much information. Much of our academic research in management and leadership is not very productive and in fact is like seeing through a glass door. Readers should always ask “so what” when they review any research, and question whether it fits a need in the area you are reviewing. If it does not fit you must acquit yourself of the research. Remember you already know what you know – learn what you don’t know. It is often not what we know or don’t know, but what we know that is simply wrong. Remember that for every complex problem, there exist several simple explanations that may just be flat wrong.

We often see an illusion of control when dealing with random events. There is no logic to random number selection nor does it work to scream at the TV when the game on TV is not going our way. When we win we assume we can win again -- curb your enthusiasm when you win in a random activity. We are dazzled by success (of ourselves and others) -- look at popularity of celebrities of all types and stripes. Beware of those that preach too forcefully! We prefer answers that suit us best. Moreover, we suffer from the illusion that we are good forecasters and we often choose an alternative where alternatives are associated with multiple conditions; we generally select the alternative with less conditions. And, then there is groupthink. When people get together to decide, the strong just by their mere presence cause the weaker ones to just go along and not voice their objections. Beginners luck and related self-attributed talent can be either or both. Do something and act, for then you know what to adjust or how to adapt, for without action you don’t have any idea where to adjust: just doing (acting) can be good or bad. We all have many angles to our association biases. Experience can damage judgment or improve it!

We should dispose of old views based on new information and not blame “it” on our distorted views of history. There is also what some call in-out-group biases. Identifying with a group can distort views of facts. We tend to avoid messy and confusing situations (in management and leading) that are ambiguous and difficult and we take the simple known even when the simple only answers a small part of the issue. We have risk when probabilities are (or can be) known and uncertainty when probabilities are unknown. We see known unknowns and unknown unknowns. Leadership and innovation require losing this bias toward avoiding messy, tough issues. Because we associate something with something good or bad we have a bias for or against it. Or it must be good because it took a lot of time, energy, money, etc. Take result over effort. Most of the real lasting “stuff-fundamentals” have taken a long time to be useful fundamentals so don’t toss out the old just for the sake of the new. Realize that propaganda works because even when we initially discount messages that try to sell or convince us, we’ll accept them if we hear them over and over. And, lastly, in this area we are addicted to because even when the “because” is really lame. Don’t even answer 3-year olds with the “just because” reply.

Unexpected responses to incentives abound. People always respond to the incentives; and not always (seldom in our view) to the grander intentions behind the incentives. We all too often

falsely use anchors: i.e., when we hear large numbers, we over estimate and when we hear small numbers we underestimate even when the numbers have absolutely nothing to do with the estimate. For, if it has always worked we assume that it will continue to work. Teamwork does not always work. When people work together they most often do less than individuals do. We judge sins of omission less than sins of commission even when results of omission are much worse. Be careful of what you wish for. Our ability and inability to predict our own emotions -- good or bad -- last only a short time unless you have a mental illness.

The why me question occurs because it is you: stuck in a traffic jam -- why me? -- you are you, therefore you can ask that! We reinterpret what happened retrospectively; i.e., if you found out you lost a job to another candidate, instead of admitting they are better we feel they had an unfair advantage -- sex, race, child of owner, etc. Lies we tell ourselves to save us from admitting it's us. Immediacy can be a false delusion. Why many do not work toward a degree or why most don't want delayed gratification: response time and overnight delivery. If we would do it for nothing, intrinsic reward, then a small extrinsic reward most often makes us less likely to want to do "it." Expectations may or may not be realistic. Expected value theory -- if you like something you believe the benefits are greater and the risks smaller than if you don't like it: applies to people we like or don't! Too many of us are prone to believe our own soul-searching but not that of others. Be more critical and skeptical with yourself and regard your own justifications and internal observations with the suspicion you place on your enemies. And watch using jabber to disguise ignorance. If you don't have anything to say then don't say it!

Do not overlook simple or complex knowledge just because it is that. We accept that that corresponds to our beliefs and self-image; filtering out most other things. We volunteer when we would do better to work at our vocations and pay for someone else's efforts. Making ourselves feel good may or may not solve problems in an effective or efficient way. But most of us have an inability to close doors. We want as many options as possible. Commit and leave yourself few or no outs. Effective time management strategies must include stop-doing lists, not just to-do lists.

Humans like to create dichotomies when most things are neither good nor bad, but on a scale of just different. Seldom are there just two alternatives: build or buy, use for this or that. Come up with more alternatives to evaluate. We all have comparison others in many areas of our lives and we abuse this: i.e. when is the last time you heard of someone firing themselves because there were many better cheaper alternatives in their employ? We love the predominant and the recent. Information you received more recently just seems better than older information; and primacy is when you consider the first information too much while discounting the middle information. Then there is the "not my idea" so it isn't worth considering. Insights and pronouncements do not pass well between disciplines. It is very hard in many cases to transfer from academia to other real life situations; book smarts don't transfer to street smarts easily. Think about what you read or think you learn and ask so-what, that is, how can I use this or that insight or theory?

Watch unfounded fear or regret and don't procrastinate. Start the journey now to personal innovativeness by junking envy, managing the "you" product and realizing that we often feel that simply paying attention to something solves it. Then watch "cheery picking:" only showing pictures or repeating words that help us sell our views. Watch personal and otherwise personification used to protect human psyche with illusions of knowledge, skills and abilities and excuses of bad luck. Don't misuse stories. Watch using something because of a professional persona: yours or others! Also realize that it is harder to detect that something is missing than it is to determine something is wrong with what you have.

Let us be committed to not over or under thinking issues and answers. Appreciate that we may see a single cause behind any complex issue; but generally there is no easy "one size fits all" response. For example, the cause of the 2008 financial meltdown in the U.S. is complicated. This litany of excuses, errors, misconceptions and so on that affects our thinking could go on, but any serious reader should understand that it's very complex and we need to reassess our re-assessment of our re-assessments, etc. etc. of our thinking when the stakes are high. Noticeable, significant, main and prominent (possibly relevant or not) information or actions have more influence. And, if we are not sure of the stakes we need to start by thinking they are high.

We lie to ourselves more than anybody else and the truth will set us free to become all we are capable of becoming. Watch it because we will take the default position most of the time. By changing your default settings you can change "your" behavior. Don't suffer from the mission accomplished fallacy or seek a false consensus and quit before you arrive: we never arrive at the end of innovation and learning. Lastly, remember that by thinking to learn we learn to think, so think but act, using all new or old insights and slogans with wisdom. Better thinking leads to better results in life and innovations that move a society forward.

Now that we have described many of the ways of thinking that interfere with our abilities to see issues more nearly as they are we move on. In the next section we build a foundation for our recommended mindset of strategy of innovativeness.

1.2. Creative Confidence Is Required for Innovation

Understand clearly the need to innovate in order to advance personally and organizationally, and for survivability (Zander and Zander, 2000; Gaynor, 2002; Robinson and Schroeder, 2004; Kelley and Kelly, 2013). Improving economic prosperity; and expanding and keeping freedom depends on innovation. Growing an overall economy is the only sustainable strategy for improving the lot of all. Redistribution of existing resources helps basically no one over time. To achieve overall good we must accomplish needed innovation. This requires more of us to open our minds to think anew in a creatively competent fashion. When we lead, manage or follow we must seek to foster thinking that can nurture innovations in applications of principles, theories, adaptations, products, processes, ourselves, and others. More of us must continually identify innovations and put them into use for sustainability in today's increasingly complex and

competitive global marketplace (Mendenhall *et al.*, 2008). The strategy for sustainable competitive advantage is rapid incremental innovation (Peters and Waterman, 1982; Peters, 2003).

Innovation involves getting ideas to market or use where the product, service, system, policy, program or process is new to the implementing entity. Innovation can reform, change, add or delete revolutionarily or incrementally methods, products, services or views. It can produce something new, make something old better, improve efficiency/productivity, develop new materials, etc. but ultimately it must be realized in application to be labeled an innovation. Management gurus of all stripes proclaim over and over that innovation can and must be pursued with vigor, presented as a discipline, taught, learned, practiced and kept in the forefront of all that an organization does (Drucker, 1985; 1996; Cohen, 2010; Buford, 2014).

Many innovation researchers have noted that economics and economists have a difficult time understanding innovation, in part because it most often results in failure (Landsburg, 1993). In fact innovation is only positive in retrospect since the vast majority of innovations are failures. And, contrary to popular lore, innovators capture only a minuscule fraction of the value created by their innovation (Levitt and Dubner, 2009). It seems hard for many of us to grasp that most businesses understand that one-time profit at all costs is not a sustainable existence, but giving more for the money and win-win insures their longevity!

All improvements start with self-knowledge beginning with the awareness that few of us actually go into any situation empty-headed: organizations are collections of individuals! As we discussed earlier we all take with us various biases, frameworks and mindsets that surround our thinking about what we experience or want to accomplish. Each individual's perception is their reality. We think and react through foundations of experiences, religion, and culture (Service and Carson, 2010; Service and Carson, 2013). Our choices are not between frameworks and having none: we all have them. Instead, choices are between taking mindsets and biases that are unknown and unconsidered, versus ones that are known and subject to the challenge of new ideas. Know your frames, modes and models of thinking, and relentlessly challenge and expand them. Use the common cognitive biases we have described earlier to improve and expand thinking not to continue the narrow erroneous predispositions.

To build creativity and innovation into management and leadership, start asking: How can we make "that" of use to better leverage all resources for greater synergistic value? We write and research because better teaching requires continuous learning. To be a better teacher, be a better learner toward adding value, having fun, and caring. What does it take for you to get better in your profession and consequently improve your organizations?

In *Three Roads to Quantum Gravity* Smolin (2001) states flatly that academia stifles new ideas. Mintzberg (2009) in *Managers not MBAs* rightly points out that the process of tenure and promotion means that academics don't rock the boat and innovate until after about 10 years and by that time they are in a habit of not innovating. Dembski and others in their work on Intelligent Design (ID) show how limited ID is by academia's insistence that ID is a code word

for God in the creation equation. Code words only exist if we use or interpret them that way: we don't. Even Richard Dawkins, famed Oxford atheist, shows his narrowness of thought as he tells others what they believe. When atheists say you must believe as they do, are they being any more open minded than a religious fundamentalist (see Dembski and Dawkins citations in [Service and Carson \(2009\)](#)).

The conventional wisdom of business and leadership academia is simply not the conventional wisdom of those in practice. Reading *First Break all the rules* and *The 25 most influential works of the 20th century* illustrates this. We have read hundreds of books and articles that make this mistake. The rules broken were not the rules of practice but of academia. The influential works (books) of the 20th century were not those influential in practice but “on” academicians. It took academicians 300 years to realize what common people already knew — rocks fall from the sky. It took academicians a long time to realize the impact of Japanese cars on the American auto industry. The academic experts did not think anyone needed computers in their homes. The academics knew that in theory heavier-than-air flying machines were impossible. Yes, in theory there is no difference in practice and theory, but in practice there is! Academia was out-to-lunch when it came to predicting the 21st century's first economic bubble. This could go on, but you should get the point and if you don't agree, do your own research ([Service and Carson \(2010\)](#); discusses the realities of management versus the hype of management).

Here we are in a situation where all writings related to management and leadership must pass peer review that demands not original thought but empirical evidence and the “who” said drivel. Turn this academic conventional wisdom on its head, debunk political correctness and innovate. There is a lot more out there that just needs to be viewed with realism versus political correctness and academia wisdom. Think about your industry and its examples of narrow thinking that limit innovativeness. Look hard and develop insights to lead you into improving the future.

2. INSIGHTS

You cannot give another person an insight you have gained through the experience of hard work and sacrifice or loss. This applies exponentially for insights that one must internalize and apply about themselves related to relationships, management, leadership, and most especially innovativeness. Insights that become life-changing epiphanies are rare, so develop more insights! The best you can expect to do is to set someone up to realize an insight when it makes itself apparent during their own experiences. Our routines, habits, daily paths, and those we choose to associate with, often make it difficult for us to realize an innovative insight.

A universal truth is that we all seek meaning in and for our lives. We must always remain an apprentice of life; seeking first, getting, then doing, and ultimately being. Remember the price we pay is very high for once we use today it is gone leaving in its place the fruits of our efforts be they positive or negative. A life-long goal to realize more from our abilities is a nice start and

finish. Our hope should be that we do better in part by gaining more insights that we might set up others to gain their own insights when they are exposed to possibilities. We are seeking innovation leadership applications for the rest-of-us versus lessons from the outliers of history!

3. MOTIVATIONS

All human actions have one or more of these seven causes: chance, nature, compulsions, habit, reason, passion, desire (Aristotle).” Life starts with what we’ve been given, and for those reading this article it builds to what you choose it to be; it won’t be perfect but, above all, it will be what you make of it. We can choose to change because we always have the possibility of new beginnings. “There is a choice to make in everything you do. So keep in mind that in the end the choice you make makes you.” Switch from the "excuser" attitude many have to the "I'll figure it out and add value" attitude of a professional. “It's now or never, tomorrow will be too late!” One could easily write several books about motivation, but that is not the purpose of the current article. If you want to get a better understanding of motivation, we highly recommend *Drive: The Surprising Truth about What Motivates Us* (Pink, 2009).

4. INTUITION

Intuition occurs about many things, such as, how people will react or treat you, whether danger is near, and so on. However, the type of intuition focused on here is the kind that is useful in strategy making, managing, leading, and innovation in general. First, one should realize that intuition as a term, like innovation as a word, is only positive in retrospect. Most intuitions as innovations are negative because they fail to be correct or produce desired results. A related cognitive glitch is that normally we all only hear about the intuitions and innovations that work.

Warren Buffet said, a person’s forecast about the stock market, tells you more about the person than it does about where the market is headed. We remember well when Buffet was asked about investing in Enron and he said, "I cannot figure out how they make their money so I am not buying." So many others simply said, ‘I have better instincts than Buffet’ and bought Enron and WorldCom. This mob-mentality arrogance occurred to the extreme in America during the great depression, the dot-com craze, and the recent housing bubble. Think about all those investing “geniuses” in the mid-to late 1990s who believed they had great instincts on stocks. Monkey dart-board investing worked well in this era. Alan Greenspan said of the recent housing bubble, that he had in the past believed that irrationality was randomly distributed, though he now feels it is systematic. Greenspan said he could not put a percent on irrational versus rational thought and its relationship to economic bubbles; but again, irrationality was systematic not randomly distributed.

Churchill and Reagan certainly were proven right in their predictions. Perhaps we should also note with care that Hitler had great instincts in the beginning of WWII when he said we can

go into Austria, we can go into Poland, and they will not stop us. Hitler's instincts failed in the end and he became a historically sad 'deranged' memory.

Keeping those comments in mind, the key to "effective" intuition is attention, focus and reflective thinking based on knowledge and experience. These things coupled with a great EQ (emotional quotient) and IQ (as successful intelligence) are good, but these many factors and their combinations and permutations do not allow us to see things as they are becoming (on successful intelligence and IQ see first (Guilford, 1986; Sternberg, 1996) then (Pinker, 2002); and finally all of (Goleman, 1995; 2000) for EQ. We all have filters that allow us to "intuit" mainly what we wish to come true or need to have happen in the future.

The effectiveness of a person's intuition is normally determined by their locus of control, leanings toward the socialistic or capitalistic views, the entrepreneurial or risk adverse side of views, education, experience, and all of our collective histories. However, those with constantly good intuition actually make very calculated decisions and then commit to their chosen course of action with extraordinary gusto. That said, it is often possible to develop intuition, but it is dangerous to be sure you have done so. So many people that have exhibited intuitive effectiveness in the past do not continue to do so. Witness the fact that so few mutual fund managers beat the market index averages on a consistent basis.

Leaders are expected to look to the future and communicate what they see. Most often, it is not clairvoyance or perceptivity but it is a forward-looking skill that is demonstrated as an understanding and a self-confidence that results in an acceptance of personal responsibility for creating a future that fits with your intuitions or dreams. Failure to be forward-looking is more due to mindlessness in the present than any other factor. We just get too focused on what is right in front of us; the immediacy of entertaining and even useful technology can stifle uninhibited foresight. The inability to grasp what is going on around us, inability to notice, and lack of the courage to use what we notice is the normal anti-intuition most of us exhibit. Very often, what is seen as intuition is the *will* of a person that makes things happen: that is determined doing versus wishful thinking. The commitment to an idea is much more critical than the idea in almost every case. Each day brings challenges to succeed; do we enact a future in which to succeed or to dream?

Realize what is truly "cannot" versus "will not." Most life's circumstances that appear to be road blocks appear that way based on our frameworks of assumptions we carry within us. Visualize a different or expanded frame around the same set of circumstances and new possibilities are within our reach: given focus and energy. Much, much more is possible than we all think.

In life there is no escape from attention, work, focus, freedom, happiness, sadness, responsibility, money, peace, opportunity, temptation — good or bad, relationships, selflessness, selfishness, love, hate, opportunity, oppression, good and bad will, search for meaning; and, finally, finding out that a lot of the conventional wisdom you've learned is simply wrong. Allow

yourself to accept your intuitions and mold them into useful innovation and develop Successful Intelligence. Successfully intelligent people can recognize and adapt to new roles, and figure out how to meet new and differing needs in distinctively innovative ways. They recognize that they will have to change the way they work and analyze to fit the situations, tasks and people as all evolve. Successful intelligence requires understanding that preferential and “wishful” thinking must be replaced by thinking more clearly. As Brooks said of successful intellect: “The skills a master seaman has to navigate the oceans, they had to navigate the world (2011: p. x).” Successful intelligence can and must be developed as the kind of intelligence that matters in reaching life’s important goals (See [Hall \(2011\)](#) and [Sternberg \(2003\)](#)).

4.1. Getting to the Issues, not Simply Presenting Complaints

Too often we solve symptoms not issues. Instead we must identify the real problems and eliminate excuses for inaction. Remember if you are doing something you see what will not work and you can adjust. When and how are we going to debunk these excuses, clarify our thinking, be more innovative and become more of what we are capable of becoming?

Start by addressing the prime question for any proposed rule, regulation, law, policy, action, change, addition or deletion (innovation) related to the key issues of the day for you and your organization. First, admit you have confirmation biases and preferred alternatives. Then realize that if you get the questions wrong, you do more harm than good. Address the correct questions and then the answers matter. Here is our list of overriding questions that need addressing and answering regardless of what you are trying to accomplish or solve:

- 1-Who are the constituents and how does the change affect each one?
- 2-Will this make it easier to establish or expand business, hire more people, improve profits, etc.?
- 3-Does this make it easier to follow the new or different policy/law/rule?
- 4-Will this make the new or different more truthful and easier to understand?
- 5-What are the likely and unlikely unintended consequences?
- 6-What are alternative motivations to behave differently than we anticipate?
- 7-How will this reduce the national/more local, personal or organizational deficit and debt?
- 8-How will this help move people and organizations to independence; or create opportunities?
- 9-Will this produce more stability locally, regionally, countrywide or worldwide?
- 10-Will the change make me more innovative and help others be more innovative?
- 11-Will this help me or others reach more of our potential?
- 12-Will it provide superior value and be rare with few or no substitutes available?
- 13-How feared is the chosen alternative-risk/reward relationship?
- 14-How deeply embedded is the current way of doing “it”?
- 15-Will the solution build or replace relationships?
- 16-How easy is it to back out of the solution? Do you have a plan B, C, and so on?
- 17-Were all identified choices considered or at least addressed?

18-Will more time or resources allow for more or better information or just waste time?

Do a cost benefit analysis for all proposed changes. This applies doubly to so-called charity and “do-good” projects. For all “charity” projects do a cost-benefit analysis and rank by the likely effectiveness compared to other alternatives. Remember that: If “it” is spent here “it” can’t be spent there; and “it” came from somewhere that had a cost. ID that costs. “It” can be monetary units, time, attention, focus or anything of value. [Corbett and Fikkert \(2012\)](#) *When Helping Hurts*, shows clearly that enough money has been spent in many parts of the world to affect peoples’ lives, but desired change has not followed. The same rules that apply to profit making businesses should apply to the so-called non-profits for effectiveness is all that matters in the end.

At this point we should be thinking more clearly, using more of our innate and learned creative abilities, and we wish to effect change through innovation. That requires leadership.

4.2. Leading for Innovation-Leading is how you effect Change

Historically leadership emphasized stability and control. Today's trends guide us toward facilitation for speed, empowerment, flexibility, and organizational learning, all directed at increasing innovativeness. The information revolution, globalization, technology, communications, and widespread education all make it necessary to involve everyone in change. Innovation involves exploiting change opportunities, and every organization, business, university, church, labor union, doctor, or hospital loses or may quickly go down if it fails to innovate. The failure to innovate is the largest reason for organizational and personal decline ([Drucker, 1985](#)); [Colino et al. \(2014\)](#); ([Service et al., 2014](#)).

We must investigate management and leadership for innovation and change using current and past leaders and our own observances as lenses for viewing the future. Leaders are bridges connecting people to the future and no identified trends lead to an envisioned and improved future; that requires leaps of faith and hard work. To be a truly innovative leader one must be curious and daring; and study, travel, people, work, play, reflection and mistakes are all sources of knowledge and understanding. Theories, suppositions, innovative successes and failures, and experiences will help move inclinations outside the boxes, frames and models that limit thinking and innovativeness. Being “anything” is predominantly a matter of desire and focus. But, all too often the desire is big and the effort is small.

A leader's effectiveness is measured by their ability to speak and write with clarity and conviction. Then it continues with the ability to interpret the context of the situation in which one leads, culminating when followers act. One cannot be a leader without communicating well with others. Leaders must understand the process and context of leadership situations, and they must be innovative in their approaches to guiding others to reach the "envisioned future." Truly, leadership is defined by one's form of participation. Practice communicating and observing to be a better leader for innovation.

Confidence is another key to leading into the unknown. Watch the Kenyan Maasai warriors take meat from a pride of lions' kill. The lions simply would not walk up and take something from what they fear. Therefore, they think (respond from instinct) that they should fear the Maasai and they simply back off! Be confident and not cocky; understand the difference.

4.3. How do we develop as a Leader for Innovation?

Start with the desire to improve all aspects of life with creative and innovative changes: relational, spiritual, emotional, attitudinal, physical, vocational, recreational, and mental. Choose action and don't simply get ready, but get started. The world needs more creative policy makers, office managers, plumbers, teachers, policemen, beauticians, doctors, politicians, and . . . [add your job or calling]. Creative confidence is a way of seeing your potential and your place in the world more clearly, unclouded by anxiety and doubt. Most of us know much more than we think; capable of effecting significant change in our lives and the world. We all need to find our sweet spot of balancing desire, viability, and feasibility of our purpose and ideas. Determine the want, can, might, ought and need of your mindsets and resulting actions.

4.4. Review and Reverse Your Attitude

Shift mental outlooks from tentativeness to a self-image of creativity and empowerment to act and experiment with ideas intended to improve. As Einstein said, we cannot hope to solve our most critical issues with the same level of thinking that caused them (Isaacson, 2007). Don't think "I'm not good at that kind of thing," for if we believe that our own abilities are limited that becomes a self-fulfilling hypothesis. Creative people do more experiments and they are prepared to fail and try again. "Failure sucks, but instructs." To learn from failure, you have to "own" it. You have to figure out what went wrong and what to do better next time.

Develop courage to listen to your more innovative and intuitive voices. Realize that courage is the accumulation of small steps. Improvements in self, others and situations are driven by restless courageous intellectual curiosity, a feeling of optimism, the ability to accept failures, an unyielding work ethic, and a mindset that encourages not just ideas, but action. If you want to make yourself, someone else, or a situation great, start *making*. The best kinds of failures are *quick*, *cheap*, and *early*, leaving you plenty of time and resources to learn from the experiment and iterate your ideas.

5. CONCLUSIONS

Don't get bogged down in the everyday trivial details of life: don't be trapped. Take the time to ask yourself each day, "When was I at my best and doing things that bring happiness and fulfillment to my life and the life of others?" Choose words in your thoughts that move you, for your thoughts and words do more than just reflect your thought patterns—they shape them.

Get in the habit of always asking, “How might I?” and forget the “I can’t” thinking. Act and make mistakes, then admit, adjust and adapt to try and try again.

We are advising you to get a grip on your mindsets and make them directed toward a “can do,” innovative mindset and you’ll truly lead innovation by your innovativeness.

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