



Dear Friend,

What Was I Thinking?

Ever ask yourself *that* question?

I sure have! Countless times those words have crossed my mind, if not passed my lips.

What was I thinking that made me consider *that*, say *that*, *dothat*? And, because I thought, said, or did whatever it was, look at what happened!

Now, before you immediately picture only the bone-headed side of the coin, also reflect on the thoughts, words, or actions that seemingly came from nowhere, but that answered a question, or hit a nerve, or solved a problem in a way that appeared incomprehensible to you in the moment. *"Wow, that was spot on! Did it really come from me?"*

We all think and make decisions differently. It's amazing, really. And, understanding more about our own patterns and tendencies, and recognizing those of others, can have a tremendous impact on how effectively we function at work, at home, and elsewhere.

So, join me for this month's edition of **EA Insights** as we take a brief look at the topic of thought and decision making. And, if you're interested, contact me so that you can complete an assessment to pinpoint your own unique wiring in this area. Perhaps the next time you pose the *"What was I thinking?"* question, you'll have a better lead on an accurate answer.

All the best,

June

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The Link between Your Thought Pattern and Your Success

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Let me cut right to the chase.

The way you think has a direct impact on what you experience.

Now, that statement doesn't stem from new-age, self-help mumbo jumbo. It's actually based on extensive research by behavioral scientists, not to mention decades of my own experience personally and in the workplace. The way you think, the basis from which you make decisions, factors significantly into the results you achieve.



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"Quotes"

"So a core unique aspect of what [the book] is about, is it deals with the thought process that has to be applied on your stuff before you actually know what to organize or can manage that inventory."
~David Allen

"Foolproof systems don't take into account the ingenuity of fools."
~Gene Brown

"Goals are not dreamy, pie-in-the-sky ideals. They have every day practical applications and they should be practical."
~Les Brown

"Anyone who has practical ideas..., let him speak up. No idea or proposal is to be dismissed out of hand."
~Moshe Dayan

"Failures of perspective in decision-making ... more often result from simple mistakes caused by inadequate thought."
~Herman Kahn

"Exactly how that works, what the practical impact ... will be, we're still trying to find out. We certainly want it resolved as soon as possible."
~Richard Lobb

The research tells us that our thought and decision making tendencies fall into three basic groupings. Interestingly, we are able to function in any one of the three. And, because we have some level of ability in each area, it becomes important to get a handle on:

- 1- Which is my dominant (or default) mode of thought?
- 2- How capable am I in each area?
- 3- When do I tend to resort to a particular way of thinking?

By understanding your unique wiring through your responses to these three questions, you're better able to understand *you*. That self-appreciation, in turn, can improve your ability to utilize your strengths when appropriate and also to slow down, be more intentional, and/or seek the input of others when confronted with situations that may require thinking that is less than instinctive for you.

So, how do we think?

Systemic Thinking

Whether you're looking at the world around you, or you're considering a situation that's more personal in nature, does your mind immediately turn to organization? That is, is your first instinct to figure out how to put things in place, how to devise a way to bring order to chaos, how to define the situation in terms of some theory or school of thought? If so, systemic thinking may be your leading mode of thought.

Systemic thinking is the big picture way of approaching situations. It's wrapped up in developing a direction, understanding and/or creating structure, and devising systems in order to cope with the situation that has come to the fore or the decision that must be made.

Extrinsic Thinking

A second way that people think and make decisions is called extrinsic thinking. Is your mantra: *"Forget talking; pick up a tool, and do something."*? If you're a person who addresses a situation with a "let's just get our hands on it" mindset, extrinsic thinking is probably leading the way for you.

At the core of extrinsic thinking is a practical, results-oriented approach to the issues around you and even those within you. Extrinsic thinkers focus largely on defining situations in realistic ways and identifying solutions in practical terms. The overarching focus is to get going so we make this work.

Intrinsic Thinking

Intrinsic thinking is the third thought dimension. As a matter comes up, does your thinking shift to concerns about how the situation will affect others? How will they feel? What will they think? How will they be impacted? If this is the primary direction of your thought and the foundation of your decision making, intrinsic thinking may be the dominant factor for you.

The emphasis for intrinsic thinkers is on the human aspects of a situation. In many respects, this is an empathetic mindset. It's recognition that there are real people on the other end of one's thoughts and decisions. Thus, the human implications (for others as well as for yourself) must be considered in considering the matter and in reaching conclusions.

Now, although we have addressed the three thought dimensions separately, the reality is that none of us is a pure anything. We're a mix of the three. That means it's important to understand how that mix plays itself out in you -- how clearly you are able to see and operate from each thought dimension, when a certain thought mode is likely to take the lead, where you may have blind spots, etc. And, because there can be a distinct difference, it also is helpful to understand how you tend to function when your decision-making topic relates to *others* and when the thinking and choices are strictly about *you*.

What we do and what we are able to accomplish begins with *what* and *how* we think. Doesn't it make sense to invest in gaining knowledge about, and developing a plan for, how you'll utilize your own unique wiring for greater success? If you're interested in learning more about YOU, reach out to us at **Executive Advantage** today. We're here to help you recognize and leverage the link between your unique thought patterns and your success. [Contact us today](#).



"What people want from [him] is not more polished rhetoric about the future but practical solutions to the problems of the present."
~Francis Maude

"I am very down to earth and practical."
~Ashley Olsen

"We must now view our problems as opportunities -- historic opportunities to change the failed systems of the past and do what's right for our future."
~Bob Riley

"The federal government has done a lot, but this is so large and complicated and affects so many people that we are very concerned. All of the systems will have to work perfectly and in very high volume for everything to work out."
~Stan Rosenstein

"Poets, in their way, are practical men; they are interested in results."
~Allen Tate

"Shutting off the thought process is not rejuvenating; the mind is like a car battery -- it recharges by running."
~Bill Watterson

"Human thought is the process by which human ends are ultimately answered."
~Daniel Webster

"I believe that our very survival depends upon us becoming better systems thinkers."
~Margaret J. Wheatley

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At **Executive Advantage**, we are committed to providing results-based business and management consulting, leadership development, and coaching support. We partner with business leaders to build healthy, well-functioning organizations, where goals are met and people thrive. We also partner with individuals to create professional (and personal) lives with clearer direction, improved results, and greater balance.

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