



## Transformational Leadership & Service Podcast

### Episode 28 Transcript

#### *Do Leaders Think?*

During on of his very forgettable movie roles, the late comic actor, John Candy, stared from the movie screen and spoke words I have never forgotten. "I am so highly educated," he said, "I don't even have to think before I speak." Without question, he was trying to make us laugh. Unfortunately, all too often, leaders speak and make critical decisions without thinking and that's just not funny!

Why don't we think? I believe it's because we're too busy responding. Responding to the situations and scenarios that leaders face every day. Responding is not always bad, but it is always reactive. Conscious thought and planning on the other hand are always proactive in nature. Therefore, I would like to introduce some proactive thought processes, accompanied by some practical questions, that should be of help to all leaders.

Explorative Thought...Why? By way of this thought form, we are attempting to understand and create an acceptable order to the environment and universe around us. The more uneducated or inexperienced a leader is, the more beneficial this particular method of thinking should be. Taking the time to ask "why" regularly can unlock treasure chests of previously undiscovered potential for each of us.

Comparative Thought...Why Not? With this approach, leaders take the "why" question to an even higher level. By way of it, we take what we have already come to know and understand, then consciously choose to meld it with still other realities that have been made known to us. It's the same thought process that served candy makers well several years ago when they brought individual snack favorites, chocolate and peanut butter together in a new form known as Reese's Cups. The result? A runaway candy best seller! A "why not" attitude can serve leaders as the spring board for continuous personal and professional improvement.

Creative Thought...What If? This thought process simply allows us to stretch the boundaries of our own imaginations to explore new possibilities. For example, what if we moved our cost accountant into inventory control? What is we changed the design of our marketing materials? What if we extended our office hours until noon on Saturday? Once we've immersed ourselves in "what if" questions, the following method becomes very important.

Deliberative Thought...How? Here beats the heart of rational thought and deliberation. Let's face it. Not every "what if" question would lead us to prudent business decisions. Therefore, the "how" becomes very important. The "how" allows us to create a defined order to our world. Even the most creative, flamboyant

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thinkers/leaders should never abandon this common sense, foundational thought process.

Interactive Thought...What Do You Think? The most successful leaders know the value of this question. Few classic “managers” do. Taking the time to ask followers what they thinking can serve to mentally and emotionally engage both individuals and groups. Once the question is asked, we must also be prepared to shut up and listen. When the information gained form this process is managed properly, it can energize and propel even ordinary groups toward extraordinary accomplishments. Now there’s something to think about!