

Habits of Thinking and Action by **Adrian Savage, President of PNA, Inc.**

Over time we gather a set of habits, beliefs and opinions around ourselves and come to see them as solid. We let them define what we think we can and should do, even what we cannot bring ourselves to try. Very few of these choices that now affect our lives so powerfully were ever taken consciously. We start to form habits whenever we repeat some action that seems to work. It is that easy. As a result, we hand over the direction of our lives to an automatic set of instructions that we have probably never examined or evaluated fully. The good news: once they are recognized and understood, these patterns can be changed.

Cause and Effect

Once people recognize they are stuck in repetitive situations, the typical reaction is determination to change. They see they have been harming their own prospects, and allowing unconscious habits to block them again and again.

Understanding how our habits work against us is the best antidote to putting all the blame for problems “out there.” As long as we are ignorant of the part we play in the upsets and setbacks to our own lives, we can take no effective action to improve anything. Even if we are able to do something about the difficulties “out there,” the ones within us remain, ready to cause more negative effects.

This is just as true of the positive aspects of our lives. If we attribute success to external causes such as luck, connections or qualities we believe we can never possess, our situation is weak. We can hope for better things, but do little to bring them about. To see how prevalent this attitude is, consider how many people buy lottery tickets in the hope of becoming rich. Compare this with the number of people who take action to make themselves wealthy.

Only careful attention to re-establishing conscious choices can bring about the future we desire. The outcome is not entirely in our power. External events have a strong impact. It is the combination that works: acting consciously to take advantage of circumstances and building up the flexibility to cope with setbacks and not lose the way.

Moving from Cruise Control to ‘Deliberate Thinking’

All sensible, intelligent action begins with thinking. We recognize this in our ordinary language. When someone does something we believe is hasty, ill judged or poorly prepared we say the action is thoughtless or not thought through.

Ordinary thinking is part automatic, part based on a range of common assumptions. The type of thinking that allows you to realize your potential is always alert, questioning and exploring. Ordinary thinking easily becomes rigid and predictable. It jumps from a quick perception of an event or a person to land in the category of habitual response that is assumed to be appropriate. Ordinary thinking puts events into pigeonholes with a habitual kind of action ready to deal with it. It is thinking on cruise control.

'Deliberate thinking' is what develops potential. Every conscious, deliberate choice provides another opportunity to learn and extend the range of options and possibilities that make up our potential. The deliberate thinker sees exactly what's so, without the numbing and limiting effect of habitual judgments and assumptions. By seeing exactly what's there without letting anything else get in the way, deliberate thinkers can adjust to the particular elements in each situation. They waste no time trying to fit what is seen into some preset category. They move swiftly to understand what action is called for.

This clarity of vision does not arise without effort. We are surrounded by constant distractions. The pressure to appear decisive and in control pushes us towards the habitual assumptions that cloud our vision. We assume that we have no time to look at each situation carefully with unrestricted vision, when the truth is that we waste time on assumed actions that have to be corrected or undone. Assumptions organize our experience prematurely, forcing it to conform to what is expected and limiting our actions. Learning and innovation – both essential components for the realization of potential – are blocked.

Access, Develop and Use Your Potential

Learning has massive survival value. Man is a learning animal from birth. True learning, the kind that modifies behavior, only comes from a complete thinking/action cycle. When we intend an action and carry it out, the result can be linked to the thought and intention. We know what we wanted and can compare it to what happened, learning from the result. The process of learning and development is naturally one of opening up to a whole range of new possibilities and options. The best and most effective development is a kind of opening and softening of our ingrained habits.

The universe rewards the complete thinking/action cycle. Thinking what to do and doing what you think is the natural process. To develop your potential, you must drive your life by conscious choices and commitments for the future. It will not always produce the precise result you want. But it will always produce one thing without fail: more opportunity to learn and grow.

About the Author

Adrian Savage co-founded the forerunner of PNA, Inc. ten years ago to clarify the way people view employee and organization potential. Mr. Savage drew on a background in senior management positions in diverse organizations. He used his experience with complex organizational structures to develop fresh ways of understanding what allows companies to achieve optimum performance. This visionary believes that employees can align themselves more successfully with their commitments and the opportunities available to them by exploring their unused talents and fundamental values.

About PNA, Inc.

PNA provides The Potentia System (TPS), a qualitative diagnostic approach that produces a clear picture of potential in individuals, teams and organizations; and NetTPS, which uses the Internet to deliver the benefits of TPS through certified NetTPS Solutions Providers. PNA solutions are based on three key principles: exploring future possibilities, reawakening deliberate choice and working from strength. Companies use PNA solutions to focus on understanding and maximizing the potential in individuals, teams and organizations as an essential element of leadership and an effective and proven approach to creating positive change. PNA solutions have been in development and use for more than 15 years worldwide.

Visit www.nettps.com or call 650-368-6198 for more information and let NetTPS accelerate your success.