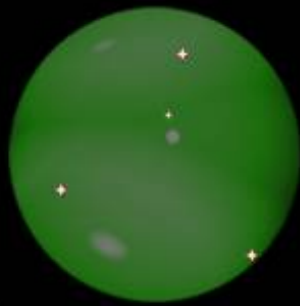


S.P.I.R.I.T.

Managed Thinking



Noel Coburn

A Clarity Business Enhancement Services Publication

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Managed Thinking

- By Noel Coburn BE, MBA, CPIM –

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First published 2005 by Clarity Business Enhancement Services
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What is it?

SPIRIT managed thinking is a style of thinking that can be applied to address any challenge positively, effectively and efficiently.

It could also be described as

- A proactive approach to applying quality thinking for effective result
- A way of thinking that will enable you to make more decisions better and better decisions faster
- Purpose-directed creative thinking that always strategically links short and medium term actions with a longer-term future vision.

When you have read this introductory document, you will be in the best position to decide which description you prefer.

Why SPIRIT Managed Thinking?

I have believed for quite some time that most of us use only a fraction of the power of our minds to dream our dreams, to set and achieve our goals, and to improve the quality of our lives and the lives of others.

SPIRIT managed thinking is the result of several years studying and questioning; practicing and testing; accepting and adapting a range of research, theories and principles, all relating to thinking more effectively and achieving better results. I am particularly indebted to Professors Nadler and Hibino who developed the Breakthrough Thinking approach and its underlying principles.

This document is an introduction to the SPIRIT managed thinking process. The objective of this document is to describe the basic approach and underlying concepts in the least complicated way possible. Rather than pepper the document with references as they arise, you will find a reading list of work by authors who all deserve credit for making SPIRIT managed thinking possible.

Perhaps the greatest complicating factor when it comes to a discussion of thinking styles is the subject of language. With this in mind, and for the purposes of keeping things simple in this document, please accept the following working definitions:

- A 'challenge' could be a problem to be solved, an opportunity to be addressed, a project to be designed, or a decision to be made.

- A 'challenge situation' is where a challenge is perceived to exist. It is a condition or a set of circumstances that a person or a group of people think should be changed.
- A 'solution' is an answer, resolution, change or transformation of a challenge situation.
- Your 'conscious mind' is your objective mind, your thinking mind, your intellectual mind. It has the ability to choose. It can accept or reject thoughts or images.
- Your 'subconscious mind' is your subjective mind, your emotional mind. It accepts any thoughts or images that are accepted or produced by the conscious mind. It cannot reject them. It is the seat of your emotions, and all of your life's memories and experiences. It is the seat of your imagination, intuition and creativity. It does everything in its power to manifest the thoughts and images passed on by the conscious mind – whether they are correct or incorrect, positive or negative.

This document describes SPIRIT managed thinking in the context of addressing a challenge situation and finding an effective solution, if not a breakthrough.

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S (Stillness) P I R I T

The first phase of addressing a challenge is 'Stillness.' If I want to manage a process, I must take control of it.

Controlling Beliefs

My mind is working non-stop. It is guided by my own personal set of controlling beliefs or mental models. These are automatic patterns of thinking and associated feelings and actions. I have come to accept and apply them without question. They are models that have become deeply rooted in my subconscious mind and can have a highly significant influence on my thinking and behaviour. They take the form of unquestioned assumptions, misconceptions, beliefs about myself, beliefs about my capabilities or limits, beliefs about others.

Controlling beliefs originate from a variety of sources including:

- What my parents and other adults told me as a child
- What my teachers taught me at school
- The newspapers I read
- The company I keep
- My past experiences

Controlling beliefs are deeply ingrained in my psyche. They can be positive or negative, right or wrong, true or false. It is difficult to counteract them even with the most positive of thinking.

In achieving a state of stillness, I am projecting images of peace and tranquillity to my subconscious mind. I am leaving no room for fear, doubt or anxiety – part of the staple diet of negative controlling beliefs. I am clearing my mind of all thoughts by creating a vacuum where even controlling beliefs cannot exist and I am reclaiming control of my mind.

There are many techniques that can be used to achieve this state of stillness including meditation and various relaxation techniques.

Positive Frame of Mind

When I am satisfied that I have achieved a vacuum and that my controlling beliefs have been expelled, it is now time to consciously fill the vacuum with thoughts and attitude that will give me the right frame of mind for peak performance in addressing my challenge. These can include:

- I am relaxed and alert
- I am open-minded and aware
- I am free of my controlling beliefs

- I believe in myself
- I am creative and I have what it takes to come up with a great solution
- I appreciate that two heads are better than one and that part of having what it takes to come up with a great solution involves working in harmony and mutual respect with other people
- I am confident in my abilities and I deserve to be successful
- I expect the best and I choose to be positive
- I accept this challenge situation

Going through this process puts me in a positive frame of mind. It fills my mind with positive conscious considerations and minimises the mental floor space available for controlling beliefs to have an impact on my thinking or on my direction.

Hurdles Cleared

The Stillness phase helps me to avoid, from the outset, controlling beliefs that can impose severe limits on my effectiveness in addressing a challenge. These can include:

- Information Gluttony – “Find out all there is to know about. . . .” – how much time, money, and resources are wasted on

gathering information that turns out to be irrelevant, unused, or out of date? In many cases, Information Gluttony also leads to a bad case of the debilitating 'analysis paralysis.'

- Me Too Syndrome – failing to appreciate the uniqueness of every challenge situation and locking onto the latest technology or assuming that what worked for someone else will also work for us.
- Political Distraction – considering the impact of the challenge from the perspectives of rivalry, defensiveness, risk aversion, organisational culture, or interdepartmental politics.
- Emotional Distraction – fear, uncertainty and doubt, negative subjectivity, lack of confidence or enthusiasm.
- Status Quo'ism – the challenge is perceived as a disruption to be dealt with quickly and the priority is to get things back to the way they were as soon as possible.

Summary of Stillness

The Stillness phase is all about getting into the right frame of mind and at the same time, avoiding the many knee-jerk reactions that can seriously limit your ability to address your challenge situation effectively.