

Thinking Like a Leader

Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think.

Romans 12:2

Some years ago a magazine pictured a man staring out of a window; the caption read: "Why does this company pay this man \$100,000 to look out a window?" The answer: Because the lifeblood of any organization lies in ideas and creative thinking. Thinking is powerful. Flying a plane, air conditioning, cell phones, vaccines, the World Wide Web—without thinking, these would have been impossible. Everything begins with a simple thought.

Ideas are a great moving force of history. We are never free to do what we cannot conceive. Having a godly mind enlarges our thinking capacity. A leader's thinking must be shaped by the following:

Vision: What is our dream? Carl Sandburg was right: "Nothing happens unless it is first a dream." Vision is a process of the mind—it's mental, not visual. Vision is seeing what everybody has seen but thinking what nobody has thought. What is needed to build a pyramid? One person who can think and ten thousand people who can grunt.

Values: What is important? Values have to do with how we treat people, how we do our work, what is vital to us. Values are the standards, the principles, and the code of conduct that characterize the organization. Values aren't dreamt; they already exist. Leaders shape and form the organization's values. Some universities decide to pour sidewalks after students have first worn a path. Where are the well-worn paths—the actions, the beliefs, the attitudes—that matter most to you? Those are your values.

Venture: What are we willing to risk? Organizations that make a difference are willing to think outside the box. For example, a company that was in the well-digging business began to think in terms of efficient and effective means of making holes, and they soon discovered that lasers dug holes better than augers. They achieved the same goal but accomplished it more efficiently.

Vehicle: What will get us there? How can we accomplish our desired outcome? A dream without a strategy is merely wishful thinking, but with a strategy it becomes powerful thinking.

Victory: What will the celebration be like? A leader thinks like a champion. The end result is to move forward, to accomplish goals, to be God's faithful servant, to celebrate being a part of God's kingdom.

Wake up and start thinking. Take off your nightcap and put on your thinking cap. Ask God to continually renew your mind.