

What Are You Thinking About?

By Kenneth Spence

You are what you think.

People don't advance beyond their thoughts. Ever think about that? Development in your life is encumbered by the indomitable walls of your thoughts. It is so simple, but so profound. If you think you can't, you can't. When you can see yourself achieving a goal, you'll usually get there. If you view the world through a filter of negativity, the glass will always seem half-empty. Positive thoughts yield a positive you.

It's amazing when you think about it. In most respects, thoughts are what differentiate us. Thoughts engender customs, cultures, religious beliefs, governments, wars, education, science, everything—our whole world, as we know it. Thought is the atom of our human intellect.

Building on this thinking, then, mindsets are merely a product of our thoughts. Our mindsets come from the questions we put forth. The answers fashion our thoughts and hence our perception of what is and what can be.

Therefore, the questions we ask are vitally important.

Marilee Adams, PhD, a professor at American University, categorizes queries as learner questions and judger questions. Learner questions are open-minded, curious and creative. They cultivate possibilities and advancement by expanding options, which typically give rise to solutions, understanding and discovery. Judger questions differ in that they tend to be critical, certain and somewhat closed-minded. They center on the problem at hand, thereby leading to a limiting of perspectives, defensive positions and negativity. Learner questions search for change and possibility.

Mindsets are not solely restricted to individuals. We can develop corporate mindsets, too. These are derived from individual mindsets and the way individuals come together to approach work and solve problems.

So what does this have to do with internal auditing? A lot. How you think and how co-workers think determines how effectively problems are solved. If you ask learner questions, you will get better solutions more quickly. Create a list of learner questions and keep them with you at all times. Better yet, learn them (Google "top 12 questions for success"). When a meeting leans toward judger questions, change the tone with learner questions.

Lastly, learn more about learner and judger questions and explain their power to your team members. Then insist that you and your team apply learner questions in daily audit and compliance work. Embracing change helps it happen while resistance slows it. Refuse to be limited by limitations!

There is a lot to learn in this issue of *New Perspectives* and we hope you enjoy each article thoroughly.

I wish you good reading and a wonderful and enjoyable summer! **NP**



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Editor: Kenneth E. Spence
(603) 843-5583
newkes2@comcast.net

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