



The Success Communication Series

Mental Flexibility

Building Your Thinking Power

Marina Milner-Bolotin, Club 59 (adopted from Dennis Slozel)
December 1, 2014

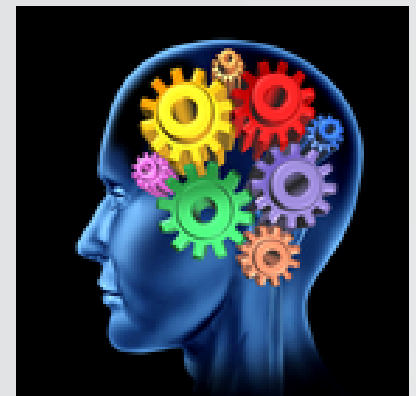
Mental Flexibility



***The ability and willingness
to adapt to a changing reality***

Mental Flexibility: Hallmark of an Effective Thinker

- ▶ Being able to **adapt**
- ▶ Appreciate various points of view
- ▶ Open to new possibilities
- ▶ Change your ways when necessary
- ▶ Be willing to learn and grow



Benefits of mental flexibility



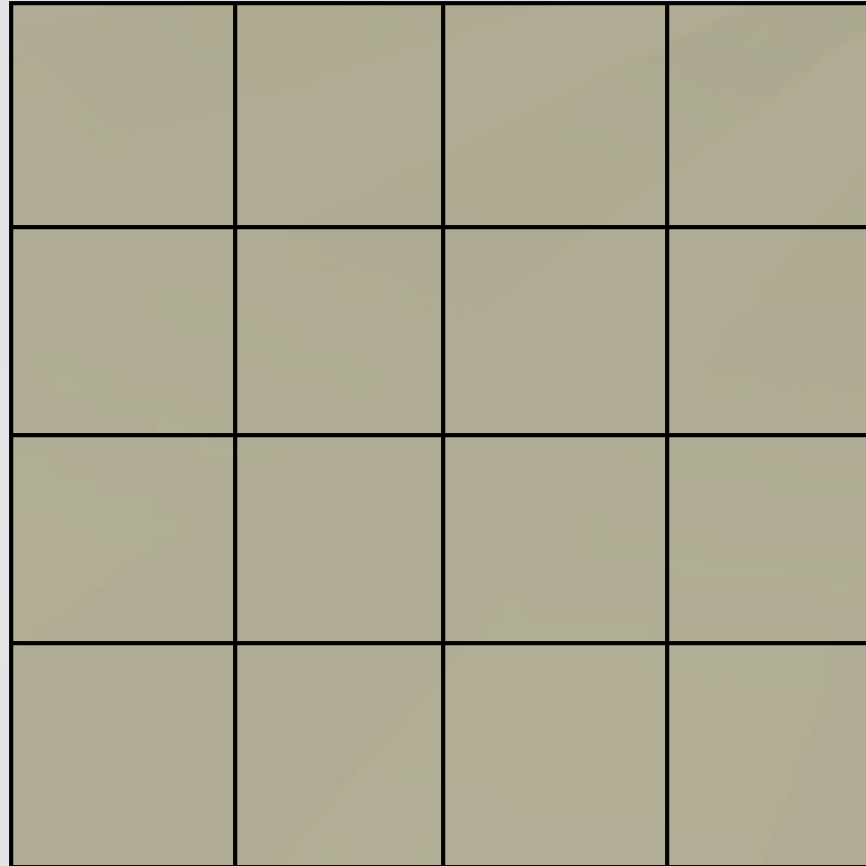
► You will become a better:

- Listener
- Observer
- Thinker
- Problem solver



"Thanks to yoga, I now gently stretch to conclusions instead of jumping to them"

How many squares do you see?



What did you learn?



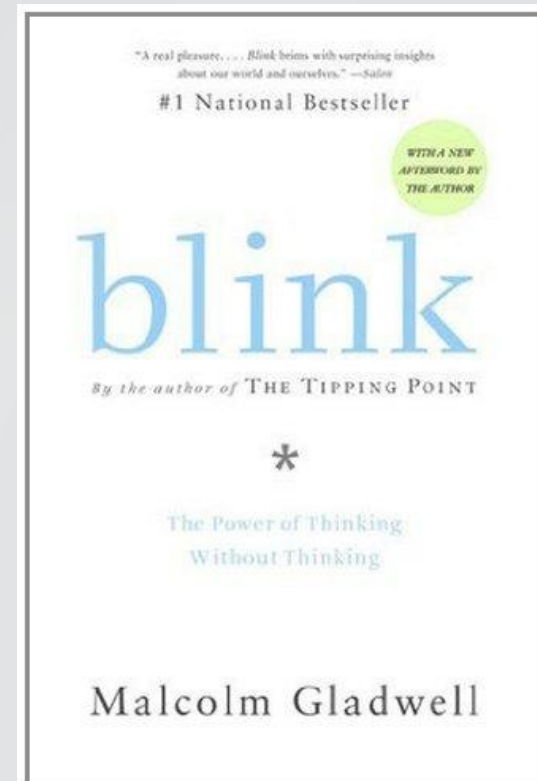
► Perceptions can be.....

Highly automatic

Frequently inaccurate

Biased towards past experiences

Influenced by emotional factors



Getting rid of rigid attitudes



- ▶ It's all about attitude.. Flexible attitude
- ▶ An attitude is a pattern of thinking that leads you to behave in a certain way





A momentary attitude or
expectation that governs
our behavior



Mind sets are a natural and routine part of your brain's activity

- ▶ Useful way to organize your thoughts
- ▶ Help you organize your thoughts so your behavior is consistent with the needs of the situation

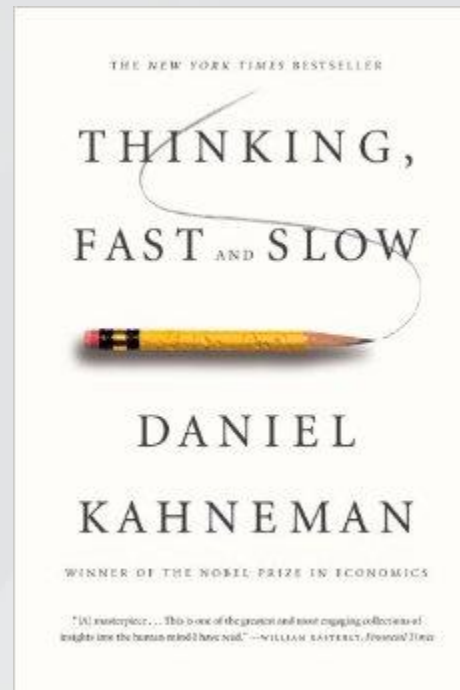
Downside of Mind Sets



- ▶ If you can not abandon a mind set that is no longer helpful
- ▶ You will
 - Deal with situations rigidly
 - Be inflexible
 - Often act inappropriately



Snap Reactions





Table



- ✓ We have learned millions of snap reactions through out our lives
- ✓ The key is letting go of negative snap reactions that lead to

Losing your internal sense of emotional well being



These negative snap reactions are called

Grabbers..

- ✓ Something someone says that elicits a negation reaction on your part
- ✓ Even a non-verbal gesture could trigger it



Appreciate others' points of view!

- ▶ A flexible thinker can look at various points of view and
 - Pause before taking a position
 - Explore facts and options
 - Is highly conscious of alternate points of view
- ▶ There may be more than 1 valid point of view



Being mentally flexible means

Being able to consider (not necessarily accept) and appreciate other points of view

Taming your value judgments



Examine the way you pass judgment

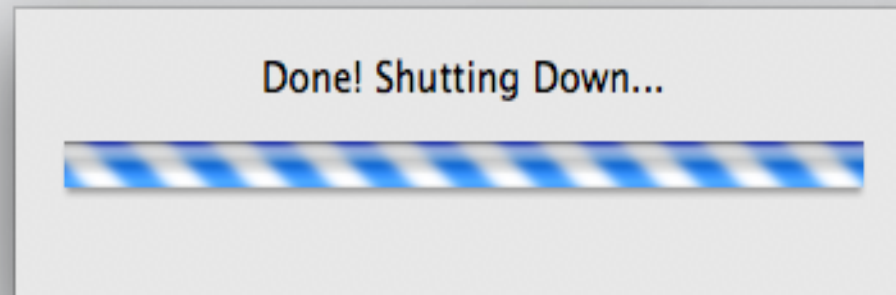


- ✓ Are you overly judgmental?
- ✓ Do you make snap judgments before listening to the facts and other points of view?
- ✓ Can You suspend judgment and **KEEP AN OPEN MIND**
 - ❖ Often you can wait and hear the options

When you pass a value judgment



YOU TEND TO SHUT DOWN



&

NOT LISTEN



P ositive aspect of the idea

I nteresting aspect

N egative aspect

P. I. N. Exercise - Example



*Let's have every citizen in the
country finger-printed and
have the government keep
them on file*

Homework: 5 minutes to apply P.I.N.

Semantic Flexibility



- ▶ AVOID expressing your views in a non-dogmatic way..
Try not to use.... All, Every, Always, Never, Everyone
- ▶ Using a semantic qualifier allows for flexibility

It seems to me....

It appears...

As far as I know..

To a certain extent...

According to my limited experience...

In my humble opinion...

Test yourself



- ▶ Can you comfortable say..
I don't know
I made a mistake
I changed my mind
- ▶ If you can, then you are thinking flexibly... using semantically flexible language

Increasing conceptual fluency



- ▶ See the BIG picture
- ▶ Link ideas together in large patterns
- ▶ Think BIG - on a grand scale
- ▶ Thinking strategically



Thinking on Your Feet



- ✓ **What's going on here?**
- ✓ **What is my objective?**
- ✓ **What are my options for action?**

Mind-Map



**WILLING TO
SUSPEND
JUDGMENT**

**OPEN
MINDED**

LISTENING

ATTITUDE

SKILL

**NO
“OPINIONITIS”**

**MENTAL
FLEXIBILITY**

**ABLE TO CHANGE
YOUR MIND**

**THINKING ON
YOUR FEET**

**RESPECTING
OTHERS’ VIEWS**

Let's summarize



When evaluating an idea



- ▶ Be aware of and/or avoid
 - Grabbers.. Reactions to negative snap judgments
 - Making value judgments
 - Using words like All, Every, Always, Never, Everyone

- ▶ Work on
 - Pausing and thinking about the PIN aspects of the idea
 - Being open minded and aware of the various view points
 - Using semantic flexibility
 - LISTENING**

In Conclusion



► Being mentally flexible means

Being able to adapt

Appreciate various points of view

Open to new possibilities

Change your ways when necessary

Be willing to learn and grow

The Benefits are Immense



► You will become a better:

Listener

Observer

Thinker

Problem solver

Now it is Your Turn



**December is the perfect
time to start building
your mental flexibility.
Act now!**