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*“Follow effective action with quiet reflection. From the quiet reflection comes even more effective action.” - Peter Drucker*

I've noticed a new and dangerous epidemic in the last decade. I call it “hurry sickness.” I know the disease well as I am frequently infected with it! Technology, instead of saving us time, conspires to keep us racing faster than ever. We have expanded both our “productivity” - and our expectations to the extent that most of us find little time to even think. A recent study conducted by the Harvard Business School revealed that the average executive spends approximately nine minutes a day reflecting. Considering the complexity leaders face today and the need for quality thought, that's a frightening statistic. Being in constant reaction mode contributes to health issues, shallow thought, poor decisions and damaged relationships. I firmly believe we were not created, physically or psychologically, to live or lead in hyper speed.

Author James Truslow Adams tells an interesting story:

*“A friend of mine, a distinguished explorer who spent a couple of years among the indigenous people of the upper Amazon, once attempted a forced march through the jungle. The party made great progress the first two days, but on the third morning, my friend found all the natives sitting on their haunches, looking very solemn and making no preparation to leave. They are waiting,” the chief said. “They cannot move further until their souls catch up with their bodies.”*

This story describes our plight in the 21st century quite well. We live in a state of “disease.” Our souls need to “catch up” with our bodies. Allowing time to practice reflection offers us this recalibration.

Reflection is more than simply “thinking” or “stopping.” Reflection defined is a “calm, lengthy, intent consideration.” It is a skill, a practice, a discipline and a gift. The paradox of reflection is that the more you need it the more difficult it is to practice! I believe that the explosion of the coaching profession is due to the value people experience in sitting down with someone who forces reflection – as well as teaching you how to do it through practice.

You are probably asking, “How can I possibly make time for this when my schedule is already overwhelming”? Start small – but start. Five minutes of intentional, calm consideration can represent a good beginning. It's a lot like exercise and good eating, once you develop the habit, you will crave the experience; you will feel as though you are missing out when you don't do it. Find a quiet place you can regularly retreat to. It can be a chair, a coffee shop or even your car. Turn off the radio or put your headphones on to tune out the world, if needed. Consider recent events in your life. Observe your reactions. Assess your outcomes. What patterns do you notice? What

emotions emerge? What thoughts or concerns continue to repeat? Ask yourself what outcomes you want for the future and what actions might be more effective to get you there. Guide the conversation in your head. Make notes if needed, or better yet, commit to regular journaling. Reflection will become your oasis in a crowded, noisy and activity-addicted world

## Ideas for Insight and Action

**# 1** - Create a meaningful ritual, including a comfortable space, time and environment. Make it a place where you look forward to retreat from action and focus on reflection.

**# 2** - Focus on one or two things when reflecting; avoid considering too many things at once. Sustained thought on a singular area yields better results and helps to generate more creativity.

**# 3** - Turn a problem into a question. Instead of “I can’t believe this happened” ask instead “what are the many reasons that this may have occurred”?

**# 4** - Learn to use the 4 phases of the “Reflection Wheel” in your daily life. Practice reviewing your conversation, an event or even a given day using this step-by-step process.



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