

## **CREATING EXTRAORDINARY ORGANIZATIONS**

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This letter is written for those who want to move beyond the ordinary to the Extraordinary in creating business organizations.

Please feel free to pass this letter on to anyone you think would like to join this journey to Extraordinary.

Sent only to recipients who have personally opted to receive it. To change your sign-up information, please follow the instructions at the end of this letter.

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### **THIS ISSUE:**

#### **THE MOST IMPORTANT THING FOR YOU TO IMPROVE TO ACHIEVE DESIRED RESULTS**

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Welcome to this first issue of Creating Extraordinary Organizations!

As I was thinking about this first time out, I wondered what would be the best subject to write about. I asked myself what I would answer if you asked me, "What is the single most important thing for me to improve to get the results I want in my organization?" My answer would be, "What and how you think."

To which I expect you might very well reply, "Why thinking?" For two primary reasons: It directly affects results, and it directly affects our lives. The reasoning behind the first is simple. Results are produced by actions. You have to do the right thing in the right way at the right time with the right kind of energy to actually get the result you want.

And what precedes action? A thought or thoughts. The quality of the thought determines the quality of the action and hence the quality of the result. The way we think--that is our process of thinking--determines the quality of our thoughts. If our process of thinking is weak or incomplete, we create poor quality thoughts leading to low quality actions leading to - - lousy results. It's just as simple as that.

How thinking affects our lives is a subject way beyond this letter. However, I can give you an inkling of it by listing some of those who have produced many words on the subject and just a hint of their ideas:

Mike Dooley: Audio tapes: Infinite Possibilities: The Art of Living Your Dreams; Web site: [www.tut.com](http://www.tut.com) (Totally Unique Thoughts) -- Thoughts become things so think the good ones.

Stacey Hall and Jan Brogniez: "Attracting Perfect Customers" -- The law of attraction works through our thoughts to create our experience.

Byron Katie: "Loving What Is" -- It is not our thoughts that plague us but our attachment to them.

Barry Neil Kaufman: "To Love Is To Be Happy With"; "Happiness is a Choice" -- It is our beliefs, many unrecognized, that drive us.

Thomas Kuhn: "The Structure of Scientific Revolutions" -- Our paradigms--the set of beliefs through which we see the world-- define what we see and what we believe we can do.

Douglas McGregor: "The Human Side of Enterprise" -- Our unquestioned and unrecognized beliefs about people, Theory X and Theory Y, determine how we manage; thus, how people behave; and therefore, the results the enterprise achieves.

Peter Senge: "The Fifth Discipline" -- Systems thinking and shared mental models lead to positive results.

If I have made my case that thinking is of prime importance, you may be saying, "Great, but how on earth do I improve it?" I'm glad you asked. Although this too is a subject beyond the scope of one letter, I can at least point out four areas for you to consider.

The first is pretty obvious. Start putting more and better time into thinking before acting. Just paying more attention to what you are thinking will help. Paying attention to how you are thinking will help even more. The other three areas can help you improve the use of your thinking time.

First, observe and upgrade your language. Our mind works in words. You are processing this letter in words. Words are, of course, symbols for concepts, ideas, and meaning. If we do not pay attention to our words, our thinking will be imprecise at best. The sharper the distinctions we can make in our words the sharper will be our thinking.

I often refer to the dictionary to clarify slight differences in meaning. These help me make clearer distinctions in my thoughts and lead to better actions and results. In my next e-letter I am going to talk about how people use or misuse the words 'goals' and 'objectives' and in so doing lose the benefit that can come from setting clear ones.

The next area concerns learning and using various processes to enhance thinking. One of the best of these is using what I call frameworks. Frameworks are like the framing of a house. To have a complete and stable house you need a complete and solid frame.

Thinking frameworks do the same thing--they include the essential pieces of a complete thought and link them together. I will be using another letter to talk about one I use all the time called an

Activity Design. It links together the four thoughts--purpose, product, process, and capability--that must be considered to think thoroughly about any activity that we want to carry out.

The authors mentioned earlier offer various processes for improving our thinking. Mike Dooley talks about using visualization. Barry uses the Option Process to uncover and change beliefs. Byron Katie has four questions that help you think more clearly to free yourself from attachment to damaging thoughts. McGregor provided his theory X and Theory Y to open new possibilities. Stacey and Jan offer a process called Strategic Attraction Planning. Peter Senge provides a process of systems analysis to aid in understanding and solving problems.

The last area relating to improving your thinking is that of tools. There are a number of computer programs that help you think better. One of my favorites is called "Inspiration". It allows me to free-think and build a mind map. It makes it easy to add thoughts and reorganize them. "Microsoft Project" provides an orderly way to think through and link all the tasks of a whole project. "IThink" is a program that enables you to model a complex system to see how all its pieces interact. All of these are ways to improve your process of thinking to generate higher quality thoughts.

Just keep in mind this order: results are preceded by action; action is preceded by thought; thought is generated by the process of thinking. And remember that in many ways our thoughts make or break our lives. Makes sense then to say that the most important thing anyone can do to improve their results is to work on improving their process of thinking.

Future letters will definitely be revisiting various aspects of thinking. I tell people that the central part of my consulting work is helping people improve their thinking and their processes of thinking. That is where you have to start if you are going to create an Extraordinary Organization.

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## COMMENTS AND INFORMATION

**Building an Interactive E-letter** — One of my hopes for this E-letter is that it becomes more and more interactive. To be truly useful it needs to evolve according to the needs and desires of its community of readers. For instance, I would like to see one part of it devoted to answering reader questions. In order to further this evolution, please send me any comments, questions, or suggestions you have at:

<mailto:eletter@extraordinaryorganizations.com>

**Enlarging the EO Community** — I believe also that the larger the community of readers we have the more ideas we will have to exchange and build on. You can help add readers by passing this letter on to others you think would find it valuable. In order that members of this community can communicate with each other I plan to have a Yahoo Group devoted to these ideas.

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Thank you for spending time with me on this inaugural issue.

Until next time,

Be Extraordinary!

Don Yates  
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