

The Five Disciplines of Thinking:

1. **Find the Unasked Question**- Create a question that will result in clarity and generate better choices.
2. **Separate the Problem from the Symptom** – Identify the real obstacle that is blocking progress.
3. **Check Assumptions** – Differentiate the facts from the story I am spinning.
4. **Consider 2nd-Order Consequences** – Clarify the risks and the possibility/cost of being wrong.
5. **Create the Machine** – Create the executable plan and identify the resources (people and money) required to solve the real (core) problem and make forward progress.

Great Questions Have 3 Characteristics:

"Most serious mistakes are not being made as a result of wrong answers. The truly dangerous thing is asking the wrong question." Peter Drucker

1. It provides insight on what the actual problem is that needs to be addressed.
2. It simplifies the problem and makes it solvable.
3. It expands the number of possibilities available to solve the problem or improve the situation.

Chapter 3

- How might I...so that I can...
- What don't I see?
- What is the upside?
- What is the downside?
- Can I live with the downside?
- What are the current obstacles preventing higher revenue in your business?
 - What are the possible reasons I am noticing these symptoms?
 - What isn't happening that, if it did happen, would cause the perceived gap (symptoms) to either narrow or disappear?
 - What is happening that, if it stopped happening, would cause the perceived gap (symptoms) to narrow or disappear?

Chapter 4

Create 3 to 5 questions to focus on/ Clarity Break focusing on a common thread or concern

- If I was starting again today, what market would I target?
- If I wanted to double my sales, what market would I target?
- Why aren't my sales double what they are right now in the market I am currently targeting?
- How would I run my business if 100% of my future customers were by referral only?
- What else could it be?
- What could I do that would make this problem worse?
- How would my competition solve this problem?
- If I got fired and a new CEO took over, what decision would she make?

Chapter 5

- Where are we compromising by looking for the door marked "WOW"?
- What shortcuts are we attempting to take that are not really shortcuts but rather mirages of greed, laziness, or impatience?
- What skills do I need to master to attain the success I want?

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- Realistically, how much additional time and practice are required for me to attain my outcomes?
- Who can I hire as a coach or mentor to help guide me and hold me accountable?
- Where do I need to practice to improve my game and thus deserve the success I want?
- Where do we need to pick up the level of intensity and how we are playing this game?

Chapter 6

- If my business could talk, what would it say?
- Which hat has been my comfort zone and which hats are not getting worn often enough? For that matter which hats do I not even own, and how can I acquire them?
- What, specifically, have I been ignoring about my business, and what specifically needs to be corrected?
- What skills or tools do I need to learn current the see or do I need to hire (to help me overcome the obvious obstacles that are restricting my growth, sales, and profitability)?
- What areas of my business could be delegated (or outsourced) to someone else (who is competent and has execution intelligence) to free me up to do the things that would add most value?
- Artist hat; what needs to be created?
- In operator hat; what needs to be done that that got to day?
- Owner hat; what needs to be structured? Measured? Planned? Delegated?
- Board hat; what could go wrong? How can I mitigate the probability of that risk occurring and, if it does occur, reduce the cost?

Chapter 7

- What is the culture we have now? (Make a list of how people act and treat each other that... both good and bad).
- What is the culture we want to create? (Make a list.)
- If this were the worst, most toxic place on the planet to work, what would the culture look like? (Make a list so you can start thinking about the opposite's).
- What would the culture look like if we were to become the "employer of choice"?
- What are the cultural deficiencies in our business that are preventing us from being high performance versus high maintenance?
- What are the beliefs employees must have that have led to the culture we now have?
- What are the new beliefs employees must have to construct our new vision of how we treat each other and work together?
- What are the special rituals we can create which will help reinforce and memorialize our new culture?
- What are the difficult conversations I need to have to reset our culture and create a high-performance team?
- What are the simple rules of the game we must adopt to create a culture in which our people are truly engaged, committed to excellence, and do their best work?

Chapter 8

- How do I need to rework our plans and budgets to make them granular and measurable?
- What is the specific recipe I need to create to make certain the outcome we have started is achieved?
- What are the specific activities and milestones we must hit and order to stay on track with our stated deliverables?
- Who, specifically, is accountable and responsible for achieving each outcome?
- What are the dashboards I need to create to make sure we are measuring the critical drivers and making corrections based on our performance?

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Chapter 9

- In light of the 7 fundamental jobs of Ace O, where have I dropped the ball and what do I need to do differently to cause us to get better? (Nothing changes if nothing changes).
- As I am thinking about the next 100 days and what I will do differently, what are the things I must do less of to make Room for the things I need to do more of?
- If my team represents my leverage, what do I need to do or say to ensure their success?
- Starting and perfection are rarely simultaneous. What are the 3 things I could begin doing that would get me 80% of the way there?
- What is the discipline I need to adopt to create the outcomes I want?
- What is my specific measurable plan to improve our results?
- Where have I abdicated my responsibilities as a CEO and what do I need to do about it?
- Where have I optimized for easy instead of outcomes?

Chapter 10

- As I look back at my most significant losses, stupidest decisions, and biggest mistakes, what are the 50 most important lessons I have learned?
- Where am I making some of these same mistakes again?
- Based on prior lessons learned, where do I need to change (immediately) to avoid the dreaded dumb tax?
- What are the rules and disciplines I will put in place to minimize the likelihood of repeating my mistakes?

Chapter 11

- Trying to figure out how to immediately solve a problem in one fell swoop is stupid. I might not have the final "Holy Grail" solution to all my problems, what are five things I can do immediately to improve my situation?
- Where am I consistently executing the right thing?
- Where am I not practicing with the level of intensity, I know I am capable of?
- Where are we practicing but not correcting or getting the coaching that would give us insights about what we can do better?
- Where am I consistently executing the wrong things?
- Where have I allowed the need for instant gratification to become a substitute for picking up the business end of the shovel and consistently breaking a sweat?
- What are 3 outcomes we previously set but have abandoned because of unrealistic expectations or inconsistent execution? Should any of these outcomes be resurrected and reprioritized with the accompanying realistic plans, resources, and time frames?