



Responsibility

Responsibility is defined as being able to make moral or rational decisions about one's own behavior and therefore be answerable to that behavior. Do we ever stop to think about the decisions that we make everyday? Thousands of them are made out of instinct and without question. As forward thinkers, we are conscious of the implications that our behaviors have on the larger system and choose wisely those actions that will have the most positive impact.

Not only are Forward Thinkers conscious of their own behaviors and actions but they are also aware of the behaviors and actions of others and the organization they represent. These three areas are a critical focus for Forward Thinkers because they realize that they alone cannot create success but that it is a collaborative process.

Stopping and assessing our actions

Forward Thinkers are always evaluating the actions that they make. It helps them to realize not just their true potential but also that of the organization they represent. Stopping and thinking about our decisions is an art. If we look at our days and the speed at which we operate, it can truly be mind boggling. When Forward Thinkers stop they are slowing down enough to listen to their intuition. This is not always as easy as it sounds. Consider all the decisions that you make in one day. Now consider stopping each time you make a decision to evaluate your process. This alone can take up a lot of time. By slowing down we begin to realize the speed of our processing. In other words, slowing down actually helps us speed up. Consider the following. When do you make the best decisions? Is it when you have multiple deadlines or is it when you can think clearly and take in what is around you? Forward Thinkers would agree that it is the latter that produces the best results.

When Forward Thinkers are able to think slowly and take in their surroundings, they are also able to help those that work with them. Put another way, it is often easier to see what someone else needs because you are looking in from the outside. Forward Thinkers offer advice when needed and are cautious of how they offer their advice because they are aware of the others involved in the process. Quite often they will start out by asking a question like, "How can I

help you? or What options have you already considered?" Probing questions of this nature are seen as supportive and non judgmental. That does not mean that there is no room for a critique. Everyone knows that they can improve on a process or action. Forward Thinkers welcome and offer criticism that will empower them and other to realize their true potential.

Tracking Behavior

The other aspect of responsibility that Forward Thinkers work to develop is their behavior. Again, for many of us we are moving so quickly that in many situations we don't even know how we are behaving. Have you ever caught yourself in the middle of a situation and realize that a different behavior would have probably been effective. What is driving this knee jerk reaction? Most likely it is a factor of time. Yes, it often comes back to the amount of work we need to get done and how well we prioritize and execute on our plans.

Quite often, it seems easier if we force a certain behavior upon an individual or group as apposed to take a little more time to come to a solution together. The primary reason for this behavior is simple, we are not taught the true value of collaboration. If you think about it, from the time most of us entered school or the workforce, we dreaded working in teams. Why is this? The simple answer is that we never took the time to develop the behaviors to work collaboratively. Sure this involves more time right now, it should because most of us need the practice.

Forward Thinkers realize that by understanding what drives their behaviors they are better positioned to work with others and come up with solutions that work for everyone.

Consider adopting an approach to assessing your actions and behaviors. This small change in your daily routine may slow you down enough to create a tremendous impact.

Eric Lutzo earned his Masters of Business Administration from Case Western Reserve University's Weatherhead School of Management. Eric is the founder of Forward Thought, a coaching and leadership development practice. (www.forwardthought.net)

Email: Eric@ForwardThought.net