

THE KEY

A 12-month teleseminar series from the popular book
Listen! You're Trying To Tell YOU Something
The Board Meeting in Your Head

Edmundson, Hallmark, Connor

Module 3

BRAINWORKS

THE OVERVIEW OF YOUR THOUGHT PROCESSES

THE SEVERAL PARTS OF YOU

In recent years, clinical observation has indicated and research has concluded that there is more to the average human being than meets the eye. Much of that research and observation has made it evident that, indeed, each of us has several parts, or facets, to our thought processes (or what some call our personality). Part of what makes each of us a uniquely different individual is the level of activity we exhibit in each of these various parts, and the ratio of activity of one part to another.

Although it has been established that these parts exist in everyone; so obvious are they that they have been categorized, catalogued, analyzed, scrutinized and even named, yet, in each individual, they are blended together at a unique ratio -- much as one would mix paint colors.

As we learned in grade school art class, a person can create an infinite number of hues by mixing varying portions of just a few colors of paint. For instance, if you combine equal portions of, say, red and yellow paint you create a certain orange hue. But, then, if you mix, say, more yellow and less red, the resulting blend will be more golden than the first mix – two different colors from the same two ingredients. Then, if you add a touch of blue to that golden paint, it will take on a greenish tinge. And on you can go, creating a never-ending spectrum of colors from a few basic ingredients.

As we move through life, factors such as the experiences we've had, the situations we've been in, and the data we've absorbed combine to create the ratio of one of the parts of us to each of our other parts like adding colors to a paint mixture. And, as with mixing paint, we each become a one-of-a-kind hue, unique in the world, as one or more of the aspects of our thought processes become stronger and more dominant in our special mix and other parts become less noticeable or effective as a result.

In large part, as we apply our specific mixture of these aspects of our thought processes in our daily life, the blend that makes up our unique mix results in what might be called our demeanor and temperament, -- our "style" -- the way we conduct our lives and react to the world in general. This mix and the way we use it dictate how we react to and deal with day-to-day occurrences in our lives as well. Our unique blend shapes our values and our views, is the basis of what and how we think, and influences (or "colors") how we see things.

In an attempt to identify the various aspects of the thought processes of a person (sometimes called the personality) titles such as id, ego, superego, and inner child, to name just a few, have been assigned to them in the past, -- and are still being used today. Many times these names seem to be effectively employed to pinpoint and identify a certain aspect of "personality" for someone being "coached" or "helped" in some way, whether it be by a professional or a layman.

However, it seems that the names that have been devised in more recent times to identify these parts of us have moved away from the old, stuffy, and sometimes disconcerting clinical-sounding titles used in other similar circles, toward more familiar, comfortable-sounding, more understandable names. Therefore, for purposes of our work, we have chosen to use some of those familiar names that are now being employed: “Natural Child”, “Adult”, “Parent”, and “Adapted Child”. For ease of use, many places we will identify them with their initials: NC, A, P and AC.

These simplified, everyday names identify each part of a person quicker and easier than clinical titles and seem to simplify the application of them for your own personal use.

Dan Croft, Project Manager, Arco Design

“I have also learned better communication techniques to address my wife’s frustrations with being a housewife and mother of energetic children. Most importantly...to listen!”

Rob Steigerwald, P.E., Arco Build/Design¹

Using these names to identify various parts of your thought processes constitutes what we think is the best tool yet devised to isolate your thoughts and to determine where those thoughts originate. You can use the information that those thoughts provide to guide and assist you; then go forward in life with as little difficulty as possible. And you will find that using your KEY will greatly lessen or, in some cases, eliminate much of the

¹ Testimonial courtesy of Steve Connor

anxiety, anger, frustration, and other negative emotions and thoughts that interfere with your enjoyment of life as a whole.

THE BOARDMEETING IN YOUR HEAD

Routinely corporations, foundations, and other groups of people utilize the services of a Board of Directors when they need to come to joint conclusions or make decisions that are most effective and equitable for everyone involved with the group. Typically, the individuals that make up such a Board are carefully selected for both their expertise and success in various fields of endeavor as well as for their diversification, one member from another.

By drawing from such a collection of talent, a corporation or other group attempts to avoid certain pitfalls that might otherwise negatively affect forward momentum. They look to the experience and abilities of the members of their Board for guidance in important matters.

Of course, it is understandable that a group would strive to acquire the most experienced persons for their Board of Directors. But why does a group also seek to gather persons with diversified backgrounds and interests for these positions? One of the most important assets a Board of Directors can offer a company is its collection of the different points of view each Board Member brings to the table. By listening to and evaluating the opinions, data, and information that originate through these different points of view, the Chairman can avoid the possibility of being misled by company

“yes men” and collect factual and pertinent data to consider in decision-making.

For instance, let’s say a large corporation has the opportunity to expand and open a new part of its operation in another city. The Chairman of the corporation might call a Board Meeting to discuss the pros and cons of that possible move. In doing so, he is searching for diverse ideas, data, and opinions from various points of view. During that Board Meeting, that Chairman should be able to use his Board Members as advisors, from which to gain insights that he might not have considered up to that point.

A member whose knowledge is in real estate might ask about the housing market for transferred employees, or about the tax structure in the area, or the school system – things a real estate expert might have in mind. A Board Member whose background is in sales and marketing might want to see the results of market analysis for the proposed area. Still another member might voice concerns about freight transportation between the existing company and the proposed facility in the new location.

After considering input from all the various and diversified Board Members, the Chairman can start to round up the loose ends and assign people to pursue data and gather information needed to make an informed decision when the time comes. The most important things the Chairman does during that board meeting is to make sure he hears the input from all members of the Board, considers it all pertinent initially, then discards what

does not apply and utilizes the remainder in making clear decisions or forming a meaningful plan of action.

However, if the input from one member begins to be heard above all others, the full value of the entire Board can be greatly diminished.

If any one member of his Board of Directors becomes a “dictator”, maybe by force of personality, or his vast experience, or because of his standing with the Chairman, or simply as a result of the timidity of others, where his influence outweighs that of other members, much of the collective value of such a meeting could be lost.

The term, “Board of Directors” seems to be derived from the idea that the objective of each member of the Board is to “direct”, or point, the company in what each considers the appropriate direction and keep the company aligned with what each thinks is its actual intentions – as each individual member sees and understands it.

A Board of Directors can become either a Board of Dictators or a Board of Advisors, according to how the Chairman hears, considers, and utilizes the input of each of the members.

As it is in a corporate Board Meeting, so it is in your head. The various aspects of your thought processes are giving you valuable input from

various points of view that you can use to understand situations and run your life at all times. And, as with the Chairman of any Board, although you might not choose to act on each bit of advice your Advisors offer you, simply by listening to each diverse opinion and weighing all input carefully you can gather information that will prove extremely valuable when you make a decision or choose a path in business, in personal affairs, or life in general.

The several aspects of your thought processes (your Board Members) converse with you – in fact they create a constant mental conversation in your head (head talk), each trying to present its point of view, -- a point of view that can be remarkably valuable to you.

The KEY we offer you is the ability to employ the various aspects of your thought processes to form your own personal “Board of Advisors”.

Each of your Board Members is an expert in some aspect of the way you think, react, plan, and make decisions in your day-to-day activities, as well as in the long-term objectives of your life.

Most systems and types of therapy, analysis, and guidance that are typically employed in some fashion to help you get along in this world, ask you to repress, ignore, disregard, and even fight some of the voices of your own thought processes – your own Board Members. But, actually, by listening to the input of each you can more accurately identify your wants and needs, your likes and dislikes, your fears and joys. This knowledge can give you clearer insight and remove the confusion that might surround decision-making, as well as help you avoid much of the anxiety, frustration, and anger that might otherwise be associated with these things.

“I have learned to handle myself better in situations in my professional and personal lives. I am more aware of my actions & comments in front of others. My thought process has changed – I think about situations differently now.”
Janice Wadsack, Office Manager.
Renaissance Finance²

What makes a Board of Directors valuable is the collection of talent and points of view each member brings to the Board Meeting. But, if the most forceful Board Member is allowed to continually have the floor so that his input outweighs all other opinions, that Board Member becomes, in effect, a Dictator, not an Advisor. When each member has an opportunity to present his point of view – only then is the complete picture of factual information, hopes, concerns, dreams, ideas, plans, cautions, and excitement laid on the table for your consideration.

² Testimonial courtesy of Steve Connor

This knowledge of yourself can also provide you with the insight to analyze and understand what you really want to do and why you feel compelled to do it. Then, by sorting this out quietly, in the privacy of your own thoughts, you can decide an appropriate course of action in a given situation before you actually do something that others can see or hear.

When all members of a Board of Directors feel comfortable with adding their input, they begin to function as a powerful and effective Board of Advisors. And, as Advisors, they can guide a company, a group, a family, or an individual to go forward with all possible momentum with full utilization of what assets they possess at the time. Likewise, if the members of the Board of Directors in your head (the several parts of your thought processes) feel comfortable with adding their input, the consideration of all of their contributions can lead you to a clear understanding of your actions, which can serve as your best guide in all functions of your life.

“I feel I have learned things that will help me in my personal and business relationships through the remainder of my life.”

Skelly Fleming, Construction Superintendent

“I am able to stop myself from making rash decisions or engaging in counter productive behavior.”

*Dalila Sotelo, Senior Vice President,
McCormack Baron Salazar³*

³ Testimonial courtesy of Steve Connor

TAKING CHARGE

Any time you “think things through”, “mull things over”, or have mental arguments with yourself, you are, in fact, running a Board Meeting in your head. Any one of your Board Members may “have the floor” (be talking *to* you and *through* you) at any time. The unique method you can develop through this series will make it possible for you to begin to act as “Chairman” of that Board in your head. This will result in your ability to use the value from each of those Board Members to full advantage. As one of our colleagues says, when she first began to actually “run” Board Meetings in her head, by the time she was aware the meeting was underway, it was already in mid-riot. This goes to illustrate how, in every minute of each day, throughout our lives, our four Advisors are attempting to guide us by stating their positions, reminding us of the rules we have adopted for our life, warning us of dangers, and feeding us data. But without your ability to monitor their activity, your Board Members can run amuck, each one grabbing the floor whenever it is possible, shouting, arguing, and confusing you at every turn.

Until you learn to hear and consider the input of each part of your thought processes (each of your Board Members), the riot will continue in your head. We want to teach you to identify each of these parts so you can act as Chairman of your own Board of Advisors in your head.

Each Advisor in your head looks, acts, and sounds differently from the others. They have different roles to play in your life and specific jobs to do.

Their objective is to get you through life in the fashion each has devised for you and, therefore, thinks is important to you.

You may find that they are a real lively bunch, or, as we have found in our cases, a “motley crew”, and that they may have some tricks up their sleeves that you might not have consciously discovered yet. A closer look at these characters will reveal the individuality of each and the diversity of the group, as well as the particular role each plays in your life.

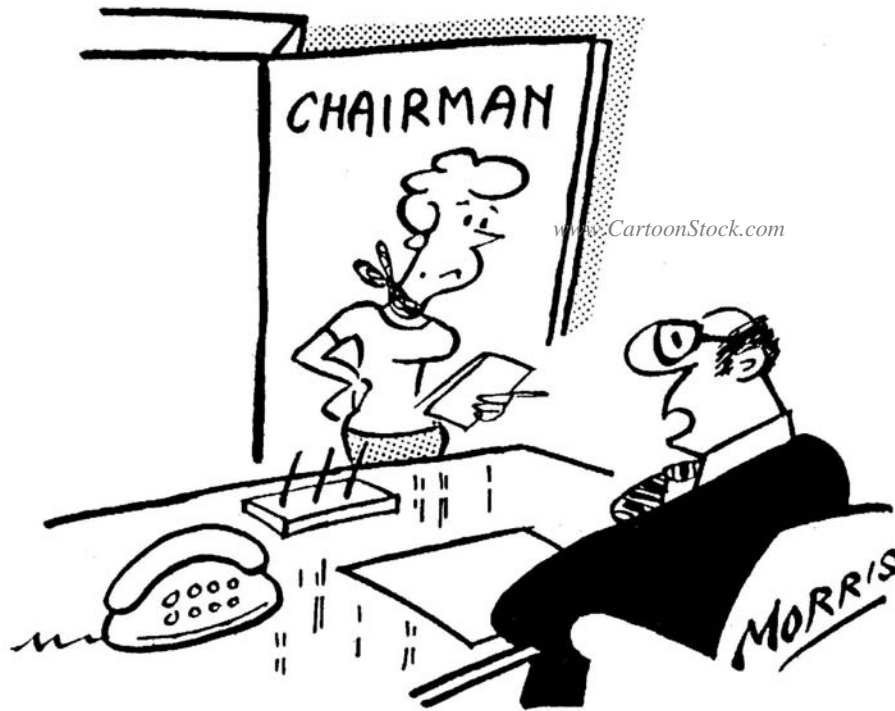
You’ll meet these other parts of you soon in weeks to come. They are:

Your Natural Child

Your Adult

Your Parent

Your Adapted Child



“Two weeks without a boardroom coup - I wonder what they’re up to?”

“My understanding of [this tool] has helped me be more comfortable in my communication style, less anxious in certain situations, and less prone to act (or react) in ways that do not serve me well.”

*Daniel Donnelley, President & CEO,
Alltype Fire Protection Company⁴*

⁴ Testimonials courtesy of Steve Connor

DISCUSSION

Below are three examples and/or questions that you might want to discuss with your coach to make this session more meaningful in your life.

1. Can you think of some other titles and phrases that define what we call that special mixture of the aspects of our thought processes? What are some pet words and phrases that you might rather call it?
2. Why do we refer to the workings of your thought processes as the Board Meeting in your head?
3. Describe the difference in a Board of Directors, a Board of Advisors, and a Board of Dictators. How does one become another in your thinking processes?