

Optimal Thinking:

I know that you must be familiar with the saying...

"You are what you think"

Unless you have been hiding out in an underground bomb shelter the last few years, you would no doubt also be familiar with the book '**The Secret**'.

Well, "**The Secret**" turns out to be no more than a reinforcement of this exact philosophy... "**you are what you think**".

So surely, if this is the case, then **what** we think, and surely "**how**" we think, is pretty much what **success is ultimately based upon?**

There is no limitation too this philosophy either. It applies to every area of your life so, when get to the bottom of this rather simple philosophy, *there isn't an area of your life that doesn't improve with better and more frequent thinking.*

This is why you want to think more now, than ever before!

Of the thinking tools you need to use on a regular basis, this is the single most important, powerful, and useful of them all.

In fact, if I could convince you to start a single habit right now, it would be to cultivate this one.

I'm talking about keeping a daily journal.

Not just a Trading Journal. Sure, I love going on about Trading Journals, and I know they are an essential element to overall trading success, but you also need to keep a personal daily journal.

Why, you ask? What has this to do with Trading?

Well, as I keep pointing out in My Traders Mindset course – there is nothing about who you are; no aspect of your character, including such things as habits and belief systems that stand alone.

Your **trading decisions** are all influenced by **who you are!**

So get focused on '**all of you**' not just your trading.

You see, **writing in a journal every day will keep you thinking day-in and day-out for the rest of your life.** And you'll reap enormous dividends from this one simple habit for the rest of your life.

I recommend that you use your journal for:

Overall Thinking - I do more thinking while writing in my journal than at any other time. And because I do it daily, a day doesn't go by without some serious brainpower being used. Besides, how many thoughts get lost during a long day at the office? Take a few minutes to jot them down daily so you don't lose the good ones.

Essential Thinking - If I'm struggling with a problem either personally or in my business, I go to my journal and start writing. First, I define the problem as clearly as I can. Next, I determine its cause. After that, I brainstorm solutions. Then I pick the best solution. And last but not least, I create an action plan for solving it once and for all. Action is everything – no benefit will come from simply analysing your problems – you must establish a 'solution' and take action and implement your findings to truly benefit.

Reflective Thinking - I often naturally slip into writing about important areas of my life that are critical to reflect on. The progress I'm making towards my goals... the overall level of happiness I'm experiencing...the quality of the important relationships in my life... my overall level of health etc. If I did not write in my journal, I'm not sure I would engage in this kind of reflective thinking with the frequency it deserves (and the weight would pile on before I knew it ;-)

Creative Thinking – You have to learn to think outside the box. As Albert Einstein said (sort of) – “you can't expect a different outcome, if you keep doing the same thing”. I often find that when analysing traders problems that they are just 'stuck' and simply did not know where to start – another option is always available to you if you look for it, but you have to expand your thinking and let go of any 'attachment' to ideas that may be holding you back. The benefit of doing this has led me to many breakthroughs. Having an ongoing record of all of these is priceless as I can go back and quickly address reoccurring problems should they raise their ugly heads in the future.

Spotting Behavioural Patterns - Being human, we all have both positive and negative behaviour patterns we default to in our daily lives. By scanning the pages of my previous entries, I often spot my own. If I recognize a negative pattern, I immediately record it, and figure out ways to stop it. If it's a positive one, I do my best to leverage it more frequently in my daily behaviours. If I didn't keep a journal, I'm certain these patterns would go unrecognized, and therefore never get addressed or leveraged. Habits and Beliefs are some of the most powerful, and damaging, traits that engineer our lives on a daily basis.

Accountability – Like it or not, you are accountable in the end. When you trade for yourself, and often, by yourself, you've got no one to hold you accountable. That can often be a big problem. I avoid this completely by recording all my goals and plans on the pages of my journal. And when I don't deliver, I press myself to provide reasons so I don't make the same mistakes again. This forced accountability has been a key factor in my success.

Attitude & Feelings - It's amazing how often buried feelings get surfaced on the pages of my journal. It is also amazing how many 'trading results' are a direct result of you being in a 'bad' place and thereby making 'bad' decisions – and nothing more.

(8) Record and Explore Ideas - New ideas occur to me all the time. When they show promise, I make sure to write them down in my journal. Then on days when I don't have as much to write about, I'll often take one of these ideas and really work through it. We are often so close to what we are doing at the time that we can't see the wood for the trees. If you have an idea – write it down – find some time to step back and reflect on it to see if it holds any merit – don't let it fall through the crack of your busy schedule, write it down, you can always go back to it later.

As you can see, you can put writing in your journal to good use. It's so much more than a simple record of your day and what you've done.

A Trade Journal can also give you a lot of insight into what is actually happening, and not necessarily what you think may be happening.

If you need more info on Trade Planners, either check out my site www.freeforex4all.com or join www.the-traders-mindset.com where we look at this in a lot more detail.

Until next time,

Cheers,

Chris.