



GUIDE TO

THINKING AND
REFLECTION

JOHN C. MAXWELL



“Reflection turns experience into insight.” – John Maxwell

This guide will help you develop a great system for thinking through where you’ve been and where you’re going. It will give you a proven system for continually thinking on the right things and turning your experience into insight.

OVERVIEW ON THINKING:

1. Most people don’t think.
2. Most people don’t think on the right things.
3. Most people don’t continually think on the right things.

“The solutions to the problem we face today cannot be solved on the same level of thinking we were at when we created them.” – Albert Einstein

GOAL: Gain a system for continuous, productive thinking and reflecting.

“There is great value in having a place for everything. You need a place to put your thinking.” – John Maxwell

4 PLACES TO PUT YOUR THINKING:

1. **Find a place to think your thoughts. CREATION.**
 - When you’re there, the primary function is thinking.
 - Bring a notepad, card, or device to take notes.
 - Thoughts from others (books, audio, articles) can stimulate thoughts.
 - Think on the whole day from the moment you wake up to the moment you are in now.
 - If you don’t have a tool or an avenue to make it convenient, you probably won’t do it.
 - Make it convenient and natural to do.
 - Mental is to physical what four is to one.

“Thoughts must be stimulated and never lost.” – John Maxwell



2. Find a place to shape your thoughts. REFLECTION.

- Determine if you shape your thoughts alone on paper, in your mind, or by speaking them.
- Why shape your thoughts? Shaping your thoughts gives you...
 - Humor
 - Humility
 - Excitement
 - Creativity
 - Fulfillment
 - Honesty
 - Passion

3. Find a place to stretch your thoughts. EXPANSION.

“All of the great thoughts I ever had were not because I had them. All of the great thoughts I ever had were great because I passed them on to someone else who made them greater.” – John Maxwell

- Who expands you?
- The right thought, with the right people, in the right environment, at the right time, for the right reason = the right result.
 - A thinking environment is a place where...
 - + Thinking is encouraged
 - + Ideas flow freely
 - + Fresh eyes are welcome
 - + Change is expected
 - + Questions are asked
 - + Egos are checked
 - + Ideas stimulate better ideas
 - + Team thinking generates teamwork



4. Find a place to land your thoughts. APPLY IT.

“Land your thoughts on a long runway, not a dead-end street.” – John Maxwell

Bruce Hamilton compiled a list of ultimate Olympic Track & Field performance. At the time, it seemed that no one would ever:

- Run the 100 yard dash in less than 9.2 seconds
- Run the mile in less than 3:57.8 seconds
- Throw a shot put more than 62'
- Throw the discus more than 200'
- Pole vault more than 16'
- Complete a high jump of more than 7'1"

Since his prediction, every one of these records has been broken.

- Land thoughts with yourself. Develops integrity. People will buy into the vision after the leader buys into it.
 - Ask yourself: Do I believe it? Do I live it? Do I believe others should live it?
- Land your thoughts with key players. Develops influence.
- Land your thoughts with those most affected. Develops insight. This will give you a “reality read.”
- Landing is all about... Trying it. Adjusting it. Trying it again.
- When do you know you're ready to land a thought?
 - When people have heard enough that they are willing to change
 - When people learn enough that they want to change
 - When people receive enough that they are able to change



NOW IT'S YOUR TURN:

1. **Schedule time to pause and reflect. Aim for pausing and reflecting on a regular basis. If you don't, it will always get pushed off your to-do list.**

- 10 to 30 minutes a day
- One or two hours each week
- A half day to a full day every few months
- A full day or two full days once a year

Put these days and times on your calendar. Reflection will do you little good unless you are intentional about thinking time.

2. **Find a comfortable place where you can make thinking and reflection your only priority. Getting outdoors, driving somewhere, or finding a quiet room are great ways to get started.**

- The place I can do my best thinking is _____.

3. **Come with resources to stimulate your thinking, tools to record your thoughts, questions to shape your reflection, and a plan to expand your thoughts with others when you're done.**

- A book that inspires me is _____.
- A writer, speaker, or thinker who teaches/challenges me is _____.

QUESTIONS FOR THINKING AND REFLECTION:

1. Where do I most need to grow right now?
2. Is there an issue that I can't seem to wrestle down?
3. Am I experiencing a plateau in my career or with my work?
4. Am I failing to win in the most important relationships in my life? What's missing and what can I do to serve them better?
5. Do I need to examine or reexamine my purpose?
6. What should I be doing that I'm not doing now? What keeps me from doing what I should? What's holding me back and/or what am I neglecting?
7. Do I need to forgive someone or give someone grace?
8. What am I spending my time on that's giving me the greatest return? What are my motives?
9. Do I value people? Do I value myself? Do I value where I am right now?

