Module 2: Collecting Popcorn Thoughts
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Mind shift Change Model courtesy of the Office of Strategic Innovation

Overview:
We have amazing thought-flow at all times through our heads: some pretty profound, some make us smile. The problem is, the half-life of a thought might be 30 seconds at tops. Next time you are noticing your noticing, when something clever pops into your mind worth writing down: attempt to remember it. How long does it last? Popcorn thoughts are the mental gymnastics for growing insightful. They place the mind in motion to generate. The end of your pen is full of ideas; the trick is figuring how to get it down on paper. This is the genesis of thinking about your thinking.

Objectives:
1. Create a mental bias toward idea collection and generation.
2. Collect what you know, then grow what you know.
3. Place the mind on high alert to think on purpose instead of reverting to instinctive autopilot thinking.

Material: Go purchase a little tape-recorder and keep it in your car to collect thoughts. At your home computer, begin a bulleted ‘Popcorn Thought’ file; and keep it active…ready to capture thought. At church, take a pad to write on.

Procedure:
1. Read the ‘Anatomy of a Popcorn Thought’(page 3). Popcorn thoughts are simply those things that pass through your mind that might have merit to remember. Listen to your head: it’s continually creating.

2. Purpose in your mind to capture any thought that might have potential. Unless you purpose this into a routine for change, you will be stuck in the valley of ‘normal’ thinking. ‘Normal’ is not bad; it just doesn’t have as much to choose from as ‘different’.

3. Capture anything to begin with. Consider the thoughts as a list of personal proverbs for yourself. Consider each thought as a seed with DNA characteristics to grow greater thinking. Listen to sayings or insights that other say that you might want to absorb. When it hits, write it down. Keyboard it at home. In the car, record it. Any delay and it evaporates away.
4. Take a pad and pen to church. The sermon is 30 plus minutes, see what you can capture that is good that the preacher says. Place a slash on the left side of the paper indicating a thought is to follow. What did he say. What did he not say. What should he say. When your mind runs off to other things (not church related), write it down. Seek to capture any useful thought.

5. Pen in hand, as soon as the thought pops into your head, write it down (page 4). Whether it’s useful is not the point; the fact you are alert, in the moment and attempted to get in on paper is. By the way, half of what I write aren’t keepers, but I consider them as priming the mind for those thoughts are keepers. After a while, in 30 to 45 minutes you will typically produce 2 to3 pages of bulleted thoughts. Benchmark: After six years of collecting popcorn thoughts at church/home/ and car, I average about one page of (single space) bulleted thought a week. Two-thirds are spiritual, one third personal thought. Your production rate is truly yours. If you are like me, it’s like mental yoga.

6. Later on, concurrently focus on several topics. Example: put a dash then start the stem statement, “Love is…and wait for the mind to finish the sentence. Expect a facet of love to pop out (page 5). By the way, this does not take away from the sermon; it adds to it. For you are more receptive to receive insights. You’re not trying to think; you are simply capturing the first thing that pops out of you head and maybe punctuating it with some wit.

7. When you get home, transfer the candidate thoughts to your computer. As you review each, see what can be done to add value to them. Turn on your ‘clever lever’ to add some zing to them. Add more thought as you keyboard them in.

8. Share your popcorn thoughts with others. I started a ‘Top 10 Popcorn Thoughts’, pulled out 10 good ones and sent them out to a think-geek elist. As of today I’m on my 468th set of ten (page 6). I send out ‘Sunday Popcorn’ weekly to a God-geek elist, (except when I inadvertently hit the ‘i’ key which is next to the ‘u’ key and turn it into sinday popcorn).

9. As you get good at this, begin adding some ‘attitude’ to your collected thought. Make a play on words, shock, rhyme, metaphor…spice those thoughts up (see page 3).

10. Final note: If this doesn’t become a routine, the mind will probably revert to ‘normal’. I’d hate to go back to normal. I’d have less to choose from.
Anatomy of a Popcorn Thought  
(different ways to pop it out)  
What is your mental picture of your thinking?  Duke  

- I love squeezing things out of my brain. It seems to make room for more.  
- I don’t think more than most; I just collect more than most.  
- Thinking deeper is going one layer deeper than you thought you could.  

Body: A smile is a hug without arms.  
Bold: Just think. If you were committed, then you weren’t committed.  
Cause and Effect: An incomplete purpose in life is the springboard to greater things.  
Copy:…Don’t be known for what you don’t do. The difference between the creative and the non-creative is the creative are better at hiding their sources.  
Definition: Empty thoughts are just those not looking for anything.  
Different States: Don’t trip over your feelings. Confidence that you can is a green light to try.  
Disconnected / Senseless unless you think about it: Beauty is friend deep.  
Get others to think: Having a need is not bad; a need having you is.  
Goodness: When you are continually looking for the greater good, you don’t have time to squat on the inconsequential.  
Great Sayings: All men die; few men rarely live…Bravehart There are millions of Americans who are clever and fearless, but the trouble is they are only 4 years old…Suzanne Gibson  
Insight For Others: Some of us need to be healed of our opinion of ourselves.  
Lessons you discovered: One cannot "out-think" a crisis.  
Life: A heart in the habit of sharing expands to experience more of life.  
Ouches: Don’t let what you know get in the way of what you don’t.  
Play on Words: Two attributes I don’t want: careless and care less. A changeless heart is about as useless as a heartless change.  
Polar: Insight is the outside you let in.  
Rhyme: Integrity starts in the dark. The chains of shame are built with links of lies.  
Shocking: No one has the right to stay offended.  
Spiritual: You can’t do God’s part and He won’t do yours. Don’t believe it when you see it; believe it until you see it. Leapfrog Thoughts: Time is the measuring cup of faith.  
Success: It is not failure when you are not successful. It is a failure when you only can be successful.  
Technique:…To think differently, simply pull yourself off autopilot.  
Thankaboutit: Another person’s weakness is usually your strength they don’t have.  
Wisdom: My loss is my gain if I learn from it.  
Witty: In downtown Houston, three lefts make a right.
When you are focusing on another’s wrong, you are ignoring yours.
Do you want to have more? Use well what you have.
God’s will is not a secret.
Denying self is the beginning of serving Him.
Impatience gets mad at the Christian bookstore for not being open on Sunday.
You get God’s attention by believing what He’s promised you.
Dare your prayer to make a difference.
Great wealth can diminish a great love for the Lord.
I may not be perfect; just heading that way.
All life owes you is an opportunity to live it.
Your best practices had better not be your best-kept secret.
I’d hate to be known for what I’m gonna do.
We ascribe good things to the Lord. But the growth through pain is completed in that count as well.
Overconfidence, presumption and entitlement are primary contributors to vehicle accidents.
Your convenience is not my obligation.
The Lord will perfect what concerns you Ps 138:8 You wouldn’t need the Lord if you didn’t have a concern.
"A man can fail many times, but he isn't a failure until he begins to blame somebody else." John Burroughs
Change ain’t the same anymore.
Thinking differently is like tennis. You tend to get better at it when you are playing with another who is skilled at it.
We become offended when we place ourselves in the judgment seat over another’s actions.
We become offended when our focus is on another other than ourselves.
You’ve got to let go of what owns you to be something else.
Control is only as good as where it’s heading.
When you are trying to impress someone, you allowing their perception control your actions.
Hope is but a prayer away.
A runaway mouth is attached to a runaway mind.
It’s funny how those who talk much think others listen well.
Listening sees what hearing misses.
My purpose is to help others find purpose. Or to give others more of a choice in their purpose.
You love for the Lord is the lure for others to do the same.
Popcorn thoughts aren’t there for you to agree, but to provoke thinking. Even disagreement is something to think about.
I don’t think more than most, I just think on paper.
Forbearance is a sign of strength.
Love

Love reaches out to what can't reach itself.
Love takes a licking and keeps on loving.
Love gives until love is accepted.
Love lost is love never extended.
Love longs for righteousness.
Love lives when it gives.
Love doesn't need a return.
Love is never entitled.
Love is 'til death do us part' in a marriage.
Love will incur harm in order to reach another.
Love is the expression of Jesus on the Cross.
Love is re-presenting Christ regardless of the circumstances.
Love isn't love until it's given away.
Love has no end.
Love risks disappointment to help another.
Love is beyond mere human capability.
Love engages all the forces of heaven.
Love cried "Forgive them, for they know not what they do".
Love requires no return.
Love just keeps loving, for that is its character.
Love was invented by God.
Love grows as it gives.
Love displaces fear.
Love that reaches out enriches within.
Love understands the need.
Love is beyond lust, for lust serves self.
Love is allergic to offenses.
Love without God is ultimately empty.
Love gives meaning to life.
Love loves anyone.
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8. Listening sees what hearing misses.

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Words

Words can be wounding or wondrous. They can lift up or tear down. Words can range from clear and concise to complex and confusing. Words can come from the heart to say I love you, I believe in you, I'll stand for you. Or they can fall out of a mouth with little meaning at all. Words can be a code that requires a key to understand. Without that key, all kinds of misinterpretation and suspicion can fill the void. Words written down can be remembered while words only spoken tend to fade. Words can be eloquent or plain, yet their impact is determined in the heart. Words can be sincere or empty promises. One offers life-giving rain, the other just rumbles by.

Words can rhyme in time or be contrasts that last. Words can make you stop and think or they can cause you to fast forward and skim. Words can be rich in meaning or show you the meaning of being rich. Words can point you to their author. They can also point you to Who or what the author seeks. Words can say a lot by not saying much. They can open an ear or they can open a heart. They can motivate or they can deflate. They can personify and connect or they can simply be white noise to a busy mind. Words can cause one to engage or ignore. They can bless or curse. They can strike fear or they can bring hope. Words can be cruel and vengeful or they can be forgiving and merciful. Words can just occupy a mind or they can direct a thought. Words not spoken can be missed opportunities. Words spoken with a smile can open the door to life. Words can be smoothly polished or rough cut in need of finishing. Words that are just thoughts do little good. Words can only be understood in their own language. Words spoken in another language causes a mind to work overtime. Words can stick or fall to the ground. They can last forever or be lost forever. Words can stimulate or dull a mind. They can engage or put it to sleep. Words can be rich with depth or they can be empty and idle. Words can hit their target or miss their mark. Words can have truth or be Truth. They can conceive life or deceive with lies. They can stir what's already there or insert what is not yet there. Words written from the heart can often touch another heart.

Choose your words carefully.

A man of many words can be good or bad depending on what he has to say.

Duke