

Positively Speaking

By Mark Wilson

What Ifs and Whys

There are two important kinds of thinkers necessary to lead any organization in a positive direction: **"What If?"** thinkers and **"Why?"** thinkers.

The **"What If"** folks are idea farmers who create new ways of doing things. They also usually have the energy to do them. Entrepreneurs at heart, they are always considering options. To them, every situation is loaded with potential. Every problem carries the seeds of its own solution.

While the rest of the world looks at the way things are and asks, "Why?" The **"What Iffers"** look to the way things COULD BE and ask, "Why not??"

"What If" thinkers always see the possibilities and seize the opportunities. They possess a positive bias for action.

However, the world would fall apart at the seams if EVERYBODY was a **"What If"** thinker. Every good idea produced by a **"What Iffer"**, is accompanied by about twenty lousy ones. Often, the **"What If"** thinkers don't know the difference. They just keep coming up with more ideas!

That's the reason we need the other kind of thinkers too: the **"Why?"** thinkers.

"Why" folks look beyond the surface and aren't afraid to ask the difficult questions. *"Tell me again, WHY are we doing this??"* They think deeply and can see all the ramifications of a decision. Many times, even before the **"What Iffer"** is finished with presenting his grand idea the **"Why"** thinker has already identified at least seven potential difficulties and conflicts with the proposal.

"What Iffers" bring the energy -- but they can bring annoyance and wear out everybody else around them.

"Why" thinkers perceive deeply -- but prone towards negative thinking and the paralysis of analysis.

And THAT'S the reason why we need BOTH kinds of thinkers -- in every community, on every board or committee, at every workplace, in every church, and in every home.

Ever notice that **"Why?"** thinkers end up getting married to **"What Iffers?"** God has His good reason.

Here's a good equation for effective leadership: **"What Ifs"** plus **"Whys"** = WISE.