



5 Minute Strategic Mindset

Your weekly dose of subtle challenge



Here's my list of what I'm enjoying, or is inspiring me this week.

A quote that made me think

"Dear CEO, When you get tired of telling your strategy storyline, you have reached three percent of your target population." [Jeroen de Flander](#)

A fundamental idea that I take completely for granted

I'm on a family trip in Indonesia this week and in the car yesterday my son mentioned someone's letter box at home. Our driver, surprised, asked "Do you still have those in your country?" It turns out that many parts of Indonesia have leapfrogged snail mail and everything is transacted by smart phone. 10 years ago, virtually nobody in a Lombok village would have owned a phone at all. Nowadays, locating a person in Indonesia has become completely decoupled from their physical location. And then this morning, In a separate conversation entirely, a group of us were trying to work out why and when zip codes (or postcodes) were first introduced. To save you looking it up, it was 1963 and it solved the uniquely post-war problem of quickly locating people who were increasingly mobile within ever-growing cities. Both conversations got me thinking about how, as societies, we are very good at developing systematised methods to enable more and more complex transactions amongst greater numbers of people. **Question: "What systems are you creating in your organisation that dramatically simplify a complex interaction amongst customers or staff?"**

A book I'm challenged by

Decades ago, a teacher asked me a question that fried my brain: "When you wake up each morning, how do you remember to be you?" The author of "[Breaking the Habit of Being Yourself](#)", Joe Dispenza, writes extensively on the answer to this, which is best summed up in this simple quote: "Nerve cells that fire together, wire together." As I repeat my activities, my brain's pathways are wired to repeat that activity, and so it becomes even more difficult to change. Repetition reinforces brain behavior, and by, say, age 35, our identity becomes a set of memorized behaviors. Dispenza's visualisation and meditation techniques centre on imagining a future as vividly as you do the past, so you become drawn to new patterns, not old ones. Note that Dispenza's ideas are deeply polarising, attracting criticism from many scientific and therapeutic disciplines, but I believe that he's onto something, when I reflect that my most successful strategy clients do truly shift focus from their past and present (and an emphasis on what's lacking) and instead deeply immerse themselves into a desired future. **Question: "What questions, discussions and mental tools do you use to immerse your decision-makers into a future state, not a past state?"**

An idea that amazed me this week

Animal-assisted therapy. One estimate is that almost 10% of people will experience a traumatic event in their lifetimes, sufficient to give rise to repeated PTSD symptoms such as flashbacks and panic attacks, hyper-vigilance and emotional numbing. Amongst some groups, such as combat veterans, the figure is at least 30%. It doesn't surprise me that dogs reduce overall stress levels amongst hyper-aroused PTSD sufferers but what did amaze me is that *dogs can detect onset of symptoms well before when the person (and clinicians) can.* Growing research tells us that a service dog helps PTSD sufferers with impulse control, sleep and even reduces reliance on medication. But why dogs? It turns out there are three major reasons: (i) dogs are vigilant of both physical and psychological threats; (ii) they form authoritative relationships naturally; and (iii) dogs love unconditionally, even when subjected to harsh treatment. All of the above create trust bonds in a person who has lost the ability to trust themselves (the PTSD symptoms are unpredictable and uncontrollable) and the world around them. **Question: "What unlikely - and even unexplainable - intervention might be worth trying for an 'unsolvable problem' amongst your clients or customers? "**

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