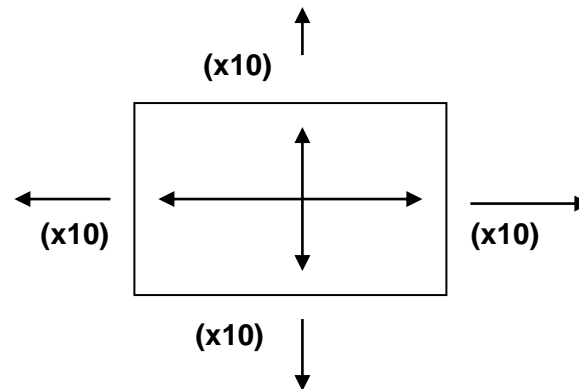


THE POWER OF 10

The following article arose from interest shown in the concept of The Power of 10, which was used in a recent workshop auspiced by Family Advocacy on the topic of “Circles of Support”.

1. It was a crisp morning in July when Garry and I approached the quaint terrace house in South Melbourne, Victoria. We were greeted by Dr Michael Hewitt-Gleeson, *Count de Saint-Arnaud* who was hosting a workshop on the topic of ‘*Creative Thinking*’. Dr Hewitt-Gleeson, had worked alongside Professor Edward De Bono, a world authority in the area of creative/lateral thinking. If the day was to be as exciting as Dr Hewitt-Gleeson’s bright yellow socks, then we were in for a surprise. It was as 20 years later I still call upon what I learnt that day – **The Power of 10**.
2. So what is this thing called “The Power of 10”. The Power of 10 could best be described as “*the deliberate process of using the concept of the multiple of ten (x10) to take us beyond the boundaries of our traditional thinking*”. This may be reflected in the following diagram. The interior of the box represents our traditional thinking, how we readily perceive the world, whereas through the deliberate use of the “Power of 10” we are forced, both deliberately and consciously to go beyond the boundaries to seek out “*the more*”.



The ‘Power of 10’ is software for your brain. The ‘Power of 10’ doesn’t just extend your thinking. Dr Hewitt-Gleeson reminds us that it in fact acts as a booster. The ‘Power of 10’ helps provoke your thinking, it helps you make quantum leaps, in your thinking.

Cognitive psychologist, George A. Miller discovered that our short term memory shuts down after 7 numbers (that is why telephone numbers are 7 figures) or after 5 words or concepts. We can appreciate the value of the ‘Power of 10’ as it forces us to “go on” to “push the boundaries”, past that moment when our thinking goes into shut down mode. Through the use of the ‘Power of 10’ we are increasing our options by 100%.

3. Why bother? Well there are many reasons for why the 'Power of 10' is worth considering. First, it may result in a better outcome for you and others, secondly, it is an opportunity to stop and implement what is known as the *creative pause* and in so doing consider new and better options, thirdly, the 'Power of 10' can be seen as a pro-active tool when we experience a "thinking block(s)", fourthly, it is a very effective and helpful planning tool, fifthly, it helps boost your confidence in knowing that you have really thought about something and finally it promotes and encourages collective thinking.
4. But what stops us from both being creative and making the effort? There are many reasons and perhaps this is a good opportunity for you to consider, whether you have been led to unfortunately believe in them also.

Some of the reasons may be:-

- "I'm just not creative".
- "I'm too conservative in my thinking"
- "I might fail"
- "The problem is just too big"
- "The responsibility for this rests with others"
- "You need to be really intelligent to be creative"
- "What will people think about my contribution"
- "I can't do this by myself".
- "I just don't have the time"

You are creative, and the 'Power of 10' will provide you with the opportunity to prove it, especially in the presence of others.

5. The pursuit of "creative ideas" through the use of the 'Power of 10' is greatly assisted when used with the full assistance and involvement of others. There is great value, efficiency and effectiveness when you use group thinking. It is also great fun!!! When we think of the concept of "Circles of Support", we immediately have a collective force, an opportunity to implement the "Power of 10" in a way that will enable new and creative ideas to evolve. But for this to be truly effective there needs to be some ground rules put in place, to both give permission and confidence to all, to be part of this new culture of creative thinking, through the use of the "Power of 10".

Some of the rules are:-

- Participants must postpone and withhold their judgement of ideas.
- Participants should be encouraged to think both wild and exaggerated ideas.
- Participants need to recognize that through the 'brainstorming' process quantity counts, not quality at this stage.
- Participants are given the opportunity to build on the ideas of others.
- Participants recognize that every person and every idea has equal worth.
- Participants ideas are recorded.

6. Following workshops on creative thinking, and in particular the use of the 'Power of 10' many participants have identified how they have been able to call upon the 'Power of 10', not just within their professional work but also within their private life.

Some examples of where they have called upon the 'Power of 10' are :-

- Identify 10 different ways in which one can express 'love'.
- Identify 10 different ways in which I could organize myself better.
- Identify 10 different things that I would really like to do this week end.
- Identify 10 different ways in which I could save money (\$).
- Identify 10 different ways in which I can maintain contact with people I care for.
- Identify 10 different ways in which I could lose weight.
- Identify 10 different holiday options.
- Identify 10 different meals that I love to cook and share.
- Identify 10 different ways in which I can really enjoy cleaning the house.
- Identify 10 different ways in which I can contribute directly to my happiness.

Whilst on a committee I was involved with others in the development of a 'post card' aimed at encouraging people to consider the consequence of community exclusion, and in contrast highlight the benefits of leisure and how through leisure we are able to better connect with community. The full potential of this post card only evolved when we carried out a 'Power of 10' exercise and identified 10 different ways in which the post card could be used. It worked, with thousands of the post cards distributed nationally, using the different approaches.

7. The real value of the "Power of 10" is not just the single use of its potential, for example, '*identify 10 ways in which I can lose weight*', but how it can be further developed through the use of what is known as the 'levels of enquiry' approach. This is where you may call upon the 'Power of 10' to investigate your initial focus at different and deeper levels. When you do this, you can truly say that you have thoughtfully considered your initial request.

Let's look at an example:

As highlighted in the previous example we identified the area of 'weight loss'. Now let's look at how the 'Power of 10' process, incorporating the extended 'levels of enquiry' approach extends our understanding further.

1. Identify 10 ways in which I can lose weight.

But we know, that the challenge of weight loss involves far greater consideration than just identifying the strategies, hence we may call upon the 'Power of 10' to both consciously and deliberately take the theme of weight loss to deeper levels of enquiry by way of :-

2. Identify 10 ways in which you can remain motivated in our desire to lose weight
then,
3. Identify 10 people who may wish to join with you in you in losing weight
then,

4. Identify 10 ways in which you can celebrate or reward yourself when successful
then,
5. Identify 10 ways in which your goal of losing weight may be threatened.
then,
6. Identify 10 ways in which you can safeguard against such threats.
then etc.

It is through this 'level of enquiry' approach that you can re-define an issue, concern or goal from a number of different perspectives. It is at this stage that you can be more confident of our analysis of the situation.

8. Let's have a look at how the "Power of 10" has been used within Inclusion Works, a small community building agency dedicated to building better communities through the inclusion of people with a disability.

"Peter, who is labelled within his community as having a disability has recently graduated from his local school and was spending each day at home, doing little except watching television and throwing constant questions at his mother. Peter needed to be more involved in his community. Peter had gifts and talents that belonged in his community. Peter's situation was brought to the attention of Inclusion Works, and consequently became an enthusiastic participant.

Having spent time with Peter, Sally a Community Development Worker from within Inclusion Works called upon her knowledge of the 'Power of 10' to help offer some possible future directions.

As Sally had already spent some time in getting to know Peter, she called upon a definition of community, developed by John McKnight from the USA. John defined community as "*the social place used by family, friends, neighbours, neighbourhood associations, clubs, civic groups, local enterprises, churches, schools, ethnic organizations, temples, local unions, local government and local media*". This definition is known as an associational definition of community, where community is seen as a collective of unique associations of people, who share a common interest or experience.

Shared interests are one of the most powerful forces known to help facilitate community connectedness. Sally vigorously considered the definition offered by McKnight and with Peter's involvement they decided to focus on 'clubs'. Clubs offer one of the greatest opportunities within Townville. In fact, with over 700 clubs in Townsville, if we consider that each club may offer at least 10 community inclusion opportunities, then we already have 7000 potential opportunities waiting to be identified.

Definition of Community (as per McKnight)	Options (example)	Further Options Within Local Theatre	Promotion Opportunities
“the social place used by:-			
Family			
Friends			
Neighbors			
Neighborhood associations			
<u>Clubs</u>			
Civic groups			
Local enterprise			
Churches			
Etc			

Sally knew that they had to look further into what local club opportunities existed and how they may match Peter’s interests, gifts, talents and contributions. They studied the smorgasbord of opportunities available and set out to identify Peter’s top 10. Those identified were angling, bingo, community centres, dancing, theatre, folk music, gardening, environmental work, book clubs, and the local YMCA.

Sally (and many others, including his mother) identified and reinforced Peter’s love of theatre and gave many an example of where he displayed a real interest and passion for it. With Peter’s support they ‘went a hunting’ for what theatre opportunities existed within Townsville.

Definition of Community (as per McKnight)	Options (example)	Further Options Within Local Theatre	Promotion Opportunities
“the social place used by:-	1. Angling		
Family	2. Bingo		
Friends	3. Community Centers		
Neighbors	4. Dancing		
Neighborhood associations	<u>5. Theatre</u>		
<u>Clubs</u>	6. Folk Music		
Civic groups	7. Gardening		
Local enterprise	8. Environment		
Churches	9. Book Club		
Etc	10. YWCA		

They identified a theatre group. Not just any theatre group, but one that had a reputation for welcoming all people. It was also located within Peter’s immediate neighbourhood. Approaches were made, and as Sally had little experience in theatre she asked of those in charge, to help her identify 10 different roles that Peter may play within the theatre group.

They were identified as follows:

Definition of Community (as per McKnight)	Options (example)	Further Options Within Local Theatre	Promotion Opportunities
“the social place used by:-	1. Angling	1. Actor	
Family	2. Bingo	2. Usher	
Friends	3. Community Centers	3. Promotion	
Neighbors	4. Dancing	4. Backstage	
Neighborhood associations	5. Theatre	5. Refreshments.	
Clubs	6. Folk Music	6. Sets	
Civic groups	7. Gardening	7. Lights	
Local enterprise	8. Environment	8. Costumes	
Churches	9. Book Club	9. Make-u0p	
Etc	10. YWCA	10. Music/Sound	

Inclusion Works, has as its mission – “to help build better communities, through the inclusion of people with a disability”. Inclusion Works, also knows that successful community inclusion is more than likely to occur when the gifts, talents and contributions of people are both offered, shared and above all acknowledged.

So what did the local theatre group need, that Peter could immediately offer and in so doing be acknowledged for his contribution and membership. The area of ‘promotion’ was identified. You can never promote too much. Peter was invited to help out in this area, and he enthusiastically agreed (although he did want to be promoted immediately to the leading role with the next production!!!).

The next question, prompted once again by way of the ‘Power of 10’ was what 10 different ways could Peter best assist in the area of promotion. The task of personally delivering promotional material to those immediate residents, close to the theatre was identified. Not just a good opportunity for the local theatre group to develop immediate links with the community, but also provide an opportunity for Peter to ‘get to know’ his community.

Definition of Community (as per McKnight)	Options (example)	Further Options Within Local Theatre	Promotion Opportunities
“the social place used by:-	1. Angling	1. Actor	1. Deliver
Family	2. Bingo	2. Usher	2. Street Theatre
Friends	3. Community Centers	3. Promotion	3. Media
Neighbors	4. Dancing	4. Backstage	4. Bill Poster
Neighborhood associations	5. Theatre	5. Refreshments.	5. Word of Mouth
Clubs	6. Folk Music	6. Sets	6. Design
Civic groups	7. Gardening	7. Lights	7. Printing
Local enterprise	8. Environment	8. Costumes	8. Mail outs
Churches	9. Book Club	9. Make-u0p	9. Distribute
Etc	10. YWCA	10. Music/Sound	10. Catalogue.

So to date, through the use of the 'Power of 10' Sally had been able to :-

- *Identify which associational opportunities may offer the best opportunities, i.e clubs.*
- *Identify what community option best matched Peter's gifts, talents and contributions i.e theatre*
- *Identify the various roles that the theatre experience offers, and which role would help contribute to the groups immediate needs, i.e. promotion*
- *Identify which means of promotion would be most effective and would benefit both the theatre group as well as Peter i.e. Personal delivering of promotional material within the immediate community.*

So from this brief example we can see how through the deliberate and conscious use of the 'Power of 10' opportunities evolved that directly impacted on the theatre group, Peter and his community.

But there is more.

The use of the 'Power of 10' is unlimited. In the planning process Sally was able to call upon the 'Power of 10' to seek out further considerations, and as such be both prepared and confident in her actions and support of Peter's full participation in the theatre group. Additional use of 'Power of 10' questions were identified as follows:-

- What 10 things may go wrong?
- Of these which ones are the most concerning and what 10 ways can you help either reduce the risk, or eliminate it altogether?
- What 10 ways can the theatre group help celebrate Peter's contribution to the group?
- What 10 ways can Peter's involvement be built upon that may result in greater acknowledgement and meaningful, interdependent relationships being both formed and maintained?

The 'Power of 10' invites us to consider something that was previously not there.

9. So if this thing called the 'Power of 10' is something worthwhile considering you may be asking, how do I begin and how do I become proficient in its use. The answer is *practice, practice, and practice*. Like learning a musical instrument the more you practice the more confidence and competence you will gain.

So to kick you off, let me invite you to consider the following situation and invite you to call upon the 'Power of 10' to consider the possibilities.

"Your 16 year old son, who has epilepsy and enjoys spending time with his mates from school. The Easter school holidays are coming up and a number of his mates have invited him to join them on a surfing holiday at Byron Bay. He is keen to go and has asked you. You are uncertain and wish to call upon the 'Power of 10' to help review the situation.

What 10 questions do you consider important to help you to come to a more confident decision regarding your son's request?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.

Of these 10 questions, which one do you feel raises the most concern for you? What 10 different ways could this concern be addressed that would help reduce your concern?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.

Did you involve others in the process and therefore benefit from their different perspectives? If not, what would it have taken to involve others in this process?

Congratulations ! You have started your journey in the mastering of the 'Power of 10'.

10. So, I have only one final thing to say. In offering you 10 chunks of information (isn't that interesting that there is 10 chunks of information!) I have invited you to think beyond the boundaries of your traditional thinking through the deliberate and conscious use of the thinking tool called the 'Power of 10'. It will of course only be useful if it is called upon. Its full potential will only be discovered through its repetitive use. If you accept the challenge I can guarantee that things will happen.

Good luck, and remember to keep thinking about thinking.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ric Thompson', followed by a long, sweeping horizontal line that curves upwards at the end.

Ric Thompson
Principal
Great Ideas In Action

**Ric welcomes the opportunity to receive 'feedback' regarding this material or provide you with the opportunity to share your 'Power of 10' experiences through contacting him on ric@greatideasinaction.com.au*