

## Ongoing Discussion “Thought Piece”

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for

Pratt & Whitney Rocketdyne’s  
Enterprise Thinking Network

## Recognizing Our Own Power

By Jon Bergstrom

Pratt & Whitney Rocketdyne's (PWR) Enterprise Thinking Network (ETN) comprises employees who endorse *Better Thinking for a Better Future*. Every month they are joined by counterparts at other organizations in a monthly Ongoing Discussion conference call. Once a year, they join with peers within the In2:INThinking Network (In2:IN) at an annual 6-day Forum in Los Angeles.

One of the recent In2:IN Forum brochures notes that members "believe that by "thinking about thinking" – or *inthinking* – we will manage resources, acquire knowledge, work together, lead organizations and plan more effectively. With *inthinking*, we create a new awareness of various forms of thinking, their interdependency, the possible ways of integrating them and including them – toward more joy and quality of life in individuals and organizations." I believe that new ways of thinking and acting do lead to more individual joy and improved quality of life.

One of the common themes of people who participate in the In2:IN as well as PWR's ETN is that these new ways of thinking are very interesting. However, it is often not necessarily easy to put them into practice in their work and daily living. Many people would like to feel more powerful in using them. The purpose of this "Thought Piece" is to provide some thinking about ways to recognize and use the power we already possess.

I would like to begin by providing some background reading as many of the participants in the monthly ongoing discussions are willing to spend time preparing for the discussion. The reading and homework for those interested is as follows:

1. **The Firestone**. This is a very short story (eight pages) about an Indian tribe that has to deal with everyday life and the trials that it brings. Through this reading you will find out how individuals and the tribe improve their environment by dealing well with everyday experiences. You can access the story at:  
[http://www.websweare.com/bergstrom/organizational\\_thinking.htm](http://www.websweare.com/bergstrom/organizational_thinking.htm)
2. **Questions from The Firestone**. Questions are provided for your consideration that identify how people used their wisdom and power to provide some assistance, direction and leadership to the tribe. These may assist you in thinking about some of the everyday things we all have the power to do to improve the environment we live in.

***It is suggested that you pick one or two questions to ponder that are interesting to you, and consider how you might use your power in these circumstances.***

3. **A Management and Leadership Model.** A model of management and leadership by John Kotter is provided. A review of this model will provide an opportunity to consider that everyone has the opportunity to manage and lead in their environment – and that position power is not required.

The purpose of the reading is to facilitate thinking about how we can use our existing knowledge to make a difference. It focuses in these areas:

1. **The "Aware Person".** I am hopeful that people will see with new eyes the power that they already have by being the "aware person" in situations they face. I have found that my ability to be helpful in many situations is simply a function of my recognition of new possibilities that exist because of the new ways of thinking that I have been exposed to. This help might take the following forms:
  - a) **Questions.** Questions that lead to new thinking and new options.
  - b) **Suggestions.** Suggestions for a course of action or for additional personal or joint inquiry into the complexity that often exists in the problems we face.
  - c) **Challenges.** Challenges to the thinking of others that can assist in revealing non-critical thinking or discounting of options.
  - d) **Stance.** The stance we take can have a dramatic affect on those around us.
  - e) **Resources.** Resources that might be helpful in the situation, including studies, research, articles, books, consultants, etc.

In order to be helpful in these ways, the "aware person" must be willing to "risk their significance" as Dawna Markova expressed at the November 2006 Systems Thinking in Action conference. Her thoughts were that we can only be helpful and be a player in the affairs of the world if we are willing to take the risk to share what we know and what we think. I share this thinking. This requires a certain degree of self-awareness and courage. We must each find our own level of comfort in the stance we take in various situations.

2. **The "Knowledgeable Person"**. I am hopeful that people will also see with new eyes that we do not have to be "an expert" in putting these new ideas into practice to be the knowledgeable person and a leader in a variety of situations. I have found that I have been able to put my knowledge of concepts, processes or facilitation into practice when I am simply one or two steps ahead of others. I believe we can show important personal and organizational leadership and management in many situations. This might include work in areas like the following:
- a) **Setting direction**. Setting direction is the most important step that can help each of us and our organizations succeed. Each of us can play an important role in helping to make sure that clear direction is set.
  - b) **Team leadership**. Many teams are formed without formal leadership. We can play a role in providing direction and leadership in many ways. This could include change leadership. We can acquire practical knowledge about how organizational change happens and play a significant role as a change agent.
  - c) **Process design and facilitation**. Process design and facilitation of these processes can play an important role in assisting teams and groups in thinking in new ways.
  - d) **Learning leadership**. Learning opportunities are often not apparent to our cohorts or organizations. We can provide learning leadership simply by preparing workshops, encouraging participation, and facilitating these learning opportunities. This could include reading and thinking together. My bibliography provides some references at <http://www.websweare.com/bergstrom/bibliography.htm> .

I hold a belief that we can all use our existing knowledge and power to make a significant difference in the world. As Bill Bellows often says, "Do what you can from where you are." As we practice our new ideas in our daily life, we learn from our experiences and ready ourselves for greater challenges ahead. Learn! Be bold! Be courageous!

### Questions from *The Firestone*

The following questions identify how people used their wisdom and power in *The Firestone* to provide some assistance, direction and leadership to the tribe. They are some of the everyday things we all have the power to do to improve the environment we live in. ***It is suggested that you pick one or two questions to ponder that are interesting to you. How might you use your power in these circumstances to make a difference in your environment?***

1. Kuala shared her firestone with her mate and others.

***-What do you share?***

2. Bright Star learned at Kuala's side.

***-Who do you learn from? Who learns from you?***

3. At Bright Star and Soaring Eagle's wedding, everyone sang an ancient song.

***- What cultural traditions do you have? Are they important?***

4. Kuala gave away her firestone, one of her most valued possessions.

***- What important things do you give away?***

5. Bright Star and Soaring Eagle chose to begin a new firehole out of respect for the use of the stone by Kuala and Bear Claw.

***- Who / what do you respect in your organization?***

6. The tribe found new uses for the stone.

***- What new ideas are you generating?***

7. The tribal council used the Firestone as a talking stone. Also, the two holes in the stone reminded them that most issues have more than one side.

***- What is the state of talking and listening in your life / your organization?***

8. Soaring Eagle had become an eager hunter and fisherman at a young age.

**- What are you eager to learn and master that will have an impact on your future?**

9. Bright Star and Soaring Eagle willingly shared the Firestone but had rules for its use.

**- What rules help you and your organization function?**

10. A difficult winter and flooding during a spring hunt tested the tribe.

**- How do you / your team / your organization deal with difficult circumstances?**

11. When the tribe was faced with discord after the loss of the firestone, the tribal council decided to engage the "stone council" to recommend action.

**- How do you / your organization recognize those problems that require urgent attention?**

12. As the "stone council" began its work together in the teepee, they recognized the uncertainty of their own thoughts. They wondered how their wisdom would grow.

**- What uncertainties do you have as you begin a new adventure?**

13. The drums and dancing outside the teepee provided energy and inspiration to those inside.

**- How do you / others in your organization provide support?**

14. The team in the teepee spent two days thinking in old ways. Their thoughts were then transformed – with help from the tribe.

**- When was the last time your thinking was transformed? Why?**

15. The Shaman described the thinking of the team in some detail so that the tribe could gain some understanding.

- ***How do you / your organization explain your thinking to your tribe?***

16. The team drew a large circle and designated the center as a point of greatest agreement.

- ***What non-verbal rituals do you / your organization use to test agreement?***

17. The Chief asked the tribe to deliberate on the proposal from the stone council and show their level of support.

- ***How do you / your organization seek guidance from everyone on important issues?***

18. When Golden Bear did not join the tribe near the center of the circle, the Chief asked him to share his views with everyone.

- ***How do you / your organization seek out and recognize opposing views?***

19. The tribe learned together important lessons that could make them stronger for the future.

- ***What lessons have you learned that are making you stronger and more capable for the future?***

## Leadership and Management Model\*

<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Management</b>	<b>Leadership</b>
Creating an Agenda	Planning and Budgeting	Establishing Direction
Developing a Human Network for Agenda	Organizing and Staffing	Aligning People
Execution	Controlling and Problem Solving	Creating the conditions in which people can be motivated and inspired
Outcomes	Produces a degree of order and predictability, and has the potential of consistently producing key results	Produces change, often to a dramatic degree. Helps produce change quickly.
		*John Kotter



# MANAGEMENT\*

## Management: Coping with complexity

Without good management, complex enterprises tend to become chaotic.

## Planning and Budgeting

- Helps produce predictable results
- Best used as a compliment to direction setting
- Direction setting clarifies what kind of planning is essential and what is irrelevant.

## Organizing and Staffing

- We organize and staff to create human systems that can implement plans as precisely and efficiently as possible.
- Typically requires many complex decisions

## Controlling and Problem Solving

- We want processes to be as close as possible to fail-safe and risk-free.
- Systems and structures should support everyone to complete their routine work successfully, day after day.
- We want to make targets and goals.

\*John Kotter

# LEADERSHIP\*

## LEADERSHIP – Coping with change

Without good leadership, change happens slowly and randomly. Change is necessary to remain competitive.

### Establishing Direction

- Setting direction for change is fundamental to leadership.
- Developing good business direction is not magical. It usually involves a tough, exhausting process.
- Vision is usually not innovative – most consist of ideas already known. How well it serves everyone is more important than originality.

### Alignment

- A clear sense of direction allows independent actions that are supportive.
- These actions are much less likely to conflict with others.

### Motivating and Inspiring

- Creating the context in which people are motivated and inspired is necessary to create a supportive culture.
- Achieving grand visions / changes always requires a burst of energy.
- Satisfying basic needs for achievement, belonging, recognition, self-esteem and control over one's own life touches us deeply and elicits a powerful response that can provide the burst of energy required.

\*John Kotter

**Jon Bergstrom** provides a wide range of business consulting services through the Bergstrom Learning Center in Tehachapi, California. Prior to his recent retirement, he worked for Shell Oil Company for 35 years in a variety of engineering and management positions.

Through his consulting practice, he assists organizations in Leadership and Management, Strategic Planning, Organizational Success, Executive Coaching, Personal Mastery, Systemic Thinking, Team Skills, Change Leadership, Meeting Planning and Facilitation, and Conflict Management.

He is a member of the In2:InThinking Network Forum planning team and provides workshops on a regular basis. He has also conducted numerous workshops at business and learning conferences in the United States and Europe. He was a member of the planning team for the Space Generation Forum at the 1999 United Nations Conference on the Peaceful Uses of Space in Vienna, Austria and continues work with SGF participants.

He is a member of the adjunct faculty at International Space University in Strasbourg, France and has provided team skills workshops to students since 2000. The workshops for the Masters Program in Strasbourg and the summer sessions at locations around the world are intended to provide students with concepts and processes that will enhance their team experience at the university.

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