

Ongoing Discussion “Thought Piece”

Prepared by

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Ongoing Discussion Host: Bill Bellows
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This month's "Thought Piece" is a turnaround from our traditional format. Instead of something to read in advance and then prepare questions for our Thought Leader, our Thought Leader would like to start with questions for the participants, for which he'd love to hear answers. Welcome to the turnaround style of Shel Rovin, who offers,

"I DON'T KNOW WHAT'S GOING TO HAPPEN NEXT AND NEITHER DO YOU. That is, *COMPLEXITY, UNCERTAINTY, AND RANDOMNESS* are constant features of our organizations and our world."

Here are several questions raised by Shel's assertion (belief). You might find it helpful to print this and have it handy for making notes both before and during the call.

1) What does this mean for us, our organizations, and our society?

2) What does this mean for planning?

3) Under conditions of uncertainty, to what extent can we trust our judgment?

4) Under conditions of uncertainty, to what extent can we trust our intuition?

5) If something seems counterintuitive, should we reject it?

6) Was Grandma (or Grandpa) right: are two (or more) heads better than one?

8) Can we take what we think we know to the bank?

9) What is the relationship between cause and effect?

10) How has our schooling (not education) helped or hindered how we think?

11) Can the same thinking that created our complex problems help us handle them?

Biography

Sheldon Rovin is Emeritus Professor of Healthcare Systems at the Wharton School of Business and past Director of Healthcare Executive Management Programs at Wharton Executive Education and the Leonard Davis Institute of Health Economics. He is Emeritus Professor and past chair of the Dept. of Dental Care Systems, School of Dental Medicine. All of these positions are at the University of Pennsylvania. Among the programs he directed at the Wharton School are the Johnson & Johnson-Wharton Fellows Program in Management for Nurse Executives, the SmithKline Beecham Executive Management Program for Directors of Hospital Pharmacy, the Wyeth Ayerst-Association of Professors of Gynecology and Obstetrics Program in Management, and the Wyeth Ayerst-APM Executive Management program for Chairs of Medicine. Dr. Rovin's publications include over ninety journal articles and book chapters, and nine books. His latest three books are *Medicine and Business: Bridging the Gap* (2001) published by Aspen Publishers; *Redesigning Society* (2003) written with Russell Ackoff and published by Stanford University Press; and, *Beating the System: Using Creativity to Outsmart Bureaucracies*, written with Russell Ackoff, was published by Berrett-Koehler in July, 2005. An earlier book entitled *Managing Hospitals: Lessons from the Johnson & Johnson-Wharton Fellows Program in Management for Nurse Executives* (1991), won the Journal of Nursing Administration's 1992 Management Book of the Year Award. Dr. Rovin's principal consulting interests are the application of systems thinking, idealized design, interactive planning and creative thinking to the design, management and leadership of organizations. He has won several teaching awards. He was the Dean of the University of Washington, College of Dentistry from 1973 to 1977. Prior to this he was professor and chair of the Dept. of Oral Pathology and professor of General Pathology at the University of Kentucky Colleges of Dentistry and Medicine, respectively. Dr. Rovin is a diplomat of the American Board of Oral Pathology and holds DDS and MS degrees from the University of Michigan.