

## **Why Don't We Ask Why?**

**By Mel Schwartz**

One of our greatest challenges is to look at the manner in which we think. This rather daunting task requires that we come to see that we participate in creating the reality of our world. Our thoughts ultimately manifest in what we come to call reality. They have taught us to see the problems of our world as being out there, separate and distinct from us, and then quickly go to work attacking the problem. But our thoughts don't instruct us that we participated in creating the problem. In so doing our thoughts trick us. As we consider such problems as terrorism, cancer, global warming, or the more personal issues of our lives, we quickly vault into action to defeat the problem. But no one is asking why the problem exists in the first place. It's appears as if there is a tacit acceptance of the very existence of the problem. But we must ask why it exists. For if we don't we'll only replace old problems with new ones.

Why is it that the cancer rate now impacts thirty-five percent of the population, up from a level of five percent a century ago? The answer to the question might be that we have created this epidemic of cancer. We have polluted our air and water and we have refined, processed and mutated our food so that it no longer resembles food. We have produced an environment so chemically toxic that it is essentially unlivable. And we then declare war on cancer. We go to battle with what we created. The same thinking that created cancer will not solve it. We must ask ourselves why and then take responsibility.

Why is there such an alarming rate of attention deficit disorder? This malaise was unheard of in prior generations. Before we rush off to medicate our children for this disorder we might pause to ask ourselves why millions of us have this new affliction. Could it be that we have created it? It didn't fly in on the wings of the West Nile virus. ADD is a sign of a culture that is out of harmony. It is the result of a world in which we unthinkingly create the attention deficit and then victimize the victims. Attention deficit disorder is predictable in a world that is so hurried and frenzied. It is yet another problem created by our way of thinking.

Terrorism has both devastated us and riveted our attention. As we focus on defending ourselves against the inhumane attacks, we might do well to ask why terrorism exists. For if we don't we'll be fighting a perpetual war. As heinous as the terrorists are, they too are only symptoms. What causes their hate and their venom? Until we understand what underlies the penchant for destruction and violence we will surely never root it out with retaliations of more destruction and violence.

Why is it that nearly one-half of the American population is likely to suffer at least one bout of depression in their lives? Rather than simply going to war with depression we might well be served to ask why. Why is one as likely to experience depression as not? Might it have something to do with the way that we live our lives? Perhaps our misdirected pursuit of happiness leaves us feeling empty. Again the victim is labeled and victimized. It might be that as painful as depression is, it makes sense. Frankly, there are times when our lives are depressing. If

we ask why there is such a plethora of depression, we might see that the cause is found in the way that we approach life. Once again, we might fundamentally contribute to creating the problem, but shirk from that responsibility.

Why do one-half of all marriages end in divorce? Is that statistic endemic to the nature of marriage? Is it as simple as the notion that marriage is difficult and we shouldn't be surprised by such failure? Or could it have something to do with the way that we engage in relationships? If our schools offered courses in relationship and intimacy and we treated our partnerships with the same vigor that we pursue our careers and material pursuits we might create a markedly different reality.

Before we leap to treating or attacking the problem, we must ask how we came to create the problem. For if we don't, we'll only replace it with a never-ending succession of new problems. From this lack of awareness we'll always be dealing with the symptoms rather than the cause. Our thoughts create the problems and then we devise entire industries to combat the problem. It is in the absence of an inner ecology that we produce the chaos of the world. To achieve an inner ecology it is essential that we come to understand how our thinking creates our reality.

It's not what we think that's important, it's how we think. We live in a world in which we search for answers, but we miss the most vital point. The questions we ask reveal much more than the answers. The media rolls out a never-ending array of experts to provide the answers. But no one is asking the question why.

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