

## Closed Thinking

**Closed thinking defined:** A choice to be non-receptive to others. There is an unwillingness to hear, listen, or consider people while maintaining personal agendas that promote a Big E.

**Scriptural references:** **Proverbs 1:29-33 (NLT)** For they hated knowledge and chose not to fear the Lord. [30] They rejected my advice and paid no attention when I corrected them. [31] That is why they must eat the bitter fruit of living their own way. They must experience the full terror of the path they have chosen. [32] For they are simpletons who turn away from me—to death. They are fools, and their own complacency will destroy them. [33] But all who listen to me will live in peace and safety, unafraid of harm."

**Proverbs 15:12 (NLT)** Mockers don't love those who rebuke them, so they stay away from the wise.

**Isaiah 44:18-19 (NLT)** Such stupidity and ignorance! Their eyes are closed, and they cannot see. Their minds are shut, and they cannot think. [19] The person who made the idol never stops to reflect, "Why, it's just a block of wood! I burned half of it for heat and used it to bake my bread and roast my meat. How can the rest of it be a god? Should I bow down to worship a chunk of wood?"

**Isaiah 14:15-17 (NLT)** (in reference to Lucifer's judgement) But instead, you will be brought down to the place of the dead, down to its lowest depths. [16] Everyone there will stare at you and ask, 'Can this be the one who shook the earth and the kingdoms of the world? [17] Is this the one who destroyed the world and made it into a wilderness? Is this the king who demolished the world's greatest cities and had no mercy on his prisoners?'

**Boundaries vs. Walls:** Boundaries continue to offer relationship and teach respect. Walls keep people out - from knowing others and being known. It requires playing charades - presenting an external image that doesn't match the internal realities of one's heart.

### **Non-Receptivity**

**Nondisclosure** lying by omission rather than commission. This keeps the hidden agenda hidden. Remember, the Layer Concept - lack of true intimacy will lead to finding life in substitutes.

**Denial/ No Self-Criticism** A lack of looking at the true condition of our hearts will lead to a lack of empathy. But looking at our hearts and having empathy for those we have wounded will derail our hidden agendas. Here is how Larry Crabb and C.S. Lewis describe openness and love:

"We really are on a mission in life When others hurt us, we really can respond well. Yes, we are responsible to love, but we can't pull off the obedience involved in loving others. This makes us dependent on God. Life is not in facing your pain: **Life is in loving.** This doesn't just mean at any given moment that we should 'be who we are,' but rather it means directing all our energy toward the other. None of us does this, but we all can come closer.

**The degree to which we come closer to loving is the degree to which we'll experience joy in our lives.**

Dr. Lawrence J. Crabb, Jr.

“Love anything and your heart will be wrung and possibly broken. If you want to make sure of keeping it intact you must give it to no one, not even an animal. Wrap it carefully round with hobbies and little luxuries; avoid all entanglements. Lock it up safe in the casket or coffin of your selfishness. But in that casket - safe, dark, motionless, airless - it will change. It will not be broken; it will become unbreakable, impenetrable, irredeemable. To love is to be vulnerable.” from The Four Loves by C.S. Lewis

The journey of Twisted Thinking and the numbing of conscience begins at an early age and once it has begun is difficult to stop.

- (1) Age 3-5. Manipulates parents - pits them against each other. Begin lying. Low-level control patterns. Steals candy, change, etc.
- (2) Age 6-9. Stealing bills from parents. Manipulates teacher. Used as patsies for older kids. Class Clown
- (3) Age 10-13. Parents see them as different. Starts to skip school. Recruits younger kids as patsies.
- (4) Age 14-16. Into power and control.

### **Recognizing Closed Thinking:**

Three things need to be present: 1) Receptive to feedback, 2) Self-critical, disgusted at being irresponsible, and 3) Disclosure by telling the truth and nothing but the truth. ALL THREE MUST BE PRESENT!

It is very possible to be honest without being receptive to change. Mike tells about time he was caught with emergency phone. You can even be honest and have self-disgust but not be open to giving up the hidden agendas.

### **Foundation for All Errors**

None of the other thinking patterns can operate unless Closed Thinking is present. If we focus on other thinking errors without addressing Closed Thinking too, we'll be on a rabbit chase.

### **Overcoming Closed Thinking**

A person can be closed and not have Closed Thinking. Remember the difference between Boundaries and Walls! Boundaries invite relationship and have a gate. Walls keep people out and allows one to keep his/her hidden agendas to pursue the Big E.

2 Cor. 4:1-2 (NLT) And so, since God in his mercy has given us this wonderful ministry, we never give up. [2] We reject all shameful and underhanded methods. We do not try to trick anyone, and we do not distort the word of God. We tell the truth before God, and all who are honest know that.

When Moses came down Mount Sinai with the Ten Commandments, his face glowed from being in God's presence.. Moses and his veil illustrate the veiling of the people's minds and understanding by their pride, hardness of heart, and refusal to repent. The veil kept them from understanding the references to Christ in the Scriptures.

The Closed Thinker needs to see that excitement is in a relationship with

Jesus and the joy of heaven awaiting us. There needs to be a covenant of NO SECRETS!

How to respond to Closed Thinking: First, take the log out of your own eye. You need to be there for the person, not control or manipulate them. They might not be aware of what they are doing. Ask for more data, like, "Tell me more..." Ask the person to re-phrase what you are saying. Don't argue with them. Ask "Are you open to discussing?" This is not a shaming technique and gives the person a choice.

## **TACTICS TO AVOID ACCOUNTABILITY AND TO CONTINUE THE PRESENT WAY OF LIFE**

1. You will continually point out people's inadequacies.
2. Building yourself up by putting others down.
3. Telling others what they want to hear and not what is truth.
4. Lying - by omission, by distorting the truth and by disclosing only what benefits him/her.
5. Vagueness. "Someone," "I will think about it," "Maybe." "If I feel like it."
6. Diverts attention away from self. Introduces irrelevant material. Invokes racial issues.
7. Attempting to confuse others.
8. Minimizes the situation. "I just got into a little trouble."
9. Agree or say "yes" without really meaning it.
10. Silence
11. Paying attention only to what suits YOU.
12. Make a *big* scene about a minor point.
13. Putting off doing something by saying "I forgot."
14. Putting others on the defensive. The tactics such as degrading, quibbling over words, trying to embarrass, using anger as a weapon.
15. Total inattention
16. Accusing others of misunderstanding.
17. Claiming that you have changed because you did it right once.

**When the renegade thinker discovers that effort, competence and reliability are usually rewarded, they will accomplish worthwhile things without deception or intimidation.**