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## ***Resolve to think in 2010***

By Paperitalo Staff

OK, I am doing the cheap thing all writers and editors do this time of year--resorting to cheesy resolutions for an article topic. If you get on board with this, though, your humble writer thinks it can make a difference for you, your family and your company.

Many years ago, in an early Nip Impressions column, I talked about people going through the motions of life each day. And this is still true--many get out of bed each morning and go through the day, from the point their feet hit the floor, as automatons. Seldom thinking, acting as if they are programmed to routinely perform certain tasks. Every day is Bill Murray in "Groundhog Day."

Some of us are wired a bit differently--I am blessed with a gift of creativity, for instance. Yet the most creative people I know are comedians. If you listen to them closely, you can figure out what they do to make you laugh, especially the ones which you see on television every day. Their primary tool is to juxtapose portions of events. They will take one bit of one contemporary news story and add it to a bit from another one and get a laugh. The laugh is the surprise we all get when the juxtaposition is completed.

In the past I have suggested you vary the path you drive to work in order to add some new thinking to your day. Here I want to teach you a bit about being creative. Learn how to juxtapose situations and see what you come up with. 99% of them will be junk, but it is the 1% that is the big payoff, and they can be a really big payoff.

Some examples. Having trouble with your shipping department? Have them report to stock prep! A preposterous idea on the surface, but it may lead to you finding some people with natural abilities and skill sets that can be switched around and improve the overall performance of your mill. Need to stuff some new equipment in your mill and find yourself short on real estate? Take some simple drawings to a girl scout or boy scout troop and spend an evening challenging them

to come up with some ideas to solve the problem. They will have a bunch of worthless, crazy ones, but they just might come up with a jewel you have been too blind to see.

Life is like the experience I had many years ago watching my daughter learn to drive a car. At first, her eyes were darting all over the place, and her brain was working overtime, for she did not know what data was important and what data was not. After a few trips out on the road, however, she calmed down--her brain had automatically started to sort the important stuff from the trivial, reducing the data flow to a manageable quantity.

We do this every waking moment. You do not negotiate a stairs with attention of a toddler doing it for the first time, in fact, unless you have a leg injury, you do it without thinking. The tragedy is we do this all day long--we navigate the entire day without thinking. For many, it is as if they are in a stupor. Days go by, weeks go by, years go by, and they have little to show for it.

One very strong barrier I see in many is their education. It is as if they think because they are highly educated, they have matured beyond "foolish" ideas. Some of the most lauded thinkers of our age achieved recognition because they dared think foolishly. Albert Einstein is a great example and so is Thomas Edison. They both turned foolish ideas into serious science.

I urge you to use the juxtaposition method, and in general, just begin to use your brain in 2010. You will have a more rewarding year in every aspect of your life.

As we go into 2010, we all have a perfect safety record. Let us resolve to keep it that way by being alert to dangers and hazards all of the time.

Be safe and we will talk next week. ##