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A Leader Thinks Aloud

**A Leader Thinks Aloud**

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## Introduction

John Wesley wrote that he preached to himself, and others were welcome to listen.

It's the same with these thoughts, captured in my quiet moments of reflection and journaling. I see some now as Memos from the Head Office (to borrow an expression from Perry Marshall) and others as early bits of clarity on complex issues I still have not mastered. "Thinking aloud" for me requires me to write it down.

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I've been sharing these types of notes week by week in my Leadership Craft newsletter – you can subscribe free at [leadershipcraft.com](http://leadershipcraft.com) to get new editions.

### A Leader Thinks Aloud

A close friend suggested A Leader Thinks Aloud I compile these up to benefit new audiences.

I hope you find insights and A Leader Thinks Aloud encouragement, as a gift from God to help you work on your leadership craft.

Glenn Brooke

January 2016

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There is a LOT of stuff published about leadership, managing people and projects, running businesses and non-profits, etc. There's a big audience, significant demand. I wonder if A Leader Thinks Aloud part of the demand for this content is not just "help me solve this problem," but "please, dear God, give me hope that someone, anyone else struggles with this, too."

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A friend visited our home and commented on all the books. "Have you read them all?"

"No," I replied. "There are some I haven't started yet. There are many that I started, got what I needed, and then put them aside." It's the same with my ebooks.

I love books. I won't slavishly give my time to the A Leader Thinks Aloud entirety of a book if it is not worth it. I used to feel guilty if I A Leader Thinks Aloud started a book and then didn't get back to it. No longer.

This is particular true with contemporary "business" and popular A Leader Thinks Aloud books. Extract what's useful, leave A Leader Thinks Aloud the rest.

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Trust me, books will come back across your path if you need to pick them up again.

Apply 80/20 thinking to your book reading A Leader Thinks Aloud this year. 80% of the books you read collectively only give you 20% of the value. There might be one or two books you give yourself permission to love and dwell in multiple times this year, because they're that good. That's the 4% that has 64% of the value!

Years ago a mentor of mine said, "How bad would it be if you read nothing but the Bible, Shakespeare, and Aristotle this year?"

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I received an email in which (let's call her Milly, to A Leader Thinks Aloud protect her privacy) wrote "I love your weekly notes and look forward to them. Could you tell us more about your family?"

I'm fairly A Leader Thinks Aloud open about my thoughts and to a lesser degree my experiences, but I do believe in guarding what's A Leader Thinks Aloud important. I tend to share about experiences I've had in the past, especially if I'm going to be away from home. Occasionally I've seen well-known people post on Twitter or Facebook messages like "Going to Dallas today for XYZ. I'll miss my wife and little girl while they stay home all alone until Sunday night." Ach! Protect your family by holding that kind of information close!

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So I don't write on the Internet very much about my family. They publish some information on their own, but they are all adults now.

Consider how you handle the privacy of not only your family but your work colleagues. They need to trust you. A Leader Thinks Aloud

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Do A Leader Thinks Aloud you believe the best days of your family, your organization, your country, and this world are still ahead of you?

Before you <sigh> and say no, listen to ol' Uncle Glenn for a minute.

Astute readers of the Lord of the Rings novel (it's actually 6 books comprising one novel, usually grouped into 3, and made into 3 movies) have pointed out that Tolkien was writing from the post WW1 British world in decline, facing hostile Germans for the 2nd time. People have suggested that Gondor, the ancient civilization founded by the mighty Numenorians but now in its waning days, is a picture of the British Empire. By contrast, Rohan is cowboy culture, wild A Leader Thinks Aloud and free, who in return for helping Gondor in ages past were granted a large section of their kingdom. They come again in Return of the King to A Leader Thinks Aloud save Gondor from the hordes of Mordor. Rohan is the United States.

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The best days of both A Leader Thinks Aloud great nations in Lord of the Rings are ahead. They both need a renewed sense of who their self-identity, and a renewed caliber of leadership. Status quo leads to decline.

The best days of your family, organization, and the world can A Leader Thinks Aloud be ahead, as well. It's quite likely that you are in that organization to step up to a higher caliber of leadership. This is why leaders like you must continue to work on the craft of leadership!

What you believe about future possibilities matters.

Related: your beliefs about the future also influence your bias about status quo and moving forward.

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Learning to write well comes from two basic practices sustained over a long time:

1. Reading (and listening) to other quality wordsmiths

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## 2. Writing as a means to find the voices to express your true self well

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I like this advice for entrepreneurs on organizing your portfolio of projects: "One long shot and 3 fish-in-a-barrel"

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Over-respond to everything in your life. (Not over-react, but over-respond). Don't just put out fires, but when a problem occurs spend 5x the energy and eradicate the root cause. Make it so that you never ever had that particular problem again.

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Take a day off.

Be a master of your technology. We have allowed Verizon, Facebook, and Twitter to become

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our 'bread and circuses.'

Make the choices that lead to the better you. Kindle should be more used than Facebook on your mobile devices. A Leader Thinks Aloud Less chatter in your life, less noise will be better for you.

Related -- you will be fine, in fact better off, if you ignore the mainstream news most of the time. The important stories will still come to your attention, trust me. But your thinking won't be contaminated with honeyed swill. Your mind will be much better prepared to analyze the news you do hear. Remember that our mainstream media outlets have become entertainment businesses competing 24x7 for your attention.

Why did the ancients consult hermits for clear thinking and advice? Because they were set apart from the noise of the typical life.

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Two thoughts about our public school systems. (1) The money going into the system (still rising!) is really about graduating students, not educating them. I wonder if we attached the same funds (in the US we average \$13,000/student) to the student rather than the system, if we would see different results. (2) We seem to have lost the distinction between indoctrination and education.

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I love how Perry Marshall titled one of his newsletters: "The Real Teacher Will Refuse to be Your Messiah"

Brilliant.

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There's a difference between getting rid of problems and solving problems.

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One of the primary reasons we study the words of the Bible is to learn what God's voice sounds like, so we can distinguish our Father's voice from the cacophony of other voices.

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I made a list the other day in my journal of encouraging signs in some of the men and women that I'm mentoring:

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## **A Leader Thinks Aloud**

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