CENTER FOR QUALITY LEADERSHIP®

The Power Thinking™ Decision Guide

Six tools that train the thinking behind every decision you make

Dr. Don W. Hooper, Ph.D., CTL®

Author of the Amazon bestseller *Power Thinking: Discovering the Unknown by Unlocking Your Brain*

“Just like Napoleon Hill's blockbuster book, "Think and Grow Rich", Don Hooper’s book will impact leaders for decades to come”

Rod Paige, Former United States Secretary of Education

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

This guide is short on purpose. It shows you **what** to look at in your thinking. My Power Thinking™ Mastermind is where we work on the **how**, together, on the decisions in front of you.

Before you turn the page, choose one decision you are facing right now. Keep it in mind as you read. Each tool ends with a question. Answer it for that one decision.

By the last page, you will know where your thinking is strong, where it slips, and what to do next.

A NOTE FROM ME

Have you ever collected a good idea and never used it?

I have. For years I was intrigued by every new tool and insight I came across. I saved them for later. I scanned them for quick wins. I rarely put them to work. I felt stuck at one level of success, and I wanted to break through to the next.

Then I read about and met people who were applying what they learned. They were doing well, and the reason was plain. They acted.

That is when I came to a simple conclusion. Wisdom and understanding without implementation have limited value.

So I changed my mindset. I stopped collecting and started applying. That decision led to my book, *Power Thinking: Discovering the Unknown by Unlocking Your Brain*, to the Certified Thought Leader® credential, and to the work I do with leaders today.

I wrote this guide with that lesson in mind. It is not meant to sit in a folder. It is meant to be used on one real decision this week.

Ideas without action lead nowhere.

Dr. Don W. Hooper, Ph.D., CTL®

Founder, Center for Quality Leadership®

START HERE

Why good leaders still make poor decisions

Just because you have thoughts does not mean you know how to think.

Most leaders I meet are smart, experienced and busy. They have more information than ever. They have frameworks, dashboards and advisers. They still make decisions they later regret.

The problem is rarely a lack of information. It is the thinking that sorts the information, weighs it and turns it into action.

Many leaders rely on best practices. Best practices are in the past. Best thinking is what you need today and tomorrow.

Here is the good news. Thinking is a skill. Your brain keeps forming new connections throughout your life. The thinking habits you have today are not fixed. With focused practice, you can build better ones at any age.

That is what Power Thinking™ is. It is a way to train the thinking behind every decision you make. The six tools on the next pages show you where to begin.

> **ASK YOURSELF**
>
> When a decision of mine went wrong, was it the information, or the way I thought about it?

TOOL 1

Know how your brain decides

1

Every decision you make passes through three types of thought.

Conscious thought is focused thought. It is you paying attention, alert and minding your business.

Unconscious thought is unfocused thought. It is the mind wandering, daydreaming or drifting.

Subconscious thought is always working under the surface, even when you are not focused. I believe it is also where we receive what is larger than ourselves. Some call it intuition. Some call it inspiration or faith. More than once, a creative thought has come to me while I was resting, and I got up to capture it before it left me.

Most leaders only trust the first type. Power Thinkers learn to use all three. Sometimes the best thing you can do for a decision is let your mind wander so it can wonder.

The same is true of data. Data can only inform. It has to become information, then knowledge, then understanding, before you can act with wisdom.

> **ASK YOURSELF**
>
> Where does my decision sit right now: data, information, knowledge, understanding or wisdom?

IN THE ROOM · WEEK 1

We look at how your brain is built for decisions, and where you may be working against it without knowing.

TOOL 2

Lead people, manage things

2

I call it Executive Stewardship. An executive steward leads people and manages things.

Those are two different kinds of thinking. Leading people calls on the creative, sensitive side of the brain. Managing things calls on the logical, organized side. A whole-brain thinker knows which one a decision needs, and when to use both.

The same balance shows up in how you get work done.

Efficiency is doing the thing right.
Effectiveness is doing the right thing.

Put them together and you get excellence. When you have to choose, choose effectiveness. A task done well that should never have been done is still a poor decision.

> **ASK YOURSELF**
>
> Is my decision mainly about people or about things? Am I using the right kind of thinking for it?

IN THE ROOM · WEEK 2

We work on leading people and managing things in your own role, so you can be decisive and caring in the same decision.

TOOL 3

Change your thinking before your strategy

3

Most change efforts start with a new strategy. Many of them stall, because the thinking behind the strategy never changed.

Before you plan, ask what kind of change you are facing.

An **interruption** pauses what you do for a short time. Then things carry on in much the same direction.

A **disruption** is a pivot point. It changes the direction itself.

Leaders get into trouble when they treat a disruption like an interruption. They wait for things to go back to normal, and normal never comes back.

A volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous world calls for new thinking, not old habits applied harder.

> **ASK YOURSELF**
>
> Is the situation behind my decision an interruption or a disruption? How would I decide differently if it were the other one?

IN THE ROOM · WEEK 3

We look at why change fails when it starts with strategy, and how to retrain the thinking patterns that keep you stuck.

TOOL 4

Name the right problem

4

Many poor decisions are good answers to the wrong question.

Watch a young child ask "why?" They ask, hear the answer, think about it and ask again, until they truly understand. That is the spirit of the Five Whys, one of the simplest root-cause tools I know.

Once you have the right problem, resist the urge to narrow your options too soon. Widen first. Look at the problem from a different angle. Then narrow.

And when time is short, do not skip the step most leaders skip. In the OODA Loop (observe, orient, decide, act), orient is where you make sense of what you see. It is where your assumptions go to work. Two leaders can look at the same facts. One sees a crisis. The other sees an opening.

> **ASK YOURSELF**
>
> What problem am I really solving? Is it the right one?

IN THE ROOM · WEEK 4

You bring a real problem. We work through a structured way to see it, rank it and solve it, with eleven other leaders asking the questions you would not ask yourself.

TOOL 5

Test the decision before you commit

5

A decision can look sound on paper and still fail on the ground. So before I commit, I put it through a few mental models. Here are three I teach.

The important versus the urgent. Urgent things are loud. Important things are often quiet. Which one is driving this decision?

All the dominoes. One decision sets off another, then another. Can you see where the last domino lands?

Inversion. Ask, "What if the opposite were true?" Thinking backward puts a spotlight on errors you would otherwise miss.

I also come back to a test written in the 1930s by a businessman named Herbert J. Taylor. It is four questions long. The first one is, "Is it the truth?" You would be surprised how often that question changes a decision.

> **ASK YOURSELF**
>
> What would have to be true for the opposite decision to be the right one?

IN THE ROOM · WEEK 5

You get my core thinking tools, including mind mapping and affinity diagrams, and you use them on your own decision while we work together.

TOOL 6

Decide on purpose, then act

6

Purpose is the why behind what you want to do. If you do not know the why, the what may not make sense.

Purpose comes first. Then vision, mission, goals, strategies and tactics. Many leaders start with tactics and wonder why their decisions feel scattered.

When clarity is present, decisions are easier.

Then comes the part most people wait on. They wait to feel motivated. Motivation does not cause action. Action creates motivation. You act, your brain responds, and the next step gets easier.

You can do anything. You cannot do everything at the same time. Purpose tells you which thing to do now.

> **ASK YOURSELF**
>
> What is the why behind this decision? What is the first action I will take, and when?

IN THE ROOM · WEEKS 6, 7 AND 8

We find your purpose, turn it into a plan, and build the willpower to follow through, so your decisions turn into results.

YOUR DECISION SNAPSHOT

One decision, six questions

Write down the decision you chose at the start. Answer each question in a line or two.

My decision:

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1. Where does it sit right now: data, information, knowledge, understanding or wisdom?

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2. Is it mainly about people or about things?

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3. Am I facing an interruption or a disruption?

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4. What problem am I really solving?

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5. What would have to be true for the opposite decision to be right?

---

6. What is my why, and what is my first action?

And one more: who questioned my thinking on this?

THE LAST QUESTION

What you cannot do alone

Look at the last line of your snapshot. Who questioned your thinking?

For many leaders, the honest answer is no one. The higher you rise, the fewer people question you. Your team is used to following your lead. That is not a flaw in you. It is how organizations work.

It leaves you with a problem. You cannot see your own blind spots. That is what makes them blind spots.

Napoleon Hill called the answer a "Master Mind Alliance." When people think together about a definite purpose, one person's thought builds on another's, and together they reach a thought none of them would reach alone.

Each of us looks at the world through our own mind's eye. When you spar with a different mind's eye, you see what you could not see before.

A mastermind is not a book club. A book club talks about what you read. A mastermind talks about how it changed your thinking.

This guide showed you what to look at. The Mastermind is where you learn how, with other leaders, on your real decisions.

THE HOW

Inside the Power Thinking™ Mastermind

Eight live, one-hour sessions on Zoom, every Wednesday at 2 p.m. Central. No more than 12 leaders. I teach every session myself. Each one is built on a chapter of my book and goes further than the book can.

Week	Session
1	**Brain Basics.** How your brain is built for decisions.
2	**Executive Stewardship.** Leading people and managing things.
3	**Powerful Change.** Retraining stuck thinking patterns.
4	**Problem Identification, Prioritization and Power Solutions.**
5	**Power Leadership Tools.** Mind mapping, affinity diagrams and more.
6	**Finding Your Power Purpose.**
7	**Planning Tools.** Turning vision into action.
8	**Willpower for Powerful Action.** Follow-through that lasts.

You also receive

- A copy of my book, mailed to you
- The Power Thinking Toolkit and digital workbook
- My personal summary of each week's chapter
- A 30-minute private call with me on the Certified Thought Leader® path; recordings and transcripts of every session for 14 days after the program

IS IT FOR YOU?

An honest look before you decide

It is for you if you

- Are an experienced leader or consultant who wants sharper decisions
- Will bring a real decision to the group
- Want a method you can use for the rest of your career
- Value other leaders' questions as much as their answers

It is not for you if you

- Are satisfied with average results
- Believe hard work alone guarantees success
- Want a quick fix
- Prefer comfort over growth and challenge

My honest promise

No one can guarantee what you will do with this. What I can tell you is that leaders who build the systems, the tools and the processes do better.

So here is my commitment. Take part in the first two live sessions and apply the tools. If you do not experience a meaningful shift in your thinking and approach, ask for a full refund.

Your investment

$897, or three monthly payments of **$299**.

Money you can get more of. Time you cannot. The wise investment of time is what helps you lead a better, higher-quality life.

QUESTIONS LEADERS ASK ME

Good questions deserve straight answers

"I do not have time."

That is a fair concern, and I am glad you raised it. It is one hour a week for eight weeks. The question is what that hour is worth if it changes how you make every decision after it.

"I have already read the book."

Good. Then you already know the what. The book gives you the ideas. The Mastermind is where you apply them, with other leaders, to the decisions on your desk.

"I am not a CEO."

You do not need to be. The Mastermind is for experienced leaders and consultants in any field. Many of the leaders I work with are physicians, attorneys, educators, military officers and executives inside organizations they do not own.

"What if it is not right for me?"

Then let us find out together. Book a 15-minute call with me. I will ask about your role and your goals, and I will tell you honestly whether the Mastermind fits. And if you join, you have the refund commitment on the page before this one.

WHAT OTHERS SAY

From leaders who have read and used this work

“Dr. Hooper creatively and systematically puts together known thought practices that promote critical thinking while understanding brain science. He poses thought-provoking questions that help one understand the principles that projected innovators from Isaac Newton to Elon Musk.”

Mike Holt, Ph.D., Former Executive Director of School University Partnerships, Texas A&M University

“Don Hooper's book on Power Thinking opened my mind to exercise different thinking strategies, thinking models, and deep thinking practices to minimize risks and maximize opportunities for success. I have been in real estate for decades, and this book helped me create a Masterpiece of Thought for development. Open your brain and cross the finish line.”

John Femrite, Real Estate Investor

YOUR NEXT STEP

If not you, then who? If not now, then when and how?

You have a decision in front of you. You have seen what to look at. The next step is learning how, with a small group of leaders who will question your thinking and help you act on it.

The next Power Thinking™ Mastermind begins **Wednesday, December 2, at 2 p.m. Central**. Each cohort is capped at 12 leaders.

Join the Power Thinking™ Mastermind

power-thinker.net/mastermind2026

Not sure yet? Let us talk first.

Book a 15-minute call with me

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr. Don W. Hooper, Ph.D., CTL®

Dr. Don W. Hooper served as a school superintendent for more than 25 years. The Texas Association of School Administrators voted him Superintendent of the Year, and he served as President of the American Association of School Administrators.

He is the founder of the Center for Quality Leadership® in Richmond, Texas, where he helps executives, managers, and professionals train the thinking behind their decisions and become recognized thought leaders in their fields.

He is the author of the Amazon bestseller *Power Thinking: Discovering the Unknown by Unlocking Your Brain* and the creator of the Certified Thought Leader® (CTL®) credential.

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