

Turn New Ideas Into New, Permanent Behaviors

So you went to a great seminar or read an excellent book that gave you some solid ideas about how to run your practice more effectively or treat colleagues or clients in ways that create better results. Did the ideas translate into real changes for your practice? Were you able to develop an easy-to-call-on competency with the suggestions you learned? When the pressure is on, do you naturally use the new information? Or is it harder than you thought?

Attorneys, wealth professionals, entrepreneurs want to execute effectively and reliably. Once you learn a new idea, most of you want to just do it. So, how do you get from knowing the idea to permanent, unconscious strategic thinking and behavior?

You wouldn't expect to hear how to hit a great backhand or accurate drive and then simply and consistently implement at a high level. When moving from new information to easy mastery, there are four stages that you are likely to pass through:

1. **Unconscious Incompetence:** You don't even know what you don't know.
2. **Conscious Incompetence:** You now have a clue what you could be doing, but don't know how to do it. Maybe you just read a great book, attended a provocative seminar, or had some other "aha" experience. You now know you could be "creating a better team", creating a "learning environment", could be on the "cutting edge", but where do you start? What's the first step?
3. **Conscious Competence:** You know what to do, but you have to remember and pay attention to do it. You may have problems keeping at it. The new approach worked when you remembered it, but things easily slide back to the old status quo. Other things catch your attention and it's hard to remember to maintain the new behavior.
4. **Unconscious Competence:** You're so good you don't even have to think about what you're doing any more. It's automatic, like brushing your teeth. You actually notice when you're not doing it. Of course, you greet the client and every communication is filtered through your "how will the client receive this?" mindset. Of course your staff is happy to come to work every day and you follow up with people in a timely way. When you don't do this, something just doesn't feel right.

This unconscious competence is your ultimate goal. With a behavior so practiced that it's automatic, you have freedom to pay attention to the dynamic flow of a situation; to free up your mind for your most creative thinking.

Coaching—feedback and techniques to make a new behavior fit your style and play to your strengths—will help you move from knowing new information to comfortable, unconscious competence. Tiger Woods didn't get to his level of competence without coaching; isn't it time for you to raise your game to a new level?

Give me a call if you're ready to solidify a new expertise.