



## ViewPoint

### **Where is your mental maturity?** Cdr. Bud Slabbaert

---

**W**hen children are getting to the age of three, they start asking questions. It heralds a sudden upsurge in their intellectual development. A younger child will simply accept that things are the way they are; past that certain age the child with a greater degree of mental maturity will want to know why. You are an adult, where do you stand? Are you acting like a child before the age of three or do you estimate that you have mental maturity enough to still ask questions? Wow, I got you there!

I'm sorry, but the older I get, the more I start asking why and I start questioning all the answers. I wonder what that means in this context. At that age of around three, the process of "individuation" occurs. Children begin to become aware of themselves as individuals, and start to see the gap between how the world is and how they want it to be. Again, my question to you, where do you stand on this as an adult? I bet that most of you see the gap, but what are you doing about it? Be honest with yourself, most likely nothing! You need to do what you need to do and not what you want to do, and that's how life continues to run smoothly. Right? Is that your way or his/her way? Okay, have it either way if that satisfies you. I have mine. I let people do what they want, but not with me. You see? That is where Individuation comes in and also applies to our aviation business and industry. I'll get to that later on and it is no child stuff.

### **Most of what we do is a bunch of nonsense!**

"Why" is not simply about curiosity. It is about asking for a reason. Ask the why-question to people in any kind of activity. Most likely you'll get the answer that they were told to do so. Told-to-do-so could also be trained-to-do-so. That's acceptable. However often the answer to the "Why" is more like: rocks are hard and water is wet. In my view, that is not acceptable. However people start slipping and sliding if more why-questions are coming thick and fast and go on like a broken record with whys. One is becoming subject to be considered a nuisance. Who wants to be a nuisance? So, that's where the questioning stops most of the time. What is considered a nuisance here, is where the most brilliant minds keep going on. People love to quote Einstein because quoting him gives a sense that one has also intelligence. You know? A bit like rubbing off. What better way to show it than agreeing with a genius. It is funny though that there is a quote from Einstein that you don't see much; he said: "It's not that I'm so smart, it's just that I stay with problems longer." That is Einstein! That may give you a hint why, where mediocre minds consider questioning a nuisance, the brilliant minds create a new theory and get a Nobel Prize!

### **Individuation is best for business**

In business, individuation parallels specialization and increases efficiency. It serves as a means for individuals to find comparative advantage in their working environment or career. For

business it could create a comparative advantage in the marketplace. Isn't that what most of us want, be better and make more money? Let's think of that kid's stuff above, put it into place here, and you will see that it is what is needed most in our business and our industry. It makes you wonder how we forgot what we did at age three. Keep asking "Why"! Why the heck are we doing this and why this way? Why isn't there a better way? Individuation is the process through which a person or a business becomes its "true self". In psychology it is considered the process whereby the innate elements of personality; the different experiences of a person's life and the different aspects and components of the immature psyche become integrated over time into a well-functioning whole. Take a pause, digest, and read again but this time apply it to a business. Individuation is stabilizing a professional's personality or a business; it is also a process of establishing a competitive edge! Understand why the why-questions are so valuable and we should not stop asking them? In fact, we should ask more because we all know darn well that we ourselves, our business and industry are not perfect.

## Stop the world; ask why

I have come to the conclusion that most things we do in life or do in business are just a bunch of nonsense and what is worse that we keep doing it for no good reason at all. Some will blame it on the boss, some on the weather, others on childhood or their mother-in-law. Oh, almost forgot the recession. Did you ever look in the mirror in the middle of the day and wondered what you look like? Honestly? WHAT you look like, not how? The other day, I came to the conclusion that a fresh ripe mango is cheaper than a half a pint of Haagen-Dazs mango sorbet. Probably healthier too. A big water melon may be cheaper than a bottle of those slightly melon-taste flavored waters. Problem is, mangos and water melons require a knife and they don't come in containers or bottles. So, rather than going for the real-McCoy, we are going for the processed substance and pay more for it! Convenience is the name of the game. Believe it or not; there are still choices in life.

So, then we shop at the delicatessen store and pay more or dine at a fancy restaurant which also gives a smaller portion on a plate with hoopla decoration, all at a higher price but you experience the advantage of been seen big time. Actually, what you are doing is spending more and forcing yourself into ways to make more money. You work so hard for it that you need a vacation or a wellness stopover. It keeps snowballing until nature starts giving you some messages that you can feel in bones or see by looking at your skin. You start wishing for a magic wrinkle eraser. Or you start realizing that there a limit on how long you can play "hard to get". At this point, if you are thinking that I'm singling out the female gender, man, you are wrong as men can be. You think you are "Living the life of Riley" and you believe you are "Hot Stuff". Through nature's eyes you are really only lallygagging and dilldallying along through life. In retrospective you will see that you were as unimportant as a miniature ship in a bottle. Why such harsh words? Hmmm, a why-question; I like that! Well, that is what it often takes to make people halt for a moment to think "Why"!

Actually, often fun and joy get lost in life, let alone the challenge that nature gave us to gather our food. Yesterday, the gardener picked a coconut from a palm tree for me. With his machete, he cut away the thick layer of protecting hairy material and I could see and feel the fibers that door mats are made off. Never thought about that, did you? Then he made a little hole so that I could pour the coconut milk in a glass. Next, with the furiosity of a Wildman he hacked with that machete into the nut to open it. I could peel the fresh white coconut meat out of it. We sat next to each other and shared some of that "flesh" while sitting on a boulder under a palm tree! You don't even feel that a cushion is missing. It tasted yummy, it was entertainment, I socialized and I learned that coconuts are some of the most incredible piece of the pack in this creation. Did you know that a coconut can float around on the salty ocean for a long time until it washes ashore and then germinates and grows into to a tree? Anyway, you would not experience all that at the Five Star Restaurant run by Maitre Moutarde. And the price? Just friendly a smile. Why not?

---

*The author Cdr. Bud Slabbaert is an expert in Development of Business Aviation at airports. He is initiator and Conference Chairman of the BA-MEETUP, a joint conference for Schedulers, Dispatchers, Pilots, Operators, FBOs, Executive Handling Agents, Business Airports, and International Service Providers in Europe and the Middle East.*