

Critical Thinking Notes

Critical Thinking Virtues

- Humility**: People who are intellectually humble are aware of the limitations of their knowledge.
- Courage**: to change their minds when other ideas are superior to their own.
- Empathy**: Empathy allows you to put yourself in the position of those who oppose you
- Integrity**: Having integrity means that there is consistency between your words and actions
- Perseverance**: Working through layers of complexity to find the truth
- Ability to Reason**: Do not be guided by blind faith, tradition or emotional impulses
- Autonomy**: Relying on yourself and your own thinking. Thinking critically, being open to other points of view and seeing others' perspectives
- Fair-mindedness**: equally respect all points of view whether or not they agree.

Types of Thinkers

The “Unreflective Thinker” – You are born unreflective, that is, unaware of how you go about thinking. By reflecting on how you think, you improve your thought processes.

The “Challenged Thinker” – Awareness of a problem with your thinking, such as faulty assumptions, is a sign of progress toward critical thinking.

The “Beginning Thinker” – Beginners acknowledge that thinking is important and make some efforts toward betterment, but often those efforts are irregular and not sustained.

The “Practicing Thinker” – Regular practice is indispensable to improvement. Devise a plan for improvement and execute it consistently.

The “Advanced Thinker” – Regular practice, according to the game plan, will help you make sustained progress.

The “Master Thinker” – Your critical-thinking skills are well-developed and almost automatic.

Eight Elements of Critical Thinking

“Purpose” – Thinking is always purposeful

“Point of view” – All thinking takes place from a particular perspective.

“Assumptions” – An assumption is a presupposition that helps shape your point of view. Assumptions may be true or false, justified or unjustified.

“Implications” – Implications are inherent in a situation or a decision. They reveal possibilities that might result from the situation. Consequences are the realization of such possibilities

“Information” – Thinking requires constructing information from raw facts.

“Inferences” – Use the process of drawing out deductions to make sense of data.

“Concepts” – are the implicit "theories, principles, axioms and rules" that guide your thinking.

“Questions” – The critical thinker will pose questions throughout the thought process

Critical Thinking Notes

Test Your Thinking For...

“**Clarity**” – Nebulous or ambiguous thinking leads to questionable conclusions and bad decisions.

“**Accuracy**” – Thinking in accordance with facts. Inaccurate statements—in advertising campaigns, persuades uncritical thinkers.

“**Precision**” An adequate but not excessive amount of detail. Specificity and precision are necessary to optimize clarity and accuracy.

“**Relevance**” – Relevant thinking is germane to the purpose.

“**Depth**” – Deep thinking goes beyond the superficial and grapples with the complexity underlying the thought.

“**Breadth**” – Broad thinking takes into account all perspectives and assess them fairly.

“**Logical order**” – Thinking that moves according to logic is sound and strong.

“**Significant**” – Ensures thought will not chase trivial tangents, but will focus on issues central to the problem.

“**Fairness**” – Fairness gives due respect to the opinions of others, and avoids stereotyping and prejudice.

Obstacles to Critical Thinking

- **Power struggles** – Endorsing wrong views and illogical conclusions, especially when powerful people espouse those views, may itself be a path to power.
- **Group representations** – Members of the group generally work to maintain a good appearance in the eyes of outsiders; this can discourage open questions about issues that might harm such an appearance.
- **Bureaucracy** – Bureaucracy discourages independent judgment, and favors habitual routines and regulations.
- **Success** – Success may lead organizations to draw the wrong lessons from their experiences. Success may occur despite, rather than because of, the culture of the corporation.

Interdependence – Analyze the links and patterns among thoughts, desires and feelings. Identify patterns and subject them to the discipline of reason.

Logic – Recognize that you bring meaning to the world by your thoughts, and carefully analyze your goals, questions, information, assumptions, concepts and conclusions.

Assessment – Conduct a regular assessment and criticize your mode of thinking to maintain your thinking skills at a high level of effectiveness.

Egocentricity – Recognize the danger of egocentric thought.

Egocentricity of others – Anyone can be egocentric, and some people may behave irrationally. However, the strategic thinker conducts a fair and thorough analysis before imputing irrationality to others.

Generalization – Ample experimental and historical evidence indicates that people make generalizations based on limited and usually quite recent data. The strategic thinker puts all experience and information in context.

Distrust of appearances – Egocentric thinking can often initially appear to be quite rational. You must develop a ruthless perseverance to get beyond the superficial appearance.

Deliberation – The strategic thinker is aware that unconscious, unplanned action is apt to be irrational.

Dominance and submission – Self-examination will reveal when you are acting in a dominant or submissive manner.

Sociocentricity – A strategic thinker questions thoughts and decisions that are merely expressions of social identity.

Work – The strategic thinker acknowledges that developing critical thinking skills takes concentrated and sustained effort over time.

