

Critical Thinking

An Introductory Lecture

Being a 'critical thinker' does not mean that the person tends always to be negative.

CT is not the same as disagreement. There is a considerable difference between disagreement and critical thinking.



Disagreement is a clash of viewpoints.



When a person asserts an opinion and another denies it or states an opposing opinion, they are disagreeing but not thinking critically. if someone tries to embarrass or humiliate, and allows himself/ herself to dominate somebody else unfortunately he/she is not out of the realm of critical thinking

Human righteous behaviour **does not** tolerate embarrassment or humiliation , and neither allows any person to dominate one another and confiscates his will or thoughts...

yet

thinking critically **does** give one a kind of power. Such a power is knowledge which is the ability to assess the reasons for a belief, to make a discussion more enlightening, to solve problems, of gaining greater control over your life, of attaining truth.

- Critical thinking gives people the power that originates from knowing, from attaining truth, and justified belief.
- It is neither the tyranny of imposing one's will on others, nor inflicting humiliation, nor trying to persuade another to your opinion.
- The ultimate aim of critical thinking is the justification of belief. A belief is justified when sound reasons count for it than against it.

- Critical thinking helps people assess their beliefs. When beliefs are justified, we know we have a solid basis for believing what we do, that we can defend your beliefs when necessary, and that possess legitimate grounds for action.
- Unfortunately, no one can justify his beliefs by dominating or humiliating others, or even by persuading them to believe as he does. Those who think they can are tyrants, not critical thinkers.

**Occasionally, critical thinking entails nitpicking.
Critical thinking requires no imagination or creativity.
Critical thinking can be applied only to the beliefs and
positions of others.**

If you think any of these statements is true, you are misinformed about critical thinking. There's widespread ignorance among many well- and not-so-well educated about the nature and function of critical thinking. And the number of people who don't, can't, or won't think critically is even greater.

Critical thinking involves determining and assessing the reasons for an opposing view. It aims to find out whether a position is worth holding, thereby serving as a basis for further discussion and inquiry that, ideally, will lead the disputants to a better understanding of an issue.



You believe death sentence should be outlawed; I don't.



If we're thinking critically, we'll closely inspect the reasons for and against each position. We don't merely keep reasserting our positions. I look at the reasons for your position; you look at the reasons for mine. Just as important, each of us is willing to have our positions subjected to this kind of scrutiny.

Definitions of critical thinking vary in breadth or inclusiveness. Broad definitions equate critical thinking with the cognitive processes and strategies involved in decision making, problem solving, or inquiry.

Critical thinking is reflective and reasonable thinking that is focused on deciding what to believe or do.

Robert H. Ennis (1985, 45)

Limited definitions focus on evaluation or appraisal; critical thinking is formulation and use of criteria to make warranted judgments about knowledge claims, normative statements, methods of inquiry, policy decisions, alternative positions on public issues, or any other object of concern.

Critical thinking, defined narrowly, is an essential element of general cognitive processes, such as problem solving or decision making, but is not synonymous with them.

Critical thinking, whether conceived broadly or narrowly, implies curiosity, skepticism, reflection, and rationality. Critical thinkers have a propensity to raise and explore questions about beliefs, claims, evidence, definitions, conclusions, and actions.

1- The definition of critical thinking has gone through a *transformation from meaning the ability to distinguish the thought patterns in the work of others to a reflection on one's own beliefs, thoughts, and decisions.* Cromwell (1992)

2- Others define it as figuring out what to believe, in a variety of contexts, "in a rational way that requires the ability to judge the plausibility of specific assertions, to weigh evidence, to assess the logical soundness of inferences, to construct counter arguments and alternative hypotheses.

3- Another group of experts define critical thinking as "disciplined, self-directed thinking that exemplifies the perfections of thinking appropriate to a particular mode or domain of thought."

4- A more practical view offers the following broad definition: "Critical thinking skills are (a) those diverse cognitive processes and associated attitudes, (b) critical to intelligent action, (c) in diverse situations and fields, (d) that can be improved by instruction or conscious effort."