

Critical Thinking & Intellectual Traits

Humility vs. Arrogance

Anyone has to know that one's knowledge is limited and both he and his knowledge are context sensitive and sometime we may be deceived because of our viewpoints. We have to be conscious of the limits of our knowledge.

Intellectual humility depends on recognizing that one should not claim more than one actually knows, but it does not imply submissiveness.

It implies that lack of intellectual pretentiousness combined with insight into the logical foundations, or lack of such foundations, one's beliefs....

Courage vs. Cowardice

We have to be conscious that we have to fairly face and address ideas, beliefs and opinions toward those we have prejudice. This courage is a trait of a critical thinker who believes that even those ideas considered dangerous or absurd are sometimes rationally justified (in whole or in part) and that sometimes we are astray with those beliefs and conclusions we have been indoctrinated.

Intellectual courage comes into play here, because sometimes we will discover truth on the other side and what we took from community was just misleading.

We need courage to be true to our own thinking in such circumstances and sometimes we have to face society penalties.

Empathy vs. Close mindedness

We have to consider others while exposing their viewpoints and put ourselves in the place of others in order to genuinely understand them, which requires the consciousness of our egocentric tendency to identify truth with our immediate perceptions of long-standing thought or belief.

As such we can reconstruct others' opinions and reasoning and to inspire from their ideas and premises.

This trait also correlates with the willingness to remember occasions when we were wrong in the past despite an intense conviction that we were right, and with the ability to imagine our being similarly deceived in a case-at-hand.

Autonomy vs. Conformity

When we rationally control our beliefs , values and inferences we may embrace the ideal of critical thinking which is to learn to think for oneself, to gain command over one's thought processes.

It entails a commitment to analyzing and evaluating beliefs on the basis of reason and evidence, to question when it is rational to question, to believe when it is rational to believe, and to conform when it is rational to conform.

Conclusion

Critical thinking can be applied not only to the beliefs and positions of others but also to our own. Although it's true that you can apply critical thinking to dissect the claims you encounter, its application is by no means confined to the views of others.

How many times have you pondered a personal problem?

Furthermore, as an intelligent, responsible citizen you probably want to clarify your positions on important social issues. The resolution of personal problems and the formulation of viewpoints on social issues call for critical thinking. Indeed, individuals who cannot think critically are like dead leaves at the mercy of any storm.