



## How to Develop Critical Thinking Skills

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Critical thinking is often characterized as a scientific, analytical way of thinking. It helps us form more knowledgeable opinions and make better decisions. That certainly seems like a beneficial skill to have, but how do you develop the ability to think critically?

Critical thinking doesn't equal higher intelligence. *In layman's terms, it's just a more logical way to think about solutions from all angles.*

Some of us may have stronger critical thinking skills than others, but we can all learn how to improve and develop our mind.

**Here are some suggestions that can help you strengthen your critical thinking skills:**

- 1. Clarify.** Make sure you have a clear understanding of the problem you're trying to solve. You won't be able to reasonably analyze a situation and locate a solution if you're not completely clear on what you're trying to accomplish!
- ***It's also important that you place your own feelings about the situation aside.*** You cannot get a clear understanding of the issue if you have prejudiced opinions and biases about it.
- 2. Attempt to find a solution.** Take some time with a pen and paper to define all possibilities. At this time you'll also want to map out how you'll be able to reach each of these solutions.
- Include the benefits and challenges of each solution. To learn how to improve and develop your critical thinking skills, ***you must be open to new ideas,*** so try and incorporate as much as you can into your list.

**3. Information.** Next, gather as much information as possible to support all the solutions you're considering, as well as information you need to refute them.

- ***Considering your solutions from all angles will keep you from making a haphazard decision,*** which would not be classified in the realm of critical thinking.

**4. Learn how to analyze.** Now you have a problem, a list of solutions, and all the information you need to support or refute each of those decisions. So what do you do with it all?

- ***You'll need time to analyze everything.*** Take everything into consideration and don't assume anything. Make sure you have irrefutable evidence to back everything up. The more you practice this, the better you'll ultimately get at it, so keep plugging away.

**5. Conclude.** Make an intelligent conclusion to your original problem. Make sure you have the documentation to back up and prove your decision. Always make sure this is a reasonable conclusion that is relatively simple to put into action.

- If you've put the time and effort into analyzing the problem and gathering the information, your conclusion should be able to support itself.

### **Final Thoughts on Critical Thinking**

***By following the steps explained here, you have just used your critical thinking skills!*** Though it may seem unnatural at first, as with everything, as you continue to practice these strategies, your critical thinking skills will continue to improve and develop.

Thinking critically can help you with many aspects in your life. Keep practicing these skills on a regular basis and soon you'll enjoy the benefits of better decisions and superior choices!