

Review of key word in the Art of Thinking---Part 1--Be Aware
53 Very Important Points I want you to be Aware of--

Chapter 1--Developing Your Thinking

1. Thinking is a purposeful mental activity over which we exercise some control.

2. Formal definition of thinking: Thinking is any mental activity that helps formulate or solve a problem, make a decision, or fulfill a desire to understand. It is a search for answers, a reaching for meaning.

3. The production phase of thinking--In this phase, which is most closely associated with creative thinking, the mind produces various conceptions of the problem or issue, various ways of dealing with it, and possible solutions or responses to it.

4. Good thinkers produce both more ideas and better ideas than poor thinkers.

5. The judgment phase--In this phase, which is most closely associated with critical thinking, the mind examines and evaluates what it has produced, makes its judgments and, where appropriate, adds refinements.

6. Effective thinking is mostly a matter of habit. The difficulties of improving your thinking depend on the habits and attitudes you have.

7. Consider time, place and condition in your thinking.

8. The contribution feelings can make to problem solving and decision making is immeasurable.

9. Concentration is not so much something done to prevent distraction and interruption as it is something done to overcome distraction and interruption when they occur.

10. Good thinkers have learned strategies for dealing with their frustrations.

11. Good problem solvers read a problem and decide how to attack it. Poor problem solvers cannot settle on a way to begin.

12. Good problem solvers bring their knowledge to bear on a problem.

13. Poor problem solvers convince themselves they lack sufficient knowledge (even when that is not the case).

14. Good problem solvers go about solving a problem systematically--

15. Poor problem solvers plunge in, jumping haphazardly from one part of the problem to another, trying to justify first impressions, instead of testing them.

16. Good problem solvers tend to trust their reasoning and to have confidence in themselves.

17. Poor problem solvers tend to distrust their reasoning and lack confidence in themselves.

18. Good problem solvers maintain a critical attitude throughout the problem solving process.

19. Poor problem solvers lack a critical attitude and take too much for granted.

How to make discussion meaningful:

20. Whenever possible, prepare in advance.

21. Set reasonable expectations.

22. Leave egotism and personal agendas at the door.

23. Contribute but don't dominate.

24. Avoid distracting speech mannerisms.

25. Listen actively.
26. Judge ideas responsibly.
27. Resist the urge to shout or interrupt.

Chapter 2--Establish a Foundation--

28. Truth is what is so about something, the reality of the matter, as distinguished from what people wish were so, believe to be so, or assert to be so.

29. One way to spare yourself confusion about truth is to reserve the word truth for the final answer to an issue. Get in the habit of using the words belief, theory, and present understanding more often.

Ways of knowing-

30. Experience--We do not just receive experiences and store them in our minds. We compare them with previous experiences, classify, interpret and evaluate them, and make assumptions about them.

31. Observation--It is possible to observe accurately, but we often follow short of doing so.

32. Report--This source of knowledge covers most of what we are taught by our parents and teachers, what we hear reported in the news, and what we read in books, magazines and on the internet.

What are opinions-

33. Expressions of Taste--Expressions of taste describe internal states and preferences. They say essentially, "I like this" and "I like that."

34. Expressions of Judgment--Expressions of judgment are assertions about the truth of things or about the wisdom of a course of action.

Four important facts about causation--

35. One event can precede another without causing it.--Such thinking overlooks the possibility of coincidence. Correlation does not prove causation.

36. Not all causation involves force or necessity. Causation is the phenomenon of one thing influencing the occurrence of another. Sometimes the effect is invited, encouraged or inspired.

37. There is a wild card in human affairs--free will. Free will is a causative factor and one that trumps them all.

38. Causation is often complex. In determining causes, you may have to settle for probability rather than certainty.

Basis of Moral Judgment--

39. The most reliable basis for moral judgment, the basis that underlies most ethical systems is the principle that people have rights existing independent of any government or culture.

Additional working principles--

40. Relationships with other people create obligations of various kinds, and these should be honored unless there is a compelling reason not to do so.

41. Certain ideals enhance human life and assist people in fulfilling their obligations to one another.

42. The consequences of some actions benefit people, whereas those of other actions harm people.

43. Circumstances alter cases. Generalizations have their place, but too often they are used as a substitute for careful judgment.

Chapter 3 Broaden Your Perspective

Three important steps that will help you achieve your individuality:

44. Acknowledge the influences that have shaped your thinking.
45. Sort out and evaluate your ideas and attitudes even your most cherished ones.
46. Choose the best ideas and attitudes. Decide as best you can which ideas deserve your endorsement and which attitudes are worth striving to acquire.

Habits that hinder thinking--

47. The mine-is-better attitude hinders our thinking because it destroys objectivity and prompts us to prefer self-flattering errors to unpleasant realities.
48. Face Saving is a natural tendency arising from our ego. Psychologists call face saving a defense mechanism, meaning it is a strategy we use to protect our image.
49. Resistance to Change is the tendency to reject new ideas or new ways of seeing or doing without examining them fairly. If we are resistant to change, we are resistant to discovery, invention, creativity and progress.
50. Harmful conformity is what we do instead of thinking in order to belong to a group or to avoid the risk of appearing different.
51. Stereotyping is an extreme form of generalizing. Generalizations that go beyond the boundaries of reasonableness are called overgeneralizations. Stereotyping is a deeper and more serious problem than overgeneralization because it is irrationally maintained.
52. Self-Deception includes a willful and destructive forgetting of whatever in its past does not flatter or confirm its present point of view.
53. The key to overcoming bad habits is to examine your first impressions of problems and issues particularly strong ones prompting you to take a stand immediately without examining the evidence or weighing the competing evidence.

