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1. Why we need beyond feelings?

Feeling and thought are perfectly complementary. Feeling, being more spontaneous, is an excellent beginning to the development of conclusions. And thought, being more deliberate, provides a way to identify the best and most appropriate feeling. Both are natural. Thinking, however, is less automatic than feeling. To do it well demands a systematic approach and guided practice.

When the first edition of this book appeared in 1975, the dominant intellectual focus was still subjectivity, feelings. That focus, the legacy of the 1960s, was originally a necessary reaction to the rationalism and behaviorism that preceded it. Yet, despite its value, the focus on feelings went too far. Like many other movements, what began as a reaction against an extreme view became an extreme view itself.

First, because we live in an age of manipulation. Armies of hucksters and demagogues stand ready with the rich resources of psychology to play upon our emotions and subconscious needs to persuade us that superficial is profound, harmful is beneficial, evil is virtuous. And feelings are especially vulnerable to such manipulation.

Secondly, because in virtually every important area of modern life—law, medicine, government, education, science, business, and community affairs—we are beset with serious problems and complex

issues that demand careful gathering and weighing of facts and informed opinions, thoughtful consideration of various conclusions or actions, and judicious selection of the best conclusion or most appropriate action

The Influence of Time and Place

1 Not only are you a member of a particular species, *Homo sapiens*, but you also exist at a particular time in the history of that species and in a particular place on the planet. That time and place are defined by specific circumstances, understandings, beliefs, and customs, all of which limit your experience and influence your thought patterns.

2 Living in a different age or culture would make you a different person. Even if you rebelled against the values of your time and place, they still would represent the context of your life — in other words, they still would influence your responses

The Influence of Ideas

1 When one idea is expressed, closely related ideas are simultaneously conveyed, logically and inescapably. In logic, this kinship is expressed by the term *sequitur*, Latin for “it follows.” Consider, for example, the idea that many teachers and parents express to young children as a way of encouraging them: “If you believe in yourself, you can succeed at anything.” From this it follows that nothing else but belief—neither

talent nor hard work—is necessary for success. The reason the two ideas are equivalent is that their meanings are inseparably linked.

The Influence of Mass Culture

1 Modern advertising typically bombards the public with slogans and testimonials by celebrities. This approach is designed to appeal to emotions and create artificial needs for products and services. As a result, many people develop the habit of responding emotionally, impulsively, and gullibly to such appeals. Ads often portray play as more fulfilling than work, self-gratification as more desirable than self-control, and materialism as more meaningful than idealism.

2 The number of shifts within commercials ranged from 6 to 54 and averaged approximately 17 per fifteen-second commercial. The total number of attention shifts came out to over 800 per hour, or over 14 per minute.

This manipulation has prevented many people from developing a mature attention span. They expect the classroom and the workplace to provide the same constant excitement they get from television. That, of course, is an impossible demand, and when it isn't met they call their teachers boring and their work unfulfilling. Because such people seldom have the patience to read books that require them to think, many publishers have replaced serious books with light fare written by

celebrities.

The “Science” of Manipulation

1 Attempts to influence the thoughts and actions of others are no doubt as old as time, but manipulation did not become a science until the early twentieth century, when Ivan Pavlov, a Russian professor of psychology, published his research on conditioned (learned) reflexes. Pavlov found that by ringing a bell when he fed a dog, he could condition the dog to drool at the sound of the bell even when no food was presented”

2 The more people hear a slogan or talking point, the more familiar it becomes. Before long, it becomes indistinguishable from ideas developed through careful thought. Sadly, the packaging is often done so effectively that the viewer, listener, or reader does not make up his own mind at all. Instead, he inserts a packaged opinion into his mind, somewhat like inserting a DVD into a DVD player. He then pushes a button and ‘plays back’ the opinion whenever it seems appropriate to do so. He has performed acceptably without having had to think.

The Influence of Psychology

1 According to Frankl, the primordial anthropological fact is that being human is being always directed, and pointing to something or someone other than oneself: to a meaning to fulfill or another human being to

encounter, a cause to serve or a person to love. A person becomes fully human “by forgetting himself and giving himself, overlooking himself and focusing outward.

2 Whether we agree completely with Frankl, one thing is clear: Contemporary American culture would be markedly different if the emphasis over the past several decades had been on Frankl’s theory rather than on the theories of Maslow and the other humanistic psychologists.

being an Individual

In light of what we have discussed, we should regard individuality not as something we are born with but rather as something acquired—or, more precisely, earned. Individuality begins in the realization that it is impossible to “escape being influenced by other people and by circumstance. The essence of individuality is ‘vigilance. The following guidelines will help you achieve this:”

Treat your first reaction to any person, issue, or situation as tentative. No matter how appealing it may be, refuse to embrace it until you have examined it.

Decide why you reacted as you did. Consider whether you borrowed the reaction from someone else—a parent or friend, perhaps, or a celebrity or fictional character on television. If possible, determine what

specific experiences conditioned you to react this way.

Think of other possible reactions you might have had to the person, issue, or situation.

Ask yourself whether one of the other reactions is more appropriate than your first reaction.

be inclined to conj. 倾向于...; 有意

homo sapiens n. 智人(现代人的学名); 人类

rebel v. 反叛

simultaneously adv. 同时地

logically adv. 逻辑上合乎逻辑

inescapably adv. 逃不掉地

kinship n. 亲属关系; (因起源或态度相似而产生的)亲切感;

equivalent adj. (在价值、数量等方面)相等的; 等价的 n. 对等的人(或事物)

inseparably adv. 不可分地, 不能分离地

bombards vt. 轰炸; 炮击

slogans and testimonials 口号和证明书鉴定书

appeal to v. 向...呼吁; 对...有吸引力

impulsively adv. 冲动地

gullible adj. 易受骗的; 轻信的

portray vt. 画像; 描述; 描绘; 描画写真

approximately adv.大约;近似地近于

a mature attention span 成熟的注意力跨度

mature adj.(人、树木、鸟或动物)成熟的; 仔细考虑过的

vi.成熟, 长成; (票据等)到期

span n.跨度, 跨距; 范围

vt.跨越; 持续; 以手指测量

condition n.条件; 情况; 环境; 身份 vt.决定; 使适应; 使健康; 以.., 为条件

packaging n.包装; 包装业, 包装风格 v.包装(package 的 ing 形式)

markedly adv.明显地; 显著地; 引人注目地

primordial adj.原始的; 根本的; 原生的

anthropological adj, 人类学的; 人类学上的

appealing adj.吸引人的; 动人的; 引起兴趣的; 恳求似的

问题: 花几分钟思考一下, 大众传媒和文化是如何影响你的? 这种影响是好是坏, 你有考虑过吗?

2.What is critical thinking?

1 many philosophers argue that the mind and the brain are demonstrably different. Whereas the brain is a physical entity composed of matter and therefore subject to decay, the mind is a metaphysical entity.

2 One especially important issue is whether the mind is passive, a blank

slate on which experience writes, as John Locke held, or active, a vehicle by which we take the initiative and exercise our free will, as G. W. Leibnitz argued.

What Is Critical Thinking?

The essence of critical thinking is evaluation . Critical thinking, therefore, may be defined as the process by which we test claims and arguments and determine which have merit and which do not. In other words, critical thinking is a search for answers, a quest . Not surprisingly, one of the most important techniques used in critical thinking is asking probing questions .

Characteristics of Critical Thinkers

1 A number of misconceptions exist about critical thinking. One is that being able to support beliefs with reasons makes one a critical thinker. Another misconception is that critical thinkers never imitate others in thought or action. It is also a misconception that critical thinking is synonymous with having a lot of right answers in one's head. And yet another misconception is that critical thinking cannot be learned, that one either has it or does not.

2 We have already noted one characteristic of critical thinkers—skill in asking appropriate questions. Another is control of one's mental activities. John Dewey once observed that more of our time than most of

us care to admit is spent “ trifling with mental pictures, random recollections, pleasant but unfounded hopes, flitting, half-developed impressions. ” Good thinkers are no exception. However, they have learned better than poor thinkers how to stop that casual, semiconscious drift of images when they wish and how to fix their minds on one specific matter, examine it carefully, and form a judgment about it. They have learned, in other words, how to take charge of their thoughts, to use their minds actively as well as passively.

The Role of Intuition

1 Intuition is commonly defined as immediate perception or comprehension of something — that is, sensing or understanding something without the use of reasoning.

2 Breakthrough ideas favor trained, active minds. It is unusual for someone totally untrained in a subject to make a significant new discovery about it. Thus, if Kekule had been a plumber, Goethe a book-keeper, and Coleridge a hairdresser, they would almost certainly not have received the intuitions for which they are famous.

Avoiding Plagiarism

Step 2: As you read each source, note the ideas you want to refer to in your writing. If the author’ s words are unusually clear and concise, copy

them exactly and put quotation marks around them. Otherwise, paraphrase —that is, restate the author's ideas in your own words. Write down the number(s) of the page(s) on which the author's passage appears. If the author's idea triggers a response in your mind—such as a question, a connection between this idea and something else you've read, or an experience of your own that supports or challenges what the author says—write it down and put brackets (not parentheses) around it so that “you will be able to identify it as your own when you review your notes.

demonstrably adv.可论证地；明确地，无可否认地

a physical entity 实体

metaphysical entity 超自然的实体

metaphysical adj.形而上学的；超自然的

entity n.实体；实际存在物；本质

initiative n.主动权；首创精神，新方案；倡议 adj.主动的，自发的
起始的

probing adj.探索的；寻根究底的；寻求真理的；(问题)深入锐利的；

misconceptions n.迷思概念；错误的想法

imitate vt.模仿，仿效；仿造，仿制

synonymous adj.同义的；同义词的；同义突变的

trifling adj.微不足道的；轻浮的

flitting v.轻快地行进、掠过；不停地移动；很快转变 n.迁移，搬家

semiconscious adj.半意识的；半清醒的

hunches and hypotheses 直觉和假设

hunches n.预感

hypotheses n.假定；臆测

wrack his or her brain 绞尽脑汁

wracked v.使痛苦不堪，使受折磨

quotation n.引用语

triggers v.引起；引爆

brackets n.支架；括号，圆括号

parentheses n.圆括号

问题：独立思考中所使用的最重要的技巧之一是提出探索性的问题，而不是对自己最初的想法和他人陈述的内容照单全收，你可以试试看，按照独立思维的过程，选取一件日常生活中碰到习以为常的事情提出探索性的问题。（比如男人负责赚钱养家，女人负责貌美如花等等）

3.What is truth

1 The argument usually concerned Truth with a kind of complete record of whatever was, is, or will be, error-proof, beyond doubt and dispute, a final test of the rightness or wrongness of people ' s ideas and

theories. Those who accepted the existence of this Truth believed it was a spiritual reality, not a physical one.

2 It's fashionable today to believe that truth is relative and subjective.

“Everyone creates his or her own truth,” the saying goes, “and what is true for you may not be true for me.”

Imperfect Perception

it is influenced by our desires, interests, and expectations: “From the outset perception is selective and tends to simplify the world around us. Memory continues and hastens the process.” 首先，它受我们的欲望、

Imperfect Memory

Even when our perception is initially flawless, our memory often distorts the data. We forget details, and when later attempting to recall what happened we resort to imagination to fill in the blanks. Though we may at first be aware that such a process of reconstruction is occurring, this awareness soon fades, and we come to believe we are remembering the original perception.

Deficient Information

It's possible, of course, to devote a lifetime of study to a particular field.

But even those who make that kind of commitment can not know

everything about their subject. Things keep happening too fast. They occur whether we're watching or not.

Even the Wisest Can Err

All too often, what is taken as truth one day by the most respected minds is proved erroneous the next. You undoubtedly know of some examples. In the early seventeenth century, when Galileo suggested that the sun is the center of our solar system, he was charged with heresy, imprisoned, and pressured to renounce his error. The “truth” of that time, accepted by every scientist worthy of the name, was that the earth was the center of the solar system.

Truth Is Discovered, Not Created

1 The truth about something is what is so about it —the facts in their exact arrangement and proportions. Our beliefs and assertions are true when they correspond to that reality and false when they do not.

2 Truth is apprehended by discovery, a process that favors the curious and the diligent. Truth does not depend on our acknowledgment of it, nor is it in any way altered by our ignorance or transformed by our wishful thinking.

3 Having the right frame of mind can make your pursuit of the truth less burdensome and give it the sense of adventure that the great thinkers in

history experienced. A good way to begin is to keep the following thought in mind: “I know I have limitations and can easily be mistaken. And surely I’ ll never find all the answers I’ d like to. But I can observe a little more accurately, weigh things a little more thoroughly, and make up my mind a little more carefully. If I do so, I’ ll be a little closer to the truth.” That’ s far different from saying, “Everyone makes his or her own truth” or “It all depends on how you look at it.” And it is much more reasonable.

cause-and-effect relationships

Some of the most difficult challenges in discovering truth occur in determining cause-and-effect relationships. Unfortunately, mistakes are common in such matters. One mistake is to see cause-and-effect relationships where there are none. Another is to see only the simple and obvious cause-and-effect relationships and miss the complex or subtle ones. A third is to believe that causation is relevant only to material forces and is unrelated to human affairs.

Remember that free will is a powerful causative factor in human affairs

Be aware that in a chain of events, an effect often becomes a cause.

Be aware that, in dealing with human affairs, outcomes can be unpredictable.

error-proof 误差检验

assertions n. 断言；认定

spiritual adj. 精神的；心灵的；高尚的

physical adj. 物理的；身体的；物质的

outset n. 开始；开端

hasten v. 加速；催促；赶快

initially adv. 最初，首先；开头

flawless adj. 完美的；无瑕疵的；无裂缝的

Deficient adj. 不足的；有缺陷的；不充分的

commitment n. 承诺，保证；委托；承担义务；献身

charged adj. 带电的；充满感情的；气氛紧张的

heresy n. 异端；异端邪说；异教

renounce vt. 宣布放弃；与…断绝关系；垫牌

worthy of the name 名副其实

arrangement and proportions 排列和比例

arrangement n. 布置；整理；准备；安排

proportions n. [数] 比例；大小（proportion 的复数形式）

apprehended vt. 理解；逮捕；忧虑 vi. 理解；担心

ignorance n. 无知，愚昧；不知，不懂

forges n. 伪造；伪造罪；伪造物

burdensome adj. 繁重的；累赘的；恼人的

thoroughly adv. 彻底地，完全地

问题：回忆一下在自己经历中，了解事实的过程中（比如对某人的看法，比如学习的过程等等）

遇到了哪些阻碍？（比如信息不全，比如记忆模糊……）

4.What does it mean to know?

knowing involves more than having the right answer. It also involves the realization that you have it. The issue may require understanding numerous details or complex principles or steps in a process. (It may also involve a skill—knowing how to do something)

How to achieve knowledge?

1 We can achieve knowledge either actively or passively. We achieve it actively by direct experience, by testing and proving an idea (as in a scientific experiment), or by reasoning. When we do it by reasoning, we analyze a problem, consider all the facts and possible interpretations, and draw the logical conclusion.

2 We achieve knowledge passively by being told something by someone else. Most of the learning that takes place in the classroom and the kind that happens when we watch TV news reports or read newspapers or

magazines is passive. Unfortunately, passive learning has a serious defect. It makes us tend to accept uncritically what we are told even when what we are told is little more than hearsay and rumor.

Why Knowing Is Difficult

One reason why knowing is difficult is that some long unanswered questions continue to resist solution. Another reason is that everyday situations arise for which there are no precedents. Still another reason why knowing is difficult is that, as one generation succeeds another, knowledge is often forgotten or unwisely rejected.

Before we discuss how knowledge is best sought, let's consider two habits that impede knowledge: assuming and guessing. Assuming is taking something for granted — that is, arbitrarily accepting as true something that has not been proved or that may reasonably be disputed. The main negative effect of unrecognized assumptions is that they stifle the curiosity that leads to knowledge.

Guessing is offering a judgment on a hunch or taking a chance on an answer without any confidence that it is correct. Because assuming stifles curiosity and guessing denies the importance of evidence, neither is likely to lead to knowledge.

The most reliable approach is to be cautious in asserting that you know something. Be conservative in your level of assertion — whenever

you are less than certain, speak about possibilities and probabilities. Say, “I think” or “It seems to me” rather than “I know.” Most important, be honest with yourself and others about your ignorance. To admit you don’t know something shows good sense, restraint, and intellectual honesty. These are not weaknesses but strengths. The admission of ignorance is the essential first step toward knowledge.

actively adv. 积极地；活跃地

passively adv. 被动地；顺从地；消极地

hearsay n. 传闻，谣言. adj. 传闻的，风闻的

rumor n. 谣言；传闻 vt. 谣传；传说

assuming and guessing 假设和猜测

impede vt. 阻碍；妨碍；阻止

arbitrarily adv. 武断地；反复无常地；专横地

hunch n. 预感.

asserting v. 主张，声明；断言

onservative adj. 保守的 n. 保守派，守旧者

admission of ignorance 承认无知

admission n. 承认；入场费；进入许可；坦白；录用

ignorance n. 无知，愚昧；不知，不懂

问题：你的知识是从哪儿来的一主动获得还是被动接收的？

5.How Good Are Your Opinions?

To me truth is precious. . . . I should rather be right and stand alone than to run with the multitude and be wrong. . . . The holding of the views herein set forth has already won for me the scorn and contempt and ridicule of some of my fellow men. I am looked upon as being odd, strange, peculiar. . . . But truth is truth and though all the world reject it and turn against me, I will cling to truth still.”

Free societies are based on the wise observation that people have an inalienable right to think their own thoughts and make their own choices. But this fact in no way suggests that the thoughts they think and the choices they make will be reasonable.

It is a fundamental principle of critical thinking that ideas are seldom of equal quality. Solutions to problems vary from the practical to the impractical, beliefs from the well founded to the ill founded, arguments from the logical to the illogical, and opinions from the informed to the uninformed. Critical thinking serves to separate the more worthy from the less worthy and, ultimately, to identify the best.”

Even Experts Can Be Wrong

In 1890 a Nobel Prize – winning bacteriologist, Dr. Robert Koch, reported that he had found a substance that would cure tuberculosis. When it was

injected into patients, though, it was found to cause further illness and even death. It is impossible to know what expert opinions of our time will be overturned by researchers in the future. But we can be sure that some will be. And they may well be views that today seem unassailable.

various errors

1. Errors or tendencies to error are common among all people by virtue of their being human

2. Errors or tendencies to error associated with one's individual habits of mind or personal attitudes, beliefs, or theories

3. Errors that come from human communication and the limitations of language

4. Errors in the general fashion of an age

Some people, of course, are more prone to errors than others. English philosopher John Locke observed that these people fall into three groups: Those who seldom reason at all, but think and act as those around them do — parents, neighbors, the clergy, or anyone else they admire and respect. Such people want to avoid the difficulty that accompanies thinking for themselves. Those who are determined to let passion rather than reason govern their lives. Those people are influenced only by reasoning that supports their prejudices. Those who sincerely follow reason, but lack sound, overall good sense, and so do

not look at all sides of an issue. They tend to talk with one type of person, read one type of book, and so are exposed to only one viewpoint. To Locke's list we should add one more type: those who never bother to reexamine an opinion once it has been formed. These people are often the most error prone of all, for they forfeit all opportunity to correct mistaken opinions when new evidence arises.”

Forming Opinions Responsibly

Understand how opinions are formed.

Resist the temptation to treat your opinions as facts.

Monitor your thoughts to prevent the uncritical default mode from taking charge.

Whenever you begin forming impressions of a person, place, or situation, follow the advice of the ancient Greek philosopher Epictetus: “Be not swept off your feet by the vividness of the impression, but say, ‘Impression, wait for me a little. Let me see what you are and what you represent. Let me try [test] you.’” This approach will prevent your impressions from hardening into opinions before you determine their reasonableness.

herein adv 在此，于此.

set forth 陈述 阐明

the scorn and contempt 轻蔑和蔑视.

ridicule 奚落

inalienable adj 不可分割的，不可剥夺的.

tuberculosis n 结核病

unassailable adj 不可摧毁的，无懈可击的

are prone to 有做...倾向的

Clergy n 圣职人员，神职人员

prejudices n 偏见，成见

forfeit vt 丧失.

Default n 默认; 预设

swept off your feet 迷恋，着迷

6.What Is Evidence?

To state an opinion is to tell others what we think about something; to present evidence is to show others that what we think makes sense. Being shown is much more interesting and impressive than being told—we've all known this since grade school. Why, then, does so much writing and speaking consist of piling one opinion on another, with little or no evidence offered in support of any of them?

kinds of evidence

To evaluate your own and other people's opinions, you will need to

understand the various kinds of evidence. This entails knowing the value and limitations of each kind, as well as the appropriate questions to ask. The most important kinds of evidence are personal experience, unpublished report, published report, eyewitness testimony, celebrity testimony, expert opinion, experiment, statistics, survey, formal observation, and research review.

personal experience

To evaluate personal experience—your own or other people's—ask, Are the events typical or unique? Are they sufficient in number and kind to support the conclusion? Remember that the vividness and dramatic quality of an anecdote cannot compensate for its limitedness.

published report

To evaluate a published report, ask, Does the report cite the sources of all important items of information? (If so, you may wish to check them.) Does the author have a reputation for careful reporting? Does the publisher or broadcaster have a reputation for reliability? Which statements in the published report constitute evidence, and which should themselves be supported with evidence? (Another way to ask this question is Which statements might a thoughtful person challenge? Does the author anticipate and answer the challenges satisfactorily?)”

eyewitness testimony

To evaluate eyewitness testimony, ask, What circumstances surrounding the event, including the eyewitness' s state of mind, could have distorted his or her perception? What circumstances since the event—for example, the publication of other accounts of the event—could have affected the eyewitness' s recollection?”

celebrity testimony

To evaluate celebrity testimony, ask, In the case of advertisements or infomercials, is the celebrity a paid spokesperson? In the case of talk show comments, does the celebrity offer any support for his or her views—for example, citing research conducted by qualified people? Also, does the host ask for such support? If the discussion consists of little more than a series of assertions expressing the celebrity' s unsupported opinion, you would do well to discount it no matter how much you may admire the person.

expert opinion

To evaluate expert opinion, ask, Does the person have, in addition to credentials in the broad field in question, specific expertise in the particular issue under discussion? This is not always easy to ascertain by

those outside the field, but one good indication is that the person does not just state his or her opinion but also supports it with references to current research. Also ask whether the expert was paid. The acceptance of money does not necessarily taint expert opinion, but it may raise questions about the person's objectivity. Finally, ask whether other authorities agree or disagree with the expert's view.

experiment

To evaluate experimental evidence, ask, For a laboratory experiment, has it been replicated by other researchers? For a field experiment, have other researchers independently confirmed the findings? If replication or confirmation has been unsuccessfully attempted, it is best to postpone your acceptance of the experiment's findings.

survey

When evaluating a survey, ask, Was the sample truly representative? That is, did all members of the total population surveyed have an equal chance of being selected? Were the questions clear and unambiguous? "Were they objectively phrased rather than slanted? In the case of a mailed survey, did a significant number fail to respond? If so, how might non-respondents differ from respondents? Also, do other surveys corroborate the survey's findings?

formal observation

When evaluating formal observation, ask, Is it likely that the presence of the observer distorted the behavior being observed? Was the observation of sufficient duration to permit the conclusions that were drawn? Do the conclusions overgeneralize?

Although you may not be able to eliminate your biases, you can nevertheless identify and control them, and that is all that is necessary. The purpose of evaluating evidence is to discover the truth, regardless of whether it is pleasant or unpleasant, and the only way to do so is to evaluate fairly. Such an evaluation will sometimes require you to conclude that the view you leaned toward (or actually held) is mistaken.

Unambiguous adj 意思清楚的；明确的；毫不含糊的

Slanted adj 歪曲的

Corroborate vt 证实；坚定；使加强

leaned vt 倾斜

Entail vt 需要；牵涉；使必要

compensate vt 弥补 补偿

Recollection n 回忆.

infomercials n 商业信息节目

credentials n 资格证书；证件；资历；证明书

taint vt 污染，玷污

eliminate vt 缩小，减弱

testimony n 证词，证言

evaluation n 评估，估计

7.What is argument

One common meaning is “a quarrel,” as in the sentence “They had a heated argument, a real scream-ing match.” Another meaning of argument is “the exchange of opinions between two or more people,” as occurs in a formal debate.

Although argument as “the exchange of opinions between two or more people” is relevant to critical thinking, another meaning of the term is even more relevant to the challenge of becoming a critical thinker. Argument, in this sense, means the line of reasoning that supports a judgment. Because our main concern in this chapter, as throughout this book, is the evaluation of individual arguments, your own as well as other people’ s, this definition is the one we will focus on.

The basic principles

The premises are either true or false (correct or incorrect).

The reasoning that links the premises to the conclusion is either valid or

invalid .

Correct premises plus valid reasoning equal a sound argument.

Either an incorrect premise or invalid reasoning will render an argument unsound.

The basic approach to evaluating arguments can be stated simply: Decide whether the premises are true or false and whether the reasoning that leads from them to the conclusion is valid. If both criteria are met, the argument is sound. When the argument is clearly and fully stated and you ask the right questions, this approach is relatively easy to follow.

Argument = premise+ reasoning+conclusion

Good Argument = correct premise+ effective reasoning+reasonable Conclusion

for example

The Argument : Success comes to those who work hard.Jane is successful.

Therefore, Jane worked hard.

Premise: Success comes to those who work hard. Jane is successful.

Reasoning: because Success comes to those who work hard and Jane is successful

Conclusion: Therefore, Jane worked hard.

The Questions : Does it always?

The Questions : Is she?

The Questions : Does this conclusion follow logically from what is stated in the premises?

Would any other conclusion be as reasonable?

Comment: The first premise is not entirely true. Some people who work hard end up failing anyway because they lack the necessary aptitude or background experience to meet the challenge. Moreover, some people who do not work hard succeed anyway because they have wealth and/or influence. Even if we grant that the second premise is true, the argument must still be judged unsound because of the first premise.

When an argument contains hidden premises, identify them before proceeding with your evaluation. Hidden premises are clearly implied ideas that are not recognized when the argument is conceived and expressed. When the hidden premise is accurate, no harm is done; but when it is inaccurate, it quietly corrupts the argument. Following are some examples of such arguments. Each is presented first as it might occur in informal discussion. Then it is broken down into its component parts, including hidden premises.

Argument: They should never have married—they felt no strong physical

attraction to each other during courtship.

The Component Parts

Stated Premise: They felt no strong physical attraction to each other

Hidden Premise: Strong physical attraction is the best, or perhaps
the only meaningful basis for marriage

Reasoning: Because they felt no strong physical attraction to each other
during courtship.

Conclusion: They should never have married.

The Questions : Did they feel no strong physical attraction to each
other?

The Questions : Is strong physical attraction is the best, or perhaps the
only meaningful basis for marriage?

The Questions : Do the premises lead to this conclusion and no other?

valid adj 有根据的.

render vt 导致, 致使

sound adj 明智的, 合理的

criteria n 标准

aptitude n 天资, 才能

premise n 前提

proceed vt 继续做, 行进

Corrupt vt 贪污，腐化，有错误的

courtship n 求爱，求偶.

broken down 分解

component n 组成部分，成分

8.The basic problem:”mine is better”

In this section we will examine the various errors that can impair thinking. We will also consider how you can best discover them in other people’ s writing and speaking and avoid them in your own. The most basic error, “ mine-is-better ” thinking, seems rooted in our human nature and paves the way for many of the other errors. The other errors are grouped according to when they occur.

Errors of perspective are erroneous notions about reality that are present in our minds more or less continuously. Errors of procedure occur when we are dealing with specific issues, errors of expression when we put our thoughts into words, and errors of reaction when someone criticizes or challenges a statement or argument we have made. The final chapter in this section explores how these errors can occur in combination.

mine-is-better

This tendency is attributable to a “ mine-is-better ” perspective,

which we all have to a greater or lesser extent. It is natural enough to like our own possessions better than other people's. Our possessions are extensions of ourselves. All of this, as we have noted, is natural, though not especially noble or virtuous or, in many cases, even factual—simply natural. The tendency is probably as old as humanity.

For many people, most of the time, the “mine-is-better” tendency is balanced by the awareness that other people feel the same way about their things, that it's an unavoidable part of being human to do so. In other words, many people realize that we all see ourselves in a special way, different from everything that is not ourselves, and that whatever we associate with ourselves becomes part of us in our minds.

People who have this understanding and are reasonably secure and self-confident can control the tendency. The problem is, some people do not understand that each person has a special viewpoint. For them, “mine is better” is not an attitude that everyone has about his or her things. Rather, it is a special, higher truth about their particular situation. Psychologists classify such people as either egocentric or ethnocentric.

Egocentric

Egocentric means centered or focused on oneself and interested only in one's own interests, needs, and views. Egocentric people tend to practice egospeak.

the perspective of egothink is very limited, egocentric people have difficulty seeing issues from a variety of viewpoints. The world exists for them and is defined by their beliefs and values: What disturbs them should disturb everyone; what is of no consequence to them is unimportant.

This attitude makes it difficult for egocentric people to observe, listen, and understand. Why should one bother paying attention to others, including teachers and textbook authors, if they have nothing valuable to offer? What incentive is there to learn when one already knows everything worth knowing? For that matter, why bother with the laborious task of investigating controversial issues, poring over expert testimony, and evaluating evidence when one's own opinion is the final, infallible arbiter? It is difficult, indeed, for an egocentric person to become proficient in critical thinking.

Ethnocentric

Ethnocentric means excessively centered or focused on one's group. Note the inclusion of the word "excessively. What distinguishes ethnocentric individuals from those who feel a normal sense of identification with their group is that ethnocentric people believe (a) that their group is not merely different from other groups but fundamentally and completely superior to them and (b) that the

motivations and intentions of other groups are suspect.

By taking a negative view of great groups of mankind, we somehow make life simpler. For example, if I reject all foreigners as a category, I don't have to bother with them — except to keep them out of my country. If I can ticket, then, all Negroes as comprising an inferior and objectionable race, I conveniently dispose of a tenth of my fellow citizens. If I can put the Catholics into another category and reject them, my life is still further simplified. I then pare again and slice off the Jew . . . and so it goes.

Ethnocentric people's prejudice has an additional function. It fills their need for an out-group to blame for real and imagined problems in society. Take any problem — street crime, drug trafficking, corruption in government, political assassinations, labor strikes, pornography, rising food prices — and there is a ready-made villain to blame it on: The Jews are responsible — or the Italians, African Americans, or Hispanics. Ethnocentrics achieve instant diagnosis — it's as easy as matching column a to column b. And they get a large target at which they can point their anger and fear and inadequacy and frustration.

Harm

Our preference for our own thinking can prevent us from identifying flaws in our own ideas, as well as from seeing and building on other

people's ideas. Similarly, our pride in our own religion can lead us to dismiss too quickly the beliefs and practices of other religions and ignore mistakes in our religious history. Our preference for our own political party can make us support inferior candidates and programs. Our allegiance to our own opinions can shut us off from other perspectives, blind us to unfamiliar truths, and enslave us to yesterday's conclusions. Furthermore, our readiness to accept uncritically those who appeal to our preconceived notions leaves us vulnerable to those who would manipulate us for their own purposes. Historians tell us that is precisely why Hitler succeeded in winning control of Germany and wreaking havoc on a good part of the world."

1 One way to gain control of "mine-is-better" thinking is to keep in mind that, like other people, we too are prone to it and that its influence will be strongest when the subject is one we really care about. As G. K. Chesterton observed, We are all exact and scientific on the subjects we do not care about. We all immediately detect exaggeration in . . . a patriotic speech from Paraguay. We all require sobriety on the subject of the sea serpent. But the moment we begin to believe in a thing ourselves, that moment we begin easily to overstate it; and the moment our souls become serious, our words become a little wild.

2 Another way to control "mine-is-better" thinking is to be alert for signals of its presence. Those signals can be found both in our feelings

and in our thoughts:

In feelings: Very pleasant, favorable sensations; the desire to embrace a statement or argument immediately, without appraising it further. Or very unpleasant, negative sensations; the desire to attack and denounce a statement or argument without delay.

In thoughts: Ideas such as “I’m glad that experts are taking such a position—I’ve thought it all along” and “No use wasting time analyzing this evidence—it must be conclusive.” Or ideas such as This view is outrageous because it challenges what I have always thought—I refuse to consider it.

Whenever you find yourself reacting in any of these ways, you can be reasonably sure you are being victimized by “mine-is-better” thinking. The appropriate response is to resist the reaction and force yourself to consider the matter fair-mindedly. Chances are this won’t be easy to accomplish—your ego will offer a dozen reasons for indulging your “mine-is-better” impulse—but your progress as a critical thinker depends on your succeeding. The other errors in thinking, covered in the next four chapters, are all at least aggravated by “mine-is-better” thinking.

impair vt 损害.

procedure n 过程 程序

attributable adj 可能由于，可归因于.

virtuous adj 品德高的; 有道德的;

possessions n 拥有; 个人财产.

extension n 延伸

unavoidable adj 无法避免的; 难以预防的.

egocentric adj 以自我为中心的; 自私自利的

Ethnocentric adj 种族(或民族)中心主义的; 种族(或民族)优越感的

laborious adj 耗时费力的; 辛苦的. Pore vt 专心阅读; 钻研

infallible adj 永无过失的; 一贯正确的.

arbiter n 仲裁人; 公断人

excessively adv 过分地，极度地.

identification n 鉴定; 辨认; 确认

Negroes n 黑人.

Comprise vt 包括; 包含; 由...组成

inferior adj 次等的，劣等的.

objectionable adj 令人不快的; 令人反感的; 讨厌的

Catholics n 天主教徒; 天主教.

slice off 切开,割掉

Pare vt 削皮; 去皮;

trafficking n 交易; 买卖

assassinations n 暗杀; 刺杀.

pornography n 淫秽作品; 色情书刊

diagnosis vt 诊断; (问题原因的) 判断

wreak vt 造成(巨大的破坏或伤害)

allegiance n 忠诚. Havoc n 灾害; 祸患.

patriotic adj 爱国的

sobriety n 持重; 冷静.

outrageous adj 骇人的; 无法容忍的; 反常的

9.Errors of perspective

Errors of perspective are like seriously distorted lenses, except instead of being perched on our noses, they inhabit our minds. If you are prone to one or more of these errors, you can be sure that they will work their mischief more or less constantly. They will shape the attitudes and habits you bring to the evaluation of issues and create expectations that bias your thinking. Moreover, you may not even be aware of their existence unless you evaluate your patterns of thought.

This chapter is designed to help you do that and to root out whatever errors of perspective are obstructing your critical thinking. We will examine seven specific errors: poverty of aspect, unwarranted assumptions, the either/or outlook, mindless conformity, absolutism, relativism, and bias for or against change.

1 Poverty of Aspect

Karl Duncker, a cognitive researcher, coined the term poverty of aspect to refer to the limitation that comes from taking a narrow rather than a broad view on problems and issues. No doubt poverty of aspect has many causes, including simple intellectual sloth. But two causes are especially noteworthy: the multiplication of the academic disciplines over the course of history and the explosion of knowledge that has taken place in every discipline, especially during the previous century.

2 unwarranted assumptions

Assumptions are ideas that are merely taken for granted rather than produced by conscious thought. Making assumptions is natural enough, and many assumptions are not only harmless but helpful.

When are assumptions unwarranted? Whenever you take too much for granted — that is, more than is justified by your experience or the particular circumstance.

The most common unwarranted assumptions include the following:

The assumption that people's senses are always trustworthy.

The assumption that if an idea is widely reported, it must be true. Fiction can be disseminated as far and as widely as truth.

the assumption that if one event follows another in time, it must have been caused by the other. The order of and closeness in time between two events could have been accidental.

The assumption that change is always for the better. In some cases, change improves matters; in others, it makes matters worse.

3 the either/or outlook

The either/or outlook is the expectation that the only reasonable view of any issue is either total affirmation or total rejection. The problem with the either/or outlook is that it rejects the very real possibility that the most reasonable view may be both / and —in other words, a less extreme view. Whenever you are examining an issue and find yourself considering only two alternatives, ask yourself whether additional alternatives exist and, if they do, give them a fair hearing.

4 Mindless Conformity

The term for behaving as others do is conformity. In some situations conformity is the wisest course of action. Children conform when they stay away from hot stoves and look both ways before crossing the street. In contrast, mindless conformity is unreasonable and, in many cases, unreasoning. It consists of following others' example because we are too lazy or fearful to think for ourselves. Advertisers encourage mindless conformity. An excellent example is a Budweiser commercial that featured the line, "Why ask why? Try Bud Dry."

The secret to avoiding mindless conformity is to resist whatever

pleading, teasing, and prodding others exert to make you think and speak and act as they do. Instead of succumbing, ask yourself what is reasonable and right and follow that path, regardless of whether that places you in the majority or the minority.

5 Absolutism

Absolutism is the belief that there must be rules but no exceptions. Absolutists expect the truth about issues to be clear-cut, certain, and simple when, in reality, it often is ambiguous, less than certain, and complex. Because of their unreasonable expectations, absolutists tend to be impatient in their thinking and therefore susceptible to oversimplification and hasty conclusions. Moreover, once they have made up their minds, they tend to hold their views more dogmatically than do critical thinkers—that is, they tend to be unwilling to entertain evidence that challenges them. And once a rule is established, absolutists refuse to allow exceptions.

The key to overcoming absolutism is this: When you begin to examine any issue, even one that you have thought about before, commit yourself to accepting the truth as you find it rather than demanding that it be neat and simple.

6 Relativism

Relativism is the polar opposite of absolutism. Whereas the absolutist does not acknowledge exceptions to rules, the relativist believes that the existence of exceptions proves there can be no rules. The central error of relativism is the belief that truth is created rather than discovered. If someone attempts to demonstrate that something is true, relativists tend to say, "Whose truth are you talking about? Mine may be different from yours." They believe that whatever a person believes is true is, by that belief, true for him or her.

To overcome relativism, remind yourself from time to time that some ideas, and some standards of conduct, are better than others and that the challenge of critical thinking is to discover the best ones.

7 bias for or against change

Are you for or against change? The only reasonable answer is "It depends on what the change is." Some changes improve matters; others make matters worse. Yet many people lack that balanced perspective. They have a bias for or against change. Bias for change is more common than it used to be, no doubt because we live in an age of unprecedented change, especially in technology; because many changes are beneficial, we may make the mistake of believing that all are.

Bias against change, however, is still more prevalent than bias for change. One reason is the force of familiarity. Most of us prefer ideas

that we know and feel comfortable with. Another reason bias against change is so prevalent is our “mine-is-better” perspective. Our habits of thinking and acting seem to us the only right ways of thinking and acting. New ideas challenge our sense of security, so we tend to resist them. This explains why many people cling to outmoded traditions.

To overcome either variety of bias toward change, monitor your reaction to new ideas. Don't be surprised if you strongly favor or oppose an idea the first time you encounter it. However, refuse to endorse your first impression uncritically. Instead, suspend judgment until you have examined the idea carefully. If the idea proves insightful and well substantiated, accept it regardless of its oldness or newness; if it is flawed, reject it.

perch vt 栖息; 停留

sloth n 懒惰

multiplication n 乘; 相乘

mischief adj 淘气; 恶作剧

conformity n 遵从

plead vt 恳求; 央求

Tease vt 调侃的, 戏谑的

prod vt 催促; 督促

susceptible adj 易受影响(或伤害等); 敏感

dogmatically adv 武断地；教条主义地

unprecedented adj 前所未有的；空前的

familiarity n 熟悉

endorse vt 赞同支持

10.Errors of procedure

In this chapter we will examine the kinds of errors that occur in the process of addressing specific issues: biased consideration of evidence, double standard, hasty conclusion, overgeneralization and stereotyping, oversimplification, and the post hoc fallacy.

1 biased consideration of evidence

it is important to understand how that leaning can cause you to commit the error of biased consideration of evidence. One form of this error is seeking only evidence that confirms your bias. Another form occurs when evidence is presented to you that challenges your bias and you choose an interpretation that favors your bias, even when other interpretations are more reasonable.

2 double standard

As the name implies, double standard consists of using one standard of judgment for our ideas and ideas compatible with our own and an

entirely different—and much more demanding—standard for ideas that disagree with ours. People who employ a double standard ignore inconsistencies, contradictions, and outrageous overstatements in arguments they agree with, yet engage in nitpicking when evaluating their opponents' arguments. Even their vocabulary reflects the double standard. The very same behavior is called “imaginative,” “forceful,” or “forthright” in the case of an ally and “utopian,” “belligerent,” or “mean-spirited” in the case of an opponent.

To avoid the error of the double standard, decide in advance what judgment criteria you will use and apply those criteria consistently, even if the data in question do not support your view.

3 Hasty conclusion

Hasty conclusion is a premature judgment — that is, a judgment made without sufficient evidence. It takes mental discipline to resist jumping to conclusions, and many people lack such discipline. They are in the habit of accepting the first judgment that comes to mind, never bothering to inquire whether a different judgment might be as reasonable or perhaps even more so.

To avoid hasty conclusions, identify all possible conclusions before you select any one. Then decide whether you have sufficient evidence to support any of those conclusions and, if so, which conclusion that

is. Remember that there is no shame in postponing judgment until you obtain additional evidence.

4 overgeneralization and stereotype

Generalizing is the mental activity by which we draw broad conclusions from particular experiences. generalizing is not only natural but indispensable to learning. As long as we exercise reasonable care, generalizing serves us well. Unfortunately, it is easy to overgeneralize—that is, to ascribe to all the members of a group what fits only some members.

A stereotype is an overgeneralization that is especially resistant to change. The most common types of stereotypes are ethnic and religious. As you might expect, any generalization that is fixed and unbending can be considered a stereotype. Although stereotypes may be either positive or negative, they are more often negative. Sadly, people who deplore the negative stereotyping of their own groups often do not hesitate to negatively stereotype other groups.

To avoid these errors, resist the urge to force individual people, places, or things into rigid categories. In forming generalizations, keep in mind that the more limited your experience, the more modest you should make your assertion.

5 Over simplification

Simplification is not only useful but essential, particularly at a time like the present, when knowledge is expanding so rapidly. People who know a great deal about a subject find it necessary to communicate with those who know little or nothing about it. Teachers must explain to students, experienced employees to novices, attorneys to clients, physicians to patients, and scientists to the general public. Simplification scales down complex ideas to a level that can be understood by less knowledgeable people.

Over simplification, on the other hand, goes beyond making complex ideas easier to grasp; it twists and distorts the ideas. Instead of informing people, oversimplification misleads them. Unfortunately, oversimplified statements can sound insightful; in such cases, the errors can be detected only by careful analysis

if the students haven't learned, the teacher hasn't taught.

Analysis

Students' failure to learn is sometimes the teacher's fault and sometimes the students' own fault for not putting forth the required effort. This statement suggests that the fault always lies with the teacher; thus it oversimplifies.

We know ourselves better than others know us.

Analysis

It is true that we know some things about ourselves better than others do; for example, our hopes, dreams, and fantasies. Yet there are things about ourselves that we unconsciously block to preserve our self-image; for example, personal faults such as envy, pettiness, and hypocrisy. These faults are often perfectly clear to others. By ignoring this fact, the statement in question oversimplifies.

6 Post hoc

Post hoc is an abbreviation of a Latin term, *post hoc, ergo propter hoc*, which means “after this, therefore because of this.” It expresses the reasoning that when one thing occurs after another, it must be the result of the other. The error in this thinking is the failure to realize that mere order and closeness in time does not prove a cause-and-effect relationship. One event can follow another by coincidence and thus be entirely unrelated to it. The post hoc fallacy is likely the basis of most superstitions.

Fallacy n 谬见; 谬论

plagued vt 困扰, 折磨

Flatter vt 奉承; 讨好; 向...谄媚

compatible adj 可共用的; 兼容的; 可共存的

nitpicking n 吹毛求疵; 挑剔; 找碴儿

outrageous adj 骇人的; 无法容忍的

utopian adj n 乌托邦的, 空想家

belligerent adj 好斗的; 寻衅的

mistress n 情妇

snub vt 冷落; 怠慢

Deplore vt 强烈谴责

atheists n 无神论者

Unbending adj 顽固的; 固执的; 倔强的

novices n 新手; 初学者

pettiness n 小气; 琐碎

hypocrisy n 虚伪

Befall vt 降临到(某人)头上

11.Errors of exception

The errors in this chapter are without exception errors of thought because they originate in the mind, more or less consciously (sometimes dimly so). We would therefore be perfectly justified in treating all kinds of error under a single heading—“Errors of Thought,” for example, or “Logical Fallacies.” In fact, many books on thinking treat them just that way.

The rationale for using four categories is that different errors tend to

occur—or at least are most evident—at different stages in the overall process of thinking. Although errors of expression may begin to take shape in the mind at some earlier time, they are most easily recognized and corrected when we are speaking or writing. Treating them in a separate category, “Errors of Expression,” helps us remember when to be alert for them.

1 contradiction

One of the fundamental principles of logic is the principle of contradiction, which states that no statement can be both true and false at the same time in the same way .

When exactly does contradiction occur? When a person says one thing now and the opposite later. A suspect, for example, may today admit that he committed the crime he is accused of and tomorrow deny his guilt. Relativists argue that everyone creates his or her own truth and no view is more worthy than any other, and then they contradict themselves by castigating people who disagree with them. ”

To overcome contradiction, monitor what you say and write. The moment you detect any inconsistency, examine it carefully. Decide whether it is explainable or whether it constitutes a contradiction. If it proves to be a contradiction, reexamine the issue and take a view that is both consistent and reasonable.

2 arguing in a circle

A person arguing in a circle attempts to prove a statement by repeating it in a different form. When the statement is brief, the circular argument may be quite obvious. For example, if someone says, “Divorce is on the rise today because more marriages are breaking up,” few people would fail to see the circularity. But consider the same sentence in expanded form: “The rate of divorce is appreciably higher in the present generation than it was in previous generations. Before a reason can be adduced for this trend, a number of factors must be considered, including the difference in the average age at which a couple marries. However, most experts tend to believe that the cause is the increased number of failed marriages.” This is the same circular argument but is more difficult to detect.

The point is not that writers deliberately construct circular arguments but that such arguments can unfold without our being aware of them. To detect circularity in your writing, it is not enough to read and nod in agreement with yourself. You must check to be sure the evidence you offer in support of your view is not merely a restatement of the view in different words.”

3 meaningless statement

In the course of presenting ideas, people often find it useful or necessary to present the reasons that underlie their thoughts and actions.

The following headline from a print advertisement for a furniture company offers another example of meaningless explanation: “Good news! Due to the unprecedented success of our giant furniture sale, we have extended it for ten days.” If it was so successful, we might ask, how is it that they still have enough merchandise for a ten-day extension? (The more cynical among us might translate “the headline as follows: “The sale was such a flop that we’ re left with a warehouse full of inferior merchandise and we’ re desperate to have people buy it.”)

To detect meaningless statements in your writing, look at what you have said as critically as you look at what other people say. Ask, Am I really making sense?

4 Mistaken Authority

The fallacy of mistaken authority ascribes authority to someone who does not possess it. It has become more common since the cult of celebrity has grown in the media.

To avoid the error of mistaken authority, check to be sure that all the sources you cite as authorities possess expertise in the particular subject you are writing about.

5 False Analogy

An analogy is an attempt to explain something relatively unfamiliar by referring to something different but more familiar, saying in effect, “ This is like that. ” Analogies can be helpful in promoting understanding, particularly of complex ideas, but they have the potential to be misleading.

A more recent and infamous example is the one traditionally used by revolutionaries and terrorists around the world to justify killing people: “If you want to make an omelette, you’ ve got to break some eggs.” In this case, the critical thinker rightly responds, “ But people are very unlike eggs! ” Always test your analogies to be sure that the similarities they claim are real and reasonable and that no important dissimilarities exist.

6 Irrational Appeal

An irrational appeal encourages people to accept ideas for some reason other than reasonableness. Such an appeal says, in effect, “There’ s no need to think critically about this idea or compare it with alternative ideas—just accept it.” The most common kinds of irrational appeals are to emotion, tradition, authority, common belief, and tolerance.

In summary, the best way to distinguish between rational and irrational appeals is to ask whether the appeal is accompanied by an explanation of why you should accept it. If an explanation is offered and it proves reasonable, the appeal is rational. If no explanation is offered or if the explanation is not credible, then the appeal is irrational.”

originate vt 起源; 发源

Castigate vt 严厉批评; 申斥

circularity n 圆

restatement 重申; 再次声明

cynical adj 讽刺的

flop vt;n 沉重地躺下; 落下

ascribe v 把…归因于; 把…归咎于

cult n 狂热, 时尚

revolutionarie n 改革者

omelette n 煎蛋卷, 摊鸡蛋

irrational adj 非理性的

appeal vt;n 上诉; 申诉

12.Errors of reaction

Perhaps the best general answer to this question was offered many years ago by Rowland W. Jepson in a book he wrote on the subject of

thinking: When we have once adopted an opinion, our pride makes us loth to admit that we are wrong. When objections are made to our views, we are more concerned with discovering how to combat them than how much truth or sound sense there may be in them; we are at pains rather to find fresh support for our own views, than to face frankly any new facts that appear to contradict them. We all know how easy it is to become annoyed at the suggestion that we have made a mistake; that our first feeling is that we would rather do anything than admit it, and our first thought is “How can I explain it away?” This determination to explain away whatever does not flatter us or our point of view reflects our urge to save face and preserve our self- image.

1、 automatic rejection

As critical thinkers we need a reasonable basis for accepting or rejecting any argument or claim, including challenges to our ideas. The only way to establish that basis is to evaluate the challenge and make an honest determination of its worth. Liking or disliking it, feeling pleased or displeased with it, is not enough. To reject criticism without giving it a fair hearing is to commit the error of automatic rejection. The temptation to automatically reject challenges to your ideas can be powerful.

A good way to lessen that temptation is to put some emotional

distance between your ideas and your ego. Think of them as possessions that you can keep or discard rather than as extensions of your self. This will make you less defensive about them.

2 Changing the Subject

Changing the subject consists of abruptly turning a discussion in a different direction. Not every shift constitutes an error. The new direction may be more promising. Or it may be a way to provide a timely but polite rebuke. Suppose someone asks you a rude or inappropriately personal question, such as “What is your annual income?” or “Why don’t you and your spouse have any children?” Having no obligation to reply, you might say something totally unrelated to the question. Changing the subject is an error only when the original issue is appropriate and the shift is used deceptively. Sadly, this kind of shift is common in interviews of public figures

To avoid this error, face difficult questions head-on. If you know the answer, state it. If the issue is too complex to permit a certain answer, state what you believe to be probable and explain your reasoning. If you lack sufficient knowledge to speak of probabilities, say so. No reasonable person will think less of you for candidly admitting ignorance.

3 Shifting the Burden of Proof

The error of shifting the burden of proof consists of demanding that others disprove our assertions. Let's say Bill asserts, "The greatest single cause of exploding health care costs in this country is unnecessary referral of patients for costly medical testing." Barbara then asks Bill to explain why he believes that to be the case. He responds, "Can you cite any evidence to disprove it? If you can't, then say so." Bill is guilty of shifting the burden of proof. He made an assertion; he should be ready to support it if asked and not demand that others refute it. The rule is that whoever makes the assertion bears the burden of supporting it, and the more the assertion departs from what knowledgeable people believe, the greater the responsibility of the person making the assertion to support it.

You will be less likely to shift the burden of proof if you learn to expect your ideas to be questioned and criticized and prepare to support them before you express them.

4 Straw Man

The term straw man was coined by logicians to denote an argument without substance. To commit the error of straw man is to put false words in someone else's mouth and then expose their falsity, conveniently forgetting that the other person never said them.

Suppose you are discussing with a friend whether the sale of assault

weapons should be banned and the conversation goes as follows:

You: I oppose any restriction on the sale of guns. It should make no difference whether we’ re talking about a pistol, a rifle, a shotgun, or an assault weapon. A gun is a gun. And a constitutional right is a constitutional right.

your friend:You say it “should make no difference” what kind of gun is involved. I say it should make a difference because the guns you mentioned are very different from one another. Assault weapons are unlike other kinds of guns—they are not designed for hunting, or even for self-defense, but only for killing people, often indiscriminately. That’ s why they should be banned.

You [feeling defensive because you realize your friend’ s point will be difficult to answer]: So you believe you should decide what weapons are acceptable and what weapons aren’ t. It’ s exactly this kind of arrogance by self-appointed social reformers that everyone who values the Constitution should fear.

You have committed the error of straw man. If your friend is alert, she will respond: “First you put irresponsible words in my mouth, and then you say I’ m irresponsible. I’ d prefer to hear your reaction to what I really said.”

To avoid straw man, be scrupulously accurate in quoting or para-

phrasing other people's words.

5 Attacking the Critic

Attacking the critic is the attempt to discredit an idea or argument by disparaging the person who expressed it. People typically resort to this error of reaction after their ideas or behaviors have been called into question. Instead of responding to the real issue, the actual ideas or behaviors that have been questioned, they create a diversionary issue—the real or imagined failings, or the motivation, of the person who raised the issue.

Attacking the critic is an error because ideas and people are not synonymous. However interesting it may be to probe people's motives, such exploration tells us nothing about the quality of their ideas. Even people with questionable motives and outright liars sometimes tell the truth. This is not to say that honesty is unimportant or that we should unquestioningly accept the word of people whose integrity we have reason to suspect. It is only to say that it is unreasonable to substitute speculations or judgments about people themselves for judgments of their ideas.

loth adj 不乐意的; 不情愿的

frankly adv 坦率地

preserve vt 保护, 保存

deceptively adv 迷惑地; 骗人地

candidly adv 坦白地; 率直地;

temptation n 诱惑

referral n 送交, 转送

assault vt 猛烈攻击, 袭击,

pistol n 手枪

indiscriminately adv 随意地; 不加选择地

Paraphrase vt 解释, 释义, 意译

probe vt 追问; 探究

substitute vt; n 代替; 取代

determination n 决定

contradict vt 反驳; 驳斥

automatic adj 自动的, 自发的

Extension n 延伸, 延展

13.The errors in combination

The previous five chapters examined the errors that occur at various stages of the thinking process. Those chapters had two aims: to help you avoid the errors in your thinking and to help you recognize them when they occur in other people's thinking. Each error was treated in isolation.

They can, however, occur in combination. For example, “mine-is-better” thinking may create a bias against change that leads us to biased selection of evidence and a hasty conclusion. Although the possible combinations that can occur are innumerable, they all have one thing in common: They pose a greater obstacle to critical thinking than does any one error by itself.

举例

When Sam was thirteen years old, he didn't really want to smoke, but his friends goaded him into doing so. He took to it well, though, feeling more like one of the guys with a cigarette dangling out of the corner of his mouth. As he progressed from an occasional cigarette to a pack-a-day habit, the cost became prohibitive, and he began to steal money from his parents to buy cigarettes. “Hey, it's either that or do without,” he reasoned, “and I'm not about to do without.”

Now Sam is forty years old, married with a couple of children, and still smoking. He has developed a wheeze but attributes it to an allergy. Each new surgeon general's report on the dangers of smoking sends him into a tirade. “They haven't been able to prove smoking causes any disease,” he argues, “so it's up to the individual to decide whether he'll be harmed by it.” More recently, when tobacco companies were

accused of adding nicotine and suppressing unfavorable test results, Sam defended them. “Those executives are wealthy. They have no reason to harm millions of men, women, and children.” What incenses him most of all is the nonsmoking zones at work, in airports, and in other public places. “I don’t tell other people what to do and when and where to do it, so no one has any business telling me.”

Sam’s first error was being victimized by conformity. His rationale for stealing reveals either/or thinking. (There was an alternative to stealing — get a part-time job.) His attribution of the wheeze to an allergy showed face-saving, and his tirades against the surgeon general’s reports contained the unwarranted assumption that individual smokers are informed enough to decide whether they’ll be harmed. His reasoning about executives assumed that wealthy people are not tempted to do wrong. But there are other temptations than financial gain to be considered, such as retaining prestige and being included in the inner circle of management. Finally, Sam oversimplified the issue of smoking in public places, notably by ignoring the problem of secondhand smoke.

总结各种错误

Before discussing combinations of errors further, let’s summarize the

individual errors and the strategies we discussed for avoiding them. You will recall that the most fundamental critical thinking error is “mine-is-better” thinking, in which we assume that our ideas must be superior to other people’s simply because they are our ideas. In reality, of course, our ideas are as likely to be mistaken as anyone else’s. To overcome “mine-is-better” thinking, we must be as critical of our own ideas as we are of other people’s.

Errors of Perspective

Unwarranted Assumptions

Poverty of aspect

The Either/Or Outlook

Mindless Conformity

Absolutism

Relativism

Bias for or Against Change

Errors of Procedure

Biased Consideration of Evidence

Double Standard

Hasty Conclusion

Overgeneralization and Stereotyping

Oversimplification

The Post Hoc Fallacy

Errors of Expression

Contradiction

Arguing in a Circle

Meaningless Statement

Mistaken Authority

False Analogy

Irrational Appeal

Errors of Reaction:

Automatic Rejection

Changing the Subject

Shifting the Burden of Proof

Straw Man

Attacking the Critic

Errors of Perspective

1 Poverty of aspect

Limiting one's perspective on issues; having tunnel vision. Poverty of aspect sometimes is attributable to intellectual sloth; other times it is a by-product of specialized education and training.

To avoid poverty of aspect when evaluating issues, look beyond the familiar, examine all relevant points of view, and understand before judging

2 Unwarranted assumptions

Assumptions are ideas that are taken for granted rather than consciously reasoned out. When what is taken for granted is unjustified by one's experience or by the situation, the assumption is unwarranted. Because assumptions seldom are expressed directly, the only way to identify them is to "read between the lines" for what is unstated but clearly implied

3 Either/or outlook

The expectation that the only reasonable view of any issue will be total affirmation or total rejection. This error rules out the possibility that the most reasonable view might lie between the extremes.

To avoid this error, consider all possible alternatives

4 Mindless conformity

Adopting others' views unthinkingly because we are too lazy or fearful to form our own.

To overcome this error, develop the habit of resisting the internal and external pressures and make up your own mind.

5 Absolutism

The belief that rules do not admit of exceptions. This belief causes us to demand that the truth be neat and simple, when in reality it is often messy and complex.

To avoid this error, accept the truth as you find it rather than requiring that it fit your preconceptions.

6 Relativism

The belief that no view is better than any other, that any idea you choose to embrace is automatically correct. To avoid relativism, remind yourself that some ideas, and some standards of conduct, are better than others and that the challenge of critical thinking is to discover the best ones.

7 Bias for or against change

Bias for change assumes that change is always for the best; bias against change assumes that change is always for the worst. To avoid both errors, give any proposal for change a fair hearing and decide, apart from your predisposition, whether the change is actually positive or negative

Errors of Procedure

1 Biased consideration of evidence

One form of this error is seeking evidence that confirms your bias and ignoring evidence that challenges it. Another is interpreting evidence in a way that favors your bias. To avoid this error, begin your investigation by seeking out individuals whose views oppose your bias, then go on to those whose views support it. Also, choose the most reasonable interpretation of the evidence.

2 Double standard

Using one set of criteria for judging arguments we agree with and another standard for judging arguments we disagree with. To avoid this error, decide in advance what judgment criteria you will use and apply those criteria consistently, regardless of whether the data in question support your view.

3 Hasty conclusion

A premature judgment—that is, a judgment made without sufficient evidence. To avoid drawing a hasty conclusion, identify all possible conclusions before you select any one. Then decide whether you have sufficient evidence to support any of those conclusions and, if so, which conclusion that is.

4 Overgeneralization and stereotyping

Overgeneralization is ascribing to all the members of a group a quality that fits only some members. A stereotype is an overgeneralization that is rigidly maintained. To avoid these errors, resist the urge to force individual people, places, and things into hard categories. And keep in mind that the more limited your experience, the more modest your assertions should be.

5 Oversimplification

Oversimplification goes beyond making complex ideas easier to grasp — it twists and distorts the ideas. Instead of informing people, oversimplification misleads them. To avoid this error, refuse to adopt superficial views and make a special effort to understand issues in their complexity.

6 Post hoc fallacy

This error is rooted in the idea that when one thing occurs after another, it must be the result of the other, when in reality the sequence may be coincidental. To avoid the post hoc fallacy, withhold judgment of a cause- and-effect relationship until you have ruled out other possible causes, including coincidence.

Errors of Expression

1 Contradiction

To claim that a statement is both true and false at the same time in the same way. To avoid this error, monitor what you say and write. The moment you detect any inconsistency, examine it carefully. Decide whether it is explainable or whether it constitutes a contradiction. If it is a contradiction, revise your statement to make it consistent and reasonable.

2 Arguing in a circle

Attempting to prove a statement by repeating it in a different form. To avoid this error, check your arguments to be sure you are offering genuine evidence and not merely repeating your claim

3 Meaningless statement

A statement in which the reasoning presented makes no sense. To avoid this error, check to be sure that the reasons you offer to explain your thoughts and actions really do explain them.

4 Mistaken authority

Ascribing authority to some- one who does not possess it. To avoid this error, check to be sure that all the sources you cite as authorities

possess expertise in the particular subject you are writing or speaking about.

5 False analogy

An analogy is an attempt to explain something relatively unfamiliar by referring to something different but more familiar, saying, in effect, “This is like that.” A false analogy claims similarities that do not withstand scrutiny. To avoid this error, test your analogies to be sure that the similarities they claim are real and reasonable and that no important dissimilarities exist

6 Irrational appeal

Appeals to emotion, tradition, moderation, authority, common belief, and tolerance may be either rational or irrational. They are irrational, and therefore unacceptable, when they are unreasonable in the particular situation under discussion and/or when they discourage thought. To avoid this error, make sure your appeals complement thought rather than substitute for it.

Errors of Reaction:

1 Automatic rejection

The refusal to give criticism of your ideas (or behaviors) a fair hearing.

To avoid this error, think of your ideas as possessions that you can keep or discard rather than as extensions of your ego. This will make you less defensive about them.

2 Changing the subject

Abruptly and deceptively turning a discussion away from the issue under discussion. To avoid this error, face difficult questions head-on rather than trying to avoid them.

3 Shifting the burden of proof

Demanding that others disprove our assertions. To avoid this error, understand that the burden of supporting any assertion rests with the person who makes it rather than the one who questions it. Accept the responsibility of supporting your assertions.

4 Straw man

To commit the error of straw man is to put false words in someone else's mouth and then expose their falsity, conveniently forgetting that the other person never said them. To avoid this error, be scrupulously accurate in quoting or paraphrasing other people's words.

5 Attacking the critic

Attempting to discredit an idea or argument by disparaging the person who expressed it. To avoid attacking the critic, focus your critical thinking on ideas rather than on the people who express them.

goaded vt 招惹，激怒

dangling n 悬垂；悬挂

prohibitive adj 难以承受的；禁止的

wheeze vt 喘息；喘鸣；

allergy n 过敏反应；

tirade n 长篇激烈讲话

14. Knowing yourself

Part One of this book, “The Context,” presented the fundamental “tools and rules” involved in critical thinking. Part Two, “The Pitfalls,” explained the many ways in which thinking can go wrong and what you can do to avoid them. Part Three presents a step-by-step approach for you to use in addressing issues. Following this approach will enable you to smoothly and effectively integrate the habits and skills you have learned. Thinking, remember, is an active use of the mind, a performance activity, every bit as much as is playing tennis or the piano, driving a car, or cooking Thanksgiving dinner. The quality lies in the doing.

Western philosophy virtually began with Socrates' advice "Know thy- self." Ever since, thoughtful men and women have realized that knowing oneself is the key to wisdom. As Sidney J. Harris observed, "Ninety percent of the world's woe comes from people not knowing themselves, their abilities, their frailties, and even their real virtues. Most of us go almost all the way through life as complete strangers to ourselves." No doubt Scottish poet Robert Burns had this reality in mind when he longed for the gift "to see ourselves as others see us.

Exactly what influences have shaped my identity? How have they done so? How has my self-image been affected? In what situations am I less an individual because of these influences?

In what ways am I like the good thinker (as outlined in Chapter 2)? In what ways like the poor thinker? What kinds of situations seem to bring out my best and worst qualities?

To what extent has my perspective on truth been reasonable? (Refer to Chapter 3 if necessary.)

How careful am I about separating hearsay and rumor from fact? About distinguishing the known from assumptions or guesses? How difficult is it for me to say "I don't know" ?

How consistent am I in taking the trouble to make my opinions informed?

To what extent do I think that "mine is better" (not only the

personal “mine” but the ethnocentric “mine” as well)? In what ways has this kind of thinking affected my view of personal problems and public issues? To what extent does it affect my ability to listen to those who disagree with me? My ability to control my emotions? My willingness to change my mind and revise a judgment?

In what matters am I inclined to assume too much, take too much for granted?

To what degree do I tend to have the either/or outlook, expecting that the right answer will always be extreme and never moderate?

To what or to whom do I feel the strongest urge to conform? In what situations has this conformist tendency interfered with my judgment?

Do I tend to be an absolutist, demanding that truth be neat and simple, or a relativist, claiming that everyone creates his or her own truth? In what ways has my characteristic tendency hindered my development as a critical thinker?

In what matters am I most biased toward change? Am I overly accepting of change or overly resistant to it? What is the cause of this tendency and how can I best control it?

In what situations do I seek to confirm my biases rather than control them? In what situations do I interpret evidence in a way that flatters my bias?

How often do I approach issues with a double standard, overlooking

flaws in arguments that agree with mine and nitpicking those that disagree?

To what extent do I tend to jump to conclusions? Do I tend to do so more in certain areas? If so, which? Do I draw my conclusions prematurely purely for the sake of convenience? Am I motivated by the desire to sound authoritative and impress people?

To what extent do I overgeneralize? What kinds of stereotypes do I most readily accept? Racial? Religious? Ethnic?

To what extent do I oversimplify complex matters? Am I simply unwilling to take the trouble to learn the truth in its complexity? Or do I feel threatened by answers that are not neat and tidy? What has made me this way?

What errors of expression do I most often commit? Reasoning that if B follows A, A must be the cause of B? Shifting the issue to avoid difficult or embarrassing discussions? Contradicting myself? Arguing in a circle? Making meaningless statements? Confusing real with bogus authorities? Making false analogies? Using irrational appeals?

Which of the following errors are most characteristic of my responses to challenges and criticism of my ideas: automatic rejection? shifting the burden of proof? straw man? attacking the critic rather than discussing the issue?

humans are prone to avoid focusing on and coping with their problems

and instead often sweep them under the rug by resorting to rationalization, denial, compensation, identification, projection, avoidance, repression, and other defensive maneuvers.

15. Being observant

Being observant is not merely an interesting quality that enlivens our days. Clear and sound thinking often depends on subtleties that are revealed only by close observation—in other words, by attentive seeing and hearing. If there are gaps in our seeing and hearing, then the perceptions on which we base our judgments are less likely to be complete and accurate. In addition, the keener our observation, the less likely we will be to commit to stereotypes, oversimplifications, and unwarranted assumptions.

Good detectives are observant. They know that one small, easily overlooked clue can mean the difference between a solved and an unsolved case. Similarly, good trial lawyers are studious observers of people. The nervous glance of a witness when a certain aspect of the case is mentioned can suggest the most productive line of questioning. Likewise, we can conduct our critical thinking more effectively if we observe other people's behavior carefully.

The way to be observant is to use all five of your senses to keep your mind from wandering aimlessly. All too often, people are unobservant

because they are too absorbed in themselves—their own thoughts and feelings. When they speak, they are so busy forming their words and enjoying the sound of their own voice that they forget their listeners. Observant people, on the other hand, have learned how to get outside themselves, to be constantly in touch with what is happening around them.

A good way to start becoming more observant is to practice receiving sense impressions more attentively. At the next meeting of an organization you belong to or any other gathering, try to notice things you would normally miss: objects in the room, the arrangement of the furniture, the positions of the people in relation to one another, the subtle reactions of people during the discussion. When you are reading a magazine or newspaper or watching TV, look for the significance of things. Consider the connections among ideas, even apparently unrelated ones.

Observing People

What people say and the way they say it (and sometimes what they omit saying) can be valuable clues to their unspoken views and attitudes. Noticing these things can help us decide which areas are sensitive for people, which areas their understanding seems weak in, and what approaches would be most fruitful in communicating with them.

Reflecting on Your Observations

Observation will sometimes, by itself, bring valuable insights. But you can increase the number and quality of your insights by developing the habit of reflecting on your observations. The best way to do this is to set aside a special time every day—early in the morning, perhaps, or late in the evening (but not when you are exhausted). It needn't be long; ten or fifteen minutes may be enough. But be sure you are free of distractions. Review what you have seen and heard during the past twenty-four hours. Ask yourself what they mean, how they relate to other important matters, and how you can use them to improve yourself or to spur achievement.

16. Selecting an Issue

The term issue, in the context of critical thinking, means any matter about which people tend to disagree; in other words, it is almost synonymous with the word controversy

Any feeling of security this approach may generate is purely imaginary. Trying to do justice to a broad topic in a composition of 500 words, or for that matter in several thousand words, is as futile as trying to pour a gallon of water into a pint container. It just won't work, even in the case of a simple informative composition. And it has much less

chance of working when you are analyzing issues, which are at least two-sided and often multisided. This means that many, perhaps most, of the people who will judge your analysis of an issue not only know its complexities but also have half a dozen reasons to disagree with you. A superficial, once-over-lightly, treatment is sure to fail.

The only sensible solution to this dilemma is to limit the scope of your analysis. For example, if the issue has five or ten important aspects, examine only one or two. You will then have sufficient space to address complexities, make important distinctions, and deal with subtleties. This is the meaning of “less is more”—aiming for depth rather than breadth.

How to Limit an Issue

List as many aspects of the issue as you can. In the case of an important, highly controversial, matter, your list may include more than a dozen aspects.

Decide exactly which aspects you will address. Seldom will you be able to do an adequate job of treating all aspects. The one or ones you choose should not only meet your interest but also fit the occasion and purpose of your analysis and the amount of time and space you have available.

Probe the aspects you are concerned with in one or more clear, carefully focused, questions. Doing this helps keep the subsequent

inquiry focused and prevents you from drifting from the issue. Write the questions out; then, if your thoughts move in a certain direction, you can quickly glance at the questions and decide whether that direction is likely to be productive.

By limiting the scope of your treatment, you not only ensure a clearer focus and increase the odds of staying within your competency, you also make the task of analysis more manageable. The fewer matters that are competing for your attention, the less the danger of becoming distracted or confused. Even on those rare occasions when you are able to address more than a single subissue, careful identification of all of them will make your inquiry more orderly and purposeful. Finally, limiting your treatment will lessen the chance of your oversimplifying complex matters.

17. Conducting inquiry

Inquiry is seeking answers to questions, investigating issues, and gathering information to help us draw conclusions. It enables us to get beyond our first impressions, feelings, preconceived notions, and personal preferences.

There are two basic kinds of inquiry: inquiry into facts and inquiry into opinions. Opinions, remember, can be informed or uninformed.

Except in cases where the purpose of our inquiry demands that both varieties of opinion be gathered, we should be more interested in informed opinion. Often we will need to inquire into both facts and opinions

However resistant to resolution a question may be, though, inquiry is still useful. Even if it yields no more than the untestable opinions of experts, those opinions are more valuable than the casual speculations of the uninformed. So we shouldn't be intimidated by difficult issues. We should merely be realistic about how complete and final our answers are likely to be.

Keeping Focused

Even books needn't be waded through page by page to find something useful. In mere seconds you can turn to the index (usually at the end) and look for the several headings your issue might be found under; then turn to the appropriate pages and read only those pages. If the book has no index, you can turn to the table of contents, read the chapter titles, decide which chapters seem most relevant, and then scan them.

Efficiency can be more difficult to achieve in Internet searches because distractions often are more frequent and tempting. Make a special effort to discipline your Internet searches, focusing your attention

on relevant material only and resisting the temptation to wander.

Managing Lengthy Material

After reading the article or book, go back and identify the key assertions.

Identify the author's conclusion

Notice any qualifying words used in the key assertions or the conclusion

Note the amount, kinds, and sources of evidence used to support the assertions.

Notice the conditions the author includes

18. Forming a judgments

Judgments are conclusions arrived at through examination of evidence and careful reasoning. They are the products of thinking. Unlike feelings, judgments are not spontaneous and unconscious. They may, of course, contain elements of the spontaneous—such as intuition—but, like other data, these elements have first been weighed and evaluated. The fact that judgments are products of evaluation and reasoning does not guarantee their worth. There are foolish as well as wise judgments, superficial as well as penetrating ones. A judgment can easily reflect misconceptions about truth, knowledge, and opinion.

As the examples demonstrate, taking time to ask appropriate

questions has several benefits. First, it prevents you from judging hastily, on the basis of first impressions. Second, it allows you to evaluate each part of the argument individually (rather than settling for an overall evaluation) and thus to identify both strengths and weaknesses. Finally, taking the time to ask appropriate questions often provides a structure around which to arrange your thoughts.

Making Important Distinctions

- 1 Between the person and the idea
- 2 Between what is said and how it is said.
- 3 Between why people think as they do and whether what they think is correct.
- 4 Between the individual and the group or class.
- 5 Between matters of preference and matters of judgment.
- 6 Between familiarity and correctness.

Expressing Judgments

Strive for a balanced view.

Deal with probability.

Make your subject appropriately specific.

Make your predicate exact.

Include all appropriate qualifications.

Avoid exaggeration.

The critical thinking strategy presented in this chapter and the four preceding chapters may be summarized as follows:

Know yourself and remain mindful of the ways in which your habits of mind undermine your treatment of issues.

Be observant and reflect on what you see and hear.

When you identify an issue, clarify it by listing its aspects and raising probing questions about each.

Conduct a thorough inquiry, obtaining all relevant facts and informed opinions.

Evaluate your findings, and then form and express your judgment

19. Persuading others

The simple answer is because thoughtful judgments deserve to be shared, and the way they are presented can strongly influence the way others react to them. By learning the principles of persuasion and applying them in your writing (and speaking), you will extend the benefits of your critical thinking beyond the confines of your own mind.

Persuasion means presenting your view so effectively that people who have no position on the issue will be inclined to agree with you and those who disagree with you will be motivated to reconsider their own view. This task is more difficult than it may seem. Those who are neutral

will be open to suggestion, but only if you demonstrate the reasonableness of your view. Those who disagree with you will be disposed to reject your view for the obvious reason that it disputes theirs. To accept your view entails discarding their own, which they may have formed after considerable thought and with which their egos are intertwined.

To appreciate how difficult it can be to persuade others, you need only reflect on your own resistance to ideas that oppose yours. If you still have trouble giving such ideas a fair hearing even after a semester's study of critical thinking, it is unreasonable to expect individuals who lack your training to respond more generously.

Guidelines for Persuasion

Respect your audience.

Understand your audience's viewpoint.

Begin from a position you have in common with your readers.

Take a positive approach.

Understate your argument when ever possible.

Concede where the opposing side has a point.

Don't ignore any relevant facts.

Don't over whelm your readers with arguments.

Focus on the argument best calculated to persuade your audience.

Never use an argument you do not believe is sound or relevant.

Allow time for your view to gain acceptance.

GUIDELINE 1: RESPECT YOUR AUDIENCE

This guideline may sound idealistic, but it is eminently practical. If you believe the people you are trying to persuade are doltish or intellectually dishonest, you are bound to betray that belief, if not directly then indirectly in your tone or choice of words. Moreover, they will generally sense your disparaging view of them and feel hurt or resentful, hardly the kind of reaction that will make them open to persuasion.

GUIDELINE 2: UNDERSTAND YOUR AUDIENCE' S VIEWPOINT

Many people make the mistake of thinking that knowing their own view- point is all that is necessary to be persuasive. “What my readers think about the issue is really irrelevant,” they reason. “All that matters is what I’ m going to get them to think.” In addition to being pompous, this attitude ignores two crucial points. First, people’ s views matter very much to them, and when others refuse to acknowledge this fact they feel offended. Second, we must know where people stand before we can hope to reach them.

GUIDELINE 3: BEGIN FROM A POSITION YOU HAVE IN COMMON WITH YOUR READERS

Beginning from a position of agreement with your reader is not an arbitrary requirement or a matter of courtesy or good form. It is a simple matter of psychology. If you begin by saying—in effect, if not directly—”Look here, you are wrong, and I’ m going to show you,” you push your readers to defensive if not outright hostile reactions. They are likely to read the rest of your paper thinking not of what you are saying but of ways to refute it, concerned with measuring only the weaknesses of your argument. And if they are unreasonable and unbalanced in their reading, the fault will be more yours than theirs.

GUIDELINE 4: TAKE A POSITIVE APPROACH

Whenever possible, build your case rather than tearing down the opposing case. To say you should never expose the weaknesses of the opposing side of the issue would be an oversimplification, and a foolish one at that. There are times when examining such weaknesses is the only responsible course of action. Keep in mind, however, that direct criticism of the opposing view will always seem harsher than it is to people who share that view, a brief criticism will seem protracted, and the mere perception that you are being negative will make your readers defensive. The solution is not to be so timid that you don’ t say anything

meaningful but to be sensitive to your readers' reactions.

GUIDELINE 5: UNDERSTATE YOUR ARGUMENT WHENEVER POSSIBLE

The sharpest points of disagreement between you and your readers should always be approached most carefully. These points represent the greatest obstacle to persuasion. If you overstate your position, you are bound to reinforce your readers' conviction about their position rather than dispose them to question their conviction. The student who wrote the following passage made this blunder:

GUIDELINE 6: CONCEDE WHERE THE OPPOSING SIDE HAS A POINT

The natural tendency of all of us to value our own position too highly makes it difficult for us to admit that opposing views may also have merit. Overcoming this tendency can be accomplished only by remembering that in most controversial issues no one side possesses the total truth. If you can approach controversial issues with this thought, you are likely to grasp more of the total truth and to attract reasonable readers to your position. It means a specific and, if space permits, detailed explanation of where, how, and why the opposing viewpoint is correct.

GUIDELINE 7: DON'T IGNORE ANY RELEVANT FACTS

In studying an issue, we sometimes uncover facts that support the

opposing position rather than our own. The temptation is strong to ignore them, especially if the other person has apparently not discovered them. Using them, it would seem, could only weaken our position.

However, the purpose of argument is not to defeat others but, through the exchange of views, to discover the truth in all its complexity. When that happens, everyone wins. When any part of the truth is hidden, no one wins, even though it may appear that someone does. By presenting all the facts, even those that force you to modify your position, you impress your readers with your objectivity and honesty and invite them to show theirs.

GUIDELINE 8: DON'T OVERWHELM YOUR READERS WITH ARGUMENTS

In controversial matters, no paper under, say, 3,000 words is likely to be definitive. Moreover, no serious writer would attempt to convey the impression that it is. Of necessity it contains selected evidence. On the surface it would seem that this would give more reason to fill the paper to overflowing with evidence for one's position, to make it as nearly definitive as possible. But on reflection it is clear that the readers' impression must also be considered. What is the impression of those who read a composition that they know cannot possibly be definitive but is devoted to arguing one side of an issue, piling detail on detail, example

on example, without even implying that there is another side to the issue?
There is no question that they will regard such a composition as one-sided and unbalanced!

GUIDELINE 9: FOCUS ON THE ARGUMENT BEST CALCULATED TO PERSUADE YOUR AUDIENCE

Different arguments appeal to different readers. Just as it is important to understand your readers' viewpoints on the issue, it is important to use arguments that will appeal to them. To ignore their frames of reference and choose arguments that you yourself find persuasive is a mistake.

GUIDELINE 10: NEVER USE AN ARGUMENT YOU DO NOT BELIEVE IS SOUND OR RELEVANT

This guideline should be understood as a qualification of the previous one. Sincerity and regard for the truth are among the most important characteristics of a writer. Without them there is no real persuasion, only clever presentation. Therefore, if you truly believe that only one argument is worthy of consideration, then by all means use only that argument. This dilemma, however, is not likely to arise very often. In most cases, you will be able to choose among a variety of arguments without compromising your integrity.

GUIDELINE 11: ALLOW TIME FOR YOUR VIEW TO GAIN ACCEPTANCE

It may be tempting to believe that when you present your view, your readers will immediately abandon their own and embrace yours. That expectation is unrealistic. Except in rare cases, the best you should hope for is that they will be moved to reconsider the issue in light of what you said and that your insights eventually will cause them to modify their view. The fact that “eventually” may turn out to be next week or next year rather than five minutes from now is not necessarily a comment on your skill in persuading others. It may merely reflect the reality that the bonds people form with their opinions are not easily broken.

Do not feel absolutely certain of anything.

Do not think it worthwhile to produce belief by concealing evidence, for the evidence is sure to come to light.

Never try to discourage thinking, for you are sure to succeed.

When you meet with opposition, even if it is from your family, endeavor to overcome it with argument and not by authority, for a victory dependent upon authority is unreal and illusory.

Have no respect for the authority of others, for there are always contrary authorities to be found.

Do not use power to suppress opinions you think pernicious, for if

you do, the opinions will suppress you.

Do not fear to be eccentric in opinion, for every opinion now accepted was once eccentric.

Find more pleasure in intelligent dissent than in passive agreement, for if you value intelligence as you should, the former implies a deeper agreement than the latter.

Be scrupulously truthful even if the truth is inconvenient, for it is more inconvenient when you try to conceal it.

Do not feel envious of the happiness of those who live in a fool's paradise, for only a fool will think that is happiness.