**DISCERNMENT TESTS**

This approach transforms abstract "media literacy" into concrete skill-building, just like your gemology training. The four-category framework gives people a practical classification system, and the practice scenarios build pattern recognition through repetition.

The key insight from your gemologist experience is that **professionals don't just rely on intuition** - they use systematic tests that can be taught, practiced, and refined. Even when technology advances (lab-grown diamonds, sophisticated AI), the testing methodology adapts but the disciplined approach remains.

Just like this gemologist can distinguish between cubic zirconia, moissanite, natural diamonds, and lab-grown diamonds, we need people to develop that same quick recognition for digital content.

| **Test Question** | **Why It Matters** |
| --- | --- |
| **Source Test:** Where did this come from? | Anchor attention in reality-checking origins |
| **Emotion Test:** Is this designed to trigger me? | Bypass manipulation; engage reflectively |
| **Intention Test:** What is this trying to get me to believe or do? | Reveal influence strategy; reclaim agency |

**IMAGINAL AGILITY WORKSHOP COURSE**

**Reality Discernment Exercise Guide**

## REALITY TESTING TOOLKIT

### Fast, Easy, Useful Exercises

### ****THE 3-SECOND REALITY CHECK****

**1. THE PAUSE TEST**

**Action:** Before reacting to any content, pause for 3 seconds

* **Question:** "What is my immediate emotional response?"
* **Red Flag:** Content designed to trigger immediate sharing, outrage, or action
* **Why it works:** Manipulation content is designed to bypass reflection

**2. THE SOURCE TEST**

* **Action:** Ask "Where did this come from?" within 10 seconds
* **Questions:**
  + Can I trace this to an original source?
  + Is there a named author/creator with verifiable credentials?
  + Does the platform/publisher have transparency standards?
* **Red Flag:** Vague attribution, anonymous sources, or circular referencing
* **Why it works:** AI content often lacks authentic provenance

**3. THE COHERENCE TEST**

* **Action:** Scan for internal consistency
* **Questions:**
  + Do the details align logically?
  + Are there temporal inconsistencies (wrong dates, impossible timelines)?
  + Do quoted people actually exist and say these things?
* **Red Flag:** Perfect details that feel "too good to be true" or subtle impossibilities
* **Why it works:** AI often creates plausible but flawed details

### ****THE 30-SECOND DEEP SCAN****

**4. THE INTENTION TEST**

**Action:** Ask "What is this trying to get me to believe or do?"

* **Questions:**
  + What action is this driving me toward?
  + Who benefits if I share/believe/act on this?
  + Is this selling me something (product, ideology, emotion)?
* **Red Flag:** Content that pushes toward immediate action without contemplation
* **Why it works:** Reveals the agenda behind the content

**5. THE MULTIPLE PERSPECTIVE TEST**

* **Action:** Seek one additional source or viewpoint
* **Questions:**
  + What do other credible sources say about this?
  + How would someone who disagrees with this frame it?
  + Is this the only source reporting this information?
* **Red Flag:** Information that exists in only one ecosystem or echo chamber
* **Why it works:** Truth typically has multiple credible witnesses

### ****THE 2-MINUTE VERIFICATION PROTOCOL****

**6. THE REVERSE SEARCH TEST**

**Action:** For images/videos, use reverse image search

* **Tools:** Google Images, TinEye, or built-in browser tools
* **Red Flag:** Images that appear with completely different contexts or dates
* **Why it works:** Catches recycled or manipulated visual content

**7. THE EMOTIONAL REGULATION TEST**

**Action:** Notice your emotional state after consuming content

* **Questions:**
  + Do I feel manipulated or "played"?
  + Am I more angry, fearful, or euphoric than before?
  + Does this content make me want to argue with people I normally respect?
* **Red Flag:** Content that generates extreme emotional states or social division
* **Why it works:** Emotional manipulation often feels artificial once you notice it

### ****PRACTICE EXERCISES****

**Daily Reality Gym:**

1. **Morning News Scan:** Apply the 3-second reality check to the first 3 news items you encounter
2. **Social Media Skeptic:** Before sharing anything, run it through the Source + Intention tests
3. **Evening Reflection:** Ask "What did I consume today that felt 'too perfect' or 'too outrageous'?"

**Weekly Deep Training:**

1. **Find the Fake:** Deliberately seek out known AI-generated content and practice your detection skills
2. **Source Archaeology:** Pick one major news story and trace it back to its original sources
3. **Perspective Flip:** Find credible sources that disagree with something you recently believed

**Emergency Protocol:** When you encounter something that makes you want to immediately share or act:

1. STOP - Don't share/act for 24 hours
2. TEST - Run through all 7 reality checks
3. VERIFY - Find two independent credible sources
4. REFLECT - Ask "Why did this trigger such a strong response in me?"

Quick visual and intuitive tests for digital content.

**THE FOUR CONTENT TYPES:**

🔷 **OBVIOUS FAKE**

* **Quick Tests:** Reverse image search, basic fact-check
* **Red Flags:** Too perfect, recycled images, impossible details
* **Example:** Celebrity death hoax with recycled photos

🔷 **SOPHISTICATED FAKE**

**Quick Tests:** Source verification, timeline analysis, multiple perspectives

* **Red Flags:** Plausible but untraceable origins, emotional manipulation
* **Example:** AI-generated "expert" quotes that sound authoritative but lack verification

🔷 **AUTHENTIC HUMAN**

**Quick Tests:** Clear provenance, consistent track record, verifiable sources

* **Green Flags:** Named sources, institutional backing, transparent methodology
* **Example:** Peer-reviewed research, verified journalist reporting

🔷 **AI-ASSISTED AUTHENTIC**

* **Quick Tests:** Transparency about AI assistance, human oversight, clear labeling
* **Green Flags:** Honest about process, maintains editorial standards
* **Example:** News article using AI for research but human-written and fact-checked

**THE PROFESSIONAL'S TOOLKIT:**

People need signature patterns for digital deception:

**Visual Signatures:**

* **AI Images:** Perfect lighting, impossible perspectives, facial artifacts
* **Deepfakes:** Temporal inconsistencies, lighting mismatches, micro-expressions

**Textual Signatures:**

* **AI Writing:** Over-perfect grammar, repetitive patterns, lack of personal voice
* **Bot Networks:** Identical phrasing across accounts, coordinated timing

**Behavioral Signatures:**

* **Manipulation Content:** Urgency pressure, emotional extremes, tribal triggers
* **Authentic Content:** Measured tone, acknowledges complexity, cites sources

### ****PRACTICE SCENARIOS****

People need that same instant recognition for digital authenticity.

**Scenario 1: The "Breaking News" Test** Present 4 similar news items:

* Obvious satire site story
* Sophisticated disinformation with fake sources
* Legitimate breaking news from verified outlet
* AI-assisted journalism with transparency

**Scenario 2: The "Expert Quote" Test** Show 4 expert statements:

* Completely fabricated expert
* Real expert, fake quote
* Real expert, real quote
* AI-generated insight clearly labeled

**Scenario 3: The "Viral Image" Test** Display 4 compelling images:

* Obvious photoshop
* Sophisticated AI generation
* Authentic documentary photo
* AI-enhanced real photo with disclosure