

Critical Thinking Skills

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PREVIEW



Course Objectives

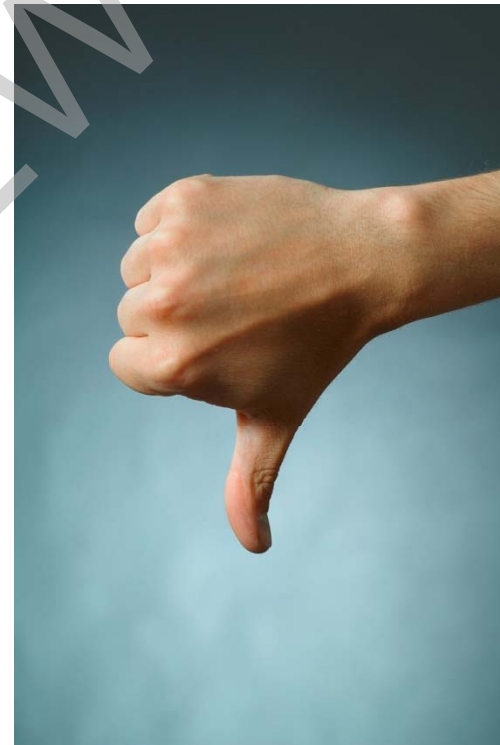
Upon completion of this course, you'll be able to:

- Define critical thinking
- Identify and adopt the characteristics of critical thinking
- Recognize and avoid critical thinking mistakes
- Identify assumptions
- Evaluate information accurately and thoroughly
- Distinguish between fact and opinion
- Implement the critical thinking process in business situations

What Critical Thinking Is Not

Despite the negative connotations of the word “critical,” critical thinking is not being argumentative or critical of other people

It also is not the acquisition of information without evaluation, or the evaluation of information without investigating it.



Benefits of Critical Thinking

Critical thinking enables you to:

- Think independently
- Solve problems systematically
- Recognize your own assumptions and biases
- Make better decisions
- Think more creatively
- Detect inconsistencies and common mistakes in reasoning



Curiosity

The purpose of critical thinking is not to be right, but to gather and assess the right information. One way to do that is to adopt the natural curiosity of a child.

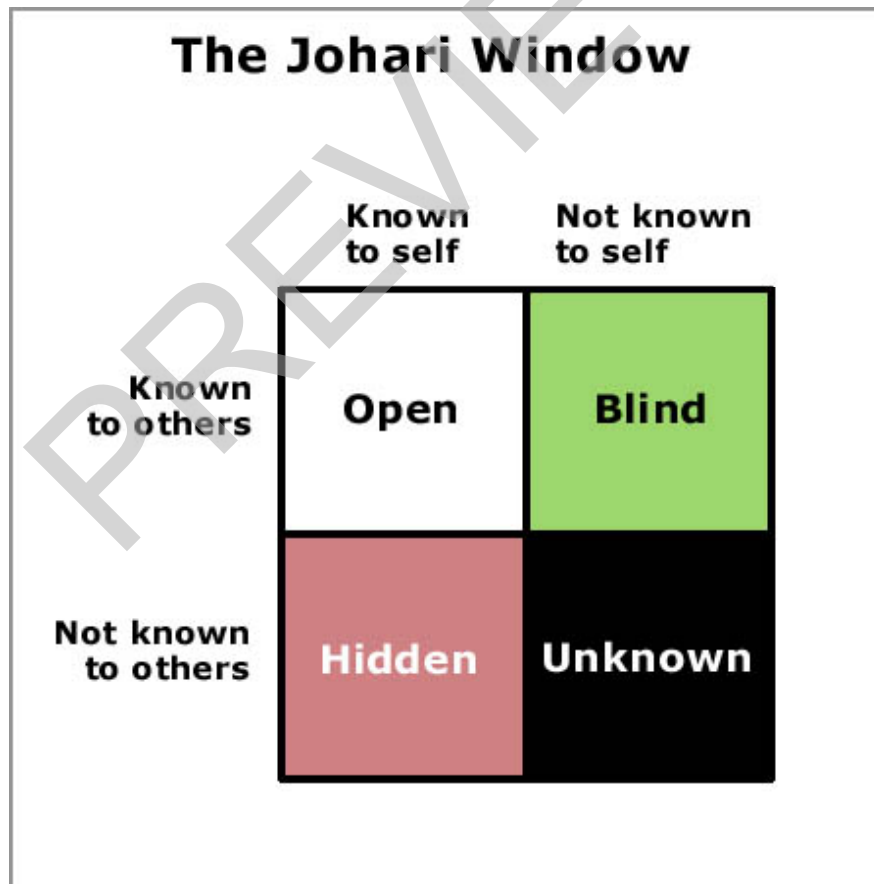


Think like a child

- Take a naïve observer perspective to the issue or problem
- Ask questions that reflect your willingness to grasp and accept new ideas and conclusions
- Project inquisitiveness and excitement rather than skepticism and negativity
- Don't let pride or ego get in the way of clear thinking

Awareness

Awareness is knowing what you know, and knowing what you don't know. This is especially important when examining your assumptions. An effective critical thinker must be able to discover his or her Blind Spots.



Flexibility

Someone who is flexible:

- Is open to new information
- Adapts easily and rapidly to new situations and new information
- Considers alternative points of view without being attached to any one perspective
- Plays devil's advocate: Intentionally considers the issue from another perspective
- Deals with ambiguity without getting stressed out



Emotional Thinking

Emotional thinking usually occurs in three primary ways:

- Reacting to a “feeling” or emotional language rather than the facts. Look at these two sets of words:

Public employee	Bureaucrat
Medical procedure	Life-saving surgery
Evacuate	Flee
Disturbance	Riot
House	Home

Which set evokes more emotions? Avoid emotional thinking by separating facts from feelings.

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