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**Abstract:** *The article is about critical thinking, where it can be used, how it can be applied. Critical thinking is an important soft skill. A person with developed critical thinking has a whole set of skills - it is observation and the ability to justify their point of view, focus on the study of information and the ability to apply analytical skills in a variety of situations.*

**Key words:** *Critical thinking, soft skill, logical and cause-and-effect relationships, quickly analyze and evaluate the judgements of others*

Critical thinking is a system of judgement that is used to analyze things and information, interpret phenomena, evaluate events and then draw objective conclusions.

Critical thinking is an important soft skill. A person with developed critical thinking has a whole set of skills - it is observation and the ability to justify their point of view, focus on the study of information and the ability to apply analytical skills in a variety of situations.

Where can critical thinking come in handy?

Everywhere. This is not an exaggeration: critical thinking skills are useful in every area of our lives - for children and teenagers as well as adults.

A person who possesses critical thinking is able to:

- understand logical and cause-and-effect relationships between different ideas and concepts;
- quickly analyse and evaluate the judgements of others;
- Competently construct their own arguments and communicate them to others;
- spot inconsistencies, inconsistencies and commonplace errors in logic and argumentation;
- recognise the importance and relevance of ideas to the overall context;
- Reflexively evaluate one's own opinions and beliefs.

In order to answer the question "what is it like to think critically?" in more detail, Nikita Nepryakhin, Head of the School of Critical Thinking, co-author of the book Critical Thinking has developed a system of six requirements.

1 - flexible thinking

This criterion is one of the key ones. The world is changing at an incredible speed, so in order to adapt to absolutely any conditions, we must change with it.

This means the ability to "juggle" different options, going beyond the usual framework. It is the ability not only to quickly find new strategies, but also to reconsider one's decisions, to abandon old views if they turn out to be wrong. A person with flexible thinking sees the situation not unipolarly, and even if something fails, he or she does not give up, as there is always another alternative.

An inflexible person is a hostage of his attitudes and stereotypes. He is uncompromising, categorical and uncooperative. Only flexibility of thinking, character and behaviour helps to avoid unnecessary conflicts and unnecessary stress.

#### 2 - logical presentation

Usually, when we speak of logic, we mean the ability to reason, abstract, analyse, make sound inferences and act consistently.

Critical thinking and logic are like Siamese twins: it is impossible to imagine a critical thinker who cannot understand, for example, cause and effect. However, any logicity is powerless on its own. It will triumph only in the presence of other criteria.

#### 3 - reasoned judgements

Closely related to the previous criterion is the third point. Critical thinking is impossible without cogent reasoning. When proving a position, a critical thinker will never say: "I'm telling you!", "Believe me!", "I said it and that's it!", "It's clear to a fool!". Demanding from others logical and proven arguments, he himself will never slip into unsubstantiated statements.

He will not take any thesis on faith without an adequate evidence base: confirmed facts, statistical data, thorough scientific research, references to concrete experience.

#### 4 - impartial approach

This means not adjusting logic to your selfish desires, striving for justice, being able to control your emotions and calmly perceive reality. Thinking as if from the third person of a kind of umpire.

Perhaps this is one of the most difficult criteria. It is difficult to be impartial, because in our head there are a lot of formed mental programmes, suggestions, beliefs and attitudes. And our ego, sometimes, selfishly influences our thoughts and actions. To avoid this, we need to ask ourselves more often: "Doesn't my subjective attitude speak in me?", "Is there no personal interest of mine in this decision?", "What would a person from the outside do?" and so on.

Absolute impartiality is impossible to achieve, but everyone should strive for it.

#### 5 - orderly thoughts

To think critically means to think in an orderly, systematic, consistent, organised manner. It requires putting one's thoughts in order. In a mature and strong mind there can be no chaos, flighty, rambling thoughts: they give birth to disorderly speech, followed by haphazard decisions, which ultimately leads to a disorganised life.

Harmony can only be born in order. A person who thinks in an orderly manner, makes consistent decisions, evaluates information systematically, is a master of analysis and synthesis. It is difficult to confuse him or lead him astray from a clear line of meaning.

#### 6 - independent thinking

A critical thinker is an independent thinker. Of course, we can listen to the opinion of others, the main thing is that it should be a conscious decision. Independent thinking should not be done in spite of, for someone else, to demonstrate adulthood and how original you are. It should be done for yourself. Otherwise, others will think and make choices for you.

But there can't be complete autonomy, that's isolation. We are not Robinson Crusoe on a desert island, we are social beings interacting with each other and living in a single infocfield according to special rules. To paraphrase a famous expression, we can say that our autonomy ends where the autonomy of another begins.

#### How do you apply critical thinking?

There are many ways. Professor Samantha Agus suggests a five-step approach.

Formulate a problem. For example, you are asked to try a diet that promises results in a fortnight. Identifying a personal goal - to lose weight, to improve your nutrition - will make it easier to critically evaluate this information and relate it to your needs.

Gather the information. You can ask experts for advice. This will help you evaluate all alternatives.

Use the information. Ask yourself a series of critical questions: "What is my rationale in this situation?", "Do I believe I am being told the truth?", "Does my interpretation of the information sound meaningful?", "What is the responsibility ahead?".

Think about the consequences. Let's say a candidate promises to lower the cost of petrol at petrol stations during a campaign. Sounds great, but what about the long-term environmental impact? It's always worth thinking about the impact of certain decisions on future events.

Explore other points of view. This will help you see the options, evaluate your choices and make an informed decision.

You can't learn critical thinking all at once. It's like learning a foreign language - at first everything seems complicated and incomprehensible, but when you understand the logic, it becomes easier.

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