

Some Thoughts on Critical Thinking

How to Spot a Closed Mind

Look For . . .

- A mind that automatically dismisses opposing positions.
- A mind that can't or won't support its ideas, taking them for granted as truths.
- A mind that thinks its beliefs and assumptions can't change.
- A mind that doesn't question public information or opinion.
- A mind that assumes its intuition is always reliable, requiring no rational thought.

How to Recognize Critical Thinkers

They're the Ones Who . . .

- Question their own beliefs as well as those of others.
- Formulate well-reasoned arguments to support their ideas and opinions, not resorting to fallacious reasoning or the methods and devices of "false rhetoric" to prove their points.
- Recognize (perhaps relish?) the possibility of changes in their beliefs.
- Express their beliefs in clear, coherent language.
- Allow reason and imagination to work together.
- Are open to reconciling conflict and reaching compromise.
- Recognize the implications of their choices of words and expressions.
- Are sensitive to their audiences and are aware of the power of language.