



More on Mentoring and Critical Thinking By Ann Rolfe

Critical thinking is a process that allows you to imagine a better future and explore ways of achieving your vision. Critical thinkers:

- Develop an awareness of the assumptions under which they and others think and act;
- Become skeptical of quick-fix and single answers to problems and claims of universal truth; and
- Are open to alternatives.

Critical thinking taps in to the logic and emotion that shape our personal beliefs. Our body-mind is one interconnected system, so critical thinking enables you to connect with and strengthen your core values and develop the ability to make informed choices about what you believe.

Relationships

You can use critical thinking to improve relationships applying it to clarify your own thinking, get to the meaning of communication and see your own actions through the eyes of others. Critical thinking in the workplace allows you to participate and contribute effectively in your team.

Media and Politics

It is essential to use critical thinking as we consume media because reporting so often exhibits distortion, bias and opinion not based on any evidence (good examples are provided every week in ABC's Media Watch). Similarly, observing and participating in politics requires the use of critical thinking (though, in my opinion, it appears too few politicians do) because democracy and diversity are facilitated by the use of critical thinking.

Learning and Development

When we apply critical thinking to learning, we can examine and question and actively participate as adults rather than passively accept what is taught. In short, our personal and professional development depend on critical thinking because, distinguishing between facts, opinions, assumptions and beliefs allows us to grow.

A skilled mentor facilitates a conversation that elicits critical thinking, allowing us to:

- Gain new perspectives,
- Evaluate options and
- Make informed choices about what we'll do, how we'll do it and why.

The mentor needs to honour the values, culture and context of the mentee and ensure the process empowers them because *that's* how mentoring works.