Critical Reasoning Inventory

Looking at the habits and attitudes that affect your thinking, please complete the inventory by answering each question completely.

Use the inventory to improve your critical reasoning performance.

1. Answer the questions in the inventory honestly and thoroughly, acknowledging not only the pleasant facts about yourself but also the unpleasant ones.
2. Reflect on your answers, noting the areas in which you are especially vulnerable. Your goal here is to know your intellectual habits so well that you can predict exactly which thinking problem will arise for you in any particular situation.
3. Whenever you are addressing an issue, anticipate what problems are likely to undermine your thinking and make a conscious effort to resist their influence.

Answer the following questions:

1. Exactly what influences have shaped my identity? How have they done so? How has my self-image been affected? In what situations am I less an individual because of these influences?

2. In what ways am I like the good thinker? In what ways like the poor thinker? What kinds of situations seem to bring out my best and worst qualities?

3. How careful am I about separating hearsay and rumor from fact? About distinguishing known from assumptions or guesses? How difficult it is for me to say “I don’t know?”

4. How consistent am I in taking the trouble to make my opinions informed?

5. To what extent do I think that “mine is better?” In what ways has this kind of thinking affected my view of personal problems and public issues? To what extent does it affect my ability to listen to those who disagree with me?

6. In what matters am I inclined to assume too much, take too much for granted?
7. To what degree do I tend to have the either/or outlook. Expecting the right answer will always be extreme and never moderate?

8. To what or whom do I feel the strongest urge to conform? In what situations has this conformist tendency interfered with my judgment?

9. Do I tend to be an absolutist, demanding that truth be neat and simple, or a relativist, claiming that everyone creates his or her own truth? In what ways has my characteristic tendency hindered my development as a critical thinker?

10. How often do I approach issues with a double standard, overlooking flaws in arguments that agree with mine and nitpicking those that disagree?

11. To what extent do I tend to jump to conclusions? Do I tend to do so more in certain areas? Am I motivated by the desire to sound authoritative and impress people?

12. To what extent do I over generalize? What kinds of stereotypes do I most readily accept?


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