

## “THINK” BOOK SUMMARY

### Why crucial decisions can’t be made in the blink of an eye

By Michael R. LeGault

This book was written in response to the 2005 book “Blink” by Malcolm Gladwell. Please refer to my book summary in my “Decision Making Kit”. Gladwell believes that intuition is the major driving force in making good decisions. LeGault believes that critical thinking is the driving force in making good decisions. **I believe they are both right.** I recommend you read the two books and decide for yourself. Like I did for the book “Blink”, I will provide you with a brief summary of this book to help motivate you to make better decisions in life.

1. LeGault believes that America is losing its ability to think. He compares the USA to many other countries. Canada in his opinion is not as bad as the USA in this area.
2. Sharp, incisive, clever thinking is steadily becoming a lost art, and more and more the domain of the specialists and gurus.
3. Critical thinking is a cognitive skill that permits a person to logically investigate a situation, problem, question, or phenomenon in order to make a judgement or decision.
4. Critical thinking is critical because it avoids jumping to conclusions. It holds judgement at bay until all evidence is in.
5. Today’s students, who, for whatever reason, “Lack the critical thinking skills necessary for higher learning.”
6. Contrary to the book “Blink”, LeGault states that if the first impressions are so important in modern society in establishing close relationships, why is the divorce rate so high? Is it possible that intuition is not as strong as some people believe?

7. Emotion and intuition are easy, “automatic” parts of our thinking processes. The observation and critical reasoning skills are the more difficult, acquired skills.
8. Do the easy things in life first and the hard things will follow. Do the hard things in life first and easy things will follow?
9. Just as intuition is possessed by each of us, so is the ability to think and reason critically.
10. We have become a society dependent on the views of experts – psychologists, landscape designers, financial advisors, even parent coaches. We are resorting to paying someone else to think for us.
11. LeGault states – “I am certainly not out to bury intuition, ah-ha moments, or emotion. As I’ve noted, these elements of human psyche are all indispensable to critical and creative thinking. But as far as delivering results, that is, favourable, critical thinking and its main elements, observation, logical reasoning, and scepticism have a demonstrably better track record”.
12. Statistics and analysis almost always beat instinct and guessing.
13. Faulty thinking is a result of two distinct but interwoven factors:
  - the ability to think critically
  - the lack of will to think clearly.
14. Modern America has evolved into a complex bureaucracy increasingly preoccupied with mastering rules and staying out of trouble, rather than one engaged by knowledge, progress, truth-seeking, and clear, innovative, analytical thinking.
15. We have become a society in which the first instinct is not to think clearly, it is the protection of one’s backside.
16. The challenge we face is not producing thoughts, it is producing useful thoughts.
17. Critical thinking is in the most general sense simply a method of investigating and arriving at meaning and understanding.
18. We are all born with the ability to think critically, but, like any skill, it is one that is honed and perfected by practice.
19. In his book “Beyond Feelings: A Guide to Critical Thinking”, Vincent Ruggiero says the three basic activities involved in critical thinking are:
  1. Finding evidence
  2. Deciding what the evidence means
  3. Reaching a conclusion about the evidence
20. Critical thinking is not always perfect. It errs, as we err, because it is the product of imperfect humans. The world is complex and is miserly with

its secrets. Our perception or memory can be faulty. We can also lack key information to make the decision.

21. When critical thinking goes awry as a method, it is because of things such as flawed observation (or incorrect data), faulty memory, or erroneous reasoning.
22. **Scepticism**, not merely open-mindedness, is required for effective critical thinking. Scepticism, which can be defined simply **as doubt in need of evidence**, lies at the heart of critical thinking and the scientific method, its acclaimed, more formal cousin.
23. Cynicism is the view that truth is buried beneath a mound of lies.
24. Improving critical-thinking skills and tapping the enormous capacity and potential of the human brain is our final frontier. Just think! Of the benefits, that is: a healthier body, a more secure job, a new and improved interest in life and a stronger, safer country. **And it doesn't cost a penny to use critical thinking.**
25. Critical thinking is the key bridge between observations about the world and positive, effective outcomes.
26. Man cannot live on facts alone; probably never could. In this world the facts of your personal experience must be supplemented by the facts of other people's experience in order to acquire true value and meaning.
27. The rise of stress, or rather the symptoms of stress, in contemporary society is a sign not only that more people are in difficult situations, but tellingly, that they are unable to respond to or think their way out of these situations. **It is a sign, ultimately, that more people are having trouble taking charge of their lives.**
28. Today, stress and its co-conspirator, so-called information overload, are two major factors in the weakening of mental energy needed to do creative, technical work and solve everyday problems. It is why so many people say they are in a perpetual "crisis mode" and have the feeling that their lives are "out of control".
29. Stress destroys the ability to make good decisions
30. Fear causes flaws in our perceptions, which leads to erroneous thinking and conclusions.
31. The more we juggle (multitask), the less efficient we become at performing any one task, the harder it is to remember where we left off.
32. Good information is still a rarity, and rarer still is the intellect that can polish it and turn it into knowledge.
33. Critical thinking demands accountability and evidence before making decisions.

34. Critical thinking is essential to reining in or understanding our emotions and breaking down those self-limiting walls people have built. Not only is critical thinking needed to rationally assess and understand risk, but accepting a certain amount of risk is a prerequisite for vigorous critical and creative thinking.
35. Risk, **actual** not **perceived**, is a reality. The challenge is not to ignore it, but to see what it is and address it. Accepting risk requires a mind that is unclouded by fears or preconceptions about the way the world works.
36. Good, creative thinkers tend to be fidgety people, full of nervous energy and curiosity. By contrast, many people are lulled into a state of complacency by their routines or habits. It is not that they are innately uncurious. It's more likely they simply have forgotten how to be curious.
37. To be truly happy a person needs to be engaged, using his or her mind. To be a really happy person he or she needs to feel they have accomplished something. Just one act of taking control can expand your moral and intellectual horizons and make you a better critical and creative thinker.
38. Self-experimentation – Use this technique for problem solving. Try one thousand solutions until you find one that works.
39. **Problems cannot be solved by the same level of thinking that caused them.**
40. The biggest puzzle is not solving and fixing problems, per se, it is fixing the thinking that causes problems.
41. People can improve their critical thinking by working to improve their memory, becoming better observers, learning as much as they can, and being sceptical.

A final comment from the Taylor Financial Group team.

Financial and lifestyle planning requires a team effort. We hope that this book summary will help you in developing your critical thinking process to help us all make better decisions for your long term benefit.