

THE KALEIDOSCOPE EFFECT™

**Thinking
About
Thinking**

By
Beth Terry, CSP

Thinking About Thinking

The Kaleidoscope
Effect™

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Thinking About Thinking: The Kaleidoscope
Effect™

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Dedication

Thank you to all who have challenged me, disagreed with me, and made me think; to the authors and skeptics who have penned works about Critical Thinking, Rational Thinking and Memes. I've made an effort to acknowledge your contributions. If I missed anyone, please let me know and we'll include corrections in future editions.

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The Kaleidoscope Effect™

Thinking about Thinking

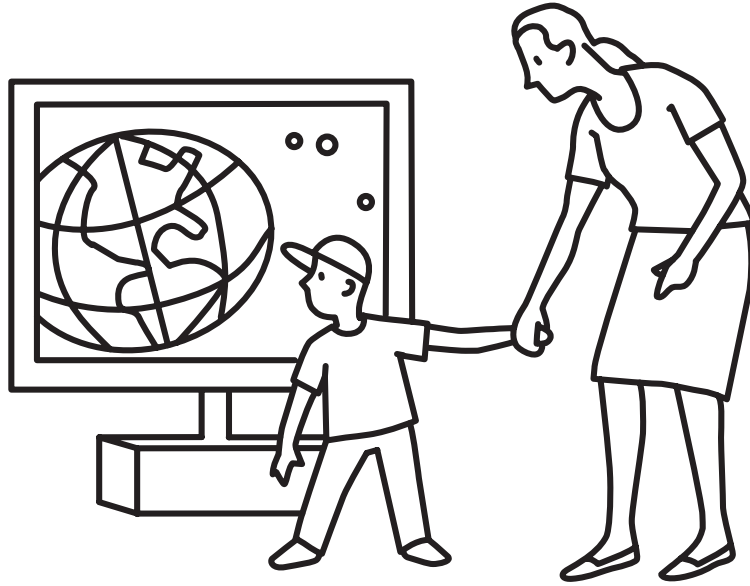
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Foreword and Introduction

The world has gone mad. Civil Political conversations have gone away. Our polarized society has created an often mean-spirited online debate full of vitriol and anger. Attacks on the person (ad hominem) rather than questioning or discussing the data are the norm.

This book was created to make it easier to understand the process of thinking. It's my hope it will help you process any and all positions and decisions. It by no means substitutes for reading the works of the greats in Critical Thinking. I've provided some references in the Appendix further reading.

1. Perspective is Everything



*Nothing is as it seems
And
Everything has another side to it.*

These words should be tattooed on everyone's right hand so we remember we are never 100 percent correct about anything. It would solve a lot of family holiday battles and help us lighten up.

Every sitcom on American TV uses misunderstandings for comedic effect. From "I Love Lucy" to "M.A.S.H" to "Big Bang Theory" one of the actors gets the wrong idea about a situation and hilarity ensues. Or not.

Why does Hollywood use it? Misunderstanding each other is universal. We can relate. We've all been there. Humor often comes from laughing at our own faults and being relieved we are not alone.

Why do we misunderstand? We have filters that cloud our perception. These are like hoods over our eyes; filters clouding our rational thinking. Imagine we are all staring through a thick pair of dirty glasses. Our filters distort how we perceive what we see and hear.

"We don't see things as they are. We see things as we are." Anais Nin

All humans suffer from **Confirmation Bias**. That is, we believe a thing, and every other fact is filtered through that belief. If new information doesn't fit, we discard it. We do this because it makes our lives simpler, but in the long term it limits our perspective.

“Confirmation bias is a tendency for people to favor information that confirms their preconceptions or hypotheses regardless of whether the information is true. As a result, people gather evidence and recall information selectively and interpret it in a biased way.”

Source:

[wikipedia.org/wiki/Confirmation_bias](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Confirmation_bias)

Our thinking is influenced by the worldviews we learned as children. We listened at our parents’ feet, to teachers at school, to our friends, and learned about the world from newspapers, movies, and TV.

We can't help but be swayed by our upbringing. We can, however, train ourselves to ask better questions. We can learn to look at all the different patterns in Life's kaleidoscope and find new ways to process information.

Choosing to step back and view the world from all sides takes courage and determination. Not everyone is willing to take the time. But making the effort will open your eyes and your world to wonderful possibilities.

2. “Mary, Mary Quite Contrary...”



**Childhood Nursery Rhymes
Informed our thinking – we each
need to be a *Contrarian* with our
own thoughts.**

When processing information
entertain the notion just for a
moment that you may be absolutely,
utterly and completely wrong.

A willingness to be wrong opens the door for us to find **Truth**.

Willingness to listen to those who do not agree with our point of view leads us to a more rational conclusion after we have weighed all sides.

We can only find truth and success if we **hear** more than one other point of view and process our thoughts with the new information. This will expand our perspective and make for more intelligent decisions.

“It seems to me what is called for is an exquisite balance between two conflicting needs: the most skeptical scrutiny of all hypotheses that are served up to us and at the same time a great openness to new ideas.... If you are only skeptical, then no new ideas make it through to you.... On the other hand, if you are open to the point of gullibility and have not an ounce of skeptical sense in you, then you cannot distinguish the useful ideas from the worthless ones.”

Carl Sagan, 1987²

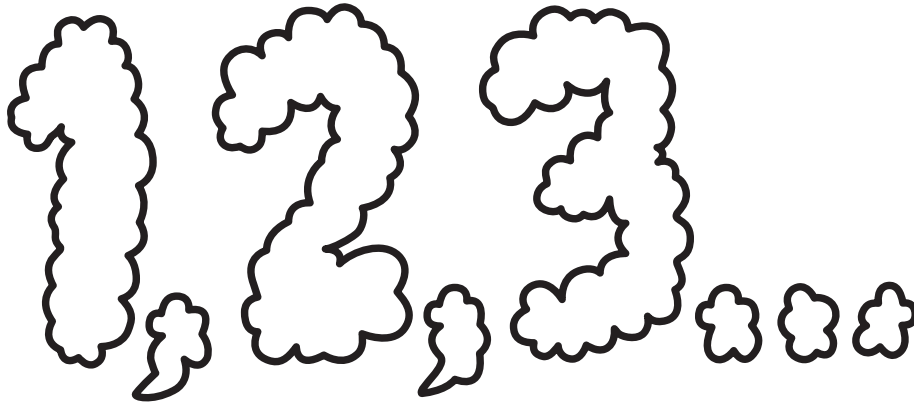
Note: I am not advocating being negative or skeptical about everything. A little faith and positive attitude is a good thing. But there's a time to be a "practical pessimist." The difference between a negative person and a practical pessimist is this:

- A **practical pessimist** knows if they step in front of a speeding bus, they will die. So they don't step in front of the bus.
- A **negative person** thinks all the buses are after them!
- A **Pollyanna optimist**, on the other hand, thinks there are no buses...

Be willing to have friends and colleagues in your life who don't agree with you. Be sure you are not getting your information only from sources that confirm all your biases. Make an effort to read across the political and religious spectrum to hear points of view that differ from yours. Listen to understand others' points of view.

Exposure to new and different ideas is one of the best cures for confirmation bias and broken friendships. You still retain the right to go back to your original hypotheses. But at least you've taken the time and made the effort to understand different points of view.

2. A Thinking Checklist



Thinking about Thinking calls for a process. Use this checklist for decisions, to understand better, to analyze and to separate the truth from the noise.

- What are you doing?
- Why are you doing it?
- What do you expect to happen?
- What will you do if it doesn't happen?

- What can you do to increase the possibility of it happening the way you want?
- What are possible **unintended consequences** of this action?
- How will you respond to those unintended consequences?
- What are long-term consequences of this action? Short term?
- To what end are you doing this?
- Is it important?
- Is it an emotional decision? Can you back it up with data?
- Are you rationalizing? (*Rational Lies*)
- Have you tried to negotiate?
- Can anyone else help you?
- Is there another way to do this?
- What will it take to do this?

- Money?
- Time?
- Energy?
- Distraction?
- People?
- What will it take to undo it if it isn't right?

Processing your thoughts about unintended consequences is the most critical piece to the checklist.

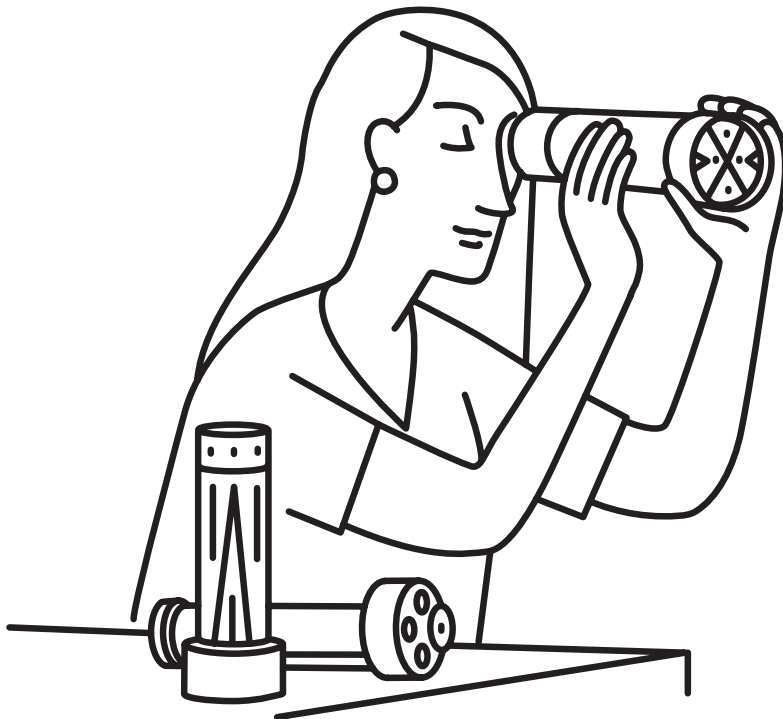
Unplanned for consequences can be very costly. Pay attention now and save heartache and money later.

I learned this one the hard way. Thinking I was doing a good thing, I purchased a mosquito zapper. Immediately the satisfying sounds of fried mosquito filled the air.

I remarked to a neighbor how this seemed to be a particularly bad year for mosquitoes. She said she didn't have any. When talking with an Exterminator, I discovered why my neighbor was having better luck: it turns out that mosquito zappers ATTRACT mosquitoes!

Yes, I was unwittingly calling out to them! "Party at my house!" I unplugged the dang thing and they disappeared!

3. Testing Your Conclusions



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- Don't be married to your good ideas. Be willing to hear opposing viewpoints once you've gone through your checklist.
- Managers and business owners need to listen to your front line. Making business decisions about customers in the absence of employee feedback is a recipe for failure.

- Make it possible and safe for your teams to give you contrary advice. Help them learn how to think about their feedback to you.
- Once you've made a decision about a new policy, product, idea or practice be willing to test your hypotheses in a small way. Try it in one of your markets. Print a small run. Try the new marketing campaign (product, policy, idea, ad) and track your results.
- When a decision is made, put measurements in place to determine the results and the consequences, and make adjustments accordingly.
- This advice can be used with kids as well. Parents and teachers will learn much from children if they only listen. Innocent questions open our eyes to surprising perspectives.

My Hawaiian stepdaughters were a great source of learning for me.

- When I told them I teach grownups for a living, one of them asked, “Why? Didn’t they learn nothin’ in school?”
- I experimented once with a new hairstyle. Everyone told me I looked “chic.” Not my kids. The five-year old said, “That hair makes you look junk!” And she was right.
- I overheard my twins arguing over whether or not their dad should receive a Boys’ Day gift. In Hawaii all boys are celebrated on May 5th and all girls are celebrated on March 3. The argument was over whether or not daddy was a boy. It was settled with, “Of *course* he’s a boy! His mother is still alive, so how could he grow up?”

We win when we test our conclusions. Stepping back and reviewing unemotionally can save us pain later. Always be willing, ready, and able to change your mind. It's better to stop a failed project before flushing more money and time down the drain.

“Rowing harder doesn't help if the boat is headed in the wrong direction.”

Kenichi Ohmae

Kaleidoscope thinking is a system that creates workable and successful solutions to your challenges.

Thinking clearly and focusing on all aspects of a problem will pay off in the long run. We all have established thinking patterns that make our lives simpler... we think. But they may actually make our lives more complicated.

Carry this little book with you. Try the **Thinking Checklist** for a month and see if it helps you simplify your life. Then email me and tell me how it worked! Beth@BethTerry.com

About the Author

Beth Terry, CSP, speaks on Resilience, Stress, Service and Employee Engagement. Since opening Pacific Rim Seminars in 1989, Beth has presented to hundreds of thousands of people in six countries, spanning a wide variety of audiences.

She brings with her a rich variety of Executive Level experience in Real Estate, Construction, Tourism, Insurance, and Retail. Beth was formerly the National Manager of Administration for a billion dollar Real Estate corporation in charge of offices in 16 states.

Beth Terry was a frequent guest columnist for three Hawaii newspapers and hosted a TV talk show. She continues to be a highly sought after speaker and radio guest throughout the US and internationally.

In 2006 Beth received the highest earned designation of the National Speakers Association: Certified Speaking Professional (CSP). Find Beth at BethTerry.com or on her blogs EverybodyLost.com and CactusWrangler.com

A few of Beth's Clients

Avon Canada • Louis Vuitton • Tiffany & Co. • American Express • Bridgeway Software • Jamba Juice • Manulife Canada • First Hawaiian Bank • Bank of Hawaii • AT&T • Verizon • Gentry Homes • Central California Women's Conference • University of Hawaii • State of Hawaii • NAPA Auto • UNOCAL • Phillips 66 • Guam Visitor's Bureau • Hawaii Visitor's Bureau • Waikiki Parc Hotel • Outrigger Hotels • USDA • US Customs • US Postal Service • US Air Force • Marine Corps Air Station • US Army • US Navy

Beth's Topics and Titles

- The Resilient Manager: Management Skills for the 21st Century
- Creating a More Resilient Team: Leading Change
- Thinking About Thinking: Kaleidoscope Thinking™ at Work & Home
- Get Out of Overwhelm & Optimize Results
- Resilience Secrets for Thriving in a Crazy World
- Networking Authentically
- 7 Ways to Make Your Life Easier
- Balancing Work and Life Together
- Customer Service: It's the Only Game in Town!



Appendix, Resources

- 1. Wikipedia Reference on Confirmation Bias:
<http://twurl.nl/m8hnbq>
- The Demon Haunted World: Science as a Candle in the Dark, by Carl Sagan and Ann Druyan, Ballantine Books (July 6, 2011)
- The Critical Thinking Community website <http://www.csicop.org>
<http://twurl.nl/0vu4un>
- www.Memes.org - writings on “viruses of the mind” - how ideas and theories go viral and what you can do about it.

“We live in a three-dimensional world and have an infinite number of perspectives. There are so many ways to interpret data.”

David Seid, Owner, Minibuks



Beth Terry, CSP, shares her unique perspectives on **Thinking** with a handy checklist to guide your decision making processes.

BethTerry.com

EverybodyLost.com

CactusWrangler.com

