

HABITS OF THE MIND

When smart people have a problem to solve, they think in **certain ways**.

- they change their thinking to fit the situation.

There have been 16 different ways to think identified.

They are called **Habits of the Mind** and will help you greatly.

- know when and how to use each habit
- know why each habit will help you
- be prepared to use them

Remember, habits are things you do often and easily

It's time to start **thinking** about your **thinking**

When you can control your thinking you can control your behaviours, attitudes and learning.

Rate yourself on your usage now with ● for each of them and set a target to achieve with ○ by the end of the year.

Rate yourself using the tool below.

Not at all Sometimes Usually Always



PERSISTING – sticking to a task until it is completed. If your first approach doesn't work, be able to try other ways to solve the problem.

- Being able to see when something doesn't work and why it doesn't work.

Ask yourself the following questions -

- in what ways have I been persistent?
- what are the most difficult things to being persistent for me?
- who has impressed me with his/her persistence and why?

Not at all Sometimes Usually Always



MANAGING IMPULSIVITY – thinking before you answer a question with the first thing that comes into your mind; take your time.

Considering and understanding ideas before you make a judgement.

Planning ways to solve a problem before you start.

Ask yourself the following questions -

- when have I shown control and not jumped into something and how?
- what goals can I set and what things can I do to help me focus myself more?
- who has impressed me with his/her self control and why?

Not at all Sometimes Usually Always



LISTENING WITH UNDERSTANDING AND EMPATHY – Understanding what another person is meaning through listening to what they are saying and reading what messages their body language is sending to you.

Being able to say what another person is saying in your own words.

55% of your life is spent listening; often we don't "tune in" to what is really being said. Listen with your ears, eyes and heart.

Ask yourself the following questions -

- when have I listened with understanding and empathy and how?
- how have I understood another person's point of view?
- who has impressed me with his/her understanding and empathy and why?

Not at all Sometimes Usually Always



THINKING FLEXIBILITY – being able to change your mind when you receive new information.

Sometimes the information may cause you to change your opinions and consider other options.

Being able to shift in your thinking from 'your way is the only way' to 'perhaps another way is better'.

Ask yourself the following questions -

- when have I been flexible in my thinking and why?
- in what different ways did I think?
- who has impressed me with his/her flexible thinking and why?

Not at all Sometimes Usually Always



THINKING ABOUT THINKING

(Metacognition) – Being able to know what you know and what you don't know.

Being able to plan, reflect on and assess your own thinking skills and strategies.

Taking time to think why you are doing what you are doing; being aware of your own thoughts.

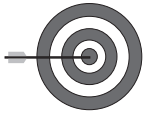
Ask yourself the following questions -

- have I considered how I was thinking and why?
- what things can I do to think more clearly about how I think?
- who has impressed me with his/her controlled thinking and why?

Not at all Sometimes Usually Always

"When the mind is thinking, it is talking to itself." Anon.

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STRIVING FOR ACCURACY - Being able to take time to check the accuracy of your work; check it again.

Taking pride in lifting the quality of your learning to the highest level you are capable of and not being prepared to settle for second best to get learning out of the way.

Ask yourself the following questions-

- when have I taken the time to proof read my learning to improve it and why?
- what things can I do to be more careful and accurate in my learning?
- who has impressed me with his/her commitment to carefully checking his/her learning and why?



QUESTIONING AND POSING PROBLEMS

- Being able to ask the right questions to fill in the gaps of what you don't know.

Ask questions that begin with "what if", "why do"

Being able to recognise the reasons behind why and how questions are asked.

Ask yourself the following questions -

- how does my understanding improve when I ask questions?
- what things can I do to feel confident to ask more questions?
- who has impressed me with his/her thoughtful questions and why?



APPLYING PAST KNOWLEDGE TO NEW SITUATIONS - Being able to use experience and knowledge learned for new problems.

Being able to adapt what you have learned from a previous experience to a new situation and make connections.

Being willing to apply yourself to use experience in your thinking; use what you learn, linking thinking and learning.

Ask yourself the following questions -

- when have I used what I have already learnt in something new and how?
- what things can I do to use my experience in new learning situations?
- who has impressed me with his/her using of learnt knowledge and understanding to new areas.



COMMUNICATING WITH CLARITY AND PRECISION - Being able to communicate your thoughts in accurate and clear language, both written and verbal.

Being able to explain, compare and give evidence using correct names and labels; thinking clearly.

Avoiding vague and generalising language such as "you know", "it's weird", "everyone says", "stuff like".

Ask yourself the following questions -

- when have I expressed myself clearly and to the point and how?
- what things can I do to think clearer and communicate more clearly?
- who has impressed me with his/her clear explanations and why?



GATHERING DATA THROUGH ALL SENSES - Being able to gain a feeling for a situation through taking in messages from all of your senses.

Being able to form mental images through what your senses experience.

Being able to feel and communicate by considering aspects such as colours, sounds, patterns, tastes, textures, rhythms, etc.; living is not just describing it. Use your natural pathways.

Ask yourself the following questions

- when have I used my senses in my learning and how?
- my favourite senses to use are and why?
- who has impressed me with his/her using of his/her senses and why?



CREATING, IMAGINING, INNOVATING

Being able and prepared to look at problems and situations from many different angles.

Being willing to take risks with your thinking and avoiding statement such as "I can't", "I'm not", "I wish"; try a different way.

Being open to advice and seeking feedback to improve your approach and thinking.

Ask yourself the following questions-

- when have I been creative in my thinking and how?
- when do I imagine and create things in class and how?
- who has impressed me with creativity and why?



"Nothing in the world is so powerful as an idea whose time has come." Victor Hugo.

HABITS OF THE MIND



RESPONDING WITH WONDERMENT AND AWE – Having a “can do”, “want to”, and “I enjoy”, attitude to the challenge of solving problems.

Enjoying figuring out things for yourself and avoiding statements such as “I was never good at”, “it’s boring”, “ask someone else”, “when will I use this”, “who cares”.

Being curious, enthusiastic and passionate about learning, thinking and solving problems.

Ask yourself the following questions

- when have I been excited and surprised by something I learnt and why?
- what do I look forward to learning and doing and why?
- who has impressed me with his/her excitement and passion about learning and why?

Not at all Sometimes Usually Always



TAKING RESPONSIBLE RISKS – Being prepared to leave your comfort zone and adopt an attitude of welcoming a challenge and the unknown.

Realising that not taking the risk of a challenge is missing an opportunity to improve yourself.

Being more afraid of a lack of success than a fear of failure and avoid statements such as “I’ll look stupid”, “I don’t want to be wrong”.

Ask yourself the following questions-

- when have I shown a willingness to try new things in my learning and how?
- what things can I do to challenge my thinking to change the ways I learn?
- who has impressed me with his/her willingness to challenge his/her thinking and try something new?

Not at all Sometimes Usually Always



FINDING HUMOUR – Having a sense of humour and laughing increases your oxygen intake and lowers your pulse rate; good for you.

Being able to laugh at yourself rather than zeroing in on the wrong places such as others’ weaknesses and differences.

Being able to appreciate others’ humour helps you to be more creative and think at a higher level.

Ask yourself the following questions -

- when have I really enjoyed my learning and why?
- what things can I do to make my learning more fun and enjoyable?
- who has impressed me with his/her enjoyment in his/her learning and having fun in a positive way?

Not at all Sometimes Usually Always



THINKING INTERDEPENDENTLY –

Accepting that as human beings we seek to be part of groups and teams and draw energy and feedback from each other.

Realising that us together has much more thinking power than you alone; and welcoming it.

Being able to accept openness and feedback from others and avoiding statements such as “leave me alone”, “I’ll do it by myself”, “they don’t like me”, “I want to be alone”; work together and learn together.

Ask yourself the following questions-

- what things have I learned when in a group and why?
- when in a group, what role do I play and why?
- who has impressed me with his/her willingness to share his/her learning with others and why?

Not at all Sometimes Usually Always



REMAINING OPEN TO CONTINUOUS LEARNING – Being prepared to realise that there could be a better way and searching for it.

Seeing problems and challenges as opportunities to develop and improve your thinking and you.

Accepting that if you don’t know then not being afraid to find out; it’s better to ask dumb questions than to get dumb answers.

Ask yourself the following questions-

- when things are going well in my learning what do I feel like and why?
- what are you really keen to learn and do and why?
- who has impressed me with his/her willingness to want to learn more and more and why?

The following habit of **character** will carry you a long way to achieving what you want.

THE RIGHT THING TO DO IS ALWAYS THE HARD THING TO DO – Being able to accept and believe that you “just don’t do something”, but you must plan, reflect and think.

Accepting that in all top performers in any activities you find a higher level of thinking.

Having the courage and willingness to do the “hard things” and leave behind the everyday easy way of thinking; actually use habits of the mind.

Checkout the following websites on the Habits

- www.habitsofmind.org
- www.habits-of-mind.net

Regularly complete the exercise on the next page to keep yourself building good habits.

Acknowledgement: Arthur Costa and Bena Kallick – Discovering and Exploring, Habits of the Mind,

“I’ve never made a mistake. I’ve only learned from experience.” Graeme Alford.

HABITS OF THE MIND: WHERE AM I AT ?

How do you know when what you do has become a habit; something that you do easily and often; and second nature?

When working towards building Habits of the Mind into what you do everyday and regularly reflecting where you are at will benefit your progress. Choose the options below that best describe where you are at now. You may have ticks at different stages, but the main thing is to get an idea of what you have achieved and what you need to achieve to make Habits a habit.

Where am I at?	What I do now	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	What I need to do
AWARE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Do I know all of the Habits of the Mind? <input type="checkbox"/> - Do I know what type of thinking each one describes? <input type="checkbox"/> - Do I know why I should think in different ways in different situations? <input type="checkbox"/> - Do I know the ways in which I think? <input type="checkbox"/> 		
RECOGNISE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Can I see when other people use Habits of the Mind? <input type="checkbox"/> - Can I see when I vary my thinking using Habits of the Mind? <input type="checkbox"/> - Can I see real life situations where I can use Habits of the Mind? <input type="checkbox"/> - Can I see when I'm not thinking in the right way? <input type="checkbox"/> 		
SELECT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Do I know which Habits of the Mind to use in different situations? <input type="checkbox"/> - Do I know why other people have used a certain Habit of the Mind? <input type="checkbox"/> - Can I explain why I used a certain Habit of the Mind? <input type="checkbox"/> - Am I confident to select the right Habit to use in each situation? <input type="checkbox"/> 		
USE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Am I aware when I use a Habit of the Mind? <input type="checkbox"/> - Do I intentionally use Habits of the Mind in my learning? <input type="checkbox"/> - Do my teachers encourage me to use Habits of the Mind? <input type="checkbox"/> - When in group work in class do I encourage my classmates to use Habits of the Mind? <input type="checkbox"/> - Do I need reminding to use Habits of the Mind? <input type="checkbox"/> 		
REFLECT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Are Habits of the Mind benefitting my thinking and learning? <input type="checkbox"/> - When in class am I thinking about my thinking? <input type="checkbox"/> - Has it become a habit for me to be aware of and in control of my thinking? <input type="checkbox"/> 		

“To know and still not to do, is still not to know.” Chinese Proverb.