

Learning to Think

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May 24, 2002, revised August 15, 2009

Being able to think for yourself is very important. Unfortunately, most people who believe that they are thinkers are really only following the party line of what they have been conditioned to think. The news media reinforces the moronic thoughts of non-thinkers - keep in mind that the news is catered to the broad audience. Even worse are the various talk shows on radio and TV - all these shows do is tell people what they want to hear - small wonder these shows are so popular. With rare exception the other entertainment media also tends to reinforce thinking at the simpleton level. Certain things you have to discover for yourself. Just because something sounds good does not mean that it is good. Also, just because something sounds bad does not mean that it is bad. People who conspire to control your thoughts will take masterful advantage of your inability to think independently and trick you to be for what you are against or against what you are for. Thinking is required to reveal the real truth.

Although this page is not about politics, there is one example of non-thinking that is so blatant that it begs to be used. If you ask most Americans if they favor socialism, they will respond with a vehement NO! If you then ask them if they favor Economic Democracy, they will usually respond with a resounding YES! -- that is what this country is all about. These people do not realize that they have just come out in favor of socialism. The average population has been conditioned to be against the name, socialism, even though they could not tell you why in any definitive way (i.e. no thought has been put into this so they are vulnerable). These same people also tend to think that anything with the word, democracy, in it must be good (again, without any thought taking place). The socialists (as well as others) capitalize on the ignorance of the masses to sell their socialist doctrine under the guise of Economic Democracy and a number of other nice sounding names (Economic Freedom, Economic Justice, Economic Bill of Rights, Social Justice, and Level Playing Field are just a few examples - don't these sound so wonderful - how could you possibly be against them?). Would you believe that the nice sounding term, global justice, actually means the elimination of all manufacturing and trade and a return to life before technological discoveries? Socialists very rarely talk about the "s" word for in that case society's ignorance works to their disadvantage. It is of interest to note that many socialist political parties around the world have some variation of the word, democracy, in their names.

I will not mention the name, but a certain large global church strongly advocates socialism through every nice-sounding phrase except socialism. In fact, Christianity has become the new frontier to invade because socialism can be packaged to perfectly fit Christian ideals and concepts. Many Christians fall victim to misguided compassion syndrome resulting in their rightful concern for people actually trying to escape distress becoming inadvertent support for socialism. This is ironic for socialism only exacerbates the distress as has been shown in every country where it has been tried (also known as the concept of more socialism being necessary to solve the problems of socialism). Christians should carefully examine their concerns to be sure that they are not being duped into

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supporting something that actually works against their noble cause. Be wary of people who use the phrase, "What would Jesus do?" (often abbreviated as WWJD) Do you really think that Jesus would advocate that the lazy be subsidized? Or do you think that Jesus might advocate that the subsidies paid to the lazy be routed to those people in real distress instead?

Socialism is really more of an economic rather than political concept but politics are required to impose the economic concept. It is difficult to impose the concept unless the sponsoring political system is dominant. Because socialism means different things to different people around the world it is difficult to define precisely. In very general terms, socialism implies that the whole population has collective ownership and control of all the means of producing goods or food. The ownership is considered a right and in theory, all share equally in the ownership. Thus, no one gets ahead or behind of anyone else. The difficulty here is that few people understand what is required for a system to be productive and the result can only be chaotic and managed mediocrity. Only when systems are allowed to compete, as in Nature, is there any hope of alleviating managed mediocrity. Socialism is not in of itself extending assistance for those who are in distress and labeling compassionate activities as such is wrong. The activity does become socialism when no distinction is made between those in distress and those who are just lazy - i.e. the concept of collective ownership disallows quality differences between "owners." Collective ownership basically says that if you are born then you automatically "own" a portion of the collective wealth and are entitled to receive that which is "yours." The biggest problem with socialism is not the economic theory, however flawed, but the allure of getting something for nothing entices those with laziness tendencies or those with misguided compassion syndrome to support a political system that promises the benefits that socialism seems to bring. The political system making such enticements is not required to actually deliver but dupes the masses into making the system dominant enough so that it can stifle political opposition - socialism and competition are not compatible. Once dominant, the system tends to redistribute as much of the wealth of the country as possible to wealth of the system leaders. Obviously, this is completely counter to the economic theory of socialism. But no matter. The system is now in control and the population forfeited (voluntarily or otherwise) any ability to change the system. Socialism and compassion must not be confused lest one be duped into supporting something that is counter to compassion. A fundamental of socialism is that society can have no failures. Thus, success must be ruled out since that implies failure on someone's part. The ideal socialist society is therefore a mediocre one - no one gets ahead and no one gets behind. Without thought, the "benefits" that socialism offers seem attractive, nice, and just. The fundamental problem is that the "benefits" are unrealistic. It is human nature to squander unearned benefits - the wealth depletes and socialism fails. In theory, socialism is about fairness. In practice, socialism is about wealth and power - the very things the theory is opposed to.

There are many phrases that you hear so often in the press that you can easily be led to believe that they are true. Among the worst phrases are "the rich are getting richer and the poor are getting poorer", "the tax burden on the poor", "regressive tax system on the poor", "welfare for the rich", "poverty in America", "hunger in America", and "women

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are paid only 70% of what a man is paid." If the press prints these then they have to be true, don't they? If they were wrong then surely someone would point that out, right? The main problem is that the masses accept these without thinking. The fact is that every one of these are socialist propaganda designed to fragment America into countless groups fighting each other rather than have everyone be Americans united. The news media broadcasts these not so much because of their socialist leaning but because that is what they know their main audience wants to hear - news is about making money - not keeping people informed. (If you are asking where you can obtain the real news then I suggest reading the Wall Street Journal. Its audience are people who must know the truth in order to make real decisions concerning large amounts of money. Feel good news is worthless to them.) A very good exercise in learning how to think is to analyze each of the above phrases/slogans/propaganda and find the obvious flaw that proves it wrong. The tricky part is that each phrase is based on clever juxtaposition of true but uncorrelated facts and the clever use of definitions of words. Do not let anyone tell you the answers. The answers are only useful if you figure them out for yourself. I have already given you two hints and for a third hint I can tell you that you will not discover the answer to any of them in a short time. But keep thinking about it. The important result is improving you thought process, not answering the questions. It would be very good if you did discover the answers, though.

A good illustration of why you must think would be as follows. Everybody wants to know what the answer is to the above and all of the world's problems. I have known the answer for years. I am either too lazy or not in a situation where I can truly implement the answer. Therefore, the answer is of no use to me. Thus, I will give this answer away free of charge to everyone in hopes that great good can come from it. By my great generosity in providing the answer I save everyone the long and difficult effort of having to think and work out the solution. I figure that each reader of this should be able to make at least a million dollars for themselves if only they will use the answer correctly. Well, here it is. The answer is three. Now you know the secret to how the world works. Go forth and make your millions. Why are you are wondering what three means? The whole point was to give you the answer so that you would not have to think. I can not think for you. You must think for yourself. Just knowing the answer is useless if you do not understand it and particularly so if you do not know nor understand the question. Understanding does not come without thinking. Note: Although three is not the whole answer it is not a bogus answer either.

How can you avoid being misled? By learning how to think for yourself instead of how you have been conditioned to think. Then, being able to examine something and discover what is really there. This skill does not come naturally - it must be acquired through study and practice. Do not expect to learn how to think by taking a class - you must study on your own, independent of anyone else. A number of established thinkers have written books on the subject. There are more books than I have time to read. I have read the following books and highly recommend them.

As a Man Thinketh by James Allen, published by Barnes and Noble Books. This book was written about 100 years ago and applies equally to women too - at the time the book

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was written the word, man, represented human kind and not always the male gender. This is a very short book that can be easily read in one evening. This is a religious book without the religion. The teachings in the book are the same as that taught by various religions but the purpose here is to make one's life better as opposed to glorifying some mystical deity. The theme of the book is that for the most part, the quality of your life is directly linked to the quality of your thoughts. Learn to think quality thoughts and that will naturally lead to quality actions which then leads to a quality life. Do the opposite and life will be miserable.

Thinking Strategically - The Competitive Edge in Business, Politics, and Everyday Life by Avinash K. Dixit and Barry J. Nalebuff, published by W.W. Norton and Company. This book is an introduction to game theory which deals with identifying the possible outcomes and either the most favorable or more likely outcomes. The key is learning to think like your counterpart thinks so you can anticipate his reaction to your action so you can make the appropriate action to get the reaction you want. Although it might sound like it, this is not manipulation - the objective is win-win. If you are going to deal with people then you must read this book.

deBono's Thinking Course, revised edition by Edward deBono, published by Facts on File, Inc. The author has written numerous books and is a well known lecturer and instructor in the thinking process. This book is at the introductory level but deBono will illustrate your thinking flaws with numerous examples (traps). You have to read this book many times to learn how to break your bad thinking habits with good ones.

Inevitable Illusions - How Mistakes or Reason Rule Our Minds by Massimo Piattelli-Palmarini, published by John Wiley and Sons. This is a more advanced book that is so enjoyable to read that it is hard to stop. With numerous examples, the author illustrates how our errors in thinking lead us to logically (in our own minds) arrive at the wrong conclusion.

Why Smart People Do Dumb Things by Mortimer Feinberg, Ph.D., and John J. Tarrant, published by Simon and Schuster. Using real life examples of well know people, this book discusses the various mental traps that people get themselves into that lead to incredible errors.

Beating Murphy's Law - The Amazing Science of Risk by Bob Berger, published by Dell Publishing. This is an entertaining fictional story that explores a wide variety of common subjects that people have thoughts (or misthoughts) about. The key objective is risk analysis but a lot of thinking is required. The point is that many things that people think are risky are actually not risky at all and conversely, many things that people think are safe are in fact very risky. The key is applied thought instead of accepting the common mis-wisdom.

Against the Gods - the Remarkable Story of Risk by Peter L. Bernstein, published by John Wiley and Sons. This book traces the history and development of risk analysis from ancient to modern times. This book is required reading for anybody that has to deal with

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the many uncertainties of life. These uncertainties can be managed successfully. The book is so fascinating and enjoyable to read that it is next to impossible to put it down once you start. Risk analysis and management are the main objectives but the thinking required is tremendous. This is a particularly excellent book to read if you are going to make investments.

Think and Grow Rich by Napoleon Hill, published by Ballantine Books. The author has written many books on the subject of self-improvement. The author provides numerous examples of how people have used applied thought to overcome difficult situations. There is much to learn from the successes and failures of others.

America's 30 Years War, Who is Winning? by Balint Vazsonyi, published by Regnery Publishing, Inc., Washington, D.C. Mr. Vazsonyi is both a concert pianist and a historian. The book is based on his personal experiences with communism in Hungary and his observations since emigrating to the United States. This is an excellent book about the history of socialism and the trend towards socialism that has been taking place in the United States since the 1960's. The changes have been so gradual that many people have not noticed. For example: Although the Constitution does not allow the Executive and Judicial branches of government to make laws, both branches have been doing so for many years and it is accepted by the public. In fact, many laws are written and enforced by bureaucrats who the voting public has no control over. The Constitution created a balance of power that has now been tilted away from the Legislative branch - the voter's influence has been weakened.

It is also an excellent book about the history and development of democracy. The reasons why democracy succeeds and socialism fails are explored in depth. A lot of points are made that command serious thought.

This book is all about thinking for yourself. The theory that many Americans have been duped into believing is that social justice or group rights is necessary for all to be equal. "Individual rights reflect our similarities; group rights emphasize our differences. Individual rights permit every one of us to be special; group rights create stereotypes. Individual rights are unalienable, and are guaranteed by the Constitution; group rights are born at activist rallies, conferred by a party-political executive branch, and confirmed by a temporal judge. Group rights can be taken away by an even louder rally, a different regulator, a new judge." It is very clearly pointed out that it is necessary in order for socialism to succeed that there be different special group rights given to as many diverse groups as possible: blacks, Hispanics, women, gays, lesbians, agnostics, etc., i.e. everybody is a victim of someone else. The concept is to make sure that everybody is working against each other rather than be united as Americans. If all these people could see their common ground as Americans then socialism fails (and the transfer of wealth to the socialist party ceases). It is much easier to manage and manipulate small specific groups of people. "Integration as a concept has not failed. The demagoguery of the self-appointed prophets of all skin colors is what has failed. ... Does anyone believe that whipping up the sentiments of black Americans against the country in which they are supposed to succeed will *help* them succeed?"

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The book also points out how socialists transfer blame for their mistakes to capitalism. Rather than attack free enterprise (which has a nice sound to it), socialists have branded the term, capitalism, as an evil -ism to be eliminated. Socialist propaganda has probably led many to believe that the Nazis were right-wing capital extremists (i.e. Republicans). Actually, Nazi was a nickname for the National *Socialist* German Workers' Party. In fairness, the Nazis were about fascism - forceful rule by a single party. They used the appeal of the nice sounding names (at that time) of socialist and workers' party (i.e. offering something that would never be delivered) to dupe the population into supporting a system that it otherwise would not have. This example has been followed by many others to take over populations (i.e. offer the "benefits" of socialism with no intention of actually delivering). Look at the many atrocities committed by those calling themselves socialists in Europe, Russia, China, Cuba, Cambodia, and other countries (in some of these the population never had a choice). Where are the supposed atrocities committed by advocates of free enterprise (or that evil term, capitalism)?

The key point the author makes is that if you think for yourself and Americans as a singular group thinks for itself then the trend towards socialism and all the problems that come with it can be reversed. Unlike victims in other countries in the past and present, Americans still have the power to make a choice. The power should be exercised before it is too late.