

# A Think Piece

## Thinking about Thought

### The Existential Question

by Ted Agon

The direct link to this think piece is:  
<https://www.thehumankey.com/think-piece>

**"Education is not  
for the learning of facts but  
the training of the mind  
to think."**

*Albert Einstein*  
*Theoretical Physicist*

**Knowing how to think  
empowers you far beyond  
beyond those who only know what to think.**

*Neil deGrasse Tyson*  
*Astrophysicist*



[thehumankey.com](https://www.thehumankey.com)

**“Some would rather die than think. In fact, some do.”**

Bertrand Russell mathematician -  
philosopher – Nobel Prize  
for Literature 1950

*(Demonstrated by some of those who chose not to get vaccinated during the Covid pandemic)*

**“If you can't describe what you are doing as a process,  
you don't know what you're doing.”**

*W. Edwards Deming*  
American engineer, statistician, professor

**(If we can't describe thinking as a specific process  
we don't know what we're doing.  
We can't knowingly improve what we don't know.)**

There is not a more important and universal human intellectual process than thinking. This *think piece* illustrates that, up until now, **there has not been a measurable description of the process of thinking.** If there was, it would be well known and we would be using it.

***If thinking cannot be measured it cannot be improved.*** This *think piece* provides a measurable and an effective definition of thinking that can be understood, applied and improved by an adolescent. It consists of a sentence of **six everyday-words** in length. **This *think piece*, of well over a thousand of words, is to support and validate just these six words. These six words allow us to exist, survive and thrive.**

## **With knowledge comes responsibility.**

It would be irresponsible, and possibly unethical, not to share what was discovered through 14 years of research and writing. It is the basis on which we survive and thrive.

The above statement may seem exaggerated or overly dramatic. This is for you to determine.

When you find that you cannot contradict the definition of thinking with evidence and logic, you will then inherit the obligation and responsibility to share this knowledge. Is there a greater legacy that can have as much effect on the future of so many? It will take little time or effort to forward the link.

### **This think piece consists of:**

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# A Think Piece

## Thinking about Thought

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### **Rational / Emotional**

If we were totally rational we wouldn't be humans, we'd be machines. If we were entirely emotional, we wouldn't exist.

Emotions are instantaneous. Reasoning takes time. As immediate and powerful as emotion is, **and it is powerful**, it is only a rational process that is capable of **counterbalancing** unfounded, destructive fear and prejudices. Our ability to be rational is our vessel's rudder that safely takes us through the challenging seas of destructive negative emotions, **misinformation** and **disinformation**.

On the other hand, the winds of positive emotions propel our vessel to lands that enrich our rational decisions around relationships with family, friends and community. We survive and thrive because of the healthy combination of the rational and emotional. This makes us humans human.

***This think piece focuses on the rational/logical and intellectual process of thinking.***

This think piece is drawn from the books [\*the human key\*](#) and [\*the Learning Curve\*](#). These books examine the core human elements of **Thinking, Learning** and **Communicating**. These elements are inextricably entwined and interdependent.

This think piece is a brief introduction to the first element –

## **Thinking.**

**“To understand is to perceive patterns”**

*Isaiah Berlin*

British social and political theorist,  
philosopher and historian of ideas

This think piece uncovers a hidden **pattern** which leads us to **understand** how we think.

**It is also an exploration  
into the science of semantics –  
the study of the meaning of everyday words.**

## - - The Problem - -

### Food for Thought

It's not that we can't see the solution.

It's that we haven't seen the problem.

Our ability to **think** is the reason we **exist, adapt, survive** and **thrive**.

The successful outcome of every **choice, decision** and **action** we take in life is an outcome of the process of thinking. Unless we are in the middle of a jungle and naked, look around. Everything that is not of the natural world is a product of the ability to think – **everything from spears to spacecraft** - our clothes, financial accounting systems or the device used to read this. **Is there a more important process? It is our greatest challenge.**

The effort to swim our way through the flood of baseless and destructive **conspiracies theories and disinformation** attest to this. Most importantly, we all want to improve our and our children's ability to think to achieve the best outcomes. We want those in education to assist in improving the ability to think.

This brings me to ask you this question:

### **What is thinking?**

Have you ever been asked this question? Have you ever asked yourself this question? Have you ever looked up the definition of "thinking" in a dictionary? I have asked these questions of hundreds of people, in groups and

individually. They come from all walks of life and none had been asked, asked themselves or looked it up. *Have you?*

Dictionaries provide a general concept of thinking but do not describe the actual **process** of thinking. What dictionaries provide is not definitive and measurable. *Anything that cannot be measured cannot be purposely and effectively improved.* Without a known measure, a starting point, improvement cannot be measured / known.

Dictionaries also offer indefinable synonyms as “reasoning” and “considering” as definitions. Looking up the definitions of “reasoning” or “considering” bring us back to the word “thinking” as a definition. This is circular logic; a traffic circle with an entrance but no exit that leads to a measurable and useful definition. If there was an **effective** definition that detailed the step-by-step measurable process of improving thinking, **it would be in common use.** Apparently, there hasn’t been one.

We have not given thinking a second thought. We have taken thinking for granted though it grants us everything. **We now have come to see the problem.**

**If we don't know what the process of thinking is, we can't knowingly improve thinking. We can no more knowingly improve the process of thinking than we can knowingly improve the process of making an apple pie without knowing the recipe.**

## - - The Solution - -

In specific, measurable, effective, and practical terms:

**"Thinking  
is the process of asking ourselves questions."**

**Do you disagree, agree or not sure  
about this definition?**

In response to the above question you now find yourself **reflexively thinking** (asking yourself), *"Do I disagree, agree or not sure about this definition?"* Though you are thinking, it comes out in question form. This is the first indication that thinking is the process of asking ourselves questions.

Then, there is unavoidable logic. No matter whether your answer is disagree, agree, not sure **or any other answer**, you confirm that the definition is accurate. How is this possible? Although there are questions without answers, **there is never an answer without a question**. You could not have arrived at *any* answer unless it was preceded by a question. **(There cannot be a product unless it is produced by a process.** *See [top of page 42](#) in Appendix)*

Without asking ourselves a conscious **or an unconscious** question (*thinking*) we could not arrive at any answer, outcome or solution. This might raise the question; **"How can there be an unconscious question?"** (*This is addressed with observation #1 on [page 12](#).*)

To arrive at any **decision**, including the **decision** on the definition of thinking, there must be a thinking process. It is the process of **deciding**. **Deciding** is a process of asking questions; (Do I disagree, agree or not sure?). The outcome of **deciding** is a **decision**, an answer. We may even **decide** not to



come to a **decision**. This **decision** must also be preceded by a question. The decision-making process, thinking, is a process of asking ourselves questions.

**A semantic pattern:** Just as we could not make a **decision** without a question, we can not make a choice, a selection, a comparison, an appraisal, a diagnosis, a judgment, a plan, a strategy, or have a solution, a result, a deduction or an action **unless it is preceded by one or more conscious or unconscious questions.** (Again; *unconscious questions #1 on page 12.*)

**Thinking and questioning are both processes that produce answers/outcomes.** Processes that produce **identical** products, regardless of the name of the process, are the same process. As one of **many** examples; “sun” and “star”, which produce the same products – light and heat - are different names for the same process. In keeping with this observation, thinking or asking yourself questions is the same process.

We did not know what thinking was so we could not have knowingly improved what we did not know. We do know what questioning is. It is familiar, definable and measurable. Anything that can be defined and measured can be knowingly improved.

**Improving questions, in effect and for all practical purposes, improves thinking.**

**Knowing and applying this information  
is an intellectual force amplifier.**

**Consider what the active use of this knowledge will have on the future of our children, families, communities, education institutions and businesses.**

**“The aspects of things that are most important for us are hidden because of their simplicity and familiarity.”**

*Ludwig Wittgenstein 1889 - 1951*

**Below are several approaches  
that reinforce the definition.**

### **Theory vs. Scientific Theory**

One might call the definition of thinking in this think piece a theory. Many of us throw around the term “theory” as if it is just an idea, opinion, gut feel or a concept. The use of the word “theory”, in the realm of hard science, falls into the realm of a hypothesis. A hypothesis, can be tested, and if it is not supported with **observations and evidence**, it is **rendered invalid**. The **Theory of Thought (ToT)** offered in this think piece falls under this hard science requirement. (See supporting **observations and evidence** beginning on ext page 11.)

**Is this definition just a hypothesis?**

**Can it be tested (*questioned*) and rendered invalid?**

**Until someone asks themselves the above questions (*thinks*)  
they cannot determine  
(*decide – acquire an answer*)  
that the hypothesis is invalid.**

Any attempt to invalidate the hypothesis,  
that thinking is asking oneself questions,  
also requires asking oneself questions.

**To doubt or to be skeptical is to question**

By doubting or being skeptical of the process of thinking,  
is to confirm the definition.

Even by doubting you are asking yourself questions.

**This is not about a new way of thinking.  
It is about how we have always thought.**

## Language / Semantics

### Persistent Pervasive Patterns

In the appendix (*page 36*) there is a [short-list of 84 words](#) that we use that are processes of questioning. These include diagnosing, analyzing and assessing. Then we have all the synonyms of “thinking”. *E.g. Pondering, ruminating, musing, considering, contemplating, reflecting, weighing, speculating, deliberating & cogitating*; to name a few.

These **pervasive language patterns** lead to this thought:

**Are there any intellectual, rational or logical processes, other than thinking and questioning, which produce outcomes/answers? They are functionally & effectively equal.**

**Until the definition of thinking offered in this think piece is contradicted by evidence and logic, or there is a more useful description, it remains valid.**

**It is effective; it works**

**The very nature of science is discoveries and the best of discoveries are the ones you don't expect..**

*[Neil deGrasse Tyson](#)*

**“Every breakthrough idea  
begins with solving a common problem.**

**The bigger the problem,  
the bigger the opportunity.”**

*Michael Dell*

## **A Convergence of Observations and Evidence**

**One** incidence is an occurrence.

**Two** converging is a coincidence.

**Three** converging is a **pattern**.

**Fourteen**, you will find in this think piece, and many more included in **31 pages** of observations in each **book**, is a **preponderance**.

The presence of questioning / thinking connection is **everywhere**.

The question **is** the **Human Key**



## **- - 14 Supporting Observations & Evidence - -**

Since the definition of thinking is affirmed by logic, it will also be logical that we will be able to find that the products of questioning are the same as have been attributed to the process of thinking. This **pattern** is ***everywhere*** we look.

**Here is everywhere.**  
**We think with our brain**

Observation # 1  
**Logic**

The brain is an **analytical** organ.

**Analyzing** is a process of **questioning**.

*Therefore*, the brain is a **questioning** organ.

Most of this **thinking/analyzing/self-questioning** process goes on unconsciously. Neuropsychologists say this is around 90%. This means that we are not aware of 90% of our questioning/analyzing. Here are just four of an **unlimited** number of examples of **unconscious** questioning.

- When asleep, unconscious, we don't fall out of bed because our brain questions how much space there is and how far we can move. Space and how far are answers. *(Unless we have had too much alcohol to drink which shows we weren't thinking.)*

- When asleep, unconscious, our brain is constantly questioning / analyzing. When it determines there is a strange sound or smell, we wake up to further question / analyze the source in a conscious state with input from our eyes and other senses.

- When walking on a crowded sidewalk we seldom bump into others. Our brain is unconsciously and constantly questioning/analyzing our environment and we make adjustments. Adjustments / **actions are answers**.

[Click Here to Return to Where You Left Off on Page 7](#)

## Intuition

**A new idea comes suddenly  
and in a rather intuitive way,  
but intuition is nothing but  
the outcome of earlier intellectual experience.**

*Albert Einstein*

To paraphrase Einstein's observation:

An intuition is the product of, an answer to,  
an unconscious question  
(intellectual analysis by the brain)  
based on a previous experience.

## Mindfulness & Situational Awareness

Mindfulness and situational awareness are the brain analyzing your surroundings and your actions.

## Instinct

When we act instinctively and unconsciously to danger (fight, flight or freeze), the **actions** of fight, flight and freeze **are results, outcomes / answers.**

## Now

Your brain has been unconsciously analyzing the content of this think piece. Without being conscious of it, you have been assessing, maybe now and then doubting, evaluating, judging, appraising, considering whether it makes sense and how you will use it. Assessing, doubting, evaluating, judging, appraising, considering are all processes of questioning. (*See appendix page 36*) You could not have understood a single word or the content of this think piece unless the brain had the ability to question / analyze / think.

**Our brain is constantly and unconsciously questioning.**

This is why you may not have been aware that you asked yourself a *question* prior to your answer (*disagree, agree, not sure*).

The thinking brain is a questioning brain. Questioning is the basis for everything that our brain has done and can do. The following are reinforcing observations of this reality.

Observation # 2  
**Curiosity**

**The brain is a curious thing.** Curiosity is the inborn human need to understand. To understand is to have an **answer**. The single instinctual, automatic **process** that curiosity initiates is a question. To be curious is to question. Having curiosity is to learn about the world.

The **curious, thinking / analytical / questioning brain** is always functioning. We witness children's curiosity well before they learn to speak. Children's curiosity at a very early age asks a tsunami of questions. This is not something they are taught. It is inherent, natural and spontaneous. This shouldn't be a surprise. The brain is an analytical/questioning organ.

The known and understood process of questioning is the outward conscious manifestation of the unknown and unconscious process of thinking. It is a fundamental human **pattern**. The desire to question, to understand, to learn, is in our DNA. To stifle questions is against nature. It's unnatural. To suppress the questions of children is to suppress their future intellectual growth. **We must, instead, nurture a culture of questioning, learning, in our children. Stimulate; not stifle.**

**“Curiosity has its own reason for existing.  
Never lose a holy curiosity. (holy questioning)  
The important thing is to not stop questioning.”  
“I have no special talent.  
I am only passionately curious.”**

- Albert Einstein

Observation # 3

## **Critical Thinking**

The term “*critical thinking*” has a meaning of careful deliberation to deliver crucial results. If we don’t know what “thinking” is, then **what is critical “thinking”?**

### *Oxford Dictionary*

#### **Critical Thinking**

*Noun: ”The objective analysis and evaluation of an issue in order to form a judgment.”*

In reference to the Oxford Dictionary definition: Analyzing and evaluating are processes of questioning. A judgment is a result/an answer. With this understanding, critical thinking is critical questioning. Let’s look at another source.

**The Foundation for Critical Thinking’s** website, as its title conveys, **sole focus and dedication** is to bring thinking to a higher or to the highest level.

Click here: [eight-section pie chart](#). (If The Foundation has changed the link, please let me know.) Pass the cursor over each section of the chart. This reveals lists of **questions** in each of



the eight elements for a combined total of **64 questions** for all eight elements.

Running the cursor over “Use the elements with sensitivity to **Intellectual Standards**” at the top of the page, also reveals relevant **questions**: a total of **27 questions**. A total of **91 questions** between the two actions. **The Foundation uses questions to critically think**. It is a persistent and pervasive **pattern**.

Across the top of this page is the sentence: **To Analyze Thinking We Must Identify and Question its Elemental Structures**. Again, *Analyzing* is a process of asking **questions**, “*to Identify*” is to acquire an answer and they employ the “*Question*” to achieve their goal of critical thinking. Again, **The Foundation** employs **pattern** of critical **questions** to achieve critical thinking.

Critical solutions/answers to critical issues cannot be realized without **critical questions**. Critical thinking is critical questioning. Calling the process “**Critical Questioning**” would remove the mystery and everyone would know where to focus – questioning.

Additionally, to assess or determine whether a question is **critical**, one must also ask questions – thinking about thinking – questioning about questioning – metacognition. Assessing and determining are processes of asking questions. Assessments and determinations are answers. *See list in appendix (page 36)*

By clicking [here](#) you will find on the **Foundation’s** site the title of the page is “**The Critical Mind is a questioning Mind**”. A thinking mind is a questioning mind.

**And all this is from an organization whose sole focus is on thinking.**

Observation # 4  
**Intelligence**

Highly intelligent individuals are more analytical / questioning. They produce cures, breakthroughs, the theory of relativity, law of gravity, technology, **vaccines**, etc. These are all answers/solutions. Highly analytical people ask better questions.

Observation # 5  
**Human Needs & Problems**

All things or processes created by humankind are solutions / answers to address a need, requirement or a problem. As answers, they were preceded by questions.

Observation # 6  
**Source of Information**

In search of information and knowledge there are only questions and answers. Information and subsequent knowledge are answers and as such came from someone's questions – a minute or millennia ago. Putting it another way, without the question, information and knowledge are impossible to acquire.

Aristotle would have described the definition of thinking as a “first principle; *the origin from which a thing is known.*” The origin, the genesis, of all things known by humankind comes from the process of asking questions.

▼  
***Only the down-to-earth “question”  
got humankind up to the moon.***  
▲

## Observation # 7

### Question Engine

There is a company that started a business in 1999 with \$100,000. In its 6<sup>th</sup> year of business its market valuation was \$6 billion. Its **only** service was to provide a path for people's questions. The company? Google.

A search engine is **only** used when someone has a question. Searching is a process of questioning. A search engine is a question engine. Googling is now another word for questioning.

Further, Google employs algorithms in obtaining information/**answers**. To obtain answers an algorithm must be, and is, a question formulated in computer code. In addition, questions are required to design an algorithm.

A growth from zero-to-6-billion dollars in 6 years was based only on the primacy and universality of single word and process – **question**. Google capitalized on their investment in our most valuable asset; the question.

## Observation # 8

### IQ

The only way to access an individual's IQ is with a test of questions. Testing is questioning. A reflexive action occurs. A question on a test causes the one being tested to **ask themselves that same question, to think**, before they can proceed to answer it. This is the Socratic process. Some 2,300 years ago Socrates taught by asking questions. The students' reflex was to ask themselves the

same question – to think. Today this is referred to as the Socratic Method. The Socratic Method is, in actuality, is **the Questioning Method**. It has been used in law schools for decades. This is where the professor teaches by asking questions. It is gaining popularity in high schools. Intelligence is a measurement of the ability to question; to think and to arrive at solutions/answers. Better outcomes, *answers*, are a result of a better ability to ask questions. **Questioning has been and can be measured.**

**”Intelligence:**

the ability to acquire and apply knowledge and skills.”

*Oxford Dictionary*

The question/thinking is the only process that provides the ability to acquire and apply knowledge and skills. The greater the ability to form and ask questions the greater the intelligence. Intelligence is a measure of the ability to think; to question.

Maybe the **Intelligence Quotient (IQ)**  
should be called the **Question Quotient (QQ)**

Observation # 9

### **Genesis of Words**

All words in all languages are answers from only one question; ”What do I call this?” *E.g. feeling, smell, place, process, object, grammar, etc.*

Questioning / thinking, is the genesis of all words.

Observation # 10  
**Science**

The *1<sup>st</sup>* active step in the **Scientific Method** is a question. The Scientific Method is used to acquire answers. Researching is a process of questioning. The word “science” is comes from the Latin word “*scientia*”. “*Scientia*” translated into English is “knowledge”. Scientists seek answers – knowledge. The Scientific Method, the Socratic Method as well as Critical Thinking are **Questioning Methods**.

We all ask questions to seek knowledge. So in this sense, we are all scientists.

**To ask a question  
is the beginning of knowledge.**

Observation # 11  
**Brain Hack**  
**Questions are Thought-Provoking**

The brain can easily tune out, and often does, any discourse going on around it. However, when we are asked a question, our brain, as a questioning organ, cannot ignore it. Our brain either attempts to answer it, decides not to (a decision is an answer) or uses self-questioning to manufacture plausible lies (false and misleading answers). A statement **may** make a person think. A question **requires** person to think. A question asked of another hacks/controls their brain. There is a specific device, **the rhetorical question**, which is employed to specifically evoke this response.

As mentioned, children at an early age ask a tsunami of questions. To enhance their thinking skills as they develop from this period onward, all we have to do is **ask them** more challenging questions. They will, **as a natural response**, cause them to ask themselves these questions (*critical thinking*). This will enhance their natural curiosity. Additionally, this is exercise for the brain which creates synapses similar to physical exercise creates muscle fibers. This will simultaneously advance their knowledge.

Observation # 12

### **Structure of Language**

There are only four types of sentences – the Declarative, Exclamatory, Imperative and the Interrogatory. The **Interrogatory type** is the **question type** and the only type that is a process. The other three are statements and as such are products/answers of the Interrogatory type; the question. Not only is the question is the source of words (*Observation #9*), it dictates the very structure of our language; our ability to communicate.

Many notable men and women in history and today are called great thinkers. We may even say they have **inquiring** minds or intellectual **curiosity**. These expressions are subconscious recognition of the source of their ability. In real terms, great thinkers are great questioners.

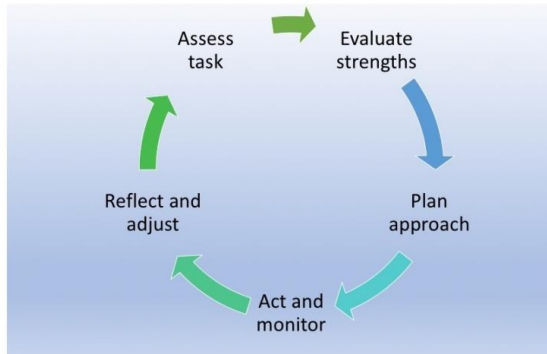
**Question everything  
until left with  
unquestionable truths.**

## Observation # 13

### Metacognition

Metacognition is the awareness and understanding of one's own thought processes.

The graphic below is from [Carnegie Mellon University](#)



As can be seen on the graphic, each of the titles involves a process of questioning. As with the Socratic Method, the Scientific Method and Critical Thinking, Metacognition is a strategy of using questions to think.

<b>Assess task</b>	Assessing is a process of questioning
<b>Evaluate strengths</b>	Evaluating is a process of questioning
<b>Plan approach</b>	Planning is a process of questioning
<b>Act and Monitor</b>	Acting is an answer and monitoring is a process of questioning
<b>Reflect and adjust</b>	Reflecting is a process of questioning and an adjustment is an outcome; an answer.

The repetition of the same process seems as if each is reinventing the wheel. This might be true except the question was organic and not invented. The wheel was the invention of humankind's questions.

## Observation # 14

### Others

#### Have a Similar Perspective on Thinking and Questioning

“Psychologists have concentrated on thinking as an intellectual exertion aimed at finding an answer to a question or the solution of a practical problem.”

(Enter the above sentence into a search engine and you will find it on many sites. Two of these sites are:

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thought#Psychology> and

<https://www.britannica.com/topic/thought>)

**Those that don't think don't question.**

**Those that don't question don't think.**

Questioning  
Thinking

**Thinking: the process of asking ourselves questions.**

Self-questioning is our most important intellectual process. Our existence depends on it. The definition fills in a void, a black hole, in the dictionary. This is a fundamental change in understanding. **It can be understood and naturally applied by an adolescent.**

We didn't know what thinking was. We couldn't have knowingly improved what we didn't know. Now we can and it can be measured; tested.

Dictionaries presently provide vague synonyms for thinking and do not specifically define the process. A question is a specific, defined and understood process. Vagueness (the term; thinking) cannot be taught. Specifics, questions, can be taught. (As illustrated by *The Foundation for Critical Thinking*)



Vagueness, by definition, is not measurable. Specifics are measurable. We can knowingly improve questioning and improvement can be measured informally and as is done with IQ tests. We can manage what can be measured. We have come from meaningless to meaningful; from abstract toward concrete.

Questioning and thinking are two words for the same process. It logically follows; measurably improving self-questioning/thinking measurably achieves better life outcomes for us and our children. **Counter to this, to stifle the questions of a child could be considered as an unintended form of child abuse.** Instead we must lead and stimulate them to ask better questions to enhance their capability and growth into **purposeful** adulthood. *Stimulate not stifle. We must nurture a culture of questioning.*

### **The Intellectual Theory of Everything transforms and is transformational**

In the hierarchy of human intellectual capability, “questioning” is uniquely alone at the top. **Everything else** is a subsidiary; a result; a derivative; an outcome; an answer. Questioning is also at the bottom; the root of all intellectual capability. It is the source.

**The question is responsible  
for extending the average life span in the United States  
from 47 years in 1900 to over 78 today;  
68% more life – 31 more years. *This is power***

**The ability to ask questions is the genesis of humankind.  
Not asking questions is the nemesis of humankind.**

To paraphrase Bertrand Russell:

**Some would rather die than  
*question*. In fact, some do.**

**The beginning  
is the most important part of the work.**

- *Plato*

**Where do we begin?  
... at the beginning.**

Is it possible for us adults to acquire a new habit, a pattern; the practice of asking more and better questions? Yes. Having said this, most of us adults must first unlearn the unproductive and obstructive one's demonstrated by the adult examples in our childhood.

These have been, over years, practiced, embedded and semi-permanently planted in the furrows of our brain.

It can be challenge for us as adults to acquire new habits. Children, in stark contrast and by nature, are a clean slate and innately attuned to acquire and absorb **patterns** in order to adapt. Before the age of five they show us this by the **pattern** of asking a tsunami of questions. Nobody teaches them this. It is innate; in our DNA. Asking questions is the process of learning.

It is us adults who, unintentionally and sometimes overtly, tend to discourage questions, discourage thinking, discourage learning and, as can be discovered in the books *the human key* and *the Learning Curve*, discourage communicating.

## Stimuli

We do we analyze / question? A question is the process that is initiated by an internal or external stimulus / observation. Stimuli can be positive or negative – constructive or destructive – safe or dangerous.

Questions are the best form of stimuli. As was mentioned before, when we ask a question of another it causes them to ask themselves the same question prior to acquiring an answer. Asking others causes them is, in other words, “to think”. The more challenging the question, the more it causes them to increase/improve their ability to think. We can encourage children by asking them more and more challenging questions relative to their stage of development to exercise their thought process.

**“We cannot always build the future for our youth, but we can build our youth for the future.” *FDR***

Our children are humanity's future. We need to “future proof” it for them. To insure the best possible future for everyone, we must arm them with the most powerful insurance tool. This tool is the ability, the persistent habit, to never stop asking and developing well-crafted questions. It will be this habit that will provide them and humanity the greatest ability and opportunity to find solutions / answers and to learn, develop strategies with which to adapt, survive and thrive. We adults have the direct responsibility to insure the future of our children.

The examples we set for our children will determine their and humankind's future.

“All **truths** are easy to understand once they are discovered; the point is to discover them.”

- Galileo Galilei

## Universal Truth

Universal Truth can not be simplified or embellished. It is what it is. Universal Truth is immortal. The definition of thinking fits into this **rare** category.

The definition of thinking conforms to these criteria.

- A universal truth has the quality of being shared by all humankind and being true or appropriate for all situations. (*All humankind thinks, analyzes; asks questions.*)
- A truth is considered to be universal if it is logically valid in and also beyond all places.
- Universal truths can only exist when they can not be contradicted.

**If the definition of thinking can be contradicted** or there is a more measurable and effective alternative, please let everyone know. If not, **this leaves us no choice**.

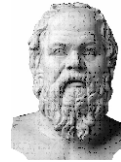
Truth is the property of no one but is the treasure of **all**. We must responsibly pass along this truth and treasure *to all*. ***Can there be a greater legacy?***

Click here [Knowledge is not power](#)

**An educational process  
that is not invested in questions  
is under-funded.**

Although children are only 22 percent of the population in the United States, they're 100 percent of our future. The most important part of education is to not stop children from asking questions.

“I know you won't believe me,  
but the highest form of human excellence  
is to question oneself and others.”




*Socrates* —a thinker who understood this 2,400 years ago

What do we do when we ask ourselves a question and don't have an answer? We ask someone else the same question. They then ask themselves the same question. They may not be able to provide an answer so they may use a search engine to ask that question.

Any answer acquired from using a search engine came from someone who had asked that question.

This question chain has gone on since the dawn of humankind.



**The question is the source of  
human evolution and revolution**

**Questions are agents of change**

**The greatest discovery to make  
is to discover  
that it is the question which discovers everything**

### **Acknowledgement:**

All the credit for authoring and editing this think piece solely goes to the ability to “question”. The “question” is the author and editor. This think piece could not exist or be edited without the ability to question. One is constantly questioning as one writes. Who is my audience? Is this word spelled correctly? Does it make sense? Etc. Further, editing is a process of questioning; critiquing the work. Critiquing, itself, is a process of questioning. (*See the list on page 36 in the appendix*)

**Madame Curie, Isaac Newton, Albert Einstein, Leonardo da Vinci, Socrates, Mozart,** and uncountable more could not have accomplished **anything** without asking themselves and others questions.

**The question is the genesis  
of all knowledge and understanding.**

**The question is the genesis word.**

**Only**  
*6 words*  
*8 letters*

**Thinking:** *the process of asking ourselves  
questions*

Consider the limitless possibilities this simple 6-word definition can have on our complex lives. It is also remarkable to realize that our survival and growth are directly dependent on the power of a single 8-letter word; **question**.

**“The greatest sophistication is simplicity.”**

— *Leonardo da Vinci*

## Pattern of Equivalency

The brain is a thinking organ

The brain is an analytical organ

- *Analyzing is a process of questioning*  
∴ The brain is a questioning organ.

We only exist due to our ability to **think/analyze**.

We only exist due to our ability to **analyze/question**.

- **Thinking/analyzing** produce answers, analyzes, outcomes, ideas

- **Questioning/analyzing** produces answers, analyzes, outcomes, ideas

- Nothing can be created nor problem solved, without the process of **questioning**.

Nothing can be created nor problem solved, without the process of **thinking**.

Thinking and questioning/analyzing precede actions.

Insufficient thinking and questioning/analyzing precede faulty actions

**Are there any intellectual, rational or logical processes, *other than thinking and questioning*, which produce outcomes/answers?**

The Great Pyramids and the tiny sewing needle only exist because of the process of questioning.

The pyramids and the sewing needle are products; answers.

**Questions are vehicles to the future.  
Answers are milestones along the way.**

**“Discovery is seeing what everybody else has seen,  
and thinking what nobody else has thought.”**

*Albert Szent-Gyorgyi*

**“The key to wisdom is this -  
constant and frequent questioning,  
for by doubting we are led to question  
and by questioning we arrive at the truth.”**

*(Truth is an answer.)*

*Peter Abelard - 1135  
French philosopher*

**Give children answers  
and they will learn in that moment.**

**Teach them to ask questions  
to acquire their own answers  
and they will learn for a lifetime.**

**“Truth is what works.”** – *William James*

### **Pragmatism and the Definition of Thinking**

Pragmatism is that a proposition is true if **it works satisfactorily**, that the meaning of a proposition is to be found in the **practical consequences of accepting it.**

**Substituting questioning for thinking is effective; it works satisfactorily.**



**“Some would rather die than think.  
In fact, some do.”** *Bertrand Russell*

**Some will and some won't,  
some do and some don't**

In regard to adopting the definition of thinking;  
some will and some won't, some do and some don't.  
With my background, I have few illusions about human  
nature.

With knowledge comes obligation and responsibility.  
Freedom of thought involves responsibility. Many  
people are frightened of responsibility and avoid it.

We have a critical need for the use of the definition  
to counterbalance destructive emotions, unfounded  
prejudice, the pandemic of misinformation,  
disinformation and baseless conspiracy theories.

**A question  
is the only inoculation against and antidote for  
disinformation, misinformation and false conspiracies.**

**The question  
is an equal opportunity provider and an equalizer.**

## ***ACTION REQUIRED***

***The power of knowledge lies only in action  
- not inaction.***

Putting this single definition to use will benefit more families, children, communities and businesses than any other definition with the exception of “kindness”.

The definition of thinking, self-questioning, is the seed from which *all* our existence survival and intellectual growth germinates, flowers and flourishes. Is there a more important seed to sew and nurture?

In a few seconds, far less than the time it took to read this think piece, a single text, social media post or email will accomplish the goal of planting this seed.

There are thousands of kitten and cat videos that go viral on the internet. Contrast this with the importance of the definition of thinking, to you, your family, your friends and your community. With this contrast in mind, please pass on this think piece’s link to as many others as possible.

To paraphrase John F Kennedy’s questions;

**If we don’t pass it on, then who will? If not now, when?**

Most important was what my mother told me

**”Make a difference. Don’t just fill up space.”**

**[theHumanKey.com](http://theHumanKey.com)**

This same link is also located at the top on the cover page

**An investment in questions  
increases human capital.**

**That which is complex  
is a combination of the simple.**

**Master the simple  
to comprehend, control and conquer  
the complex.**

**The process of thinking  
is no longer the dark matter of gray matter.  
There's no question. It's the question.**

**With this we have entered  
into an epoch of epic understanding.**

*I have to play sometimes.*

**They who know enough  
who know how to question,  
to know how to learn**

**“It is impossible to disassociate language from  
science (*knowledge*).**

**To call forth a concept, a word is needed.”**

***Antoine Lavoisier***

## - - Appendix - -

The next pages are appendices from the books  
*[the human key](#)* and *[the Learning Curve](#)*

“If I had an hour to solve a problem and my life depended on the solution, I would spend the first 55 minutes determining the **proper question** to ask, for once I know the **proper question**, I could solve the problem in less than five minutes.” - *Albert Einstein*

### Synonyms, **Patterns** and Parallel Processes

The *Global Language Monitor* tracks language usage trends. The English language currently tops one million words. There are far more words in English than any other language. The richness of the English vocabulary and the wealth of available synonyms mean that English speakers can often draw shades of distinction unavailable to non-English speakers. Synonyms are so persuasive in English that there are several publishers of thesauruses including internet thesauruses. Contrasting this, Japanese is the only other language that has a thesaurus. **A thesaurus is a book, a collection of linguistic patterns** – a **pattern** of the interrelationship between groups of similar words.

From Page 1:

**“To understand is to perceive patterns”**

**This Think Piece is a study in the science of semantics –  
the study of the meaning of words.**

**“Language shapes the way we think,  
and determines what we can think about.”**

*[Benjamin Lee Whorf](#)*

The linguistic **pattern** of the process of questioning / thinking is fundamental and pervasive in human existence. With this in mind:

### **A Thought Experiment**

Diagnosing, analyzing and assessing are three of many words that are processes of questioning. On the next page is a list of **84** words that echo this property. Similar to human mitochondrial DNA, each one of these offspring's DNA can be traced back to the same mother. In this example, the mother is "Question". Her offspring share a common genetic trait. They are all inquisitive.

Then we have all the synonyms of "thinking". *E.g. Pondering, ruminating, musing, considering, contemplating, reflecting, weighing, speculating, deliberating & cogitating*

These **patterns** / synonyms lead to this thought:

**Are there any intellectual, rational or logical processes, *other than thinking and questioning*, which produce outcomes/answers? **They are functionally & effectually equal.****

Processes that produce the same products, regardless of what they are called, are the same process.

### **Euclid's Axiom**

**"Those things that are equal to the same thing  
are equal to each other."**

**Euclid** a Greek mathematician  
known for Euclidean geometry **300BC** –  
2,300 years ago

Below are a few of the many words that are a process of questioning.

Questioning is hidden in plain sight throughout our everyday vocabulary.

Why do we have so many words for questioning processes?

It is how our brains function / think - **process**.

**“To understand is to perceive patterns”**

*Isaiah Berlin*

## **A Persistent Pervasive Pattern**

<b>Analyzing</b>	<b>Diagnosing</b>	Mulling	<b>Searching</b>
Appraising	Discerning	Organizing	Seeking
Asking	Discriminating	<b>Planning</b>	Selecting
Assaying	Distrusting	Pondering	Solving
Assessing	<b>Doubting</b>	Postulating	Skepticism
Calculating	Editing	Prioritizing	Sorting
Categorizing	<b>Evaluating</b>	Probing	Soul-searching
Checking	Experimenting	Puzzling	Speculating
<b>Choosing</b>	Exploring	Querying	Strategizing
Classifying	Examining	Quizzical	<b>Studying</b>
Comparing	<b>Fact checking</b>	Quizzing	Speculating
<b>Considering</b>	Gauging	Ranking	Surveying
Contemplating	Guessing	Rating	<b>Testing</b>
Contrasting	Imagining	Refining	<b>Thinking</b>
Critiquing	Inquiring	Reflecting	Troubleshooting
<b>Curiosity</b>	Inspecting	Requesting	Vacillating
Deciding	Interrogating	<b>Researching</b>	Valuing
Deciphering	Interviewing	Revising	<b>Verifying</b>
Debugging	<b>Investigating</b>	Scouting	Weighing
Decoding	<b>Judging</b>	Sifting	Wondering
<b>Designing</b>	Measuring	Scrutinizing	Worrying

**[Click Here to Return to Where You Left Off on Page 11](#)**

We have been obliviously and happily playing like children with the children of the question not caring and unaware of whom their parent is.

**Thinking:** *the process of asking ourselves questions*

### **An Absolute**

**No problem can be solved nor understanding or advancement achieved that is not the product of a question.**

**Ignorance is slavery.  
The question is an abolitionist.**

**There can be no creativity without diversity.** Putting the same things together only gets the same thing. It takes two or more different things together to create something new.

**The question is the origin and responsible for the survival of the species.**

No longer will questions and their answers lie camouflaged behind many every-day words and share **the same root**. Here are just a **few**.

**The persuasive pattern continues....**

<b>Questioning (Thinking) Process</b>	<b>Answer (a Thought) Product</b>
Analyzing	an Analysis
Appraising	an Appraisal
Arranging	an Arrangement
Assaying	an Assay
Calculating	a Calculation
Conceptualizing	a Concept
Choosing	a Choice
Contriving	a Contrivance
Creating	a Creation
Critiquing	a Critique
Deciding	a Decision
Deliberating	a Deliberation
Designing	a Design
Diagnosing	a Diagnosis
Evaluating	an Evaluation
Examining	an Examination
Inquiring	an Inquiry
Inspecting	an Inspection
Inventing	an Invention
Investigating	an Investigation
Judging	a Judgment
Planning	a Plan
Postulating	a Postulation
Selecting	a Selection
Solving	a Solution
Strategizing	a Strategy



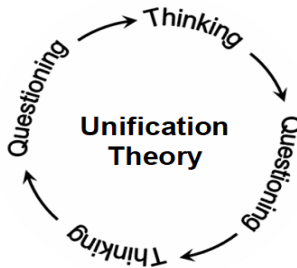
***The less we question the less power we have.  
Others who question more will have more power.***

**“Intelligence is the ability to adapt to change.”**  
*- Stephen Hawking*

To successfully adapt to change there must be a **strategy**; a **plan**. Strategizing and planning are processes of questioning. The answer to these processes of questioning is a strategy or plan for adapting to change. This must be followed by action; the ultimate answer.

**“Thinking”  
is no longer a hidden code-word for “questioning”.**

**Until we do away with our arrogance,  
we cannot overcome our ignorance**



**This Think Piece  
is a Rosetta Stone  
that makes the connection  
between two words in the same  
language  
- thinking and questioning**

In human life and nature, there are only processes and products. It is a **pattern**. There cannot be a product unless it has been produced by a process. This is true for the human brain, a manufacturing plant, making an apple pie or the universe. Thinking and questioning are processes. Both produce products; answers / outcomes / results / etc (*see below*)

**Answers (products), as with questioning (process), also have offspring.**

### **Products**

<b>Nouns</b>	<b>Nouns</b>
a <b>Solution</b>	an Analysis
an Outcome	an Appraisal
a Product	an Arrangement
a Result	an Assay
a Resolution	a Calculation
an <b>Action</b>	a Concept
a Statement	a Choice
a <b>Thought</b>	a Contrivance
an <b>Idea</b>	a Creation
an Explanation	a Critique
an Interpretation	a Decision
a Justification	a Deliberation
a Theory	a Design
an <b>Opinion</b>	a Diagnosis
a Hypothesis	an Evaluation
a Sum	an Examination
an Assumption	an Inquiry
a Value	an Inspection
a Method	an Invention
an Understanding	an Investigation
a Speculation	a Judgment
a Doctrine	a Plan
a Concept	a Postulation
a Deduction	a Selection
a Quantity	a Solution
a Proposition	a Strategy

## Intelligence vs. Thinking

Intelligence is the source of mental power / potential. Thinking, on the other hand, is a process. A source of intelligence without a process, a way, for using it, is useless. Thinking is the process we use to apply the power of intelligence to produce results.

The mental results that thinking (questioning) provides are answers. Answers go by many names: solutions, outcomes, results, ideas, thoughts, creations, concepts, information, knowledge, wisdom, communication, actions . . .

**“Reading, after a certain age, diverts the mind too much from its creative pursuits. Any man who reads too much and uses his own brain too little, falls into lazy habits of thinking.”**

*Albert Einstein*

If reading books does this, just think of what spending more than a brief time on social media and games produces. It is mental masturbation which does not produce offspring with which we can exist, survive or thrive.

## Seismic Semantics

"First, you know, a new theory  
is attacked as being absurd;  
then it is admitted to be true,  
but obvious and insignificant;  
finally it is seen to be so important  
that its adversaries **claim**  
that they themselves discovered it."

*William James*

In keeping with William James' pragmatism,  
it is my hope that many others **will claim** that  
they themselves discovered the definition of  
thinking and spread the word. This way it has  
a greater chance to reach more individuals,  
parents, families and institutes of learning.

"What is thinking?"

This is the ultimate philosophical question  
for the source of all philosophical questions  
comes from the process of thinking.