



SHANE LYNCH PSYCHOLOGY

Welcome to 2025

Happy New Year and Happy Lunar New Year!

Remember...

Compassion, courage, and confidence are always available if we can separate from parts of us that get in the way.

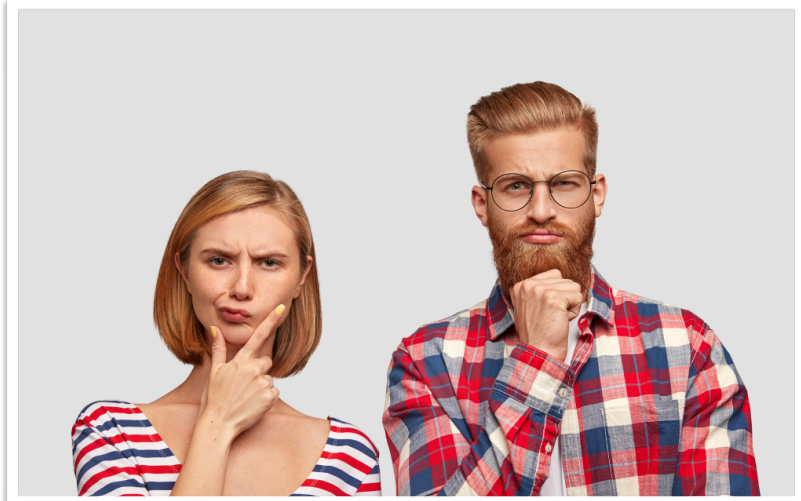
About Shane

I often catch myself thinking about thinking. This is something called metacognition.

As a psychologist it's part of curious exploration with clients to think about a client's thinking with them. This can help to give sight to inevitable blindspots we all have.

I find that self-reflection, whether noting thoughts, or feelings, or behaviours, can be a productive activity.

What kinds of activities do you engage in that create space for this kind exploration?
Meditation? Yoga? Exercise?
Conversation with others?



Thinking Critically & Cognitive Biases

Critical thinking is an essential skill that enables you to analyze information, make reasoned judgments, and solve problems based on logical reasoning rather than emotional impulse. It's a cognitive ability that spans various domains, from academia to everyday life. However, understanding the psychology behind critical thinking reveals not only how we think but also why we think in specific ways and how biases, emotions, and cognitive limitations shape our reasoning.

Critical thinking involves actively conceptualizing, analyzing, and evaluating information to form reasoned judgments. Rather than simply accepting information at face value, it requires questioning assumptions, considering alternatives, and weighing evidence. Critical thinkers engage in self-reflection to recognize biases and challenge their own thinking, ultimately leading to more informed decisions.

Cognitive biases are systematic patterns of thinking that deviate from rational judgment. These biases can obstruct critical thinking by distorting our perceptions and influencing our decisions.



Tips for Dads & Moms

Critical Thinking (CT) plays a crucial role in effective parenting, empowering parents to make informed, thoughtful decisions. When we engage in CT, we are more likely to assess situations objectively, considering all available information rather than reacting impulsively or emotionally (e.g., when addressing a child's behaviour, a critical thinker could note underlying causes—such as stress or unmet needs—rather than attributing the behaviour solely to defiance or bad attitude). CT helps us navigate the vast amount of parenting advice available today and avoid being swayed by misinformation or trends. CT models a mindset of curiosity, problem-solving, and open-mindedness for our kiddos.



Shane F. Lynch, MA, CCC, R.Psych

Confirmation Bias: One of the most well-known biases, confirmation bias refers to our tendency to seek out information that confirms our preexisting beliefs while ignoring contradictory evidence. For instance, when researching a topic, you may gravitate toward sources that support your viewpoint, limiting the scope of your analysis. Algorithms created by social media platforms can send confirmation biases into overload.

Anchoring Bias: Anchoring bias occurs when we rely too heavily on the first piece of information encountered and base subsequent decisions on it. For example, if someone first hears that a product costs \$1000 and later learns it's on sale for \$500, they may perceive the sale as a better deal, simply because the initial price (the "anchor") influences their judgment.

Overconfidence Bias: Overestimating one's knowledge or abilities can hinder critical thinking. People who are overconfident may not question assumptions or reconsider conclusions, which can lead to errors in judgment. Overconfidence often prevents individuals from remaining open to new perspectives or alternative ideas.

Availability Heuristic: This bias involves judging the likelihood of events based on how easily examples come to mind. For example, after reading about a plane crash, someone might irrationally believe flying is more dangerous than it is, simply because the incident is recent or vivid.

Recognizing these biases is the first step toward minimizing their influence. Critical thinkers question assumptions, seek diverse perspectives, and adjust their conclusions as new evidence arises.

While cognitive biases can pose challenges, they also highlight areas for improvement. Critical thinking is not an innate ability but a skill that can be cultivated with practice and self-reflection. To enhance critical thinking, consider these strategies: a) Question assumptions: "What am I assuming, and could I be wrong?" b) Seek diverse perspectives: Engage with viewpoints that challenge your beliefs to break down confirmation bias; c) Pause before deciding: Take time to reflect and allow your mind to process information thoroughly.

The psychology of critical thinking reveals a complex interplay of cognitive biases, emotional regulation (addressed in my next issue), and metacognitive skills. Understanding these psychological factors allows you to recognize potential pitfalls in your thinking, such as biases and emotional influences, and adjust your reasoning accordingly. By honing critical thinking skills through self-awareness and reflection, you can make more informed decisions and better navigate a world filled with complex, often conflicting, information.