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Learn to Think for Yourself

Most people don't know how to think for themselves. As a result, the masses are easily swayed.

Oh, they think they know how to think, but in reality most people are just repackaging existing ideas that other people created. This isn't always bad, but if the source isn't good, then your thoughts aren't good. In programming terms this is called "garbage in, garbage out!"

Some people tend to rely only on logic: "if $a=b$, and $b=c$, and $c=d$, then $a=d$." This is an important skill, but is only half the equation.

Other people are good at creative, or non-linear, thinking. Again, this is but half the equation.

Yin and Yang

The Chinese use yin yang to describe how polar opposites or seemingly contrary forces are interconnected and interdependent. You can't have light without dark. You can't have good without evil. Without up there is not down. You get the picture.

Thinking is the same way. You can't truly think without both creativity and logic. Though they appear to be opposites, they are really opposite sides of the same coin.

Creativity Doesn't Mean Artsy

For years I thought I wasn't creative. Heck, I bragged about it! I'm an engineer. Painting...not me! Singing...you better hope I don't! Poetry...not on your life!

As time went by, and as I learned more about myself (and life), I came to realize I was wrong. I may not be artistic, but artistic and creative are two separate concepts. In fact, when it comes to solving problems I'm in a (creative) league by myself.

Artistic meant you are good at art. Creative means you have the ability to create. Poets, musicians, and painters are artists. Some are creative, but most just have a skill that relates to their art.

Logic Isn't Only Used By Engineers

While logic is technically the study of arguments, in the real world it is nothing more than thinking in a progressive manner. If $a=b$, and $b=c$, then $a=c$ is a classic example. This is a skill that engineers are known for. They start at the beginning of a problem or project, and step by step move to a solution. While there are parallel paths, it is pretty much a straight line process.

Logic is also the skill you use when you use basic decision making skills. If I step outside and it is cold, I then go back inside and get a coat.

Why You Need Both

Logic without creativity is what causes so many engineers to be book smart but incompetent at fixing things. It's what causes so many dreamers to have grand schemes but no ability to create a real action plan. It's why so some artists can barely function in the real world.

It's only when you combine both creativity and logic that you are truly thinking:

- Taking unrelated facts and using logic to connect the dots.
- Taking other people's ideas, looking at them from all sides, and following each possibility to its logical conclusion.
- Looking at a symptom, considering possible causes, testing each cause for validity, identifying the actual

problem, and solving it.

- Seeing customer problems, creating a solution, and then building a service, product, or business around the solution.

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