

Critical Thinking: pitfalls and possibilities

Most people think they know *how* to think. Most of us believe we have good reasons and arguments for our beliefs, and we tend to be sceptical about belief systems that are exotic or strange from our perspective. In other words, we *think* that we are able to think critically. It seems easy enough, from an intuitive point of view. Nevertheless, research shows that clear and critical thinking is much harder than we presume. Some people are so critical that they reject everything that science has to offer. Clearly, something went wrong. But all of us are vulnerable for mental infection with bad, pseudoscientific and superstitious ideas. In this lecture we discuss the psychology behind all this. We give many examples to prove the point that our brain can rapidly and easily be fooled (or rather: fool itself), and we offer ways to enhance our critical thinking skills.