

There is nothing good  
or bad but thinking  
makes it so

Psychology



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

There is nothing good or bad but thinking makes it so" Whether it is technology, relationships, food, clothing, or profession, it is our thinking that shapes our likes and dislikes. Thinking itself depends on the experiences we have had, or the circumstances we have been brought up in. The thoughts, believes, values and standards we have been brought up with outline our perceptions and standpoints about a certain matter or object. This mini-paper argues that there is nothing good or bad but thinking makes it so. It is not the situation itself but the reaction to the situation that makes it good or bad. The situation is the stimulus and how we behave in turn is the reaction which labels the situation as good or bad. Cognitive psychology jumps in at this point. Cognitive psychology helps us study the internal mental states of an individual that shape his thinking which, in turn, shapes how he looks at things in his life. For example, Boroditsky and Ramscar (2002, p. 185) state that " it is not sensorimotor spatial experience per se that influences peoples thinking about time, but rather peoples representations of and thinking about their spatial experience." It is how a person perceives, stores, and processes information about a certain thing, for example, the internet; and, this information, in turn, shapes his standpoint about the internet. If he thinks that internet has a lot of hazards because people waste time on it, he will consider it bad. This thinking may link with some of his past experiences. Contrarily, if he thinks that internet has a lot of benefits in study and research, he will consider it good. This thinking, also, may trace back to his experiences. Hence, it can be said that our perception of things depends on our thinking, which depends on the experiences and circumstances we face, states Steenbergen et al. (2008, p.

349).

People also utilize critical thinking to contour their perception about things. Moore (2010, p. 8) defines critical thinking as “ both a deliberate meta-cognitive (thinking about thinking) and cognitive (thinking) act whereby a person reflects on the quality of the reasoning process simultaneously while reasoning to a conclusion.” It is an expertise that comes with vast experience of reading, writing and utilizing one’s reasoning abilities. Weick, Sutcliffe & Obstfeld (2005, p. 409) call it sensemaking. During the whole process of sensemaking, the thinker tries to perceive whether the thing in focus is good or bad. According to Sen (2010, p. 2), a critical thinker asks for justifications for the goodness or badness of things. However, if his conclusion was the most accurate one, then there would have been no critiques, objections, and opposing viewpoints. Opposition always suggests that it is only a matter of thinking that makes something good or bad. Hence, it is concluded that people base their perceptions on their experiences and circumstances, when actually it is only their thinking that makes something good or bad. People make use of their judgments, critical thinking and sense-making process to come out with their conclusions, but there are always counter-arguments and critiques that show that it is only people’s personal perceptions about things that make something good or bad.

#### References

Boroditsky, L., & Ramscar, M. (2002). The roles of body and mind in abstract thought. *Psychological Science*, 13(2), pp. 185-189.

Moore, D. T. (2010). What is critical thinking? *Critical Thinking and*

Intelligence Analysis. USA: DIANE Publishing.

Sen, M. (2010). An Introduction to Critical Thinking. India: Pearson Education India.

Steenbergen, E. F., Ellemers, N., Haslam, S. A., & Urlings, F. (2008). There is nothing either good or bad but thinking makes it so: Informational support and cognitive appraisal of the work-family interface. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, 81(3), pp. 349-367.

Weick, Sutcliffe & Obstfeld. (2005). Organizing and the process of sensemaking. *Organization Science*, 16(4), pp. 409-421.