

The median isn't the message critical thinking example

[Experience](#), [Belief](#)



Question # 3

The journal talks about the writings of Stephen Jay Gould. The journal brings out the message of the three mendacities which are more life threatening than any other thing. The deceptions, arranged in order of increasing savageness are lies, followed by damned lies and then statistics. A lie is a blatant deviation from the internationally acclaimed truth. Any spoken word that does not meet the truthfulness standards constitutes a lie. Damned lies are high level lies which can lead to disastrous effects. They are lies which are clothed in covers of honesty. Therefore damned lies are worse than simple lies. The third worst deception is the statistics. When used to explain phenomena, statistics relay information which does not correspond with the actual truth on the ground. Some of the measures of central tendency of numbers are the mean, the mode and the median. The mean is the sum of all the statistical entities divided by the number of entities. The mode can be described as the frequently occurring number of a statistic while the median is the mid-point of a given set of data. Statistics are the worst deceptions ever because they mislead the public by giving the general trends about a given topic. For example Gould describes a scenario whereby he was diagnosed of a certain ailment called mesothelioma. According to the available statistics about the disease, all victims of the disease died at most eight months after infection. That is why the physicians did not encourage him to read any literature about the disease. With his positive attitude, he researched on the disease and discovered the truth for himself. Incidentally, he did not die after the statistical duration documented in books. He then discovered that statistics only recorded the median duration that a person

suffering from the disease may take. This message about the three deceptions of life is very important to him because it revolutionized his attitude and way of thinking concerning the three mendacities of life. He discovered that there are a number of boundary conditions within which the statistical measures can be valid. It is generally important to note the conditions necessary for a rule to hold true to avoid mind boggling of the public.