

# Worldview and critical thinking essay

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Our worldview impacts all aspects of our lives because it is the foundation of how we think, make decisions, act, and perceive the world.

Ultimately our critical thinking processes are colored by our beliefs and not necessarily grounded in reality. The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines *weltanschauung* (a German word for worldview) as a comprehensive conception or apprehension of the world especially from a specific standpoint. The root system of our current reality and views are embedded in our experiences, background, education, and cultural traditions.

Philosopher Immanuel Kant (1724–1804) first implemented the concept of worldview in his book “ Critique of Judgment. ” He discussed how our worldview is a subjective view of the universe and specific things as they are perceived rather than as they are in reality (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy).

Kant’s use of the word subjective implies that our personal world depends on our feelings, opinions, personal tastes, and influences our decisions and actions. Our worldview will adjust and change as our experiences grow and we respond accordingly. The core factor in our worldview evolution is applying critical thinking to our lives. Critical thinking is defined as: 1) the awareness of a set of interrelated critical questions; 2) the ability to ask and answer critical questions in an appropriate manner; 3) and desire to actively use the critical questions (Browne ; Stuart, 2012, p. 2).

It is impossible to grow as a person if we do not apply critical thinking to our lives. We must ask “ why? ” and be open to the answers regardless of our current position. By practicing autonomy, curiosity, humility and respect for

good reasoning we are displaying the values of a critical thinker and expanding our worldview. If we refuse to embrace a lifestyle of strong-sensed thinking we will cling to “ wishful thinking” or as Stephen Colbert describes as “ truthiness. ” Truthiness is when we favor concepts we wish to be true instead of facts we know to be true (Browne ; Keeley, p.

16). Regardless of our background, we all have choices to make in regard to how we live our lives. Our past does not have to define and limit our future if we make a decision to develop the skills needed to be a critical thinker. After all, the ability to think critically expands our worldview inch by inch and allows us “ to either (1) defend or (2) evaluate and revise (our) initial beliefs (Browne & Keeley, 2012, p. 7)”. We can decide to be open and apply the water of critical thinking questions to the roots of our previous beliefs. Or we can remain closed, defensive, and resentful towards what challenges our own beliefs. In Deuteronomy 30: 19 God spoke to the Israelites about two paths: the path of life and the path of death.

He encouraged them to choose life so that life would spread from them to their children. When we chose to stretch our worldview, we evolve and therefore enhance the lives of our children. Changing our path from ignorance to personal growth opens the doors to infinite possibilities.

References Browne, M. N., ; Keeley, S. M.

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Immanuel Kant (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy). Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy. Retrieved March 13, 2013, from <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/kant/>