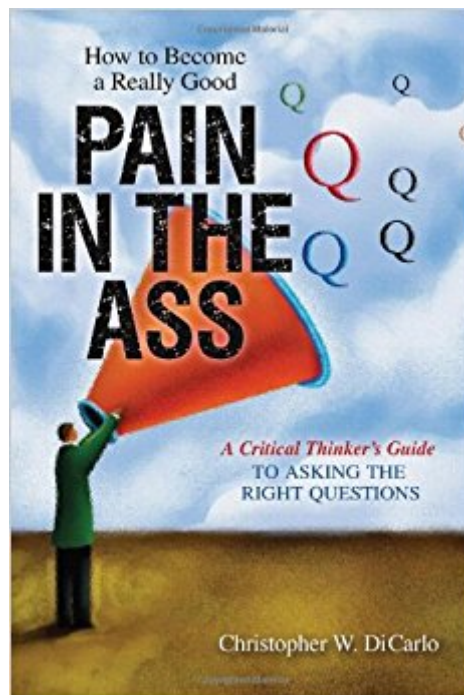




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How To Become A Really Good Pain In The Ass: A Critical Thinker's Guide To Asking The Right Questions



Synopsis

In this witty, incisive guide to critical thinking the author provides you with the tools to allow you to question beliefs and assumptions held by those who claim to know what they're talking about. These days there are many people whom we need to question: politicians, lawyers, doctors, teachers, clergy members, bankers, car salesmen, and your boss. This book will empower you with the ability to spot faulty reasoning and, by asking the right sorts of questions, hold people accountable not only for what they believe but how they behave. By using this book you'll learn to analyze your own thoughts, ideas, and beliefs, and why you act on them (or don't). This, in turn, will help you to understand why others might hold opposing views. And the best way to change our own or others' behavior or attitudes is to gain greater clarity about underlying motives and thought processes. In a media-driven world of talking heads, gurus, urban legends, and hype, learning to think more clearly and critically, and helping others to do the same, is one of the most important things you can do.

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Customer Reviews

"Teaches how to analyze your own thoughts, ideas and beliefs, and to understand why you act on them, as well as understanding others who might hold opposing views. In this regard, it can open doors to your mind that are extremely helpful."-Bookviews
"This comprehensive, lively and entertaining book...could become the foundation for a course in critical thinking. It provides a solid introduction to elementary logic, epistemology, the philosophy of religion and findings in evolutionary biology and biosociology. Recommended."-CHOICE
"Offers a fun yet specific

approach to developing critical thinking processes and provides tools that allow readers to identify and question assumptions and belief systems. —Midwest Book Review

Christopher DiCarlo, PhD, (Guelph, Ontario) is an award-winning lecturer on bioethics and philosophy of science. He is a fellow, advisor, and board member of the Society of Ontario Freethinkers and the Center for Inquiry in Canada. He is a past visiting research scholar in the Stone Age Laboratory at Harvard University.

I found *Pain in the Ass* to be an interesting read: not as good as I had hoped but not a complete waste of time either. The book is divided into three parts--Pt I is a very excellent review and explanation (depending on the reader's experience and knowledge of critical thinking literature) of critical thinking, debate, persuasive discourse, and argumentation skills and principles. Fairly complete and well done. Not too deep on theory and very readable. This portion alone makes the book worth the read if this is a subject in which you are seeking more information. Pt II is a discussion of the Socratic methodology and history of the Skeptics principles. I found this section disjointed and hard to read in spite of considerable training in the subject. Its style is such that the author appears to be trying to put forth an academic import to the work and missed badly. This section is overpacked with minutiae which does not flow and does not improve any of the points. This is a '1-star' section. Pt III is the application section in which the author attempts to use the framework built in parts 1 (successfully) and 2 (less so) to answer the "5 Big Questions". I was not a fan of framing the entire premise of critical thinking with the 5 Big Questions (nor are they what I consider the "Big 5"); however, the section is useful in its discussion and seems to be without glaring problems. Chapters 10 & 11 have several very minor inconsistencies in their discussions of geographics, evolution and climatology but this is not a treatise on those subjects and they do not detract from the premise. My only problem with Pt III is not liking the '5 Question' framework makes this section less interesting. I read some chapters fully, carefully and critically and found others that were barely worth a light skim. Overall, I am glad I read the book but I would only recommend it to friends with caveats and explanations.

I consider this book a very worthwhile introduction to critical thinking for those new to the topic and a useful refresher for the rest of us. Considering the topic, the book is quite easy to read; without sacrificing quality. It is an interesting combination of instruction in the principles of critical thinking and what the author calls the "Big Five Questions". I enjoyed this approach and I think most others

will as well. The author begins by describing arguments and how to understand them. He follows that up with chapters on biases, context, and basic ideas of logic and the various types of evidence and methods of reasoning. He has an excellent chapter on the most common fallacies. The final section of the book asks the big five questions and contrasts a naturalistic answer with a supernatural answer. Make no mistake, the author is not simply splitting the difference. He comes down very heavily on the side of methodological naturalism. In providing the supernatural answers he shows how they come up short. This book has a very good look inside content and I recommend you check that out. You will thereby get a good idea what you are getting before you buy. This book was well done and I recommend it.

Dicarlo doesn't bring any new arguments to critical thinking, but that's his point. The tools for critical thinking have been around for quite some time. Unfortunately they are not used often enough. He deftly explains fallacies in reasoning that lead to wrong conclusions. What he does well is provide a very concise and readable summary of how we believe what we do. He writes clearly and provides an abundance of examples from contemporary issues. He also does a good job of being fair in his treatment of divergent views, and showing us how to avoid bias in our judgements. Most importantly he does a good job of showing how being a good critical thinker will directly impact our lives. Too many writers today suggest that all views are equally valid and what matters is that it is true to the believer. In his conclusion at the end of the book he shows some everyday examples of how this attitude can be disastrous for the human race. I would pick this book as a must read for college students needing a beginner's guide to critical thinking.

Hope the Author reads this. I saw you on Mr. Deity and had to buy your book. I got to page 20 and read you think we can not be absolutely certain about Reality. Why finish the rest of the 351 pages? I am assuming you are certain what you write in the following pages are absolutely based in reality.

This book is life changing. Excellent for anyone who struggles with arguments that go way off topic or anyone who exists. This teaches you how to break them down into a formula that you can understand. Highly recommended.

I was hoping for a little more on logic, fallacies, and biases of judgment. Too much of the book focused on ontological questions rather than epistemological questions.

While being entertaining at first, it becomes quite redundant as you keep on reading. A nice read for someone who never concerned himself with critical thinking. Yet, anyone who is already acquainted with logical fallacies and the basics of rational thinking might well spare the time reading it and search for something more sophisticated.

I'm now on my second reading of this book and have markers in hand. It is one of the most thought provoking books I've read in some time on this subject. If I'm not mistaken, Mr. Dicarlo teaches a class on this and I would love to attend. Now then, if one is wanting some quick facts/ideas on how to think critically, you will find that here. But, he goes way beyond that and gets you to drill down into ones own life and ask the big five. When your done with that, you can't help but see life in a different way. I started and lead a Socrates Cafe and use this book there. A winner to be sure!

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