**Become a critical thinker**

 **Make Decisions.** Often, assumptions are kinder to the heart and mind. It's easier to find comfort in the falsehood and fantasies human beings have made for themselves. You have to make the choice between truth and comfort. These aren't always separate, or mutually exclusive, but in some cases they are. You have to be willing to endure a bit of mental distress for the sake of what is true. If you can't accept that, you will never be able to truly think critically. You will always be biased based upon what you would rather believe to be true.

**Examine your own beliefs first.** Anyone can be critical of the things other people believe. You can point and laugh and consider them silly for the things they believe to be true. Meanwhile, you may hold onto something even more ridiculous and laughable, but you cannot see it. Wisdom comes from understanding other people; enlightenment comes from understanding yourself. Start with and focus on yourself.

**Abandon assumptions.** We apologize in the form of ‘I assumed you meant...' An assumption is when you sacrifice feelings, senses and mental faculties for the sake of a guess. Why assume when you can know? Why believe when you can deduce? Stop assuming. Don't assume that the car beside you will yield, watch carefully and react accordingly. Assumption leads us to our most convincing, yet most incorrect beliefs. Ask yourself 'Why do I believe this to be true? Is it founded?' If not, abandon it. You may be correct, but having evidence is more important than making correct assumptions.

* **Think with logic and reasoning.**  Differentiate between what is logically valid and what isn't. Don't assume that what is popular is what's true. Reason it out. Does it really make sense? Is there evidence?
* **Have a broad basis of knowledge.** It is important to remain well-informed. Make the effort to do informed research.

 **Recognize jargon.** It is everywhere: advertising, medical research, spirituality, self-help books, sales, the law, banking institutions and insurance companies.

**Ask questions.** Truthful, helpful and informative people want to be asked questions!

**Know the difference between the impossible and improbable.** A critical thinker isn't limited by the laws of logic. You may not adopt a belief without evidence, but a critical thinker will not hold a strong disbelief in the absence of it. There are thousands of things that we can know, but there are just as many things that we do not know. A critical thinker hesitates to judge anything to be impossible- perhaps implausible or improbable. Impossible is much harder to prove.

