

Exercises

Week 1

Here are one or two mistakes I have experienced being made by others:



**Here are one or two
mistakes I have made:**



NOTE: If you are anxious about listing your own mistakes here, consider using a couple words or a little sketch or symbol as a private reminder. This will act as a reminder of why you are making the effort to think more clearly!

What would I do if I had more opportunities to do what I liked?



Week 2

Exercise 1

Can you think of a time when you were blamed for something that was someone else's fault?

Exercise 2

Can you think of a time when you blamed someone else for something you later realized was your fault?

Exercise 3

Which was easier to recall? Why?

Exercise 4

Take a moment to think about the coming opportunities for humans to become cyborgs. Do you welcome this change? Fear it? Do you have some other ideas about how you might respond to the offer of an implant that gives you powers, but gives others power over you?

Exercise 5

What legacy would you like to leave?

Week 3

Exercise 1

What does it mean when someone accuses someone else of not doing critical thinking?

Exercise 2

Which is more important to you, truth or politeness?

Can you think of some situations where that might change?

If so, under what circumstances?

If you don't know, make a sketch or doodle to remind yourself to think about this later!

Exercise 3: ADVANCED

Do you want wisdom and understanding, for yourself, or to be able to help others?

Week 4

Exercise 1

If the weather is good, or even if it isn't, go outside for this exercise. If you don't want to, staying inside is fine. Look at a corner of the room you are in, or at a tree, or building, or street corner, or a group of people at a café. Write down six things that you notice about whatever it is you are observing. Then write six more.

If you can find someone else to do the same exercise after you tell them what you are looking at, compare your lists. What did you learn?

- | | | |
|-----|-----|-----|
| 1) | 2) | 3) |
| 4) | 5) | 6) |
| 7) | 8) | 9) |
| 10) | 11) | 12) |

Exercise 2

Three things I learned this week:

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)

Exercise 3

What is something that every person alive knows? Take a few minutes to contemplate the answer that you are going to provide.

*It's ok if your answer differs from mine below. Come back to your answer later.

A very useful answer is:

Each of us knows what it feels like to be ourselves.

Each of us is familiar with our own experiences.

Exercise 4

Did a friend recently disappoint or please you?

]How did you experience the episode?

Did you mull downgrading or upgrading your opinion of this person?

Did you sincerely try to understand the details of what pushed them to a poor decision, if the experience felt negative to you? Of what pushed them to perform the good deed, if that's what they did?

Did you find a little more understanding of yourself by doing this exercise?

Write down your thoughts about this!

Exercise 5

Use part of your planned time for this workbook to learn something new about something very different from the subjects that you usually think about. Nature, music, the food supply, the culture of a country on a different continent, the origin of the name “Joe Shmoe,” a religion from 5,000 years ago, how to choose a jig saw, how to sew, weave, tan leather, hunt a rabbit, find wild asparagus, do a back flip, etc.

Make a note or sketch or create a symbol to remind yourself of the experience of learning something new, in addition to the subject matter itself.

(My answer is on the next page! I’ve never been much of a visual thinker, but recently many ideas have been coming to me in this way.)

Week 5

Exercise 1

How would the elephant story differ if the main humans involved were women? Children?

Exercise 2

If you have any siblings, compare and contrast how your lives are turning out. Or you can do this with a friend or neighbor—ideally someone who is at a similar life stage as you. The idea here is that if you are 25 years old, don't compare yourself with a retiree or a baby.

If there are differences or similarities, what are the sources or origins? Try to think of at least five different factors or influences.

Similarity/Difference	Source(s)
1)	
2)	
3)	
4)	
5)	

If you don't know what you think about this, make a doodle, scribble, or sketch. Maybe your subconscious mind or intuition will reveal some of your hidden thoughts. Each of us knows much more than we realize while we go about our day to day activities.

Exercise 3

Here are some ideas to help you practice questioning the context. Answer as many as you like, or answer different questions. Answering questions about your personal taste has the advantage that you have to think for and about yourself. You can't look it up online! Although you may be able to get some hints there!

What is the origin of my own taste in music?

In food?

In people?

In adventure?

Week 6

Exercise 1: Free Will

What is a useful frame of reference to examine our habits?

Take a few minutes to think about a “bad habit” you have. Write or sketch something below that will remind you of why you do this, even though you know it’s harmful.

What would need to happen for you to refrain from the bad habit, and not take up a worse one to replace it?

Are you willing to try an experiment for a short time to act on this idea that you just had to change your habit?

Exercise 2: How to Decide What to Eat

Think about your last meal. What did you eat? Who prepared it? Did you use pre-packaged “convenience” ingredients? A completely prepared entrée? Side dish? Is oatmeal a convenience ingredient? Write your thoughts here:

Now think about why you selected the elements of that meal.

If you don't know what you think about this, make a doodle, scribble, or sketch. Maybe your subconscious mind or intuition will reveal some of your hidden thoughts.

Exercise 3: Thinking about Financial Mistakes

Do you know anyone who spent a lot of money on something and then had buyer's remorse? Were you judgmental about them? Did you wonder “What were they thinking?”

Jot some notes or make a doodle, or whatever comes to mind...

Exercise 4: What Attracts or Repels You About Other People?

For a challenging “small” (personal, rather than societal) question, consider why you are attracted to some people and why you feel neutral, or even repulsed, by others?

Jot some notes or make a doodle, or whatever comes to mind...

Week 7

Exercise 1

Compare and contrast two examples of the same type of fruit.

Two grapes, two apples, two bananas, whatever you have handy, or enjoy eating enough to go out and procure. First, do it from memory for a couple of different types of fruits, and then bring out some real fruits and repeat. Or do it with vegetables, or some other item, if no fruits are available. But use two of the “same” type of “thing” before you use two different types of “thing.”

Two Pieces of the Same Type of Fruit—From Memory:

Trial 1—Type of Fruit or Veggie: _____

Similarities:

Differences:

A Different Set of Two Pieces of the Same Type of Fruit—From Memory:

Trial 2—Use 2 Types of Fruit or Veggies:

_____ and _____

Similarities:

Differences:

Two Fruits or Veggies—From Actual Objects:

Trial 1—Type of Fruit/ Veggie: _____

Similarities:

Differences:

Two Fruits or Veggies—From Actual Objects:

Trial 2—Type of Fruit/ Veggie: _____

Similarities:

Differences:

Did you notice any trends while you were doing this exercise?

Make some notes or doodles to remind yourself of what you experienced.

NOTE: Taking the time to reflect on your experience is a major part of what makes humans different from other life forms.

Exercise 2

Now, compare and contrast two different types of objects: fruits / vegetables, socks, books, cars, cats, etc.

If you repeat this exercise in the same way you just did Exercise 1, with remembered objects, and then physical objects, that will help to reinforce that there is value of using both the real thing, and your images based on memories. Write the TYPE of the objects on the lines provided.

Two Different Types of Object—From Memory:

Trial 1—Types of Objects: _____ and _____

Similarities:

Differences:

Two Different Types of Object—From Memory:

Trial 2—Types of Objects: _____ and _____

Similarities:

Differences:

Two Different Types of Object—From Actual Objects:

Trial 1—Types of Objects: _____ and _____

Similarities:

Differences:

Two Different Types of Object—From Actual Objects:

Trial 2—Types of Objects: _____ and _____

Similarities:

Differences:

Exercise 3

Stop and think about how you notice different types, kinds, or categories of features when you are comparing different types, kinds, or categories of things to each other.

When you compare a quail egg to a duck egg, the features, or the list of characteristics you notice, will likely differ from when you compare a duck egg to an apple. Take the time now to find a pair of SOMETHINGS, and a third item that is different. And prove to yourself that you can help yourself become more observant by cultivating this compare and contrast exercise as a habit. This benefit is in addition to the benefit of restructuring your knowledge in a more useful manner.

Potential Comparison Study Objects

Two Eggs and a Screwdriver

Two Screwdrivers and a Carpet

Two Rocks and an Egg

Two Houses and a Street

Two Toy Boats and a Sheet of Paper

A Forsythia Bush, a Lilac Bush, and a Laptop Computer

Two German Shepherds and a Driveway

Write your notes from this experience. What did you see, smell, feel, taste, hear, notice? Or make some sketches or doodles.

Week 8

Exercises

When you see the snowflake icon, ❄️, take a moment to record some aspect of your experience. It could be a jotting in a notebook, a photo, a sketch, whatever tickles your fancy!

- 1) Look over the compare and contrast exercises you did last week. ❄️
- 2) Sit down and relax. ❄️
- 3) Go for a walk. ❄️
- 4) Try to notice something new. ❄️

NOTE: Looking, listening, experiencing any sensory input in a conscious way, is a creative act.

- 5) Try humming some tunes. ❄️
- 6) Compare and contrast a “visual” and an “audio” trial of rational thinking, and notice what creative ideas emerge. ❄️
- 7) Use one of your other senses. Experience a couple of new essential oils or perfumes, or try some new exotic fruits or vegetables. ❄️
- 8) Have someone give you some small objects in an opaque container that you can reach into and touch. ❄️

9) Arrange a salad for yourself and a friend or family member. Make theirs beautiful and artistic and make yours just a pile of leaves. Or the other way around. Be prepared for a negative reaction if you try the second version of this exercise, and consider the consequences ahead of time. Maybe you can show them this book if they don't express a sense of humor about this little experiment! See if they notice and what their reaction is. ❄️

Week 9

Exercise 1

How is it that you even exist? How did your pairs of grandparents meet? How did your parents meet? How did they decide to start a family exactly when they did? How did your parents' life choices influence your personality, and thus the interests you have and the career you chose? All of us living in the modern world likely have some sort of mixed ancestry. How did the forces operating in history, or even pre-history, affect the path that resulted in each of us?

(Hint: See yourself as a tree!)

Week 10

How exactly do we move from data to doing? How do we get from gathering and storing data, possessing and processing knowledge, and generating ideas, to doing and acting? Do you have any ideas about this? Take a few minutes to make some notes, scribbles, or doodles in the box for Exercise 1.

Exercise 1

Exercise 2: The Bottom End of the Decision Making Style Spectrum

Now it's your turn. It's ok to put some items on both lists. There are often, if not usually, multiple layers of causation!

Things I did out of habit this morning include:

Things I did out of personal preference this morning include:

Week 11

Exercise 1A

Where do we get the data that we need to make the range of decisions that demand action every moment? Simply jot a few words or make a doodle in the empty spaces below.

How do we get the data that lets us decide to take the next breath?

To buy that expensive house?

To persuade our aging parent to get help with daily life?

To figure out for whom to vote?

Where to invest our savings?

Whether we should go on a cruise, or stay home and read a book?

Exercise 1B

Now try again, using the categories suggested in Figure 6. There may be more than one answer!

Where do we get the data that we need to make the range of decisions that demand action every moment? Simply jot a few words or make a doodle in the empty spaces below.

How do we get the data that lets us decide to take the next breath?

To buy that expensive house?

To persuade our aging parent to get help with daily life?

To figure out for whom to vote?

Where to invest our savings?

Whether we should go on a cruise, or stay home and read a book?

Week 12

Exercise 1

Here are some “spark ideas” to get you going. Use your own if you prefer.

What if I hadn't said _____ to
_____ back when _____?

What if I had spoken up when _____ was being treated badly?

What if I had found the words to comfort _____ when they/
their loved one was sick? _____

What if I had found the words to inspire _____ after their
disabling car accident?

Other situations:

Exercise 2

Are a person's clothes part of the facts? Part of the environmental cues?
Something else?

My thoughts:

Exercise 3

Tell someone about yourself in three short sentences. If you can gather your bravery, avoid standard small-talk descriptions, such as family status, job, school, social status, etc. This may be difficult for many people. But, if you are up for a greater challenge, also avoid personality traits. Find some deep, inner aspects of yourself that make you YOU!

Ready?

I am a....

or

I enjoy....

or

I feel a duty to...

or

????

Stuck? If you need some help, here are mine:

Aliya Exercise 3: I enjoy intellectual interests more than arts and crafts, and reach toward experiencing and expressing a growing appreciation of both our natural and spiritual environments. I seek to build meaningful relationships with my fellow Earthlings.

DID YOU NOTICE? The above sentences were written in E-Prime. E-Prime is a sub-set of English, specifically designed to “avoid confusion and clarify meaning.”¹

¹ For a general discussion of the limitations of language, see <https://blogs.ubc.ca/badlanguage>
For the referenced link about E-Prime, see <https://blogs.ubc.ca/badlanguage/2019/11/27/e-prime-a-linguistic-exercise-to-avoid-confusion-and-clarify-meaning>