NOW YOU'RE THINKING!

CHANGE YOUR THINKING
REVOLUTIONIZE YOUR CAREER
TRANSFORM YOUR LIFE

JUDY CHARTRAND • STEWART EMERY • RUSS HALL
HEATHER ISHIKAWA • JOHN MAKETA
Praise for Now You’re Thinking!

“Your mind is your most powerful tool. This book can help you chart a course for sharpening your critical thinking skills so you can make better decisions in all areas of life.”

—Daniel H. Pink, author of Drive and A Whole New Mind

“Critical thinking is the #1 skill required to build the workforce of tomorrow. Now You’re Thinking! is a valuable and very useful book that provides the tools and techniques required to make better decisions. With a heart-lifting and inspiring true story, this book guides you through the process of becoming an extraordinary thinker. This one delivers!”

—Ed Reilly, President and CEO, American Management Association, International

“While writing The Speed of Trust it became clear to us that people would not trust others to lead them if they did not trust their thinking. If you read and apply the principles in this book, people will come to see you as a leader.”

—Stephen M. R. Covey, author of The New York Times and #1 Wall Street Journal bestseller, The Speed of Trust
“A big part of being a leader is making decisions—but how often do we stop and think about our own decision-making processes? Using the unique backdrop of a real-life military, medical, and civilian team that effectively combined their intellect and courage to save a young Iraqi child’s life, the authors illustrate a five-step model we can all use to more effectively process our own thoughts toward successful decisions. This book is a must-read.”

—Ken Blanchard, coauthor of The One Minute Manager® and Full Steam Ahead!

“If you are striving to be better, faster, and different in life, to have more fulfillment and success, you need this book. A great primer to increase and enhance your thinking skills and processes.”

—Harry Paul, coauthor of FISH! A Proven Way to Boost Morale and Improve Results

“Now You’re Thinking! will transform your thinking—and change your life!”


“With today’s shortened attention spans, texting, blogging, and instant gratification, the rational thinking skills in Now You’re Thinking! are more pertinent than ever. In the workplace, quick reactions and assumptions have resulted in industrial accidents. As a Navy veteran and lifelong learner, I believe this book has arrived at a critical time.”

—Mike Miller, Vice President, Technology Transfer Services, Inc.
“We are currently going through a major upheaval that is impacting all of our lives. We can choose to be ‘masters of our fate’ or simply get swept along by the tides of change. If the choice is the former, a substantial upgrade of our critical thinking skills will be required.

“Now You’re Thinking! is a rewarding and understandable read. No matter how successful you may be, this book will sharpen your decision-making skills. For those who may question their abilities, you will find the thinking exercises practical and usable.

“You will be richer for the reading.”

—Arne Carlson, Governor of Minnesota (1991–1999)

“This is a powerful book with a great message. It challenges the prevailing view that thinking skills can’t be developed, and it provides useful and practical guidance on how someone can improve the quality and effectiveness of their thinking.”

—Stuart S. Crandell, Senior Vice President, Global Solutions, PDI Ninth House

“Most people come and go in Hollywood. Some stay, become icons, and enjoy lasting success. These are the ones who think differently. This is a book about how to think differently and how you can enjoy lasting success for yourself. It is also a great read.”

—Rob Guralnick, former Executive Vice President, Production, Warner Brothers
“With its focus on enhancing critical thinking, Now You’re Thinking! is well timed to help students meet contemporary global challenges. Intensified labor competition requires improved intellectual preparation within a fully informed academic environment, and professors can respond with the tools offered within Now You’re Thinking! Everybody gains from the skills Now You’re Thinking! pinpoints. The more widely utilized this book becomes, the more the benefits will be widely distributed.

“This is a book where everyone wins.”

—Marcus Breen, Ph.D., Professor and Head of School, Communication, and Media, Bond University, Gold Coast, Queensland, Australia

“Now You’re Thinking! uses a compelling, real-life experience to highlight the tools each of us needs to become a better thinker. This book is a must-read for students of all ages!”

—Bob Hipp, President, Pennridge Community Education Foundation, www.pennridgefoundation.org
Now You’re Thinking
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Now You’re Thinking

Change Your Thinking…
Revolutionize Your Career…
Transform Your Life

Judy Chartrand
Stewart Emery
Russ Hall
Heather Ishikawa
John Maketa
Dedicated to the men and women of the armed forces at home and abroad, with thanks for their commitment and sacrifices ... and their sound and careful thinking in trying situations.
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It has taken me a long time to understand that creating success in your life, and maximizing your potential, is about knowing who you are. This takes being clear about what your values are and what deeply matters to you. It involves knowing what you are passionate about, what you love to do, and developing your talent, skills, and abilities. It means knowing that you first have to get good before you can become great as you work to develop your talent and build your skills.

As you put these pieces together, you establish your identity. This matters because your identity is your passport to freedom. However, your identity has to be your identity. There are a lot of folks out there trying to tell you what should matter to you, what you should care about, what you should be when you grow up (no matter what your age!), along with how you should get there and what you should wear for the journey.

With the expansion of global opportunities and the explosion of technology, we are inundated with so many opportunities to think that we have to be like somebody else without realizing that being ourselves is where our influence and opportunity to grow really lies.

It is very difficult to be yourself today if you get stuck in a box with a label. You end up doing the same things over and over every day, often for the rest of your life. The missing piece is we may never think about how to take the education we have, the information available to us, and make it relevant to our identity and who we are. Additionally, the educational system teaches us to memorize, take tests, repeat back information and labels us with a grade—and all while we forget most of what we learned. So what is the
missing piece in most of our lives? We forget how to think. We forget how to take information and make it relevant to growing and developing our lives in the 24 hours that we have every day—which is the only thing that makes us all equal. Everybody has 24 hours.

True happiness is about doing things that we love and doing things that we want to be successful at. This starts with building from the inside out, as opposed to having the world define us, when we should be working on defining ourselves. We are often programmed to believe that the labels we are given are ours. We often can’t get past our environment, we can’t get past our circumstances, we can’t get beyond our race or gender or our parental programming. If we buy into all these external forces and addictions, we will never find our core and we will miss building our authentic lives. We may look great on the outside and we all have the moves down, but we will be empty on the inside. And we will never reach our God-given natural potential as human beings.

All that we’re talking about here takes some work and sacrifice. We have to pay attention to our own experience. We have to learn to integrate our mind, body, spirit, and emotions so we can live in the world authentically and be engaged. We have to work to become comfortable in our own skin. We have to work to consistently define ourselves as opposed to having other people define us. This is the process for innovation and creativity. When we do this, people will describe us as people who know who we are. They will say that we are comfortable in our own skin. They will like themselves more when they are in our presence.

In our world today, it is important to learn the art of critical thinking. It takes critical thinking to cut through the noise of other people’s opinions swirling around you like the fog of darkness
threatening to engulf your soul. Surrounded by pundits and pitchmen purveying mostly ungrounded assertions, you need a disciplined thought style to establish your own authentic identity. Sifting through experiences for the dream of a future uniquely yours is a task for critical thinking and development. When everybody has access to an avalanche of information, becoming a master thinker is very important in your life-long security.

You can master the art of thinking. This book can be your guide and show you how.

―Stedman Graham  
Author, Educator, and Entrepreneur
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Take Stock of Your Style

On the flip side of the details and events of “Amenah’s Story,” where everyone had their appropriate thinking caps on and played to their particular styles and strengths, sometimes (often) events do not play out so smoothly.

Following the January 12, 2010, earthquake that devastated Haiti, a bus pulled up to a checkpoint on the Dominican Republic. Inside were 33 children, aged from 2 to 12, who were being escorted by a group of ten Baptist missionaries. Instead of being passed through the check station, the children were taken off in one direction by authorities and the missionaries were taken in another direction and arrested on January 29 for kidnapping.

Laura Silsby, of Meridian, Idaho, who led the nine other members of the missionary group, told the media she was only trying to save suffering children. However, there were a few details she had not even shared with her fellow missionaries:

- An area-wide concern about human trafficking had made authorities exceptionally sensitive to the movement of people out of Haiti by anyone.
- Many of the children being transported were not even orphans. At least 20 of the children were from a single village and had living parents. Some of the parents told the AP they willingly turned over their children to the missionaries on
the promise the Americans would educate them and allow relatives to visit.

- Silsby had decided the previous summer to create an orphanage in the Dominican Republic, and in November of 2009, she registered the nonprofit New Life Children’s Refuge foundation in Idaho. After Haiti’s catastrophic earthquake, she accelerated the plan and recruited her fellow missionaries.

- A Dominican diplomat who said Laura had visited him the same day the missionaries tried to take the children out of the country told the AP that he had warned her that without the proper papers, she could be arrested.

So, surprise, surprise, things went wrong at the border and the well-intentioned group was arrested.

As someone getting a clearer look at how good thinking works, you can, no doubt, spot a few errors in the thinking style in this situation. Now, contrast and compare that event with how smoothly Amenah’s situation went, in spite of numerous obstacles and adjustments.

Major Kevin Jarrard’s Good Samaritan background could have led him to leap to a decision, but he avoided making any assumptions and wanted to consider all aspects and steps before he took any action. He also played to an array of supportive careful thinkers who, each in his or her own way, helped to turn a difficult and complicated task into a doable one.

Think about a time when you successfully thought through a challenging situation—a time when you did it right and you did it well. Do you remember what you did that led to success? You might
even come up with, “not specifically,” because you might not have a vocabulary to describe successful thinking. You might have a broad sense of what worked and what didn’t. Not knowing your thinking style and how you replicate successes and avoid mistakes could create a rut instead of opening opportunities for new success. If making a pros and cons list worked when you were trying to decide if you wanted to go out on a date with someone in high school, then you are likely to keep using that process to help make decisions. Evaluating pros and cons has become part of your repertoire.

Collecting good techniques as you go along certainly isn’t bad, but it is not intentional. Relying on whatever happens to be in your toolkit is not the same as having a full set of tools in a well-organized box. To be successful, really successful, you need to be intentional. You need to know your style and your skills, exactly what they are and how they work for you. The good news is that it is easy to learn.

Let’s look at how knowing, cultivating, and shaping positive thinking styles help you become a great thinker. We all possess thinking styles, which are positive habits that support the development of thinking skills. For example, approaching problems by carefully analyzing the situation or looking for facts and important details is a style.

You have preferred thinking styles, which means that you use certain positive behaviors more frequently and across various situations. You can access those behaviors quickly and comfortably. So, you lead with your preferred styles as you build your thinking skills. That is what successful people do—they leverage their strengths.
Understanding Your Thinking Styles

At this point, you are probably saying, “So, how exactly do I figure out my preferred thinking styles?” One option is to take the My Thinking Styles assessment, which is free and takes about 10 minutes to complete (see sidebar). You will receive feedback that describes your preferred thinking styles and how you can use them to your advantage. Each style is positive, and all seven styles contribute in different ways to good thinking. For you, the question is which styles do you use most frequently and comfortably, and which ones are less natural? You might find it easier to relate to the varied thinking styles if you first assess yourself before you explore the styles. Although that might work best for most people, you can also consider the styles that follow and see which one, or which combination of styles, most plays to your thinking strengths.

Assess Your Thinking Styles

Go to www.ThinkWatson.com/mythinkingstyles. It will take you less than 10 minutes to complete the assessment, and it is best to take it when you are not rushed or distracted. Give yourself time to comfortably answer the questions. When you finish, you will receive a personal feedback report that describes your preferred thinking styles.

Analytical Style

Jonathan Malloch had a map on the wall of his office with all of the key players and all of the possible players. He created an algorithm
that allowed him to sift through three to five options for every step of the extraction process, so that if one option failed, they could move to the next. At every single point in the plan, they had an alternative option. Jonathan knew that he needed “to get pieces in place in a way that is ironclad.” As he explained, “We had a lot of plans that we could have launched with, but none of them were secure. I was unwilling to send this team unless I knew—as much as could be known—that these guys would return safely. I did not want to have a conversation with their wives and their family about why they didn’t return.” Jonathan knew that he had to prepare for every possibility and to review every detail.

If you are analytical, you like to anticipate consequences and identify strengths and weaknesses in plans. You are quick to think about if-then scenarios and how they might play out. You like to study situations and think about pros and cons. If something doesn’t fit in a situation or an important detail is missing, you are likely to notice. You are comfortable studying situations and concentrating on the pieces and how they logically fit together. You are likely to sort through facts and analyze information that is received, rather than just accepting it at face value. Analytical people can be described as clear thinking, orderly, and rational. Having an analytical style helps build specific thinking skills, such as the following:

- Checking the accuracy of information you receive
- Differentiating facts from opinions
- Clarifying situations by questioning ambiguous or vague language
- Noticing missing or inconsistent pieces of a plan
- Analyzing alternatives in an orderly fashion
Inquisitive Style

A top hypertension specialist and Vanderbilt professor, Dr. Nadeau is the expert, the man with the answers. But he is also the man who wonders why and asks the questions that drive new thinking and innovation. Nadeau wondered what they could do to prevent deaths from battlefield injuries, and, with Lieutenant Colonel Bellon’s support, that question led to medical training for all the Marines in the battalion. Theirs was the first battalion to receive intensive medical training, teaching each Marine to deal with common problems that lead to deaths on the battlefield, such as how to reduce bleeding from extremity wounds.

Dr. John Nadeau’s questions lead to new training that reduces deaths from battlefield wounds: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2YwV2z9XJv0

Dr. Nadeau left his day-to-day role of caring for patients with heart disease to look after young Marines in a battle zone because, as he said, he “liked the challenge of doing something completely different.” He was also committed to figuring out how to help the Iraqis rebuild their health-care system. That’s why, when he went out to the public health clinics that had been completely stripped by vandals, he asked “Why don’t we hire Iraqis and rebuild these clinics?” That question led to renovated clinics. In the same way, he helped reengineer the hospital and he actively went out into the community to serve the needs of the local people, including the tribal sheik. After Amenah came back cured, he came across other children like her, and asked, “How can we make this happen more frequently?” Thanks to that question, a second child was helped at the University at Charleston and a third in Amman, Jordan. Dr. Nadeau’s frequent questions led to his continual learning and to a series of improvements in medical care and medical facilities.
If you have an inquisitive style, you are intellectually curious and like to learn new things about the world. You want to know why things work the way they do and are comfortable probing deeply into subjects. You like to learn about different cultures and people. For you, information is an opportunity to learn. You have a tolerance for ambiguity and complexity because it gives you an opportunity to figure things out. Inquisitive people can be described as curious, alert, and interested in their surrounding world. Having an inquisitive style helps build specific thinking skills, such as the following:

- Clarifying issues or beliefs
- Identifying the root cause of a problem
- Questioning deeply to unearth assumptions or new perspectives
- Asking how and why questions that help evaluate information or alternatives

**Insightful Style**

What does Kevin Jarrard mean when he says that every one of the decisions he made was “the result of the totality of my experiences throughout everything that had happened to me up to that point in my life”?

His Good Samaritan background could have led him to leap to decisions or make bad judgments, like that missionary group arrested in Haiti on kidnapping charges while trying to move alleged orphans across the border into the Dominican Republic. But Jarrard avoided making any assumptions and wanted to consider all aspects and steps before he took any action.
He was aware of the Marine mission at that time in Iraq, of the willingness of Lieutenant Colonel Bellon to consider a request such as his, of the capabilities of Captain Nadeau, which strengthened his case, of the people back in the States he could count on for help and action, and of what he needed to do to respect the Muslim family members and the tribal leaders. Furthermore, he was able to assemble a big picture that led to a dream that would be hard, but ultimately doable, as it turned out.

An example of Major Kevin Jarrard’s insightful style: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pEU6MphmVpA

If you have an insightful style, you are able to step back and reflect so that you can gain perspective on a situation or problem. You are likely to stand firm on tough issues, if the evidence supports the position, and you will follow through despite obstacles. You tend to see beyond the immediate and you seek clarity. You are capable of being honest with yourself and set a high standard for yourself. Insightful people can be described as prudent, humble, and reflective. Having an insightful style helps build specific thinking skills, such as the following:

- Taking time to reflect
- Maintaining perspective, even in difficult situations
- Willingness to persevere
- Accurately understanding personal strengths and weaknesses
- Making judgments that fit the evidence (don’t overgeneralize or oversimplify)
Open-Minded Style

Let’s pause to consider again one of the most dynamic aspects of “Amenah’s Story.” A Muslim child and her mother were being sent to the Christian Bible Belt of America, where they would stay in the home of Christian Pastor Steve Berger and his wife Sarah, be embraced by the church’s congregation, have their travel financed from donations all across the area, have their cultural foods and customs respected, and no one would make any attempt to convert them, but rather accept them for who they were and honor them as fellow human beings who needed help.

Following 9/11, some people in America wrote graffiti on and damaged convenience stores owned and operated by members of the American Muslim community. Then, there were people like Pastor Terry Jones from Gainesville, Florida, who burned the Koran in March of 2011, an act that drew angry condemnation in Afghanistan and Pakistan, where anti-American sentiment runs high, causing riots in April in which many people were killed. The actions and emotions of these people mark one extreme of the grassroots mood. There was a lot of confusion and some prejudice about Muslims. Religion can be a very touchy subject, but that was not an issue with all the people who came forward to help.

Deanna Dolan, of World Relief, was one of the first to contact Janet Jarrard and say she wanted to help. One of her key decisions was where to place Amenah and her mother, Maha. She knew her choice was important: “I wanted them to be with people who I trust, people who I know would be committed, and who would be sacrificial. Because it is a huge sacrifice to allow strangers that you’ve never met, who were coming with huge needs, into your home. I mean, it takes pretty solid people to be able to do that.”
She weighed the options and chose wisely: Steve and Sarah Berger.

Deanna speaks some Arabic, but she also helped provide Zainab, an interpreter who could help Maha and Amenah communicate. She helped with respect for food and cultural needs, and when she saw fear in the eyes of a mother afraid her child might die on the operating table, she made sure there were people available to support Maha, especially during those stressful hours in the waiting room. She brought together caring Christians from Grace Chapel whose only purpose was to comfort and support a worried mother, one who just happened to be of the Muslim faith. Deanna’s approach, though a Christian herself, was to offer support, empathy, and solutions without reservation or judgment.

If you have an open-minded style, you are typically tolerant of the opinions and viewpoints of others and can put yourself in the position of the other person. You can think of different options, different possibilities, and different conclusions. You are comfortable not rushing to judgment, and prefer to thoughtfully weigh information and alternatives. You tend to avoid extreme positions. You value fair play and like to think things through. Open-minded people can be described as intellectually tolerant and fair minded. Having an open-minded style helps build specific thinking skills, such as the following:

- Using an approach that is fair minded
- Seeking information from people with different views or perspectives
- Suspending judgment to evaluate information
- Generating alternative solutions
- Making connections across different situations or topics
Systematic Style

Recall that when David Bellon listened carefully to Kevin Jarrard’s proposal, he was assessing Kevin’s thinking and putting what he was hearing into context. Kevin’s plan was well crafted, but David needed to step back and consider how this plan could affect the larger operation. As he mentally scanned the system, he immediately recognized the challenges and he silently muttered, “Oh, my God, this is going to be a car crash with higher headquarters.” He understood that he needed to navigate the system and get buy-in, or at least, avoid the command to stop. He needed to harness relationships that had been developed and protect respect that he had earned from three tours of duty in Iraq. David needed to take a systematic approach in his support of Kevin.

People like Jonathan Malloch, as you saw, can be analytical and systematic when it comes to safety in a well-thought-out plan.

If you are systematic, you are able to size up a situation and place it into context. You are able to see the bigger picture and how the pieces fit together. You approach problems with a logical framework or scheme. You have vision and can anticipate the consequences of different alternatives. Systematic people can be described as conceptual, process oriented, and intuitive. Having a systematic style helps build specific thinking skills, such as the following:

- Comparing perspectives, information, and alternatives
- Developing criteria for evaluating information and alternatives
- Analyzing alternatives
- Making connections across different situations and topics
- Evaluating plans
Timely Style

Few people get bounced a bigger ball that calls for timely action than was Janet Jarrard, Kevin’s aunt. When she read the e-mail from Kevin asking her to be the point person in Nashville, she immediately said yes and went to work on December 14th, not knowing exactly what she needed to do, but being fully committed to quickly figuring it out. The time pressure was incredible—a few weeks to secure fund-raising, complete logistical planning, and nail down a multitude of details. Within three days, she had found Jonathan Malloch, and that led to the extraction team being put into place. World Relief, Deanna Dolan, and Grace Chapel church came next. Every single day, she managed to fit another piece of the puzzle into place. Janet describes this time as the most intense period of her life. She didn’t know that she could do something like this, but she did. Her efficient, resourceful, and timely approach kept the Nashville side of the operation in sync and moving forward.

Timely people can gather information and make decisions without undue delays. They don’t typically get caught up in analysis paralysis or procrastination. Instead, they are able to actively search out relevant information and work their way though situations in a timely manner that is neither too cursory nor too slow. Timely people can be described as efficient, reliable, and responsive. Having a timely style helps develop specific thinking skills, such as the following:

- Being conscientious about working through a problem or opportunity
- Making a timely decision
- Calling for action when it is appropriate
- Appropriately pushing for plans
Truth-Seeking Style

Major Mark Lamelza’s job as Operations Officer was to support Lieutenant Colonel Bellon by asking the tough questions and giving honest advice. He said, “The truth is that you always know the right thing to do. The really difficult part of it is actually doing it.” Establishing and maintaining local governance, legal systems, and security for the cities in their region all fell under Mark’s responsibility. He laughed when he admitted, “I wasn’t one of those who jumped on the bandwagon.” He knew it was the right thing to do, but he also knew that he had to ask the tough questions and dig deep to make sure that this humanitarian project did not jeopardize anything within the vast umbrella of local governance or security. Mark wasn’t naïve; he knew the fragile state of these emerging systems, and he knew that an American-driven plan to move a baby girl and her mother to America for surgery and then back again was risky. Mark’s job was to find weaknesses in the plan and then eliminate those weaknesses. He needed to apply a truth-seeking style so that the team could avoid mistakes and recognize potentially dangerous problems.

People who are truth seeking are able to ask tough questions of themselves and others in an effort to get at the truth. They will push deeper for clarity even if it causes some discomfort. They may be skeptical and not willing to accept information at face value. They are not likely to be gullible or passively rely on others for a point of view. Truth seekers can be described as independent, tough minded, and skeptical. Having a truth-seeking style helps people build specific thinking skills, such as the following:

- Thinking independently without undue influence of others
- Clarifying issues or beliefs
Evaluating information and seeing potential holes
Minimizing group think

Making the Best Use of Thinking Styles

Now that you understand your preferred thinking styles, let’s look at how they play out in your daily life. Write down a situation you have experienced recently (e.g., a decision you needed to make or a problem you solved at work/home).

Situation:
Which styles did you use in this situation?
How did they help you accomplish your goal?
Were there styles that you could have used, but didn’t?

These questions are intended to help you become more aware of how you are currently using your thinking styles. If your top style is analytical and your bottom style is systematic, you are likely to approach situations by looking for missing details and inconsistencies, but less likely to begin by putting the situation into a larger context. Knowing your preferences helps you use your strengths more effectively and become more aware of things that you might miss.
Consider the value of each style as you practice your critical thinking skills (see Figure 3.1). For example, a systematic style, the tendency to see the big picture and anticipate consequences, is particularly helpful when you are trying to evaluate information and draw conclusions. A timely style helps you bring a plan of action to life.

**Figure 3.1**  Consider the value of each style as you practice your critical thinking skills.
Summary

You’ve explored several positive thinking styles that support skill development and good thinking. Hopefully, you visited the Web site and have a better feel for your own thinking style or styles. When you have done so, you will know more about your own tendencies, the styles you use more frequently, and those you use less frequently. You can also hone and improve your thinking skills. The key lesson here is about being intentional, and the key piece of advice you can take with you is to know your style and grow with your style. It’s easier to build your thinking skills when you use your preferred style. You no doubt recognize that some thinking skills will require more work to develop because they don’t match your preferred style. At some point, it will be valuable for you to take a tough look at your least preferred styles and work on improving those, but that should come after you build a solid base of skills.
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