

IS IT TRUE?

A critical thinking decision tree

ALIVE & Wellish



Yes — DO I KNOW THIS TO BE TRUE FROM DIRECT EVIDENCE OR EXPERIENCE? — *I'm not sure*

HAVE I VERIFIED IT WITH A RELIABLE, UNBIASED SOURCE?

Yes

No

PAUSE. IS THE THOUGHT OR STATEMENT EMOTIONALLY CHARGED OR REACTIVE?

PAUSE. STRONG EMOTIONS CAN DISTORT FACTS. ASK YOURSELF WHAT EMOTION AM I FEELING? WHAT MIGHT I BE OVERLOOKING?

IS THIS CONSISTENT WITH MULTIPLE PERSPECTIVES AND/OR PEER-REVIEWED EVIDENCE?

Yes

No

Be cautious of confirmation bias

Return to step 1 & verify source

Yes

No

TRUE

DID I HEAR OR READ THIS FROM A SECONDHAND SOURCE (E.G., SOCIAL MEDIA, A FRIEND, OR A HEADLINE)?

Likely misleading or biased

Yes

No

Double check for consistency with evidence

COULD I BE FALLING INTO A THINKING TRAP?

- AM I ASSUMING THE WORST? (CATASTROPHIZING)
- AM I ONLY SEEING WHAT SUPPORTS WHAT I ALREADY BELIEVE? (CONFIRMATION BIAS)
- AM I AVOIDING CHANGE BECAUSE IT'S UNFAMILIAR? (STATUS QUO TRAP)
- AM I STICKING WITH THIS IDEA BECAUSE I'VE INVESTED IN IT BEFORE? (SUNK COST FALLACY)

SEEK VERIFICATION FROM RELIABLE, UNBIASED SOURCES & CHECK FOR PEER-REVIEWED EVIDENCE OR MULTIPLE PERSPECTIVES.

SUMMARY OF BEST PRACTICES:

- PRIORITIZE DIRECT EVIDENCE AND PRIMARY SOURCES
- USE PEER-REVIEWED AND MULTI-PERSPECTIVE VERIFICATION
- WATCH FOR EMOTIONAL REASONING AND COGNITIVE BIASES
- REASSESS REGULARLY AND PAUSE WHEN IN DOUBT