Week 3-4 - Write a journal entry focused on your awareness of the Elements of Reasoning and their applications in your daily life.

**1. Situation.**

I have created and continue to develop a community of critical-thinking trainers in Poland. After 12 months of functioning under quite free (full autonomy) rules, I noticed that they had a very negative impact on the quality of our training, on the attitude of many trainers, on the development of our community, and in particular identification and involvement.

I decided to clarify the rules to make them much clearer, clearer and more transparent. However, the vast majority reacted with anger and aggression to these proposals. Some of the coaches left immediately, and some did not extend their contracts in the next few months. Even though I expected a skeptical response, its scale surprised me, disappointed me, and sometimes upset me.

**2. Answer.**

My response was to place even greater emphasis on clarity, precision, and transparency. I listened to the voices of criticism and the few questions and tried to answer them clearly. My goal was not to convince everyone, because I knew that some trainers liked this level of autonomy and benefited from it. Therefore, my suppression of freedom in some areas and the emphasis on quality and self-development had to be met with resistance - however, I decided not to focus on individual people and their persuasion, but on the process - so that it would serve everyone now and in the future.

**3. Analysis.**

I was disappointed with the scale of resistance, rebellion, anger, and even aggression. I was also surprised by the scale of lies that some people used to maintain their benefits and their position in the community. I was sad and nervous; at times, I wanted to give up the entire project.

My reaction was so emotional because I felt that the changes I was offering were more practical for them, and there were more benefits in the long run. My expectations (assumptions) turned out to be wrong. However, I couldn't verify them earlier in a different way, because there is a completely new group of people, most of whom I don't know. What is important, we are not bound by an employment contract, but only by joint work related to the implementation of the vision of popularizing critical thinking in Poland.

My behavior – wanting to improve processes – was a reasonable action. Without him, we would probably fall apart within 6-12 months.

I think I also managed to be reasonable during meetings - I never lost my patience, I never got carried away by emotions, and I was never provoked into a verbal fight.

**4. Implications.**

In the future, I will ensure even greater clarity and precision of my message. I will also take care of preparing the ground for the entire process: I need to show why we need change, the vision (image) of change, and how we will get there. I will also emphasis on the future effects (benefits, but also ethical dimensions) of the change for us and for our clients (primarily students). When creating the entire message, I will definitely use "Elements of Thought"

Week 7 - Complete a journal entry focused on asking quality questions in your daily life.

**1. Situation.**

A few months ago, I started having gastrointestinal problems and decided to get checked thoroughly. Due to the fact that the public health service in Poland is practically in agony, I decided to choose one of the leading companies from the public sector. I paid for my tests, and the results showed that I would need about a year of therapy to fully recover. Since I knew that I would have a series of follow-up visits and a few more tests, I decided to purchase a medical package for the entire year.

I contacted the call center, briefly presented my needs and expectations and quite quickly agreed to the package option offered to me.

In my questions, I focused only on whether I would have access to specific tests in the package, whether I would not have to wait for them, and whether it would all be included in the price.

Immediately after the purchase, I wanted to make an appointment with my doctor, who had already done all the tests and diagnosed me. I saw his availability in the app to make an appointment quickly. However, I couldn't place the order. When I called the call center, I was informed that it was not up to me to decide which doctor I would get, that I would get the one available - according to their system. I got angry and felt cheated.

**2. Answer.**

I decided to get a second medical opinion, which turned out that I did not need frequent visits or additional medical tests, and that it was a chronic disease that was monitored approximately once a year. So there is no need for me to buy the package (with the need to pay monthly) that it is a waste of money for me. I exercised my right to return the purchased service and canceled this package completely.

**3. Analysis.**

When I look back now, I see my mistake in thinking - I focused only on one area of the service, the one that is most inaccessible in the Polish health service - TIME OF ACCESSIBILITY. I was also interested in getting the most benefits from the package I purchased, without thinking about whether I actually needed it or whether it was worth it to me. I assumed that since a doctor from this company examined me and made a diagnosis, it was obvious that he would be the attending physician if I purchased an annual subscription. In this assumption, I was guided by my logic - this solution is the most sensible and, in fact, the cheapest for a medical company. Guarantees customer satisfaction. However, my thinking was wrong and I realized it after some time.

**4. Implications.**

In the future, I will take care of more questions from the (no system) category and questions from the judgment category. Questions about the system, especially when contacting a salesperson, are most likely to be answered with YES, because most salespeople will say what the customer wants to hear.

Week 8 - Complete a journal entry focused on the role of close reading in your daily life.

**1. Situation.**

I created a project for schools in Poland, the aim of which is to implement the "culture of thinking" methodology based on the Project Zero methodology from Harvard. This is an almost 5-year project that is a difficult challenge for every school and every principal.

Based on many years of experience in this area, I have prepared a guide for the Principal of such a school, which guides him through the change process in the first, key year of the project. These are hints, tips, best practices.

When the school officially starts the project, the principal receives this guide and is responsible for reading and applying it.

After a few months, when a crisis occurs in the change process, directors write and call with complaints, difficulties, and reproach that they have been abandoned. When I ask if they have read the guide, most of them say yes, but they don't fully follow it because I don't think they understood most of it.

When I wrote this guide, I did not know the FCT processes yet, but I was guided by other tips from the area of critical thinking, the aim of which was clarity and precision of the message. This is a recurring situation, they bring a lot of emotions and a lot of grudges from the directors. They are teachers and in Polish schools the term "reading comprehension" dominates and every teacher will say that he is a master of this skill. Which is not true.

**2. Answer.**

It depends on the attitude of the director. If he comes with complaints that "the project is not working" and blames me for all this, I react rather unpleasantly and I am not willing to support him/her. I only refer to the provisions in the contract and the guide. But I know that doesn't solve the problem. When the director has the attitude of asking for support and help, I am more open to giving up my extra time (for free) to help.

**3. Analysis**

Honestly, my analysis of this problem is quite limited. This is a situation where I don't really have any control over it. I can't teach another person to read, especially as a principal. My thinking here is rather constructive - I assume that if he reads it, he will probably miss the most important things, topics, moments. That's why my guide is full of graphics, full of graphical facilitations, tips and underlining. The text itself is very simple, clear and precise. My thinking was "pessimistic" from the beginning and all my creative work was focused on creating a practical, simple and attractive guide.

**4. Implications.**

I honestly admit that at the moment I don't have a ready solution on what to change. I think that an interesting solution could be to create a guide in the form of training materials that you need to process yourself, and here I used the "four levels of careful reading" strategy from FCT.

Week 9 - Complete a Journal Entry focused on the role of substantive writing in your daily life.

**1. Situation.**

A dozen or so years ago, when I started my adventure with critical thinking, and specifically with TOC thinking tools, I translated a book that was a manual (instruction) on how to learn these tools. The task seemed simple - I translated and launched training courses during which this guide was the main training material. It turned out during the first training that no one understood what I wrote. And this happened repeatedly until I had to stop using this guide.

**2. Answer.**

My reaction was almost always frustration, irritation at the teachers for not being able to read with understanding, think critically, etc. The fault was only with the training participants, not with me.

**3. Analysis**

Now, when I come back to this situation, I see a lot of mistakes in thinking that I made. Firstly, it is assumed that it is enough to translate and not localize such material. Secondly, I assumed that teachers could think and would handle this thought process without any problem. Thirdly, I assumed that if even small ambiguities appeared, I would clarify them immediately and it would not affect the course of the training.

**4. Implications.**

Today, when I have to introduce new critical thinking material to the Polish market, I give myself about 12-18 months to clarify its location in Polish culture, language and thinking. However, so far I have only emphasized the language, making it simple, clear and precise. However, this is not sufficient and that is why I am now extending the time to introduce some tool or process - during trainings, meetings, discussions I observe the group, how they are doing, where and what can be further improved and clarified. However, now I think that a perfect way will be to introduce the principles of the 4 stages of writing according to FCT into my writing. I'll try asap!

Week 10-11 - Complete an additional journal entry focused on the role of group-think in your daily life.

**1. Situation.**

I could not find, despite considerable effort, a situation in which we made a mistake, sociocentrism appeared. However, I have had many situations where I felt this type of group behavior towards me.

A group of 10 trainers who worked with me and learned everything from me decided to leave and go to a competing company.

**2. Answer.**

I was obviously resentful, upset, and with a sense of betrayal. But I decided to give myself a few days to react calmly. First of all, I sent them various types of questions that were a search to understand the facts, the reasons for this decision, and the consequences of this decision. I have my own contract with trainers, in which I protect my own company against such events because it is quite a common situation in the Polish market. So I pointed out specific provisions in the contract and evidence of its violation - which means penalties.

During this period, I felt most of almost all socio-centric behaviors - from "it's true because we believe in it" to "it's true because it is in my selfish interest."

**3. Analysis**

Throughout this crisis, I tried to operate in a culture of critical thinking - to ask questions, seek understanding, and show logical consequences.

When I look back at this situation today, it seems to me that this group made many mental mistakes. Firstly, they were bribed with stories about many orders that a competing company would offer them. They did not verify this in any way. Secondly, they assumed that when the other company released its critical thinking training, there would be a huge demand for it and they would have something to do. It turned out that their product was of terrible quality, had no substantive contribution and there were no recipients - the product disappeared from the market after 18 months. Third, they assumed that if they left together, I would not do anything to them (group power). However, I had contracts with each person and I sent each of them a request to pay a penalty for breaking the contract. Fourthly, they assumed that the contract was only an element of the culture of our organization, but I would never use it - that it was only a scare, not to be used.

**4. Implications.**

This situation taught me that the phenomenon of sociocentrism, which turns off any thinking, often occurs. Very quickly, such a group begins to feel attacked and a strong, emotional confrontation begins that has nothing to do with facts, critical thinking, or reason. This is a new situation for me, which I have experienced several times recently - but each time the same "defense-attack" mechanisms occurred.

In the future, I will try to spot signs of this thinking more quickly and either change my message or choose to withdraw so as not to participate in the same process in the same way.