**MODULE 5**

**Assignment Item 3: Strong-Sense Versus Weak-sense Critical Thinking**

1. I understand strong sense critical thinking to mean:

An ability or willingness to use critical thinking skills to pursue the truth through challenging one’s own assumptions, beliefs and reasoning while accommodating and allowing the consideration of alternative viewpoints and being aware of one’s own ego-centric and socio-centric tendencies.

1. I understand weak sense critical thinking to me:

Using critical thinking skills to defend one’s own beliefs and viewpoints by resisting and destroying reasoning and opinions that differs from one’s own, thus driving one’s thoughts away from the truth.

1. I see the following examples of strong-sense critical thinking in my thinking and actions:

As a facilitator/trainer, sometimes a learner in your class would tend to disagree with what you are saying. As a habit, I do not dismiss such a disagreement as untrue or unwarranted, but I allow the person to explain the reason for him/her to that way. Once finished, I will probe through questions the areas in their understanding the I feel led to their disagreement and explain further giving examples until they realise their faulty understanding on their own.

1. I can admit to the following examples of weak-sense critical thinking in my thought and actions:

I tend to have a low tolerance for people who tend to amplify their reasoning by raising their voices or by throwing many arguments in one conversation instead of dealing with one issue at a time. This is more so around dealing with politically charged conversations. I feel I fail to exercise empathy in such situations.

1. I can improve my thinking and my behaviour in the following ways, based on this analysis:

I think I can improve my thinking and behaviour in that even if I know the truth, I have to visit the opposing view empathetically by trying to understand the rational or the reason for that particular person to see things from that faulty viewpoint rather than putting too much emphasis on logic or lack thereof.

**ARTICULATING MY OWN DEFINITIONS OF INTELLECTUAL VIRTUES**

1. **Intellectual Integrity**

It is a human characteristic of being honest and true to your own thinking and actions while applying the same intellectual standards to yourself and others consistently, as well as being open to new information and changing your lmind when presented with new evidence.

One example of it can be seen when a person takes time to acknowledge the contribution of others in the success of a project which he/she was leading

1. **Intellectual Humility**

It is a human characteristic when you recognise the limits of your own knowledge as well as the understanding that your beliefs might be incorrect, leading to your willingness to reconsider and expand your views after and honest assessment or a presentation of new evidence.

It is an example of Intellectual humility when a knowledgeable person admits to not knowing the answer to the question and promise to research and report back on it.

1. **Intellectual Sense of Justice**

It is a human characteristic that involves an understanding and application of fairness, equality and reciprocity in social interaction, and it requires critical thinking, empathy and commitment to moral principles. It also implies a consistent adherence to the intellectual standards without the influence of own advantage or the advantage of your group.

A good example would be an endeavour to support and ensuring that the rights of the marginalized or disadvantages group are not being overlooked on important issues.

1. **Intellectual Perseverance**

It is a human characteristic that entails your willingness to pursue intellectual insights and truths, in spite of difficulties, obstacles and frustrations with a recognition of a need to struggle with confusion and unsettled question over time in order to achieve a deeper understanding and insight on issues.

A good example of this would be to make a commitment not to quit but to keep on working towards your goals even on the face of controversy and setbacks in whatever field that you choose.

1. **Intellectual Fair-Mindedness**

It is a human characteristic that entails considering strengths and weaknesses of the opposing viewpoints and putting yourself in the place of others so as to genuinely understand them. It also involves an ability to accurately reconstruct the viewpoints and reasoning of others and reason from the premises, assumptions and ideas other than your own.

A good example of this on a personal level will be to seek to consider your partner’s perspective even if it differs from you own and the willingness to compromise and find a common ground.

1. **Intellectual Confidence in Reason**

It is a human characteristic that means trusting in your ability to think critically and make sound judgements even in the face of challenges and disagreements base on the belief that with proper encouragement and cultivation, human beings can develop and ability to think for themselves, form reasonable points of view, draw reasonable conclusions, think clearly and logically.

A good example of confidence in reason is seen when a person consistently and actively seeks evidence, questions assumptions and defends a reasoned conclusion.

1. **Intellectual Courage**

It is a human characteristic that drives you to fee the need to face and fairly deal with unpopular ideas, beliefs or viewpoints emanating from our understanding that sometimes, ideas considered dangerous or absurd are rationally justified and also that sometimes, conclusions and beliefs that are inculcated in us are false and misleading. It will indeed take a lot of courage to be true to our own thinking, since honestly questioning our deeply held beliefs can be difficult and sometimes frightening since the penalties for non-conformity are often severe judgements.

A good example here could be a Manager acknowledging a wrong decision he/she had taken and taking responsibility for it and apologizing to the affected subordinates.

1. **Intellectual Empathy**

It is a human characteristic that entails the ability to understand and appreciate another person’s perspective, thought processes, values and beliefs even if they differ from your own, focusing on understanding the reasoning and motivation behind their thinking.

A good example will be when as a parent, your teenage child chooses a study field that you do not believe is good for his/her future prospects, but you intellectually empathise by trying to understand the reasoning behind his/her choice.

1. **Intellectual Autonomy**

It is a huma characteristic based on your capacity to think and form beliefs independently, based on your own reasoning and critical analysis rather than relying on external authority or uncritical acceptance of information.

A good example is in the area of politics, where there is a lot of propaganda and knowledge manipulation. Such a scenario call for an intellectual autonomy where, instead of easily accepting what is being said, you would think critically about the issue at hand and form your own conclusion based on evidence or the credibility of the source.