

5 Biases That Hamper Critical Thinking for Leaders



Our Biased Thinking.

You cannot fully eliminate bias from your thinking any more than you can fully eliminate risk from any undertaking. What you can do is acknowledge that bias in your thinking will exist, then take steps to mitigate it. There is an organizing power inherent in knowledge. Simply knowing what biases might affect your thinking prepared you mentally to vanquish it.

There are over forty named and studied biases, but focus on the five contained in this handy acronym: E-COPE:

- ★ Evaluation of Evidence
- ★ Confirmation Bias
- ★ Overconfidence
- ★ Perceived Causality
- ★ Estimating Probabilities

Evaluation of Evidence. *I see what I want to see and it looks good.* Simply put we tend to see what we expect to see. At its core, the evaluation of evidence bias hits every time we make an assumption or draw a conclusion based on small sample sizes.

Confirmation Bias. *It's right because the data and analysis says it's right.* The confirmation bias is a defect in information processing. Research repeatedly shows that we have a naturally tendency to search for evidence consistent with our current beliefs.

Overconfidence Bias. *I see the future and it's so bright I've got to wear shades.* In general, overconfidence causes most people problems because they think they know more than they actually know about how the future will unfold.

Perceived Causality. *Everything is orderly because that makes sense.* It's hard to operate with a future that's not predictable. To overcome this, we tend to make the future more orderly rationale than it truly is.

Estimating Probabilities. *That's the answer because that's what immediately came to mind.* We have a tendency to call on immediate examples that come to mind when evaluating an issue and this tends to be what we go with as the answer.