

Trust Me, I'm a Skeptic
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Skepticism (from the Greek word Skeptikos)

- To be reflective and inquisitive of all things
- Against every statement its contradiction may be advanced with equal justification
- The impossibility of knowledge

Six Ways to Skepticism

Evaluate the Evidence

1. Suspension of Judgement – Withholding judgement until appropriate evidence is obtained
2. Search for Knowledge – A desire to investigate beyond the obvious, with a desire to corroborate

Evaluate the Provider

3. Interpersonal Understanding – Recognition that people's motivations and perceptions can lead them to provide biased or misleading information
4. Questioning Mindset – A disposition to inquiry, with some sense of doubt. The opposite of an Understanding Mindset which is when one tries to understand the story and never questions the story's plausibility.

Act on the Information

5. Autonomy – The self-direction, moral independence, and conviction to decide for oneself, rather than accepting the claims of others.
6. Self-Esteem – The self-confidence to resist persuasion and to challenge assumptions or conclusions.

Barriers & Biases

1. Confirmation Bias – a filter through which you see a reality that matches your expectations. It causes you to think selectively, but the real trouble begins when confirmation bias distorts your active pursuit of facts.
2. Anchoring Bias – The tendency to make assessments in gathering and evaluating information by starting from an initial value and then adjusting insufficiently away from that initial value in forming a final judgement.

3. Availability Bias – The tendency for decision makers to consider information that is more readily available from memory as being more likely, relevant, or important for a judgement.
4. Overconfidence Bias – The tendency of decision makers to overestimate their own abilities to perform tasks or make accurate assessments of risk or other judgements and decisions. Someone who knows they may not know, can stop. Overconfidence tempts you to make decisions without adequate reflection.

Presentation References:

2016 Global Fraud Study – Report to the Nations on Occupational Fraud and Abuse (Issued by the Association of Certified Fraud Examiners)

Blind Spots, by Max H. Bazerman and Ann E. Tenbrunsel