

"This is the guide parents need to teach their kids to become thoughtful consumers of information."

—ADAM GRANT, #1 New York Times bestselling author of Think Again

*A PARENT'S GUIDE TO GROWING
WISE KIDS IN THE DIGITAL AGE*

RAISING CRITICAL THINKERS

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FOREWORD BY BARBARA OAKLEY, PhD

A BOOK CLUB COMPANION GUIDE

JULIE BOGART

CONTEXT IS EVERYTHING

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HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

WITH A BOOK CLUB

Critical thinking grows best in conversation. A book club gives you a wonderful context to read the ideas presented in each chapter, to test the practices, and to form insights. Plus, book clubs are fun! Make friends, discuss great ideas, and share some snacks!

NOTE-TAKING SHEETS AND HANDOUTS

Use pages 5–9 to help guide your book club discussions. Print as many as you'd like to help with note-taking and thought-sharing.

DISCUSSION LEADER:

QUESTIONS TO PONDER

THINGS I WANT TO CALL OUT

RAISING CRITICAL THINKERS

BOOK CLUB NOTES

BIG TAKEAWAYS

THOUGHTS TO SHARE

QUESTIONS TO ASK

RAISING CRITICAL THINKERS

COMPANION GUIDE

ACTIVITY SHEETS

We've also included other printables to help you with activities. See pages 10–11 and use what works best for you!

NOTES:

RAISING CRITICAL THINKERS

COMPANION GUIDE



Your youngest kids are capable of critical thinking! The activities you do with them invite them to adopt a variety of perspectives playfully. Remember: no right answers! The goal is simply to discover more.



Middlers are curious beings. Our temptation as parents is to guide their ideas and values. One of the best ways to grow their minds is to allow them to entertain a variety of perspectives with your loving support.



Teens are ready to challenge the status quo. Give them room to explore the same way you might have supported their love of dress-up clothes as small children. No idea is permanent. They are simply testing what it might feel like to hold a belief.

PARTICIPATION GUIDELINES

Discussion of a book about thinking is likely to provoke some provocative thoughts! The book itself gives you tools that will help you ask better questions than “Do you agree or disagree?”

For instance, when someone speaks up with a strong viewpoint, you can ask “Do you think this is a personal perception or does this idea come from your community?” and “How do you account for this perspective that you hold?”

If it helps, use a timer for sharing. Set it for five minutes and remind the member when one minute remains. Allow the person to share without interruption.

These principles support each of us in having civil discourse that leads to deeper mutual regard.

1. We share to be understood, not to persuade.
2. We explain our ideas in terms of the influences that helped us form our perspectives—backgrounds, community identities, experiences, and even our lack of alternative experiences.
3. We do not debate in our book club.
4. We choose to become fascinated by someone’s viewpoint, rather than convinced or skeptical.
5. We do not interrupt each other.
6. We may ask questions of one another, but we accept a member’s choice not to answer them.
7. Sometimes writing our thoughts and reactions in the book club guide is better than voicing them when the emotions run high.
8. Above all: we use this meeting to experiment with what it feels like to hold space for what is uncomfortable, for viewpoints that feel “wrong,” for differences of experience and identity.

END THE MEETING BY READING THIS AFFIRMATION TOGETHER:

We are more than our viewpoints.

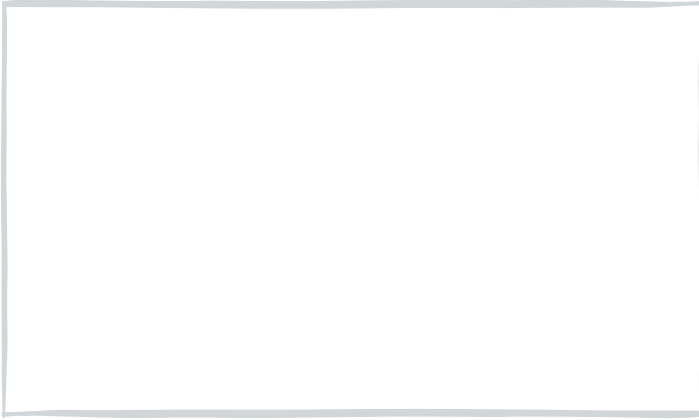
We learn the most when we listen, reflect, and ask good questions.

We are best able to problem-solve when we account for everyone, not just our people.


Until our next meeting: let’s bring self-awareness and curiosity to all our encounters.

BOOK CLUB NOTES

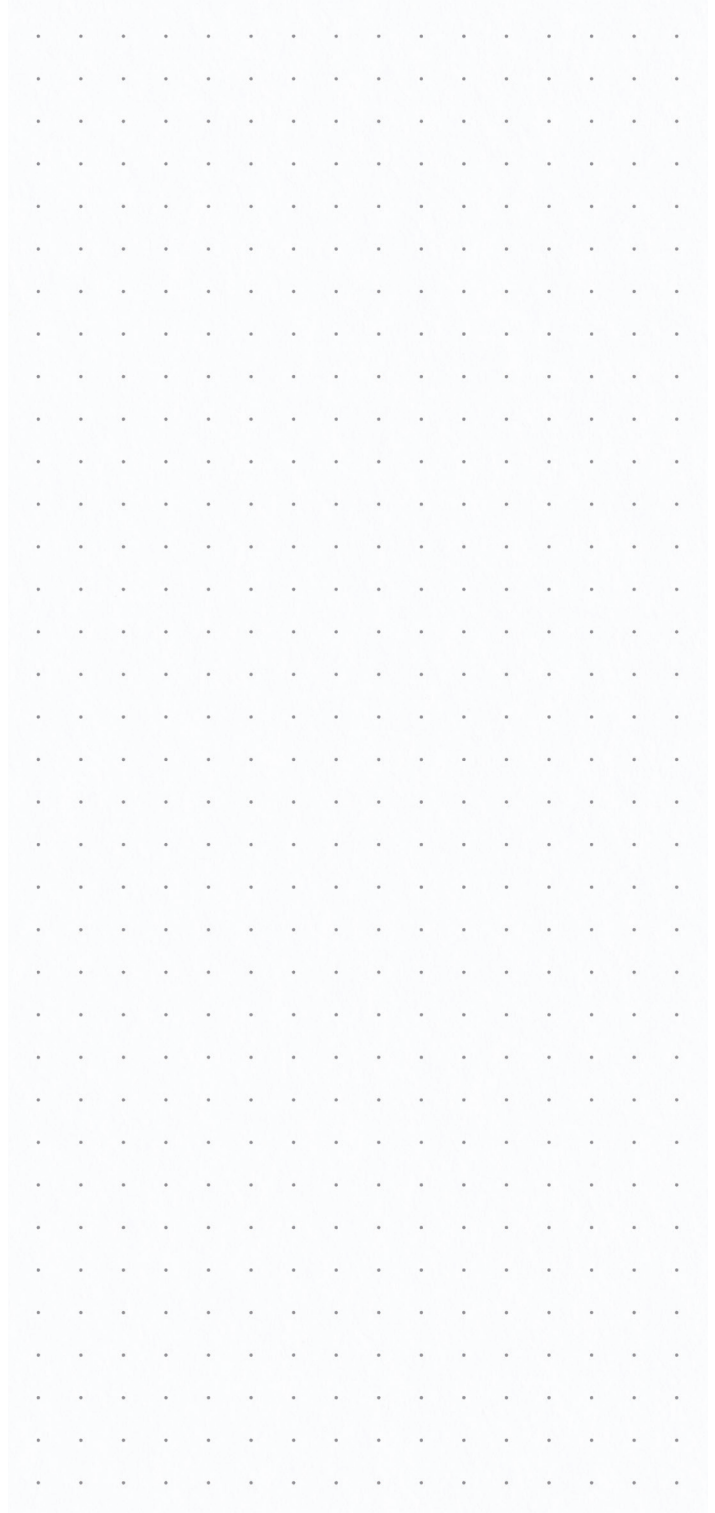
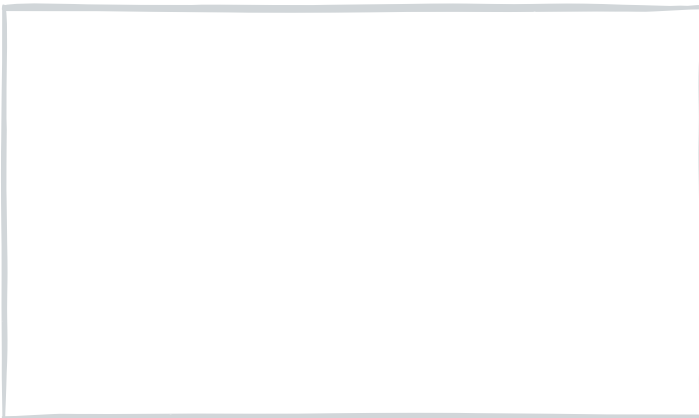
BIG TAKEAWAYS



THOUGHTS TO SHARE

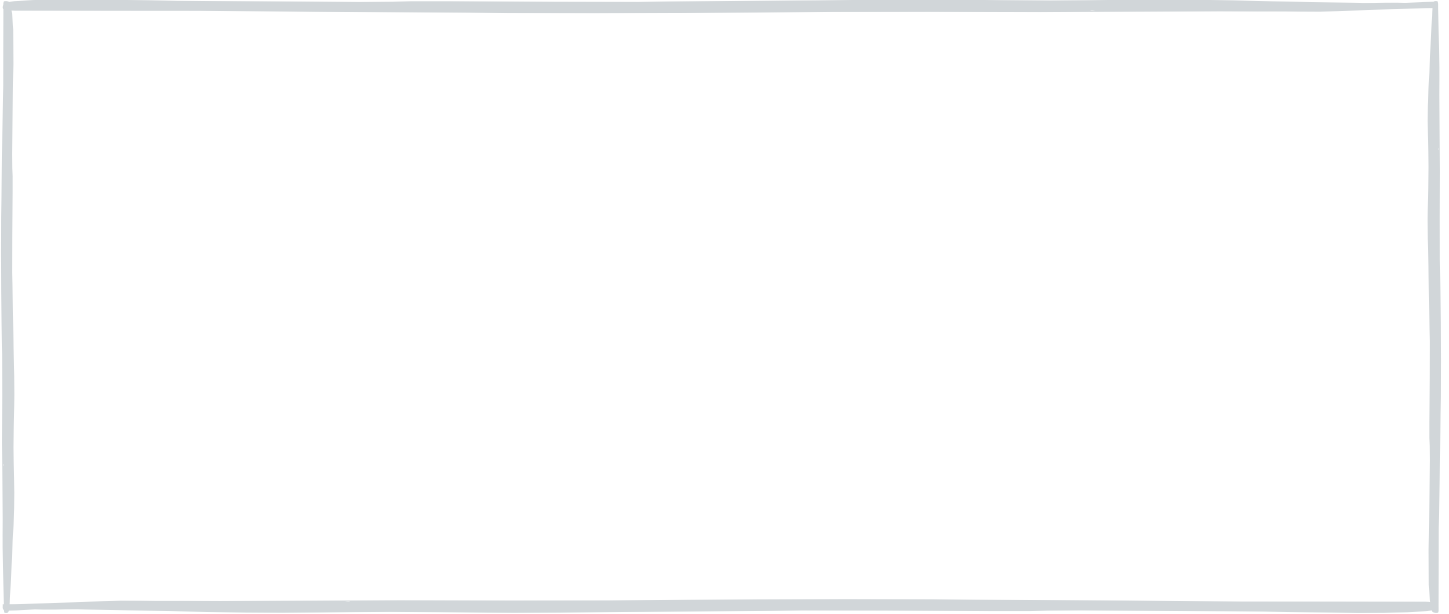


QUESTIONS TO ASK

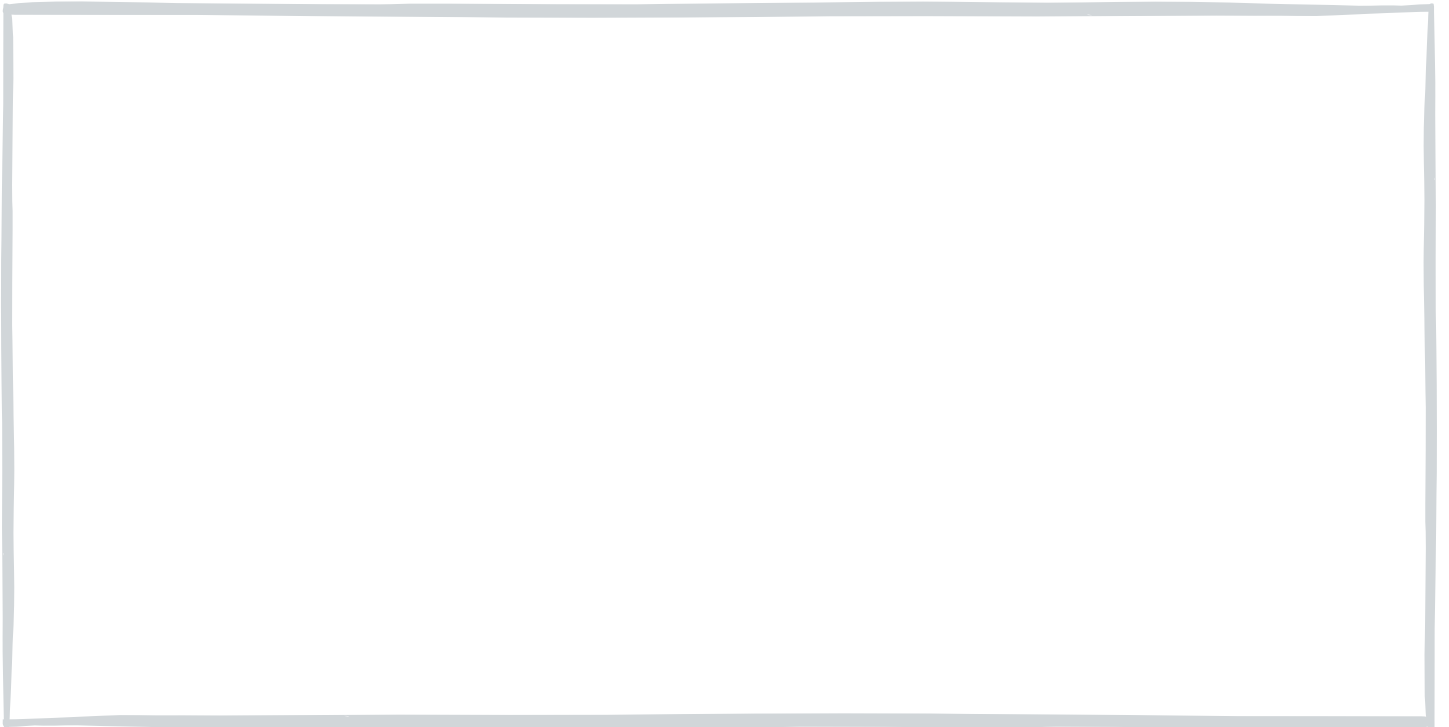


DISCUSSION LEADER: _____

QUESTIONS TO PONDER



THINGS I WANT TO CALL OUT



BOOK CLUB TAKEAWAYS

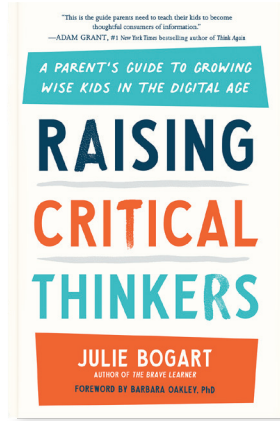
INSIGHTS I SHARED

QUESTIONS I WANT TO EXPLORE MORE

OTHER PERSPECTIVES THAT IMPACTED ME

Vertical column of dotted lines for notes.

BOOK CLUB



BOOK CLUB NAME

WHERE WE MEET IN PERSON OR VIRTUALLY

WHEN WE MEET

BOOK CLUB

MEMBER NAME

PHONE

SOCIAL HANDLE

NOTES:

A large grid of 20 columns and 30 rows, intended for taking notes.

PART 1

What Is a Critical Thinker?

The ability to evaluate evidence, to notice bias as it kicks into gear, to consider a variety of perspectives (even if they make you uncomfortable), and then to render a possible verdict—what you believe to be true, for now—is the heart of the critical thinking task.

—JULIE BOGART

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Knowing how to develop well-formed opinions in spite of prejudice and bias is one of the goals of education.

OUR KIDS ARE FANTASTIC LEADERS IN KEENLY OBSERVING THE WORLD AROUND THEM.

All we need to do is point them in the right direction through well-conceived questions, and give them the tools to express what they find!

ACTIVITIES

SAYS WHO?
P. 17

THE FACT STRAINER
P. 38

ITCH TO FIT GRAMMAR
P. 52

SILENT FILMS
P. 72

KEEN OBSERVATIONS
P. 76

CARING WELL
P. 108

“I AM FROM” POEM
P. 128

SAYS WHO?

Each point of view comes from a data set that is particular to that narrator. We evaluate the reliability of that narrator automatically, filtered through countless checkpoints that are frequently invisible to us.

Identify the storytellers.

Evaluate sources.

Question perspectives.

Determine the usefulness of a viewpoint at a particular moment in time.

ACTIVITY REFLECTION: SAYS WHO?, P. 17

How did your child make sense of the story?

What new perspectives did your child create?

What did you observe about your child as they worked through the possibility of different viewpoints?

Did you go into this activity with certain expectations or outcomes based on what you know about your child?

Were you surprised by what you learned or experienced?

SEPARATING THE FACTS FROM THEIR FICTIONS

Whatever you may accept as factual has likely been examined by someone else who sees the same data through another interpretive prism.

ACTIVITY REFLECTION: THE FACT STRAINER, P. 38

What topic did you read about? What do you think caused the similarities and differences between each story? Did you form or unform an opinion, prejudice, or bias as a result of what you read?

CURIOUSER AND CURIOUSER: A PROBLEM-POSING EDUCATION

We can provoke our students' curiosity by offering them meaningful problems to solve and helping them identify gaps in information.

ACTIVITY REFLECTION: ITCH TO FIT GRAMMAR, P. 52



WHIMSICAL WORDS

What rhymes did you create? What did you notice about your child during this activity? Were they excited? Silly? Giggly? How can you continue to encourage this type of thinking?



GRASPING GRAMMAR

How did your child do at dividing the terms between essential and non-essential? Did your student experience success or frustration? What else did they learn?



"JABBERWOCKY"

What insights did your teen have as you posed the questions in this exercise? What grammar choices did your teen make and what meaning did your teen make from those choices?

KEEN OBSERVATION: THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS



ACTIVITY REFLECTION: SILENT FILMS, P. 72

How did the Silent Films activity make you feel?

Did anything surprise you?

ACTIVITY REFLECTION: KEEN OBSERVATIONS, P. 76-77



What did you observe?

CRITICAL THINKING STARTS WITH CARING

We learn so that we can participate in the transformation of the world. All of our contributions add up to better living (at least, they should).

AHA! *WHAT CAN I DO WHERE I AM?*

ACTIVITY REFLECTION:

CARING WELL, P. 108

What did you uncover in this activity?

IDENTITY: THE FORCE TO RECKON WITH

Where we live, who we are, and how we understand our world has a big impact on how we think.

When we talk about self-aware critical thinking, then, we're talking about first identifying the key features that make us who we are.

ACTIVITY REFLECTION:

"I AM FROM" POEM, P. 128

What did you learn brainstorming with your kids?

What answers did they give that surprised you?

What did they discover when they created their "I Am From" poems?

PART 2

Read, Experience, Encounter: A Real Education

The safest way to learn is through reading. We deepen our learning by adding direct experience. But it's through encounter that our learning is transformational. It overturns preconceptions, often inspires empathy and respect, and deepens the mystery of what is being known in an up-close and personal way.

—JULIE BOGART

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

READING + EXPERIENCE + ENCOUNTER =

A SKILLED THINKER

ACTIVITIES

LITTLE LITERACIES
AND LEXICONS
P. 149

LIBRARY OF VARIETY
P. 155

DEEP READING
P. 175

REFLECTION QUESTIONS
P. 203

PROVOCATIVE
QUESTIONS AND
COMMUNITY OF VARIETY
P. 224

READING: UP CLOSE AND PERSONAL

The more our children learn to be curious to interpret what they don't understand and take the time to build that lexicon, the more skillfully they will use their minds to think well.

ACTIVITY REFLECTION 1: LITTLE LITERACIES AND LEXICONS, P. 149



PREREADING LITERACIES AND VISUAL LITERACY IN READING

What stands out about how your child participated in these activities?



COLLECT SYMBOLS AND MAKE YOUR OWN DICTIONARY

What symbols were imagined? What types of new symbols did you create?

PRACTICE TONE OF VOICE LESSONS

What sentences did you experiment with? Which tones of voice were easy for your child? Which were challenging to identify? Why do you think that is?



TRY THE ORTHOGRAPHY OF ANOTHER WRITING SYSTEM

How easy or difficult was this activity? What emotions did your child show? Frustration? Satisfaction? Did your child ask you for help? How did you guide them through this activity?

NAME THE WILDLIFE IN YOUR YARD OR NEIGHBORING PARK OR TIDE POOL

Where did you go on your adventure? What new discoveries did you find?

CREATE A WORD POOL OF DOMAIN-SPECIFIC VOCABULARY

What topic did you investigate? What new words did you and your child learn?

THE NEED FOR
QUICK ANSWERS



LIMITED
SOURCE MATERIALS



**A WELL-ROUNDED
UNDERSTANDING**
OF ANY ISSUE.

We want to teach our kids to know that they need more information, to be patient to find it, and to include it in their analysis.

**ACTIVITY REFLECTION 2:
LIBRARY OF VARIETY, P. 155**

What types of genres did you explore?

What types of books are a part of your in-home library?

What sorts of books will you add to your collection?

CHAPTER 8, P. 165

READING: GO SLOW TO GO DEEP

Today's online environment is training us away from deep focus attention states for reading. We manage multiple sources of stimuli and distractions, all while feeling pressure to express our opinions quickly in a public space. To read more thoughtfully, we can cultivate a deep reading practice away from the shadow of the internet.

**ACTIVITY REFLECTION:
DEEP READING, P. 175**

Take a moment to pause and reflect on how this activity went with your child.

Was it hard to slow down?

What stands out to you?

SLOOOOOW DOWN.

EXPERIENCE: ENTERING MORE INTIMATE TERRITORY

Critical thinking is activated when kids put what they're learning to the experience test, not merely the paper one.

EXPERIENCES ENGAGE:

OUR EMOTIONS + OUR SKILLS + OUR IMAGINATIONS

ACTIVITY REFLECTION:

REFLECTION QUESTIONS, P. 203

What other reflection questions can you ask yourself and others?

ENCOUNTER: OVERWHELM THAT OVERTURNS

Encounter is the most essential way to expand our critical thinking function.

It flips you out of your comfort zone directly into your unknowing, your lack of skill, and the awareness that what you knew prior to that moment in time is not enough to save you.

THE RESULT?

AHA! MOMENTS

EPIPHANIES OF INSIGHT

PARADIGM SHIFTS

ACTIVITY REFLECTION:

PROVOCATIVE QUESTIONS AND COMMUNITY OF VARIETY, P. 224

What story did you dissect? What reactions and thoughts did you uncover? Do you think they came from personal perceptions or a community narrative? What stood out to you when you changed the viewpoint? What did you learn, uncover, and realize along the way?

Now... pause. Part 2 was intense. Make yourself some tea. Then rest and reflect before you dive into Part 3.

PART 3

The Rhetorical Imagination

Students who exercise rhetorical imagination rise to the ten-thousand-foot view of any issue. They hypothesize, evaluate, interpret, problem-solve, and consider a variety of competing perspectives at once and dispassionately.

They root for the writer to make their case, even if they don't wind up agreeing with the conclusions the writer draws. Their goal is to understand, not render a verdict.

—JULIE BOGART

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

The sooner we can help our young people recognize that they are not trying to secure a once-for-all-time doctrine, but are contributing to a stream of ideas that ebb and flow, the sooner they will enjoy the art of critical thinking and interpretation as an expression of self, their relationship with others, and sublime ideas.

TOOLS/ACTIVITIES

FIRST IMPRESSIONS
P. 244

FRAMING
P. 248

MOVIE REVIEWS
P. 255

TASK OF
INTERPRETATION
INVENTORY
P. 270

THE SURPRISING ROLE OF SELF-AWARENESS IN CRITICAL THINKING

The goal is to “get it” not “get it right.”

Getting it implies that what you learn lands with you. It moves the task of learning from mastery of information or perfected argument to impact.

AHA! *HOW IS WHAT I'M LEARNING
ROCKING MY WORLD?*

TOOL REFLECTION: FIRST IMPRESSIONS, P. 244

What stood out to you before and after this study? Were you surprised by your reactions, thoughts, what you learned?

TOOL REFLECTION: FRAMING, P. 248

What did you uncover as you explored these questions?

ACTIVITY REFLECTION: MOVIE REVIEWS, P. 255



What thoughts, realizations, interesting tidbits, and 'aha!' moments did you uncover in this activity?

THE ART OF INTERPRETATION

The art of interpretation is like throwing clay pots or making a crazy quilt or painting a landscape. There are many pieces to fuse together to create the resulting interpretation. What you create is an artful rendering of what you now understand.

Engage interpretation with patience, curiosity, and care.

ACTIVITY REFLECTION: TASK OF INTERPRETATION INVENTORY, P. 270

HORIZON OF THE INTERPRETER (YOU)

Which questions in the Interpretation Inventory were the easiest for your teen to answer?

Which were the most provocative?

Ask your teen if they uncovered new ideas they hadn't considered on the first reading? What were they?

HORIZON OF THE TEXT (AUTHOR)

How did your answers differ in this section from the Horizon of the Interpreter?

What question caused you to go back to the text and reread it carefully? Why?

What do you understand now that you didn't before you considered the text from the author's point of view?

FUSION OF HORIZONS (YOU + AUTHOR)

Ask your teen:

Now that you've had a chance to bring your ideas together with what you understand from the author, how confident do you feel about your interpretation?

What changed for you compared with your first reading?

What else did you discover in this process?

THE COURAGE TO CHANGE YOUR MIND

Making space for dissent feels like allowing a pebble to stay in a comfortable shoe. Yet critical thinkers know that it's through dissent that we grow and are provoked to do more research.

The best way to help our children use their powerful minds for good is to teach them the flexibility of thought and heart that enables them to think, to think again, to rethink, and to think some more.

AHA! *WE CAN ONLY CHANGE WHEN WE CAN'T UNSEE WHAT WE NOW SEE.*

What ideas and beliefs does your child want to share with you that have prompted resistance in you?

HOW CAN YOU MAKE ROOM FOR YOUR CHILD TO EXPRESS THOSE THOUGHTS TO YOU?

**LET'S BE BRAVE ENOUGH
TO CULTIVATE INSIGHT
AHEAD OF BEING RIGHT.**

**LET'S BEGIN WITH
OUR PEOPLE.**