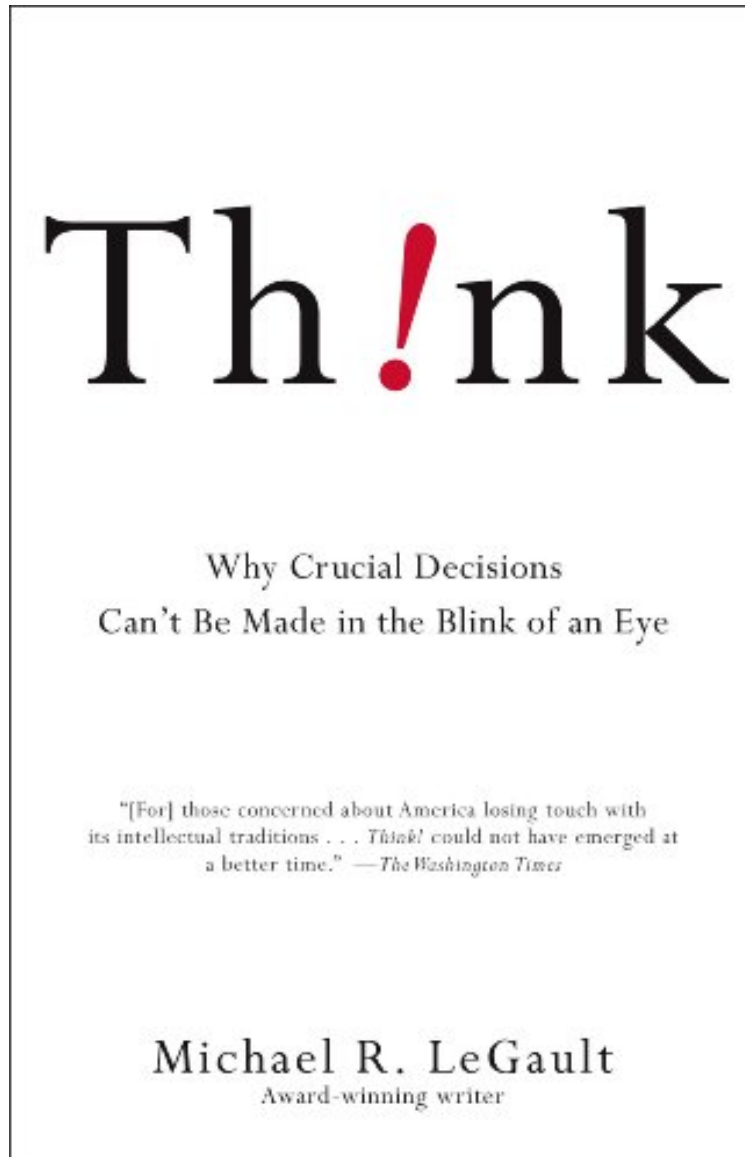


# Think!: Why Crucial Decisions Can't Be Made in the Blink of an Eye

Michael R. LeGault

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**Michael R. LeGault : Think!: Why Crucial Decisions Can't Be Made in the Blink of an Eye** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Think!: Why Crucial Decisions Can't Be Made in the Blink of an Eye:

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. THINK fails the critical thinking test of the author! By Michael RI am a late reader of BLINK by M. Gladwell and now THINK by M LeGault. Whereas BLINK was insightful and well

written, THINK reads like a little school boy who is mad because another kid is getting all the attention. Rather than compare apples to apples, LeGault compares apples to oranges. It has been proven by "critical thinking" that first thoughts with quick detail information (intuition) perform more accurately under a new situation (stress) than thoughts made with massive amounts of details and conscious thought. LeGault confuses the "intuition" thought with some PC social or emotional-based thought process. He misses the point that the final data later showed some creative thought was correct. But the original decision to proceed along a path was not made with all details in hand for "critical analytical thinking." It was a BLINK thought that later was proved correct. The education system in America is bad because people removed definable grades/standards and substituted feel good standards. All people are NOT created equal in abilities or effort and we should NOT pretend they are. That problem has nothing to do with BLINK thinking and acting....or the lack of good decision making by CEOs and government officials. Blink: The Power of Thinking Without Thinking

3 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Very helpful stimulant toward practical thinking. By Kindle Customer I listened to this audio book for two weeks while commuting to work. Most of the theses hold together strongly as I apply them to events going on in our nation now, two 2 years after its publication. For example, I see more clearly how the metastasis of man-made global warming notions within our public policy agenda is an assault on reason and objectivity. Another example is the recent election of a president whose primary strengths are presentation and style rather than delivery or accomplishment. The populace seems to have overlaid his lack of substance with their imagining of what treats they want the government to bestow upon them as well as their non-critical incorporation of the negative world-view fashioned by the dominant consumer media. It's also alarming that a recent poll shows the majority of college students don't understand the most basic principles of our government (like 'what are the three branches of government?'). I have also listened to the audio book Blink (and read the book Guns, Germs and Steel) and I find LeGault's depiction of these to be spot-on. The initial ideas presented in Blink have an appeal because of their cleverness, but there is no application for them; they don't lead to anything real or constructive. The ideas in Blink do help explain why some events occur (like the police shooting in New York); but the proscriptions Gladwell casts out for applying intuitive thinking don't hold together. The author of Think presents some elementary concepts of logic, but I would have liked to have heard a bit more. This book (Think) encourages me think objectively as I respond to what life throws at me; I am motivated to support my opinions with high quality evidence; I see that the most constructive outlook for living is to employ objective discourse with my peers and provide a hopeful example for my children. This book is not perfect but it is helpful. The negative reviews here seem to be shallow-minded and prove the hostility that can be engendered when someone presents a challenge to change and goes against the main-stream mindset that the highest priority in life is to feel good, rather than to exert yourself to be good.

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Very repetitive. By The Best Out West I bought this book as the companion piece to Blink for my wife. Before she could get to it, I tried reading it. I found the initial story to be awesome (about the auto glass manufacturer), but after that it went downhill. I found Legault to say the same thing over and over but in a different way. I made it through the first 40 pages and couldn't go any farther. However, if you can wade through his ability to say the same thing five different ways, he does say some pretty profound things (don't worry, my wife shared them with me, that's how I know) which is why I gave it a two star rating.

This isn't the time to Blink. It's time to THINK! -- before it's too late. Outraged by the downward spiral of American intellect and culture, Michael R. LeGault offers the flip side of Malcolm Gladwell's bestselling phenomenon, Blink, which theorized that our best decision-making is done on impulse, without factual knowledge or critical analysis. If bestselling books are advising us to not think, LeGault argues, it comes as no surprise that sharp, incisive reasoning has become a lost art in the daily life of Americans. Somewhere along the line, the Age of Reason morphed into the Age of Emotion; this systemic erosion is costing time, money, jobs, and lives in the twenty-first century, leading to less fulfillment and growing dysfunction. LeGault provides a bold, controversial, and objective analysis of the causes and solutions for: bull; the erosion of growth and market share at many established American companies, big and small, which appear to have less chance of achieving the dynamic expansion of the past bull; permissive parenting and low standards that have caused an academic crisis among our children -- body weights rise while grades plummet bull; America's growing political polarization, which is a result of our reluctance to think outside our comfort zone bull; faulty planning and failure to act on information at all levels that has led to preventable disasters, such as the Hurricane Katrina meltdown bull; a culture of image and instant gratification, fed by reality shows and computer games, that has rendered curiosity of the mind and spirit all but obsolete bull; stress, aversion to taking risks, and therapy that are replacing the traditional American "can do" mind-set. Far from perpetuating the stereotype of the complacent American, LeGault's no-holds-barred analysis asks more of us than any other societal overview: America can fulfill its greatest potential starting today, and we need smart teachers, smart health care workers, smart sales representatives, smart students, smart mechanics, and smart leaders to make it happen. Now is the time to THINK! -- because a mind truly is a terrible thing to waste.

"[For] those concerned about America losing touch with its intellectual traditions . . . Think! could not have emerged

at a better time." -- The Washington Times About the Author Michael R. LeGault is an award-winning editor and writer, and a former columnist for the Washington Times. His reviews, opinion columns, and features have appeared in newspapers, journals, and magazines across North America. An American citizen based in Toronto, LeGault has worked for and been a consultant to major U.S. companies on health, safety, environmental, and quality issues. He received his B.S. from the University of Michigan and his M.S. from the University of Miami, Florida. LeGault is currently an editor at the National Post. He and his wife, Anneli, have two children. Excerpt. copy; Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved. Chapter 1 Don't Blink, Think The company, a medium-sized automotive supplier based in Ohio, was already spinning in the upper regions of a vortex heading directly down the tube. What the company did sounded simple enough. It took glass windshields, put a strip of rubber around the perimeter, and shipped them to major automotive manufacturers. An operator placed the glass into a machine, and the machine injected melted rubber around the edge, then quickly cooled it to make it stick. The problem was this: The glass was breaking. The scrap rate mounted -- 10 percent, 20 percent. Little bar graphs posted in the cafeteria illustrated the amount of money the company was losing each week. Employees blinked uncomprehendingly when the figure reached a million dollars. Was anyone doing anything? The company was doing all it could, or at least it felt it was. It hired a young, dynamic, university-educated plant manager. Intuition their guide, the plant manager and his team of floor supervisors and engineers attacked the problem. They pulled the dies -- large steel molds into which the glass was placed -- from every machine and scanned them with lasers to confirm dimensions to a thousandth of an inch. They ran quality control checks on all shipments of glass they received from other companies. They installed new process control software on the machines to continuously monitor the internal condition of each machine. Day and night, one or more engineers paced the factory, poring over printouts, making adjustments to the machines. Some days, on a few machines, there appeared to be progress, then just as quickly, things spun out of control and it seemed every other windshield was being devoured by mad machines determined to put the company out of business. Hunches about the cause of the problem were getting the company nowhere. The head office called an emergency meeting. They were giving the plant one last chance to fix itself. They slid the plant manager the business card of a guru. His fee was \$1 million. It seemed cheap. The guru asked for the scrap rates of each machine operator. The company had the scrap rates for each machine, but not for the operators, who were rotated on machines on a daily, or even hourly, basis. The guru spent one month gathering the data. He spent an equal amount of time plotting and analyzing the numbers. Engineers at the plant still intuitively believed the problem was somehow related to the equipment, but the guru, examining the plots and data, noticed something odd -- the women operators had much higher scrap rates than the men. But there was an anomaly: Two male operators also had high scrap rates. He asked to meet the two men. They were both slightly built and on the short side. A million-dollar light went on inside the guru's head. The windshields weighed twenty to forty pounds, depending on the model. The operators had to lean over and into the machines to place the windshields into the molds. The workstations were set up in a one-size-fits-all mode. The guru watched one woman strain to place the heavy windshield in the mold so that it would line up properly with the guiding pins. The machine closed and the windshield shattered. The woman loaded the next part and the guru told her to wait. He ran his hand along the top edge of the windshield. The part seemed to be loaded properly between the guiding pins; however, he noticed one edge rode out a little farther on the pin than the other. He gave the edge a push. He told the woman to run the machine. The large steel jaws clamped together, then opened to reveal a gleaming windshield looking for all the world like a Van Gogh. The company modified workstation ergonomics, redesigned the die guiding pins, and trained staff workers. Scrap rates fell below 5 percent. The guru was feted and paid. A sigh of relief was heard around the plant. Only the plant manager was somewhat chagrined. He was embarrassed he had to rely on the critical thinking skills of someone else to fix his plant. He could, if he wished, console himself. Sharp, incisive, clever thinking is steadily becoming a lost art, more and more the domain of specialists and gurus. The trend is troubling and raises the question, Is America losing its ability to think? If, for argument's sake, we define thinking as the use of knowledge and reasoning to solve problems and plan and produce favorable outcomes, the answer is, apparently, yes. Consider the sober assessment of John Bardi, a lecturer at Penn State who has been teaching university students a variety of philosophy and cultural study courses for over twenty-five years. In a 2001 essay about the decline of critical thinking, Bardi states, "The intellectual qualities I see displayed in my classes . . . are getting worse every year, with the current crop [of students] being the worst." Critical thinking is a cognitive skill that permits a person to logically investigate a situation, problem, question, or phenomenon in order to make a judgment or a decision. Bardi argues that the collapse of critical thinking skills in this country may be "systemic and historical, even inevitable," although he allows that many of his colleagues have a simpler explanation -- that the problem is not history or culture, but today's students, who, for whatever reason, "lack the critical thinking skills necessary for higher learning." Certainly our universities, especially the upper tier, still attract many diligent, gifted students who can knock off a set of differential equations as if they were a connect-the-dot drawing. If Bardi's and his colleagues' harsh assessment annoys some, think of it as applied "on average." Of course, this still means that the critical thinking skills of even the top college students have, on average, declined. If this is the case, it is not surprising, as independent testing on our schoolchildren has confirmed deteriorating performance in reading, math, and science for many years. The Organization for Economic Cooperation

and Development's Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) conducts a triennial evaluation of the math, reading, science, and problem-solving skills of fifteen-year-olds living in the primary industrialized countries. In PISA's 2003 assessment, American students ranked twenty-eighth out of forty countries in problem-solving ability. The performance was on par with that of students from Serbia, Uruguay, and Mexico, and well below that of fifteen-year-olds from Japan, France, Germany, and Canada. The most recent National Assessment of Educational Progress has measured some improvement in the reading and math scores of fourth- and eighth-grade students since 2000. Overall, however, the unvarnished results show that more than two-thirds of our nation's fourth and eighth graders are not performing at their grade levels in either math or reading. If a decline in thinking skills were limited to unmotivated or hungover university students hell bent on frittering away their parents' money, we could probably muster a shrug, perhaps in the naive belief that the stringent standards of academia will inevitably weed out the deadwood. Poor thinking and nascent idiocy, according to this optimistic view, will be nipped in the bud, contained safely on campus, before they reach the real world. It is obvious, however, that this cannot be the case. Many of these students have become adept at muddling through their curriculums, finding a smorgasbord of courses they can pass, and picking up their degrees. One by one these graduates are transporting their limited knowledge and deficient thinking skills into the fields of their chosen professions, as the next generation of teachers, nurses, sales representatives, and company managers. Thus we have teachers, health care workers, and managers with historically inferior critical-thinking skills teaching, caring for patients, and managing businesses. At least one high-level automotive executive, General Motors' Robert Lutz, has lamented the inferior problem-solving skills of U.S.-trained engineers. Other refined mental skills crucial to workplace performance also appear to be deteriorating. A 2004 report released by the National Commission on Writing, a panel of educators assembled by the College Board, brought to light the growing disgruntlement of businesses with employee writing skills. The report, *Writing: A Ticket to Work . . . or a Ticket Out*, included a survey of chief executives from the nation's top corporations. The results were not pretty -- about a third of the companies said only one-third or fewer of their employees knew how to write clearly and concisely. Predictably, as if filling a growing market niche, a new-age, feel-good pop psychology/philosophy has sprung up to bolster the view that understanding gleaned from logic and critical analysis is not all that it's cracked up to be. This outlook, which sounds especially appealing after a couple of beers in a loud bar, suggests that the rational model is often unnecessary, and may even be obsolete. Malcolm Gladwell has recently set the high-water mark for this philosophy with his book *Blink -- The Power of Thinking without Thinking*. In *Blink*, Mr. Gladwell argues that our minds possess a subconscious power to take in large amounts of information and sensory data and correctly size up a situation, solve a problem, and so on, without the heavy, imposing hand of formal thought. As a demonstration of the omnipotence of instantaneous, Blinklike snap judgments, defined as an understanding arrived at "in the first two seconds," Mr. Gladwell relates a story about a forged Greek statue purchased by the J. Paul Getty Museum in Los Angeles in 1984. The sculpture was a nude male youth, claimed by the art-dealer-seller to be one of the stylized statues known as a kouros produced in ancient Greece. Officials at the Getty were apparently suspicious of the origins of the statue from the start, as it radiated "a light colored glow" not typical of ancient statues. Nonetheless, after extensive...