

Living Authentically Course Sample2

WEEK FOUR. DAY THREE

Thinking is very much emphasised in our culture. So, it surprises me how little we are taught how to do it. I remember being advised by school teachers to go home and study something – but I was never told how to study.

So today we focus a little on thinking.

Analysing An Argument.

You can either choose an argument you have been involved in or find one (such as an opinion piece in a newspaper). Then examine it using these questions.

Was there a flow from beginning to end? Did it circle back on itself?

What was the evidence used to reinforce the argument?

Were particular types of evidence used? (An argument in physics is decided in a different way to an argument in a parliament.)

If there was more than one person or group involved: what did they agree or disagree on?

Two art critics may disagree on a painting but agree on the importance of art. Two politicians from different parties may disagree on a particular policy but agree that it should be decided by politicians, not bureaucrats.

Were values spelt out?

E.g. the importance of public safety or the central role of emotions in decision-making.

Finally, do you find the argument convincing?

Why or why not? Could it be improved? Are there any kinds of evidence that would convince you?