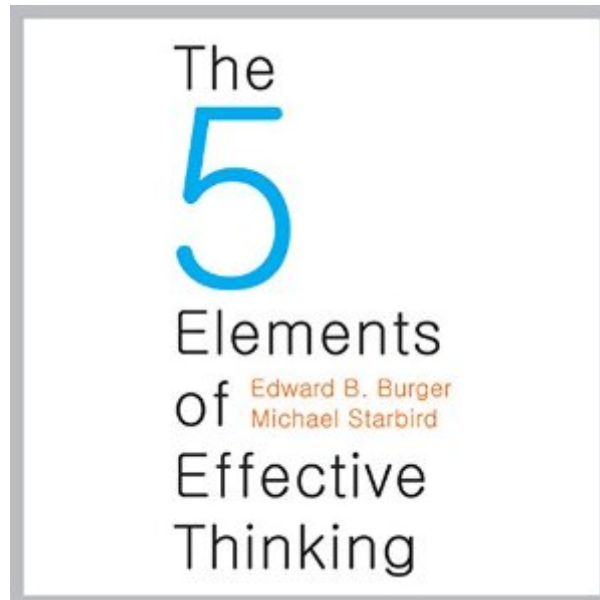


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# The Five Elements Of Effective Thinking



## Synopsis

The 5 Elements of Effective Thinking presents practical, lively, and inspiring ways for you to become more successful through better thinking. The idea is simple: You can learn how to think far better by adopting specific strategies. Brilliant people aren't a special breed--they just use their minds differently. By using the straightforward and thought-provoking techniques in The 5 Elements of Effective Thinking, you will regularly find imaginative solutions to difficult challenges, and you will discover new ways of looking at your world and yourself--revealing previously hidden opportunities. The book offers real-life stories, explicit action items, and concrete methods that allow you to attain a deeper understanding of any issue, exploit the power of failure as a step toward success, develop a habit of creating probing questions, see the world of ideas as an ever-flowing stream of thought, and embrace the uplifting reality that we are all capable of change. No matter who you are, the practical mind-sets introduced in the book will empower you to realize any goal in a more creative, intelligent, and effective manner. Filled with engaging examples that unlock truths about thinking in every walk of life, The 5 Elements of Effective Thinking is written for all who want to reach their fullest potential--including students, parents, teachers, businesspeople, professionals, athletes, artists, leaders, and lifelong learners. Whenever you are stuck, need a new idea, or want to learn and grow, The 5 Elements of Effective Thinking will inspire and guide you on your way.

## Book Information

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Psychology > Cognitive

## Customer Reviews

I originally became interested in this book after reading a blog on PsychologyToday by one of this

book's authors. The blog essentially discussed the values of failure, and how accepting and even encouraging failure leads to a better attitude about learning. This book is one of the few books I have ever read in one sitting. I became very interested in the authors' message, and found the writing to be straightforward and logical. I noticed that the authors do not needlessly repeat themselves, which is funny because in the first chapter they discuss how they initially wanted to literally print the entire text three times, but their publisher wouldn't let them. Good call, Publisher. I have noticed in reviews about similar books to this one (in the same vein of learning how to think better, or be more successful, etc.) that people often complain about the author(s) repeating the material over and over again in different words, as if to take up space. The Five Elements of Effective Thinking is logical, condensed, and never rambles. Reading this book is like drinking a shot of intellectual espresso. The basic point of the book is that there are 5 qualities of thinking that all effective thinkers share. Because it is about effective thinking, the authors rely on a lot of examples of effective thinkers: Famous examples like Thomas Edison and Albert Einstein, and examples of students who learned how to think effectively, like Mary, and the mathematics professor Dr. S who was once the worst mathematician in his class and later went on to receive his PhD in maths. All of the examples are fairly inspirational, and I think they highlight the fact that this book really is a self-help book of sorts, or maybe more accurately, a self-improvement book.

"The root of success in everything, from academics to business to leadership to personal relationships and everything else, is thinking - whether it's thinking disguised as intuition or as good values or as decision making or problem solving or creativity, it's all thinking... Doing anything better requires effective thinking - that is, coming up with more imaginative ideas, facing complicated problems, finding new ways to solve them, becoming aware of hidden possibilities, and then taking action. What is a surprise is that the basic methods for thinking more clearly, more innovatively, more effectively are fundamentally the same in all areas of life - in school, in business, in the arts, in personal life, in sports, in everything. The other surprise is that those methods of effective thinking can be described, taught, and learned. They are not inborn gifts of a special few. They are not so esoteric that only geniuses can master them. All of us can learn them and use them, and that is what this book is about." As pointed out by previous reviewers, this book is slim in size, but nevertheless large on content. The authors have developed an excellent system for applying their 5 elements of effective thinking: Earth = Understand Deeply, Fire = Make Mistakes, Air = Raise Questions, Water = Follow the Flow of Ideas, and "The Quintessential Element" = Change. When I first read about their system in the introduction, it seemed a bit odd and hokey, but by the end of the

book, I was very much impressed with the cleverness of the whole scheme. Additionally, the authors have sprinkled in some useful quotes and copious examples to illustrate their points. In sum, I believe this book really does capture what it means, and what it takes, in order to be an effective thinker.

NOTE: I received a free copy of this book to review for the web site Metapsychology Online Reviews; please see that site for a more detailed version of my review. Authors Edward B. Burger and Michael Starbird assert that throughout history, what the world's most successful and accomplished people have in common is not solely great intellect but rather, a different way of thinking. They emphasize that these concrete thinking strategies can be taught to anyone, and thus, they introduce five learning strategies in this book. The authors associate each technique with a specific element (a metaphor which feels a bit forced at times). Briefly, the strategies are as follows: Earth, understand deeply; Fire, make mistakes; Air, raise questions; Water, follow the flow of ideas; and The Quintessential Element, Change. Their chapters combine short paragraphs, brief anecdotes, personal stories, exercise suggestions, and the like; the narrative is constantly broken up, similar to a "For Dummies"-style book. I found the value of "Earth" to be minimal. Here, the authors primarily highlight the dangers of rote memorization; their main advice seems to be to simply spend more time with a subject in order to learn it more thoroughly. Conversely, "Fire" provided more practical information, offering specific examples of how mistakes can be useful as well as suggesting ideas for building on failures to find success. But the chapter on questioning is again more basic, providing common-sense suggestions such as exploring issues from various viewpoints and ask better, meta questions.

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