

Meyer's Management Models

65. Self-Centered Thinking Traps

Which dangers do I face when reasoning from my own perspective?

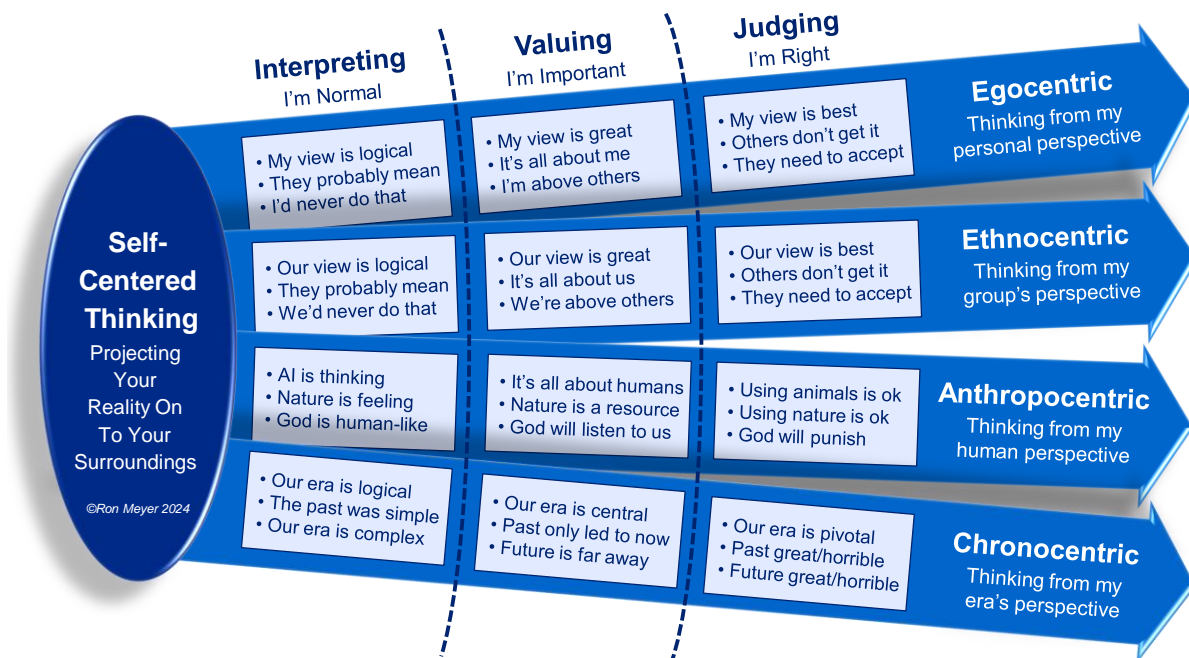
Key Definitions

Reasoning is the process of thinking and drawing conclusions from information based a particular type of *logic*. As this logic is specific to each individual, it is also called a person's worldview, frame of reference, cognitive filter, perceptual lens, or *perspective*.

People's perspective develops over their lifetime, depending on their surroundings and experiences. It is formed by what they encounter as individuals, as members of a group, as humans and as living in the current era. But while circumstances shape people's perspective, that perspective in turn shapes how people see their circumstances.

Conceptual Model

The *Self-Centered Thinking Traps* framework outlines the four most common ways in which people's narrow self-centered perspectives can lead to shortsighted conclusions. These four ways of thinking are all based on people's inherent tendency to place themselves at the center of the world and then to project their reality on to their surroundings. By predominantly viewing matters from their own perspective, they draw highly colored, one-sided conclusions, that would be different if they could see things from multiple perspectives. The framework identifies four types of self-centeredness (the blue arrows) and three types of reasoning (interpreting, valuing, and judging), and gives 36 examples of shortsighted conclusions that are often drawn.



Key Elements

The three types of reasoning are the following:

1. **Interpreting.** The first step in reasoning is to try to make sense of reality. Self-centered thinkers will assume that they are *normal* and understand the world from that viewpoint.

2. **Valuing.** A step further than determining what is *valid*, is weighing what should be *valued*. Self-centered thinkers will assume that they are more *important* than anything else.
3. **Judging.** The last step in reasoning is to draw conclusions and pass judgement. Self-centered thinkers will assume they are *right* and proceed accordingly.

The four types of self-centered thinking are:

1. **Egocentric Thinking.** Reasoning from your own personal perspective is the most recognized form of self-centered thinking. Individuals will believe they are normal and assume that others think in the same way (“they probably mean...”), or at least *should* think in the same way. They can even value themselves above all others, favor their own interests and look down on people who “don’t get it”.
2. **Ethnocentric Thinking.** Reasoning from a group’s perspective comes in many forms, as people are members of many groups. People will take the perspective of their national culture as obvious, not understanding or valuing other cultures. But they can also view matters through the lens of their ethnic group, social class, gender, club, region, company, and/or department. The more they interact within their group, the stronger their bias will be.
3. **Anthropocentric Thinking.** Maybe less obvious is the tendency of people to view reality from the perspective of being a human. People will assume that other things “think” in a human-like way (e.g. animals, AI, God) and that humans are more important than anything else, justifying human’s central role in the world. The consequences can vary from treating a dog like a human baby to accepting that humans have the right to create climate change.
4. **Chronocentric Thinking.** The least obvious is the tendency to view reality from the perspective of our current era. People constantly reinterpret history through the lens of modern times, not understanding how our ancestors could be so foolish and retroactively condemning their behavior, or alternatively, glorifying the past. In the same way, people project today into the future, predicting impending doom or imminent greatness.

Key Insights

- **Reasoning is inherently subjective.** Reasoning is a train of thought that leads to a conclusion. This thinking can’t be objective as people view the world from a specific *perspective* – through a lens that we have built up during our life, based on our experiences.
- **Reasoning comes in three forms.** People use this lens to *interpret* the information they receive (i.e. sense-making), to place *value* on themselves in the situation (i.e. determining importance) and to *judge* what the consequences should be (i.e. decision-making).
- **Reasoning is full of hidden traps.** The lens that people use will always color what people see. So, if people have only one highly colored lens, their reasoning is going to be highly biased. The danger is that they will not be aware of their own slanted perspective.
- **Reasoning can be dangerously self-centered.** The most common form of bias is reasoning from one’s own perspective – called *self-centered thinking*. People can think from their personal perspective (*egocentric thinking*), from their group’s perspective (*ethnocentric thinking*), from their human perspective (*anthropocentric thinking*) and from their era’s perspective (*chronocentric thinking*).
- **Reasoning can be enriched by multiple perspectives.** To avoid these self-centered thinking traps, people need to reflect on their own thinking, to open up to feedback on their thinking and to practice using multiple perspectives to be able to see matters from different angles. Of course, engaging in dialogue with people who have a different perspective is probably the most valuable approach, if it is true dialogue and not debate.

Meyer's Management Models

Insightful Tools to Kickstart Your Thinking

Publication Schedule

<i>July 2019</i>	<i>Mind the Gap Model</i>	<i>Change Management</i>
<i>August 2019</i>	<i>Digital Platform Map</i>	<i>Digital Strategy</i>
<i>September 2019</i>	<i>Interaction Pressure Gauge</i>	<i>Interpersonal Interaction</i>
<i>October 2019</i>	<i>Revenue Model Framework</i>	<i>Revenue Model Typology</i>
<i>November 2019</i>	<i>House of Engagement</i>	<i>Organizational Engagement</i>
<i>December 2019</i>	<i>Confidence Quotient</i>	<i>Trust Building</i>
<i>January 2020</i>	<i>Competition Tornado</i>	<i>Competitive Strategy</i>
<i>February 2020</i>	<i>11C Synergy Model</i>	<i>Corporate Synergy Management</i>
<i>March 2020</i>	<i>Leadership Fairness Model</i>	<i>Leader-Follower Interaction</i>
<i>April 2020</i>	<i>Strategic Agility Model</i>	<i>Strategy Process Approach</i>
<i>May 2020</i>	<i>Control Panel</i>	<i>Corporate Control Dimensions</i>
<i>June 2020</i>	<i>Rising Star Framework</i>	<i>Talent Management</i>
<i>July 2020</i>	<i>Strategy Development Cycle</i>	<i>Strategy Process Steps</i>
<i>August 2020</i>	<i>7I Corporate Center Model</i>	<i>Corporate Organization</i>
<i>September 2020</i>	<i>Storytelling Scripts</i>	<i>Leadership Communication</i>
<i>October 2020</i>	<i>Strategic Bets Framework</i>	<i>Strategic Decision-Making</i>
<i>November 2020</i>	<i>Rebound Model of Resilience</i>	<i>Organizational Resilience</i>
<i>December 2020</i>	<i>4C Leadership Capabilities</i>	<i>Leadership Competences</i>
<i>January 2021</i>	<i>Digital Product Model Dial</i>	<i>Digital Strategy</i>
<i>February 2021</i>	<i>Digital Distribution Model Dial</i>	<i>Digital Strategy</i>
<i>March 2021</i>	<i>Empowerment Cycle</i>	<i>Employee Empowerment</i>
<i>April 2021</i>	<i>Innovation Box</i>	<i>Innovation Approaches</i>
<i>May 2021</i>	<i>Knowledge Sharing Bridges</i>	<i>Best Practice Sharing</i>
<i>June 2021</i>	<i>Followership Cycle</i>	<i>Leader-Follower Interaction</i>
<i>July 2021</i>	<i>Everest Model of Change</i>	<i>Change Management</i>
<i>August 2021</i>	<i>Fruits & Nuts Matrix</i>	<i>Priority-Setting</i>
<i>September 2021</i>	<i>Powerhouse Framework</i>	<i>People & Organization Strategy</i>
<i>October 2021</i>	<i>Strategy Hourglass</i>	<i>Strategy-Making Steps</i>
<i>November 2021</i>	<i>Disciplined Dialogue Model</i>	<i>Interpersonal Communication</i>
<i>December 2021</i>	<i>Team Building Cycle</i>	<i>Team Building Process</i>
<i>January 2022</i>	<i>Market System Map</i>	<i>External Analysis Framework</i>
<i>February 2022</i>	<i>Strategic Alignment Model</i>	<i>Business Level Strategy</i>
<i>March 2022</i>	<i>Creativity X-Factor</i>	<i>Creativity Enhancement</i>
<i>April 2022</i>	<i>Organizational System Map</i>	<i>Organizational Analysis</i>
<i>May 2022</i>	<i>Corporate Value Creation Model</i>	<i>Corporate Level Strategy</i>
<i>June 2022</i>	<i>Change Manager's Toolbox</i>	<i>Change Methodologies</i>

July 2022	Sustainable You Model	Personal Sustainability
August 2022	Value Proposition Dial	Business Level Strategy
September 2022	The Tree of Power	Organizational Power
October 2022	Psychological Safety Compass	Team Dynamics
November 2022	Strategic Action Modes	Strategy Process
December 2022	Corporate Management Styles	HQ Management
January 2023	Thinking Directions Framework	Reasoning Skills
February 2023	5I Innovation Pipeline	Innovation Process
March 2023	Resistance to Change Typology	Change Management
April 2023	Ambition Radar Screen	Motivation Analysis
May 2023	Corporate Strategy Framework	Corporate Strategy
June 2023	Cultural Fabric Model	Organizational Culture
July 2023	New Pyramid Principle	Presentation Approaches
August 2023	Activity System Dial	Value Creation Analysis
September 2023	Customer-Centricity Circle	Organizational Design
October 2023	Status Snakes & Ladders	Leadership Branding
November 2023	Stakeholder Stance Map	Stakeholder Management
December 2023	Best Practice Sharing Modes	Sharing Methods
January 2024	Duty of Care Feedback Model	Feedback Method
February 2024	BOLD Vision Framework	Organizational Vision
March 2024	MOVING Mission Framework	Organizational Mission
April 2024	Leadership Circle Map	Leadership Skills
May 2024	Digitalization Staircase	Digital Strategy
June 2024	Time Management Funnel	Personal Time Management
July 2024	Wicked Problem Scorecard	Organizational Decision-Making
August 2024	Hunting & Farming Typology	Sales Management
September 2024	Guiding STAR Matrix	Objective Setting Approach
October 2024	Corporate Synergy Typology	Corporate Level Strategy
November 2024	Self-Centered Thinking Traps	Thinking Styles
December 2024	Sustainability Maturity Model	Sustainability Management
January 2025	The Growth Pie	Growth Strategy
February 2025	Innovation Sins & Virtues	Innovation Management
March 2025	Core Courage Model	Leadership Behaviors
April 2025	Change Management Phases	Change Management
May 2025	New Learning Curve	Personal Learning
June 2025	Partnership Distance Model	Interorganizational Relations
July 2025	Embedded Innovation Pipeline	Innovation Management
August 2025	Performance Assignment Matrix	Corporate Strategy
September 2025	Triple Diamond Model	Organizational Decision-Making
October 2025	Interpersonal Interaction Levels	Communication Approaches

November 2025	Synergy Value Matrix	Corporate Level Strategy
December 2025	Embedded Identity Model	Personal Awareness
January 2026	Dynamic Organization Paradigm	Human-centered Organization
February 2026	Leadership Journey	Leadership Development