

by Julie Mais
Editor



What makes a critical thinker?

We celebrated a big birthday a few months ago — our daughter turned 2 — and we are now fully immersed in a new phase. I like to joke that with toddlerhood, my husband and I have graduated from attending to her basic needs to actually parenting. She is forming her own opinions, her likes and dislikes.

She has ideas of what she wants to do and doesn't. These are often shared with us through those big toddler feelings. Daily joys bring on the belly laughs and squeals of excitement. Tears come quickly when screen time is limited or it's time to move on from a fun activity.

With each day I become increasingly aware of the example I set and the direction I provide. I'm exploring more and more what character and skills I hope to instill in her and how to do so.

I was recently scrolling through episodes of a favorite podcast and a title piqued my interest: "How to Raise Critical Thinkers." I thought, "yes, I want to do that!" So, I listened in. The host interviewed Julie Bogart, author of "Raising Critical Thinkers: A Parent's Guide to Growing Wise Kids in the Digital Age."

Bogart said critical thinking is more than the idea of right opinions.

"It's the strategy for how to get from your house to your supermarket to avoid traffic or an accident," she said. "It's decisions you make, the literal micro moment-by-moment decisions you make, about how you'll spend your time. Who you'll give attention to. Whether or not to raise your voice at someone. Whether or not to be polite at a customer service desk. Critical thinking is the key skill set we use to navigate all

our relationships, implement all the things we learn in school or all the things we do in our profession."

Put simply, critical thinking is crucial to thrive in life.

Bogart said critical thinking starts with self-awareness. It's the capacity to be self-observant while you're thinking, so you can notice when your bias kicks in.

"Once you are able to take that stock of how you relate to whatever just occurred, now you're capable of extending that same way of thinking to the other person," she said.

You can have an understanding other people also come with bias, and their opinions are formed from their unique experiences. Bogart shared while raising her five children, she welcomed differing opinions.

"Dissent is the chlorine in the swimming pool," she described. "It keeps the family's conversation clean, free of the algae that grows around too much similarity."

Join the conversation


The Angus family is made up of people with different perspectives — representing varying environments, small to large herd sizes, first-generation cattlemen to multigenerational operations. Many things can be learned from each other.

The *Angus Journal's* new podcast,

The Angus Conversation, is a place for just that kind of dialogue. It's for those Angus breeders interested in hearing new perspectives, sharing their own views, taking in information, forming their own opinions, and hopefully bringing what they learn back to their operations and families.

Hosted by American Angus Association CEO Mark McCully, Angus Media President Brett Spader and *Angus Journal* Senior Associate Editor Miranda Reiman, this podcast presents lively discussions on topics important to Angus breeders every other week.

In the prelaunch segment, McCully said, "As we chart this future, there's an awful lot of unknowns; and I think the bigger and broader perspective we get, the better decisions we'll make."

Dissenting opinions, a healthy debate and an open mind are critical to moving forward as industry leaders. 

jmais@angus.org

Editor's note: In its inaugural season, The Angus Conversation can be found almost anywhere listeners get their podcasts, such as Apple Podcasts, Spotify, Google Podcasts and more, or direct from www.TheAngusConversation.com.