

The “Thinking Person’s checklist” Alan Jacobs, *How to Think: A Survival Guide for a World at Odds*

1. When faced with provocation to respond to what someone has said, give it five minutes. Take a walk, or weed the garden, or chop some vegetables. Get your body involved: your body knows the rhythms to live by, and if your mind falls into your body’s rhythm, you’ll have a better chance of thinking.
2. Value learning over debating. Don’t “talk for victory.”
3. As best you can, online and off, avoid the people who fan flames.
4. Remember that you don’t have to respond to what everyone else is responding to in order to signal your virtue and right-mindedness.
5. If you *do* have to respond to what everyone else is responding to in order to signal your virtue and right-mindedness, or else lose your status in your community, then you should realize that it’s not a community but rather an Inner Ring.
6. Gravitate as best you can, in every way you can, toward people who seem to value genuine community and can handle disagreement with equanimity.
7. Seek out the best and fairest-minded of people whose views you disagree with. Listen to them for a time without responding. Whatever they say, *think it over*.
8. Patiently, and as honestly as you can, assess your repugnancies.
9. Sometimes the “ick factor” is telling; sometimes it’s a distraction from what matters.
10. Beware of metaphors and myths that do too much heavy cognitive lifting; notice what your “terministic screens” are directing your attention to—and what they’re directing your attention *away from*; look closely for hidden metaphors and beware the power of myth.
11. Try to describe others’ positions in the language that *they* use, without indulging in in-other-wordsing.
12. Be brave.

[Read the whole book](#) for an explanation and elaboration of each point.