

**To introduce us to the ideas behind Strategic Thinking, here is an article that has been adapted to help fit the NVC community:**

### **Critical Skills for the Strategic Thinker**

Strategic thinking is a process that defines the manner in which people think about, assess, view, and create the future for themselves and others. Strategic thinking is an extremely effective and valuable tool. One can apply strategic thinking to arrive at decisions related to work or personal life. Strategic thinking involves developing an entire set of critical skills. What are those critical skills? Here is a list of critical skills that the best strategic thinkers possess and use every day:

**Critical Skill #1:** Strategic thinkers have the ability to think using the left (logical) and right (creative) sides of their brain. This skill takes practice as well as confidence and can be tremendously valuable. This also avoids the “tunnel” we can also get into when we see information from only one point of view.

**Critical Skill #2:** Strategic Thinkers have the ability to develop a clearly defined and focused work vision and personal vision. They are skilled at thinking with a strategic purpose in mind as well as creating a *visioning process*. They use both skills to complement each other.

**Critical Skill #3:** Strategic Thinkers have the ability to clearly define their objectives and develop a strategic action plan with each objective broken down into tasks and each task having a list of needed resources and a specific timeline.

**Critical Skill #4:** Strategic Thinkers have the ability to design flexibility into their plans by creating some benchmarks in their thinking to review progress. They use those benchmarks as a guide, and will revise their plans as needed. Strategic Thinkers have an innate ability to be proactive and anticipate change, rather than being reactive to changes after they occur.

**Critical Skill #5:** Strategic Thinkers are amazingly aware and perceptive. They will recognize internal and external clues, often subtle, to help guide future direction and recognize opportunities for them and their companies or organizations. Great strategic thinkers will listen, hear and understand what is being said and will read and observe whatever they can so that they will have relevant information to guide them.

**Critical Skill #6:** The best and greatest strategic thinkers take time out for themselves. Their time out may be in the form of a retreat; a walk in a special environment; relaxing in a comfortable chair in the lobby of an historic hotel; or an afternoon in a quiet place with a blank sheet of paper or their lap top computer. Time away from technology is a huge part of becoming a strategic thinker (See Article Bank in Introduction Module).

**Critical Skill #7:** Strategic Thinkers are committed to seeking advice from others. They often use peer advisory groups for feedback.

**Critical Skill #8:** Strategic Thinkers have the ability to balance creativity with a sense of realism and honesty about what is achievable in the longer term. This ability to balance does not deter them in their thinking. Sometimes they refer to themselves as realistic optimists.

**Critical Skill #9:** Strategic Thinkers have the ability to be non-judgmental and they do not allow themselves to be held back or restricted by judging their own thinking or the thinking of others when ideas are initially being developed and shared. This is especially true during any "brainstorming" exercises.

**Critical Skill #10:** Strategic Thinkers have the ability to be patient and not rush to conclusions and judgments. Great ideas and thoughts require time to develop into great successes.

The greatest and most successful organizations in the world, over many years and decades, think ahead and encourage great strategic thinking at least somewhere in their Strategic Plans.

Please click **Next** to move to the next item

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*<http://www.cssp.com/CD0808b/CriticalStrategicThinkingSkills/>*