Transition Newsletter

PERSON TO KNOW

Judy Heumann was a leading disability rights activist, known as the "Mother of the Disability Rights Movement". She tirelessly advocated for the rights and inclusion of people with disabilities, fighting against discrimination and promoting equal opportunities. Judy's advocacy, particularly her role in the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), significantly impacted the lives of students with disabilities by improving access to education and other areas.

➔ bit.ly/judyheumannvideo

➔ judithheumann.com/

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You will need to determine for yourself if you wish to use it and proceed accordingly.

Critical Thinking at Work

We've all faced tough decisions—whether it's during a job interview, while talking to a manager or coworker, or when something just doesn't seem fair at work. You might find yourself asking, "Why is this being done this way?" or "Is there a better option?"

The answer isn't just having more information—it's about learning to think more clearly and carefully. That's what critical thinking helps you do. It lets you pause, ask better questions, and make thoughtful choices that you can feel good about.

And it's a skill that's useful in any job—not just for bosses or experts. Critical thinking can be for everyone.

What Critical Thinking Looks Like at Work

Critical thinking means thinking clearly and with purpose. Here's how it might look in a workplace setting:

- **Curious and Open-Minded** — Ask questions in a respectful way, like: "Can you explain why we use this process?" or "Have we tried doing it a different way?" Be open to hearing how others do things—even if it's not your way.
- **Productive Skepticism** — Instead of accepting every idea right away, look for facts. For example: Before using a new tool or app at work, you ask, "Has this worked for other teams?" or "Is there data that shows improved productivity?"
- **Humility** — Admit when you don't know something or when you've made a mistake. For example: If you make an error in a report, you say, "Thanks for catching that. I'll fix it and learn from it."
- **Analyzing** — Break big problems into steps. If customers are complaining, look at what's causing the problem—is it the product, the process, or the communication?
- **Reflection** — After finishing a big project, think: "What went well? What would I change next time?" This helps you grow and do even better in the future.

What Critical Thinking Isn't

Critical thinking isn't being negative, complaining, or always trying to prove someone wrong. It's also not about arguing or having all the answers. It's about thinking with care, curiosity, and respect.
It's not critical thinking when these things happen:

- **Dismissiveness** – Saying things like "That'll never work" without giving it real thought.
- **Overconfidence** – Refusing to hear feedback or thinking, "I already know everything I need to know."
- **Emotional Reactivity** – Making decisions in the heat of the moment, like sending an angry email.
- **Manipulation** – Asking questions to get your way, not to learn or understand.

These behaviors can hurt teams, block good ideas, and create an unfair work environment.

What Can Get in the Way of Critical Thinking?

Even though critical thinking sounds great, it's not always easy—especially at work.

- You might feel nervous about questioning a rule or speaking up in a meeting.
- You might worry that asking questions makes you look unprepared.
- Or maybe you tend to rush when you're stressed and don't stop to think things through.

All of that is normal! The key is to notice these patterns in yourself so you can take a breath, slow down, and make better choices.

Why Critical Thinking Matters

Critical thinking helps you grow, not just as a student, but also as a teammate, employee, or leader.
It helps you solve problems, build trust, and make choices that reflect your values.

So be brave! Ask questions! Think deeply! You never know what positive change you might start — at work or in the world!
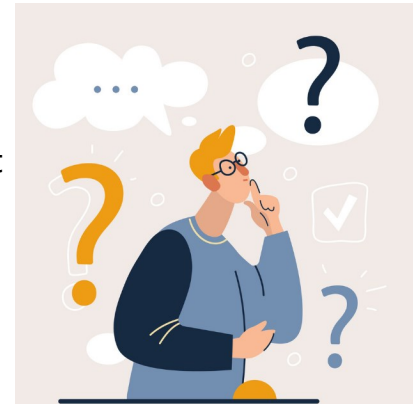
Celebrate the ADA on July 26, 2025!

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a law passed in 1990 that protects the rights of people with disabilities. It helps make sure everyone is treated fairly at school, work, and in public places.

What the ADA Does for You:
Gives you the right to access buildings, transportation, and programs.
Allows you to ask for supports like extra time, quiet spaces, or assistive technology.
Protects you from discrimination (being treated unfairly) because of your disability.

ADA
35
Celebrate
July 26, 2025
Americans with Disabilities Act

Why It Matters:
Before the ADA, many people with disabilities were left out. Today, because of this law, you have the right to be included and to ask for what you need to succeed.

The ADA is about equality, respect, and making sure everyone gets a fair chance. That includes you!

adata.org/learn-about-ada