

# PSYCHOLOGICAL OBSTACLES VERSUS PHILOSOPHICAL OBSTACLES



## EGOCENTRIC THINKING

None of us is immune to the psychological obstacles. Among them are the products of egocentric thinking. We may accept a claim solely because it advances our interests or just because it helps us save face.

## OVERCOMING PRESSURES

- (1) be aware of strong emotions that can warp our thinking,
- (2) be alert to ways that critical thinking can be undermined
- (3) ensure that we take into account all relevant factors when we evaluate a claim.



## GROUP PRESSURE

Psychological obstacles also includes group pressure. These obstacles include conformist pressures from groups that we belong to and ethnocentric urges to think that our group is superior to others.

The best defense against group pressure is to proportion our beliefs according to the strength of reasons.

## SUBJECTIVE RELATIVISM

A philosophical obstacle is subjective relativism, the view that truth depends solely on what someone believes a notion that may make critical thinking look unnecessary.

But subjective relativism leads to some strange consequences. For example, if the doctrine were true, each of us would be infallible.



## SOCIAL RELATIVISM

The view that truth is relative to societies a claim that would also seem to make critical thinking unnecessary. But this notion is undermined by the same kinds of problems that plague subjective relativism

## PHILOSOPHICAL SKEPTICISM

the doctrine that we know much less than we think we do. One form of philosophical skepticism says that we cannot know anything unless the belief is beyond all possible doubt. But this is not a plausible criterion for knowledge.

To be knowledge, claims need not be beyond all possible doubt, but beyond all reasonable doubt.

