

UT Tyler Honors Essay

Aristotle's statement, "*It is the mark of the educated mind to be able to entertain a thought without accepting it,*" carries a simple meaning with profound implications. His words are an assertion that being able to view an issue or idea critically before embracing it is a quality unique to those he considers "the educated." His statement assumes that this ability is beneficial and that education helps one attain that ability.

There is great value in not being easily persuaded. From Aristotle's Greece to the present day, unethical ideals masquerade as pure ones. Being able to see all sides of an issue impartially is a valuable trait. There are obvious benefits in considering the validity of new ideas before acting upon them. Acting first and thinking later is a practice that often results in unfortunate consequences. An educated person cannot simply accept the first idea they hear. The marketplace of ideas houses both good and bad ones, and it is vital to discern between the two. Regardless of source, every thought and idea must be examined before acceptance.

Education is a tool that aids in idea evaluation. The study of logic sculpts and perfects one's natural critical thinking abilities. A thorough examination of history provides plentiful examples of those who failed to rationally consider ideas before acting on them and caused untold suffering as a result. Close reading of literature and poetry allows the reader to find out how and why others think the way they do. These are all advantages bestowed solely by a well-rounded education.

Aristotle's words still resonate in this modern day. His statement remains as true today as it was when it was spoken millennia ago in Greece. Aristotle's statement also serves as a subtle warning to those who would accept an idea simply because it comes from a respected figure. However, his own words warn us against valuing his advice solely because of his reputation. Experience and education itself show that his words are true ones.