Beginner’s Mind is the ability to stay radically open and to see reality with fresh eyes. With Beginner’s Mind, you marry your openness and a lack of assumptions with expertise and past experiences.

When you are open, you see things without any prior beliefs or preconceived notions, coming into experiences with zero assumptions.

When you are an expert, you apply a filter of past events and interactions to bring knowledge and confidence to decision-making.

Beginner’s mind provides the cognitive flexibility that allows for more divergent thinking and creative problem-solving (Scientific Reports, NeuroImage).

Beginner’s mind and the openness to experience it brings increases the chances of being promoted to managerial and professional positions. (NIH)

Beginner’s mind and the orientation towards curiosity is associated with more positive emotions, less anxiety, higher satisfaction with life, and greater psychological well-being. (Journal of Personality Assessment)

IN THE BEGINNER’S MIND THERE ARE MANY POSSIBILITIES, BUT IN THE EXPERT’S THERE ARE FEW. Shunryo Suzuki, Zen Master

TIPS

1. WATCH OUT FOR LANGUAGE CUES
   When you find yourself saying again, always, or used to, notice that past experience is influencing your thoughts. Use it as an opportunity to invite a new perception of the situation.

2. TRY THIS REFLECTION EXERCISE
   Bring a challenge to mind – a challenge related to how you see yourself, how you see another person, or how you see a difficult situation. Take a few relaxing breaths, close your eyes and hold the challenge in your mind.

   Now ask yourself the following questions →
   - Does any unconscious bias color your perception of the challenge?
   - Do any emotions hold you back from seeing the challenge neutrally?
   - And what would the situation look like from another person’s perspective? Would it be the same or something different?

   Let these questions open your mind and help you reframe the challenge.

3. TAKE INSPIRATION FROM CHILDREN
   The next time you’re around children, notice how they react to the world around them. Take note of how you can learn from them and bring their perspective into your life.

   Start asking questions: what is this, why is it this way, how does this work? You may learn something new about topics and situations that you believed you were an expert in.