

About METARATIONALITY

Written March 16, 2020 and shared to this site June 17th, 2023 because it's still a good idea to keep an eye on your level of knowledge vs your level of opinion.

I have a new word.

For me that's a HaPpY DaNcE!!

I love new words and this one has really got me thinking.

I learned this word from a Tim Ferris's blog interview with Tyler Cowan. Tyler is an economist.

Although I have never heard his name before, Tim titled the interview ["Tyler Cowan on Rationality, COVID-19, Talisman and Life on the Margins"](#). And that caught my attention.

You can click the link and listen to the full interview. Today, I just want to share one word: metarationality.

Tyler Cowan describes metarationality as one's ability to understand how smart and/or well informed one is about a particular topic. It's your own awareness of your rationality. {Get it?}

It means knowing when to defer to an expert - when to do additional research - how to seek out and integrate opinions from various disciplines and perspectives. It means being conscious and understanding of which of your thoughts, beliefs, opinions, moods or emotions are rational and trustworthy given a multitude of different dimensions within a situation.

{At least that's what I captured from the interview. TBH, I looked for a definition on Google and was a little wow-like-really-ed!}

Tyler claims that metarationality is rare and unusual. Very few people are able to think in this way.

Very few people understand that there are a limitless number of different thoughts, beliefs and opinions on a given topic - and that their own personal feelings, thoughts, beliefs and opinions are indeed very limited.

But there's more to my story.

Shortly after listening to Tim + Tyler's conversation, I had a telephone conversation with my son. {That in and of itself is unusual as neither of us are phone chatters}. We talked late into the night.

Of course we talked about the COVID-19 pandemic. And we talked about the demands of work, how to make soup, the future of the environment, his grandparents and my parents,

society's economic future, Cinnamon Toast Crunch, his work at the lab, how to prepare for something that isn't here yet, the upcoming election, the need to touch our face, his Ham Radio License, the food pantries in LA, Summit County Children Services in OH, and his neighbors.

We discussed panic vs preparedness. Fear vs respect. Toilet paper vs bidet. Sending love and light. Offering compassionate service. Personal concern and social responsibility.

Now many of you know that Aaron is educated and informed across many topics. And while I wouldn't say that he is an expert on any of these topics, our conversations always provide me with interesting information and new perspectives. He's one step ahead of me at the least!

So this conversation was especially helpful.

Through this conversation, I was able to consider many more aspects of my current situation. I was able to see where my emotions might be limiting my vision. I was able to flush out some of my personal biases and beliefs. I was able to see implications beyond what I had previously considered. I was able to get a better understanding of what might be a rational stance.

It's likely that Aaron gained a similar benefit.

And while I am certainly not yet one of Tyler Cowan's very few metarational people, I'm more metarational than before we talked.

And I'm committed to that. I'm committed to becoming more and more metarational day by day.

Maybe it's a yoga-thing.

As yogis, we are working towards self-awareness, self-responsibility and self-development.

The Bhagavad Gita says "Yoga is the practice of the self, through the self, to the self."

And that is a very relevant reminder: Take a look at yourself, into yourself, for yourself.

Seek all of the information. Check with the experts. Have all of the conversations. Consider your individual circumstances. Give thought to all of the potential consequences. Be certain that you have arrived at the most rational and responsible stance possible in the moment you are living.

I'll be doing the same.

We will become more and more metarational day by day.