

Continuous Life Improvement

Post by "Garden Dweller" of November 8, 2019 at 7:11 PM

[Quote from Garden Dweller](#)

18. Use Rational Decisionmaking!

Rational decisionmaking means that one considers a number of criteria before making a decision on a behavior or action. For example, the choice of food that one eats is a complex prioritization that one makes every day.

Consider the following criteria used to select which food to eat:

Healthy

Low Cost

Tastes Good

Makes you feel good the next day

Easy to Cook

One might rate these criteria as to importance on a 1 to 10 scale. For example:

Importance Rating

10 Healthy

7 Low Cost

8 Tastes Good

5 Makes you feel good the next day

3 Easy to Cook

Then one might select a few food options and rate them according to the criteria:

Pizza Salad Fried Rice

2 8 7 Healthy

7 8 5 Low Cost

8 6 7 Tastes Good

2 10 8 Makes you feel good the next day

3 8 5 Easy to Cook

Multiply each rating by the importance rate for that row and sum:

Pizza Salad Fried Rice

20 80 70 Healthy

49 56 35 Low Cost

64 48 56 Tastes Good

10 20 16 Makes you feel good the next day

9 24 15 Easy to Cook

152 248 182 Total

The highest total amount indicates which choice would be most beneficial, based on the priority level given to each criteria.

This type of rational decision method for choosing food is an example of how one should approach many decisions, both mundane daily decisions such as what to eat, as well as long term life decisions. The criteria and rating system used in this example is a simplification of the process that people use to make decisions in real life.

The point here is not that you should use a spreadsheet to decide what to eat. The purpose of this example is to show how to make decisions based on consideration of the most important criteria, rather than based on immediate gratification. A certain level of discipline is needed to select the behavior or action that is most beneficial to one's life over the long term.

Display More

I intend to replace this with:

18. Rational Behavior Decisionmaking

In order to use reason to live a life of happiness and tranquility, one applies rational decisionmaking to ones life based on the philosophy of Epicurus.

Rational Behavior Decisionmaking involves selecting one's behavior and activities, including:

Which activities we choose to do each day

Which people we associate with

How we speak to and treat other people

Recognizing nature through our senses

What we consume

Distinguishing between pleasure and pain, and determining which actions or events led to the experience of pleasure or pain

Levels of Rational Behavior Decisionmaking

Present Moment Distress Reduction

Be attentive to one's body and respond to distress in the present moment.

One should constantly monitor your body's senses: are you sitting comfortably, are your clothes and shoes comfortable, are you warm or cold, are you hungry or thirsty, do you have any mental stress or physical discomfort? When you sense any of these distress indicators, take action to remedy the discomfort as soon as you can.

Present Moment Positive Emotion Enhancement

Over one's life, one should learn specific behaviors that enhance feelings of joy, kindness, love, grace and other positive emotions (pleasurable emotions). Behaviors which bring pleasure might include calling a friend for a conversation, preparing a meal, writing a poem, taking a nap, designing a project, organizing one's desk, reading a book or going for a walk. The behaviors which an individual finds pleasurable are individual to that person. Each person must make themselves aware of the types of behaviors which enhance one's positive emotions, and in the present moment, should select that behavior which the individual feels would be most pleasurable. It may be helpful to make a list of behaviors that have been enjoyable in the past to help one remember the options that one has in the present moment.

Future Distress Reduction

There are a number of problems which one can avoid in the future by taking action today. Examples are preparing a financial budget to avoid a lack of funds, exercising to improve future health, medical care to heal a wound, working today to avoid future poverty, brushing one's teeth to avoid tooth decay. Select this type of preventative behavior when a relatively minor negative experience today will prevent a major discomfort tomorrow.

Future Positive Emotion Enhancement

Some actions one can do today can reap benefits in the future. Examples are planting a seed to enjoy the future crop, getting an education which will improve one's career, investing savings so that one may enjoy free time from employment. Select this type of action strategically, with a consideration as to risk and reward, in particular regarding what one is giving up today.

Self Preservation and Maximization of Pleasure

Life is what allows us to enjoy pleasure, so preservation and extension of one's life is the prime directive to maximize one's ability to experience pleasure.

In one's rational behavior decisionmaking process, one should always consider the risk of death or injury associated with the behavior, and the impact of the behavior on one's health and longevity.

Suggestions for starting out with a system of rational behavior choices:

Make a list of foods which cause indigestion or other problems and avoid them.

Consciously select the food and drink which you consume using science-based knowledge of a healthy diet as well as your preferences in flavor and taste.

Make a list of things which you enjoy doing and which bring pleasure, so you can refer back to them when you have time and don't know what to do.

Make a list of preventative actions you wish to take and know how they need to be applied in order to be effective.

Imagine the type of life one would like to have in the future and ask oneself what can one do today to bring that life into effect.

If there is an activity which you particularly enjoy, for example, a morning walk or afternoon tea, deliberately schedule these activities on your calendar so they don't get neglected and double booked by more mundane tasks and responsibilities.