# UNDERSTANDING THE IRRATIONAL MIND

## A LONG DEFINITION

**Irrationals are those who, when presented with evidence that contradicts their belief, will employ all means possible to reject the evidence, and as a last resort will simply deny it.**

**Rationals, on the other hand, when confronted with evidence that contradicts their belief, will weigh the evidence, and IF the new evidence is superior to that upon which their belief is based, will replace the old belief with the new.**

## IRRATIONAL V. RATIONAL

**What motivates the irrational mind to protect their beliefs in the face of any and all evidence?**

**The “Ego” which always seeks to grow ever larger.**

**And, in fact, that is exactly what it does.**

**That is why the irrational person will NEVER, EVER admit they are wrong under ANY circumstances.**

**Allow the ego to grow and it will push the brain into a corner of your skull, so small, that it will be almost impossible to ever find it again.**

**The chances of recovery are bleak indeed.**

**If there is a chance it is only through training in critical thinking skills.**

**What motivates the rational mind?**

**The search for knowledge and truth.**

**Rational thinkers are like sponges who soak up knowledge for the sheer love of learning.**

**Their minds grow ever larger; their egos become irrelevant.**

**That is why a rational mind is the only one that can admit when it is wrong.**

**The only thing that matters is that now they know more than they knew before. They are ready for the next challenge.**

**The secret, if there is one, to learning to become a rational human being is to allow your brain to keep your ego under control**

**(don’t underestimate the difficulty of what I have just said;**

**what may sound simple is actually nearly impossible for the great majority of people on this planet).**

**In any debate, the Rational is holding 4 aces; in other words all the facts and proof are on their side. The Irrational is forced to bluff because their hand has nothing (no facts). The Irrational must resort to logical fallacies and other distraction techniques in order to try to support their position.**

**But just like in a real poker game, the bluffer sometimes wins. If you are a rational thinker then you must realize this. Once you develop the courage to call their bluff, their power to make you believe comes to an end. You get this power and courage through training: training yourself in the rules of reason and logic and learning the tricks that Irrationals employ to make it seem like they are supporting their position, when in fact they are not.**

## CLARIFICATION

**Obviously irrational thinkers can think rationally under some circumstances.**

**Likewise, normally rational people can think and act very irrationally.**

**There are no ‘perfect’ people who always think only one way.**

**It is more accurate to envision a continuum from 0 to 100 where no one exists at the extremes but populate every conceivable point in between.**

**So when I refer to “Irrationals” I am referring to people who generally think a certain way when confronted with a claim.**

**Similarly, “Rationals” are people who will usually think in a different manner when confronted with a claim.**

**I use these terms for convenience and I do not mean to imply that people exist in only two categories ‘irrational’ and ‘rational’.**

## CONFIRMATION BIAS

**The definition of the irrational mind that I gave at the beginning indicates that there is a serious error in the method used in their reasoning.**

**A common term used to describe the trap that irrational thinkers fall into is called “Confirmation Bias.”**

**The Irrationals only seeks evidence that supports the answer they already believe to be true.**

## EXAMPLES

**A friend who believes in alternative medicine and all food fads sent me an email regarding extreme life expentancy on the island of Okinawa.**

**I read the article and noticed that the purpose of the story was to support the theory that the main factor in longevity was ‘calorie restriction’ which is the current medical consensus.**

**Missing the main point of the article, my friend said that this article proves that Okinawans live longer than all other humans because of their diet!**

**Granted, diet was mentioned briefly in the article as a factor, but the author made it clear (at least to rational thinkers) that ‘calorie restriction’ was the factor that they considered to be the main reason for the increased life expectancy.**

**As stated earlier, the irrational mind never searches for truth – only verification of their beliefs.**

**So, in true irrational style, my friend missed the entire focus of the article, found a few sentences that she felt supported her belief, and couldn’t wait to send it to me thinking that it proved that her beliefs about ‘eating your way to a long life’ were proven in this article.**

**Then she did the exact same thing a month later!**

**I had claimed that skiing (my favorite sport) was very dangerous.**

**She didn’t like that because she didn’t ski and didn’t want me to have the ‘status’ of participating in a dangerous sport.**

**A simple case of ego jealousy.**

**This time she sent me an article comparing three of the most dangerous sports: football, skiing, and a third sport which I forgot.**

**The conclusion of the report was that, of the three, skiing was only the third most dangerous.**

**She saw this as proof that I wasn’t really engaging in a dangerous sport; missing the whole point of the article - which was - comparing three of the most dangerous sports that people engage in.**

**Skiing wouldn’t have even been in the article if it wasn’t considered a very dangerous sport. Like the Okinawa story, Irrationals only see what they want to see (anything that supports their beliefs) and they discard everything else, even missing the main point if it doesn’t support what they desperately want to believe.**

## CHALLENGING THE IRRATIONAL

**What happens when you challenge an Irrational instead of letting them win?**

**Well, usually when my irrational friends start resorting to logical fallacies and distraction techniques to defend their positions**

**I find it easier just to give in and let them think they’ve won.**

**One time though, I held my ground and showed her that she was completely wrong and that the dictionary proved it.**

**Did she give in and admit she had been wrong?**

**Not on your life!**

**Time for a distraction technique.**

**She said “Well that’s just your interpretation of the definition.”**

**The purpose of this distraction technique was to get me to agree that we just had different interpretations of the definition so she could claim a draw and not admit that she had been wrong.**

**But this time instead of letting her win I told her that I recognized what she was trying to do and that I wasn’t going to allow her to get away with it.**

**I didn’t ‘interpret’ the definition – I simply read it verbatim;**

**and it was quite clear.**

**She became quite upset when I didn’t let her succeed with her distraction technique.**

**Remember, the irrational mind will NEVER admit to being wrong.**

**This reminded me of an incident from my childhood:**

**I was playing tag with a little kid.**

**Everytime I tagged him he said “you missed me.”**

**After a few times of letting him get away with this cheating**

**I decided to tag him harder so there would be no mistake.**

**I didn’t work. He simply repeated “you missed me.”**

**I was tempted to push him down, but I didn’t want to hurt him and I also realized that he still might simply say the same thing “you missed me.”**

**So sometimes it’s just easier to let them win.**

**Another incident from my childhood:**

**I was playing ball with a little boy (different kid) and it’s some kind of game where he always wants to have possession of the ball.**

**So when I get the ball I always let him take it away from me.**

**But one time I decide to keep it.**

**He throws a tantrum and starts crying.**

**Finally I let him have his ball and he goes away happy.**

**That is how it still is, only now with adults.**

**Now the game isn’t a ball game or a game of tag**

**but a discussion where you have to let them win to keep them happy.**

**If you don’t, they will throw a tantrum, or worse, they will make sure that you will regret it.**

**Even with adults it often seems like I’ve never escaped kindergarten.**

## CERTAINTY

**The appeal of certainty is so powerful to Irrationals that they prefer**

**anything that will provide it, regardless of whether or not it is true.**

**For them, false certainty without evidence is infinitely desireable**

**to uncertainty.**

**To quote the famous Carl Sagan, “For me, it is far better to grasp the universe as it really is than to persist in delusion, however satisfying and reassuring.”**

**Lacking answers, Irrationals always assume the supernatural explanation.**

**Rationals don't claim to have all the answers; they can admit they do not know and will patiently wait as science makes its slow steady progress towards enlightenment, withholding judgement until evidence swings in a particular direction.**

**Oddly, the less evidence Irrationals have for a belief,**

**the stronger their conviction.**

**They seem to believe that they can intimidate people into accepting their unsupported beliefs simply by asserting with total conviction the truth of their belief. Sadly, they usually succeed.**

**Due to the lack of critical thinking skills in our society, the untrained are more likely to believe people who seem more sure of themselves. As always, they have it backwards because they do not know how to weigh the evidence or investigate claims, so they usually go with the person who seems more certain.**

## RELIGION

**I have a female friend who has a strong faith in Christianity (different woman than before).**

**We were discussing the bible and she made the following claims:**

**The bible gives people a strong set of moral values to follow.**

**She doesn’t believe people can be moral without the bible.**

**She also believes that the new testament ‘replaced’ the old testament.**

**(obviously, she has had trouble in the past defending the god of the**

**old testament, so she decided she could better defend the one in the new).**

**A day later I sent her biblical references regarding those claims.**

**Quotes from the bible included scripture that supported horrible morals such as slavery, subjugation of women, mass murder being justified, and the death penalty for a variety of offenses that today are not even considered offenses**

**(such as talking back to one’s parents and working on the sabbath).**

**I also included a reference where Jesus makes it perfectly clear that**

**Christians are not to ignore even one iota of the law from the old testament.**

**She went to her pastor to get answers to refute the passages I sent her.**

**Armed with these replies,**

**she explained to me how good a life the slaves had!**

**(food, shelter, protection, etc.)**

**I guess we just have to ignore all the ones that were beaten, starved, raped, and killed.**

**If slavery is such a great life (according to her)**

**how come African-Americans don’t voluntarily go back to the plantations in the South and offer to return to their bondage?**

**Oh, that’s right – it’s illegal; that’s probably the only thing stopping them from returning in mass back to that great life on the plantations.**

**She also pointed out the economic benefits to society!**

**(I’m serious – and so was she).**

**I’m sure the economic benefits were great for the slave owners;**

**maybe not so great for the slaves.**

**When I couldn’t take any more I said “So you’re okay with slavery then?”**

**She answered “yes.”**

**Now that I realized how wrong I had been about slavery,**

**I tried another hypothetical question about a 2-year-old who gets sodomized and murdered by his uncle**

**(not such a hypothetical actually – I got this story off the evening news).**

**I wondered: was that part of god’s plan?**

**Was that a necessary part of the plan?**

**He couldn’t have designed a better plan?**

**Why does god allow this to happen?**

**At first, she said it was a test.**

**A test for whom?**

**I assume the uncle failed the test,**

**but what about the child – what did the murdered child learn from the test?**

**She replied that all children go to heaven**

**and since heaven is for all eternity,**

**the child won’t care about what briefly happened on Earth.**

**I said, “So then you’re okay with the rape and murder of the child?”**

**She said, “Yes it was part of god’s plan.”**

**I said, “how is it fair that the child gets eternal life in heaven**

**and I have to be tested (and fail because I reject your particular god)**

**and lose eternal life.”**

**That is completely unfair.**

**Any rational mind could easily see that there is nothing fair about that.**

**Yet when arguing with a true-believer their prime directive is NEVER to admit defeat no matter how impossible their position becomes.**

**So naturally her answer was ... “It is fair!”**

**I have learned so much from this person.**

**I now know that slavery is okay and that the sodomy and murder of an infant is of no lasting importance.**

**I wanted to learn more (after all, isn’t that what science and skepticism are all about – the continual search for answers, knowledge, and truth?)**

**So I asked, “who created god?”**

**She told me that you can’t understand the concept of infinity:**

**god has always been here.**

**Interesting.**

**She requires that evolution explain every detail including how life began; but those same rules of evidence don’t apply to her belief.**

**That violates the logical fallacy of “inconsistency” which occurs when one applies different standards of judgement.**

## DEBATE

**So the point of this show is to show that no matter how completely you destroy a true-believer’s position, they will NEVER admit they are wrong on any point.**

**Do not go away from the discussion disappointed.**

**If you do, it is only because you didn’t realize that there never was any chance that the Irrational would admit that your arguments could change their mind.**

**That will never happen.**

**It can ONLY happen when the person, with whom you are debating,**

**is a rational person.**

**You need to understand that you did win.**

**Your argument completely destroyed theirs.**

**You never were going to obtain an admission.**

**Their admission isn’t necessary anyway.**

**The fact that you can force them into indefensible positions is the proof that your logic was correct and that they simply do not have the intellectual honesty to admit it.**

## MORE ABOUT RELIGION

**Irrationals CAN’T admit they are wrong because to do so would risk eternal damnation.**

**It is important to state that this really isn’t a matter of intelligence**

**(no matter how you want to define the word ‘intelligence’).**

**Religious people cannot admit they are wrong because they are scared shitless of the invisible imaginary Man in the Sky.**

**Are Christians cowards?**

**Not exactly: they have proven the equal of any enemy on any battlefield.**

**They have killed and been killed with equal zeal and lust.**

**Cowards in war are actually quite rare.**

**But how do they fight an invisible foe who is all-powerful?**

**That is one enemy they lack the courage to face.**

**The ONLY people on Earth with the courage to stand up to invisible, all-powerful creatures are the Atheists.**

**Strangely, however, the Atheists are probably the ones more likely to desert in terrestrial battles!**

**Let’s face it, people who have God can die for their country or religion and end up with a better life.**

**Atheists have no where to go.**

**They understand the real world and that this is the only shot at life they are ever going to get; so I don’t think it is a stretch to guess that deserters may be more likely to be Atheists (although I have no way of knowing whether or not this is true).**

**If you need to build an army, better a mass of obedient, submissive zombies who will do anything you tell them to do rather than people who can think for themselves. And nothing promotes zombie-like thinking as well as religion.**

## PERSPECTIVE

**To contrast the two methods:**

**The Scientific Method**

**“Here are the facts,**

**what conclusions can we draw from them?”**

**The Creationist Method**

**“Here is the conclusion,**

**what facts can we find to support it?”**

**As a final point so that I am not misunderstood.**

**The irrational mind that dominates over 90% of all our citizens must be put into proper perspective.**

**To use my friend above as an example, she is very well-educated, experienced in life and most importantly has a good set of moral values. She is a very nice person just like most of the other ‘Irrationals.’**

**What I am talking about here is the inability of irrational people to have ‘intellectual’ honesty because their ego-driven beliefs are more important to them than the truth.**

**What is so bad about irrational thinking?**

**Why not let them believe whatever they want and keep your mouth shut.**

**Well, that is certainly what they want you to do.**

**And I would, except that their imaginary beliefs can and do have real-world consequences.**

**When they act on those beliefs then other people are usually going to suffer in some way.**

**Skepticism can’t compete with religion, which offers eternal life**

**(hopefully above, not the one below).**

**But what skepticism can offer you is freedom: freedom from alien abductions, ghosts, witches, monsters, and all other forms of invisible imaginary creatures including gods. It is simply amazing how none of these invisible demons have ever been able to hurt a single skeptic in recorded history. Okay, maybe that’s just a coincidence, but it’s still reassuring.**

## PURPOSE OF THE SKEPTIC ARENA

**So why even fight against the overwhelming domination of Irrationals?**

**There is little hope of getting irrational people to think rationally.**

**It is not that skeptics don’t care and it’s not because we haven’t tried.**

**It’s just that we have learned from experience that it is hopeless.**

**There is nothing we can do for them.**

**The reason skeptics fight against insurmountable odds is because we are looking for those few people out there whose egos have not taken over complete control of their minds.**

**People who do have the ability to think rationally, but only lack the training and knowledge.**

**I know because I was one of them.**

**I want to do for others what was done for me.**

**Skeptics do not proselytize; religion does that.**

**Skeptics make themselves known and rationals find us.**

**That is why we fight.**

**We only seek those who seek us: lonely, isolated Rationals looking for their ‘family’.**

**SKEPTICISM IN THE NEWS**

**Congo witchcraft!**

**Shrinking and stealing penises; impotency.**

**Killing of witches. This is similar to the witch burnings that were rampant only a couple of hundred years ago in Europe and the U.S. carried out by christians.**

**People in america laugh at the Congo then turn around and pay Sylvia Browne $700 / 20 min to talk to the dead!**

**Atheists can’t be calling her because they don’t believe in invisible spirits.**

**WHAT GOD HAS TO SAY ABOUT IT**

**exodus 22:18 “Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live.”**

**deuteronomy 18:10-11**

**“There shall not be found among you any**

**one that maketh his son or his daughter**

**to pass through the fire, or that useth**

**divination, or an observer of times, or an**

**enchanter, or a witch, Or a charmer, or a**

**consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard,**

**or a necromancer.”**

**God has made himself pretty clear.**

**When you stand before the pearly gates,**

**those of you who used Sylvia Browne’s services**

**better have an answer ready**

**for why you felt you could disobey his clear instructions.**