Rational Versus Irrational

Three key questions to ask yourself about your beliefs.

Here are three questions to test your beliefs to see if you're thinking in a rational/helpful way, or if your beliefs are irrational/unhelpful.

1. Does my belief help me or hinder me over the long run?

Rational thinking is defined as thinking that is helpful to you over the long run.

Irrational thinking is defined as thinking that hinders you over the long run.

Follow-up question: If my belief hinders me, what rational/helpful belief would be more likely to help me reach my goals and to feel better?

2. Is my belief consistent with known facts and reality?

Rational thinking is defined as thinking that is consistent with known facts.

Irrational thinking is thinking that is inconsistent with (or unsupported by) known facts.

Follow-up question: If my belief is inconsistent with reality, then what rational/helpful belief would be more consistent with reality?

3. Is my belief logical?

Logical thinking is defined as thinking that makes sense. For example, if you said you would very much like to succeed at something, does it logically follow that therefore

you *must* succeed? No, the *necessity* for success does not follow logically from the fact that success would be beneficial. Another example: Does it make sense to think: “Because something is bad, I can’t stand it”?

Follow-up question: If my belief is illogical, what rational/helpful belief would make more sense logically?