

# Three Ways to be More Rational This Year

January 26, 2022

**Many people use the New Year to turn over a new leaf – to act in a way that is more rational and in our better interests. Yet we all have to confess this is more difficult than it might seem.**

Here are three examples from my series – Think with Pinker – of common irrationality traps and how to avoid them.

## 1. Future you

When people contrast what they are “thinking” with what they are “feeling”, often what they have in mind is the difference between immediate and longer-term enjoyment. For example – a feast now and a slim body tomorrow; a trinket today and sufficient funds when the rent is due; a night of passion and the facts of life nine months later.

This contrast between times can feel like a struggle between selves, as if we have one self who enjoys a streaming TV series and another who enjoys good grades in an exam.

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