# ****Knowing Knowledge With Peirce’s Pragmatic Maxim****

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**I often find myself in online forums, particularly in the religion threads, not for entertainment, but for curiosity. It’s where people seem to wrestle with ideas about existence, meaning, and truth. One question that has captivated me the most is epistemological in nature: “How do you know what you know?” Initially, I found it merely provocative, but over time, I realized it revealed deeper reality than the question itself. I was not just reading arguments, I was confronting the frameworks that shape my beliefs. I started recognizing how deeply I valued coherence, objectivity, and rationality, traits that guided both my discussions and self-exploration.**

**Engaging with epistemological questions taught me to step outside of default assumptions. Many participants in the thread ask not for answers, but to challenge others’ worldviews. That constant clash of perspectives urged me to assess not just the content of beliefs, but their foundation. I resonated most with Charles Peirce’s pragmatic maxim, that the meaning of human actions and beliefs is found in their consequences (Kaushik 2020) This approach, which echoes the scientific method, shifted my thinking. Instead of viewing truth as correspondence with an unknowable reality, I began to value it as a model justified by objective consequences. As how Kaushik puts it, "This world is a world of unique human experiences in which, instead of universal truths, there are warranted beliefs, which take shape as we repeatedly take actions in similar situations and experience the outcomes."**

**The cycle became clear to me: beliefs guide actions, actions produce consequences, and consequences help refine beliefs. This belief-action-consequence model became my anchor. For example, if I believe I can punch a wall without injury, the pain from doing so disproves my belief. That pain is an objective consequence, it doesn’t care about my intentions or assumptions. This simplicity helped me organize my reflections and life decisions around what works based on the consequences of the actions which are in turn, driven by my beliefs, not merely what feels true. Morgan (2020) stated that rather than arguing about whether something is true or not, pragmatists focus on the consequences of acting on a set of beliefs.**

**My experience aligns with research suggesting that reflection deepens understanding and aids professional and personal growth. Beliefs are formed rationally. As Morgan (2020) explained, it is important to recognize that Peirce developed the formal concept of abduction as a type of reasoning that produces hypotheses, followed by a step that depends on the expected effects of acting on those hypotheses. In engaging with online forums, I wasn’t just absorbing opinions, I was gathering knowledge, which is always based on experience (Kaushik 2019).**

**Looking back, I see how engaging in those threads wasn’t a waste of time at all. It was, in fact, a classroom, one without walls. I learned to respect perspectives while sharpening my own. More importantly, I realized that truth, for me, is not found in abstractions but in the tangible results of my actions. This realization doesn’t end the search for knowledge, it fuels it. I now approach conversations, beliefs, and decisions with the humility to test, the courage to act, and the wisdom to revise.**

****References:****

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