So far as you can tell, what is rotation? When do we need to do it? Why do we need to do it? What is the difference between oblique and orthogonal rotation, and which is better?

Rotation appears to be a way to interpret items on based on their correlations and how they create factors (We are assuming there are 2+ factors). After the factors are extrapolated, then it becomes a requirement to make sure they can fairly be measured on the correlation that is appropriate for them. That is, their correlation of other items within that factor. If the items in one factor are correlated to another factor, then the interpretations tend to not make sense - there will be odd negative correlations are hard to interpret. Therefore, we need to “rotate” them so the items only correlate correctly with the specific factor they belong to. One major reason I saw from the reading for doing this was for pure interpretation of the factors and item clustering. We can have a better understanding of the items when they are oriented to the way that works. In sum, we need to do it for interpretation.

The difference between oblique and orthogonal rotation is in terms of how the factors are correlated. If a researcher a-priori understands that factors are correlated, then the oblique rotation method may serve as more appropriate. These are looking at the shared variance between the 2 factors and the items being influenced by them. Orthogonal rotation does not have this assumption. Therefore, the factors are assumed to not be correlated.

It is hard to define which rotation method is better because it really depends on the factors being measured. In my opinion, it seems hard to believe that factors are not correlated often times, but I am sure there are times when orthogonal rotation works appropriately. DeVellis mentions that if there is a lack of theory, about the correlation of the factors then it seems better to start with an oblique rotation. If the correlations are quite small, then an orthogonal rotation may suit better. However, having an initial theory of the factors correlations would be the best.