

Transcript for Episode 2: Four Reasons We Need More of the World in Our Lives

Here's a scenario for you. You go to a restaurant, you sit down, and you open the menu, and there are a ton of different foods available. We've got food from all over the world, and most of it you have never heard of before. What are you going to order and why? You are listening to episode two of the Wiser World podcast.

Four reasons we need more of the world in our lives. In this episode, I'm going to talk about how this restaurant analogy can be used to explain global literacy and why it improves our lives and the world. Welcome to Wiser World, a podcast for busy people who need a refresher on all things world. Here we explore different regions of the globe.

Giving you the facts and context you need to think historically about current events. I truly believe that the more we learn about the world. The more we embrace our shared humanity. I'm your host, Allie Roper. Thanks for being here.

Hello again. So glad you're back for episode two. If you missed episode one, go back and listen to it because it gives a little more framework for how these episodes work. These first two episodes.

I also want you to know about my email list. If you want to hear updates on the podcast, book lists, movies to watch some extra things that I have in store, go to my website. It's in the link in the show notes, but it's wiser world podcast. com and sign up for that list. I promise I will not spam you and send you emails all the time, but it is an easy way to stay up to date.

And you don't have to be on social media to know what's going on. Okay, now to the episode. The other day I was with a friend who was once an accountant at a big firm, and she was telling me that they had to take assessments on occasion. That measured a variety of things. And one of them was called global acumen.

And what this means is that the test measured their competence in world affairs. So how well could they speak to a colleague in another part of the world? Do they understand how the world was interconnected and organized? And she said that in order to pass this test, she had to be pretty well read. She had certain news outlets that she would read daily and she had to stay on top of it to keep her job or.

At least say nothing stupid at work, right? And I heard her say this and I started thinking about the benefits of becoming more globally literate. And as I was creating this episode, I decided I was only going to pick four reasons to make it just one episode, but there's so many more reasons. And it was really difficult for me to narrow it down, but here they are.

Here are my four reasons why we need more of the world in our lives. All right, let's do number one. Let's go back to that scenario from the beginning of the episode. You're at this new

restaurant, there's a really cool vibe, the seats are comfortable, everything smells good. You open up the menu and you see a ton of different options.

It's in your native language, but a lot of the words are unfamiliar to you. A lot of these meals you don't recognize. And you're really hungry, so you need to figure out what to eat. My first question is, what is the main emotion you feel as you listen to this scenario? For me, I think I'd feel kind of nervous.

Like nervous fear. What if I order the wrong thing and I hate it? I like trying new things, but sometimes I get really bummed when I try something new and I spend my money on something and then I don't like it. I get kind of mad. So it does make me nervous to figure out what to order if everything is unfamiliar.

Maybe you've been to a restaurant where you're like, I don't know what anything on this menu is. The next question is, what would be helpful to you in making your choice for what to eat? What would help you pick? Now for me, I think there are two things that would help me. The first is if there are explanations for what is in the dish or what the word means.

You know those menus that have little blurbs under the name of the dish and it kind of tells you what the ingredients are and you can kind of imagine, like, okay, I can see how those could fit together. I love those things. Basically, that is education. You feel better when you are educated on what is in the dish.

And the second thing that would help me, I think is if someone was there with me that had either been there before and tried the food and could explain it to me, or if I had a really helpful waiter that I could ask questions to, and they would spend time teaching me. So in other words, support. So let's say that you have some education, you have this helpful menu and you have some support, the friend or the You order the food and you like it.

How do you feel in this moment? Right? You're going to come back again. You're going to want to go back. You're going to want to bring people with you and show them what you've discovered. And this restaurant that scared you at first, the initial reaction was fear or anxiety. Now turns out is your favorite.

And if you are good, if you go back to this restaurant and then you try something you don't like, you're not going to stop going back. You're in it for the long haul because you know, you've tried something that you like there. I can't help, but wonder if we live in this phenomenon all of the time. As humans, we are wired to be wary of things that we do not understand or that we know nothing about.

It is human nature. Most people don't want to put something in their mouths that they don't know what it is. You know, you don't want to talk to someone when you don't know where they're from. You don't know why they have that scarf over their head, or you don't know why they're celebrating that holiday, right?

There's fear in the unknown and most bullying or poor treatment of people really comes from fear. It's a protective mechanism that we have built. And sometimes it can be helpful in the past. I think there were times when it was helpful, but mostly nowadays it's not helpful. And I have been noticing a trend.

It seems to me that the less a person knows about the world, the more nervous they are to talk about it. And I think this makes sense. There seems to be more fear about people different from themselves, different religions, different skin colors, different cultures, different food. These people seem to be far more afraid of international travel.

Right? It comes from this protective mechanism that really isn't serving them. But on the flip side, it seems to me that the more educated or supported a person is or the more they are getting educated, the more growth mindset they have, the more likely they are to try that new food or visit that new country that's new to them or ask more questions to that person sitting next to them on the plane.

The more people are growing in their knowledge, the more excited they are, It's like the first time someone tries really good sushi and suddenly they want to take their friends to sushi because it's good. It's exciting and it's not unknown anymore. And so they're more open and interested in trying other new things because they had a good experience with that one thing.

And so this is my first reason for why global literacy is so important. When you're getting educated and you're supported, you have less fear. You're not as nervous to travel. You're not as nervous to talk with people who have different cultures from your own. And to me, That is reason enough to learn.

Just less fear about things. So the first one is less fear, which leads us straight into number two, which I'm just going to come right out and tell you. The number two is that becoming more globally literate is really humbling because it makes us aware of our shared humanity. Have you ever read a book or watched a movie or a show that just like rocked you to your core?

Maybe it was about a war or poverty or children or healthcare. These are issues that really tap into the deepest parts of ourselves. And you just want to love on those people that are going through that tragedy. I felt that way when I watched the movie Hotel Rwanda. Which is about the Rwandan genocide and guys, I am not a crier, but I had, I would watch that movie alone and I had to stop it multiple times, like press pause so I could like sit and sob and just cry.

And I think that that is one of the biggest gifts of world history is we remember our shared humanity. We are able for a moment to step into someone else's life and then their story for just a little bit of time and maybe even long term becomes part of ourselves. And I love a quote by Brene Brown where she says, people are hard to hate up close or close up.

People are hard to hate close up, move in, speak truth, be civil, hold hands with strangers. Personally, I think it's a lot easier for me to hold hands with strangers when I'm a little more literate on their history and their culture. And so to see this work itself out in real life, I'll tell you a little story about myself.

A few months ago, I was at a playground with my toddler son and my friend just happened to be there with her son as well. And her husband was there and I had never met him before. And upon introductions, I learned that he was from Iran and we started small talking, and then I branched out and I asked him about his upbringing and what brought him to the U.

S. And we talked about that transition and the culture shock. And I told him about my interest in that region and the time that I lived in Israel or Palestine. And at some point along the way, I made the mistake of assuming that he's from Iran. I spoke Arabic and then I caught myself because I remembered, Oh, wait, hold on.

People in Iran mostly speak Farsi and they're really proud of that fact. And so I apologized and anyway, was I astonishingly quick with it? No, no, it was not. But I also wasn't nervous to talk with him and I was able to apologize for my mistake and he ended up inviting us over for dinner and we left the playground and I didn't feel like a complete idiot.

And think of what I'd have missed out on if I had only talked with them about potty training Transcribed That would have been the easy way out for sure. The easy route would have been to just talk about our kids. But I ended up learning so much from that conversation with them and I made a friend. So even having a basic understanding of peoples and cultures and religions and economies and governments, these types of topics, it gives us kind of, you know, Both confidence and humility.

When we speak, we have deeper, more interesting relationships with people because we ask better questions, which means that we get better answers. It leads to even better questions. It's like this wonderful ripple effect. Think about, you know, asking your Danish friend over lunch. Okay. Tell me your thoughts on how we should treat the elderly.

Like, what is your culture feel about the way we treat age? That is going to be way more interesting conversation than what What's Denmark like, or where are you from, you know, so knowing that you can't know it all, but that you want to learn, people can feel that kind of curious energy. And it leads us to, like I said, asking better questions, which leads to better friendships, which leads to improving our culture and the way we interact with each other and teach our children.

And so there's just this wonderful effect that comes from it. And we so desperately need that in this world right now. So that's number two, global literacy. Enriches and deepens our relationships taps into our shared humanity. All right, number three is near and dear to my heart. I'm very excited about this one because number three, the third reason why we need more of the world in our lives is that it gives us a framework for noticing patterns.

Now there is this overused, but very true quote from George Santayana, who said, those who do not learn history. are doomed to repeat it. And I think that to a large extent, that's probably true, but I want to add an extra layer to that. I think that those who do not learn history are doomed to repeat it because they aren't as quick to pick up on patterns and act accordingly.

Think about that friend that keeps making the same mistakes over and over. It's because they're not picking up on the patterns going on. And same with the world. For example, when you know history, you could spot a dictatorship in the making. Because you know how Hitler or Stalin rose to power. When you know history, you can spot a genocide in the making, because you know what happened in Rwanda or Germany.

When you know history, you can spot a coup in the making, because you know what a coup is, and because you know what happened in Iran or Iraq or any number of countries that have had a coup. So when you've seen how things played out in the past, you can more easily see patterns as they begin to emerge now.

And this is one of my favorite things about being a history person. I love, I get so giddy when I'm watching a news clip or I'm reading an article and I can make a connection to something in the past. Sometimes it calms me down and I think, okay, wait, this has happened in the past. This was resolved. This is how it can be resolved, but sometimes it really freaks me out overall, though.

I do think that it always gives me context and that context is never a bad thing. So having this processing framework for noticing patterns can be extremely powerful. I just feel so strongly about this. It is more powerful than we realize. As you gain knowledge, you become more aware of the possibilities and restraints.

That face the world's people, both in the past and now. And this helps you think more critically and less simplistically about what's really going on. You jump to conclusions less and less. You're less influenced. You can think more for yourself. You think more deeply about what is not being said. That's something I've been noticing a lot lately is people will read something, but they won't think about what's being left out.

I could go on and on about how powerful the number three is, but patterns are key. And they are one of the main reasons to learn history. And we will draw on patterns often during this podcast. All right. Number four, the final benefit I have for learning about the world is that it is an anecdote. To entitlement, or in other words, when we are more aware, we become less selfish.

Now, when I was a teacher, I taught in a pretty affluent area. A lot of the kids at my school came from families with a lot of money. And on the first day of school, I always did an object lesson on poverty and economics. And I did this because I wanted to get the kids out of their own heads for a second.

The first day of school was a really. Tricky day. And so what I did is I had this activity where I had pinto beans in jars and each pinto bean represented 200, 000 people who live on less than 2 a day. And we just do this activity where we talk about economics and poverty. And it was always fascinating to me how the feeling in the room would change.

You know, there's that buzzing energy on that first day of school. Everyone's looking around who's wearing what. It's just. It's just a very interesting day, and when I do this lesson, suddenly the armor that every kid puts on on the first day of school just kind of faded away. Who was wearing what, or who got their learner's permit over the summer, or who lied to, or who didn't get to sit with their best friend.

Just none of those things had near the same pull that they had before the lesson. The world can be sobering and transporting. It's amazing! Have you ever read a book or watched a show about another area of the world and you just felt yourself transported there? There's really nothing like it! Sometimes it feels like an out of body experience.

The escape can be so real. You can almost completely leave your life for just a little bit and immerse yourself in someone else's story, in someone else's homeland. And in many cases, when you come back into your own, You feel far less entitled. It's hard for me to feel entitled when I'm reading about the Holocaust.

I'm so much less whiny about the little tiny things in my life when I am thinking about people in other regions of the world. So learning world history is a great antidote to entitlement and self centeredness. I know for me, the first second that I start feeling myself thinking that my way is the only way.

That's the minute I know I need to go looking for a book or a show or some, something about somewhere else, different from my own culture and way of life. And it grounds me and roots me and keeps me steady. And this translates into the way that we parent and interact with each other. As we become more globally minded and aware, we start seeking opportunities to do good, to give more.

In ways that we otherwise wouldn't be able to do. It gives us the know how and the smarts to be able to be more capable. You know, it doesn't make us geniuses or experts, but it does make us wiser. We listen to the news better. We have less fear. We teach our kids more confidently, or we teach children in our lives more confidently.

We raise more inclusive generations that lead us better into the future. We get better jobs with larger scope and reach, right? There's so many ways that this helps us. And we all have influence on children, right? Right. It is easier to build strong children than to repair broken men. Frederick Douglas said that, and the world needs competent and capable people to influence our young people.

They live in a very entitled world. And I feel very strongly that as we gently and normally incorporate some of these things into our lives, we really can become more outward facing people that are open minded and open hearted. And I feel that very strongly. I really, really want that for our world. We can create powerful change in those tiny little things that we do in the conversations in the car, just those little things.

So the fourth thing is that it is an antidote to entitlement. All right. To sum up my four reasons why we need more of the world in our lives. The first is less fear. The second is deeper conversations or shared humanity. And the third is that it gives us a framework for noticing patterns. And the fourth is that it makes us less selfish.

And I really feel all of these things strongly. And I hope that something in this struck you as important. And if that happened, I hope you share it. I would love to hear your thoughts on my Instagram, which is wiser world podcast. And I am so grateful for all shares and reviews. Thank you so much for those who have shared.