

Integrative Medicine Debate

Ryan Castle

Nov 30

to David Gorski

Dr. Gorski,

First of all, I want to apologize for the continued Twitter posts about scheduling, there was a miscommunication about our talk. I've asked Deepak and Kristin to respect your request while we discuss the possibility of a debate.

Before we go any further, is this the email you'd prefer to use?



Gorski, David

Dec 1

to me

Please use ----- I try to separate my keep my extracurricular activities as separate from work as possible.

As for further discussion on this, can it wait until after I get my big grant application done early next week?

David

--

David H. Gorski, MD, PhD, FACS



Ryan Castle

Dec 1

to David Gorski

Dr. Gorski,

Thank you for the clarification, and we can certainly wait until next week to go over details. I would only ask that you let me know as soon as possible whether Dec. 17 is a viable date, and if not what is. I need to clear my schedule for whenever the potential debate might be.

Thanks,
Ryan



David Gorski

Dec 2

to me

December 17 is out. I don't see anything possible until early next year.

You're also making a big assumption. I haven't agreed to debate yet. I thought I was agreeing to an exchange, an opening of communications, which is something I'm always happy to do and could certainly do by e-mail or phone before the end of the year.

That being said, I'm not a big fan of public debates and have always been skeptical of their value, viewing them as more entertainment than educational. It's a skepticism that dates back at least a decade. Also,, although I'm a halfway decent public speaker, I've never actually done a public debate before. Jumping into my first with someone as high profile as Deepak Chopra is something I'd definitely have to think about long and hard.



Ryan Castle

Dec 2

to David

There's no assumption, I just wanted to know about the 17th on the off chance you already felt strongly about doing it so I could adjust my schedule for the month. I'm flexible regarding the timing, though I'd like to move forward as soon as is practical, should you decide to agree.

I'm actually the one who came up with the debate idea and discussed it with Deepak, and if you're not comfortable debating him in person, I would be happy to act in his stead. I'm lower profile but know and represent Deepak's positions. That was an arrangement that would be on the table anyway, given his very hectic schedule. This was never intended to be a showboating exercise, but rather an opportunity to reach for a higher level of discourse than online enmity.

As far as the educational value, I hope you'll consider it. I feel that too often community leaders are preaching to the choir, while a debate has the opportunity to bring a population that would normally never seek you out and have them listen to your reasoning. Political debates have become a joke and spectacle, but this is planned as a proper academic debate, civil and fact-based. I've seen Deepak and Michael Shermer debate informally at a conference, and the result was educational for all sides.

As for myself, I think a debate could be useful in showing people that the other side (whoever it may be) are not simply morons and swindlers, or bullies and corporate hacks. I personally hope that more scientists will come away seeing some value in integrative research, but I'm also happy if integrative practitioners come away with an understanding that their approach is not as firmly established as they thought. More than anything, a proper debate encourages critical thinking, and I feel that's something everyone is in desperate need of these days.

Please consider it and let me know what you think.



David Gorski

Dec 3

to me

I'll consider it and get back to you next week. This weekend, I'm too buried in finishing up the grant application that has to be uploaded on Monday and preparing for my trip to San Antonio on Tuesday. Actually, meetings are often a good time for me to contemplate, because there's usually a fair amount of down time.



Ryan Castle

2:38 PM (42 minutes ago)

to David

Dr. Gorski,

I was as civil and respectful as could be in approaching you about this debate, and offered every consideration to ensure it would be substantive and evidence-based. You asked to move the conversation off of Twitter to avoid awkwardness and we respected that. You asked for more time and we respected that. You addressed concerns about Deepak being too high of a profile and we offered to get a surrogate. At every turn we attempted to be as open and conscientious as possible. You told me you'd get back to me by the 10th about your thoughts.

You never bothered to reply to me, but instead you posted a Tweet and blog mocking our efforts to have a "debate." I am disappointed by the disrespect and disdain you have shown fellow human beings who were trying in good faith to reach an understanding. I have always been a proponent of open-mindedness and cooperation, but these do not seem to be values you share. That is regrettable, as I consider them to be essential to a scientific and inquisitive mind.

For someone who is so disgusted by Donald J. Trump, you should be careful you do not emulate his zero-sum morality and bullying otherization.

Sincerely,

Ryan Castle



Ryan Castle
Executive Director, ISHAR

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