

# Features

## Pedagogical Elements



**Take It Personally**

*"The hottest places in hell are reserved for those who, in times of great moral crisis, maintain their neutrality."*

ANONYMOUS\*

\*Widely attributed to Dante Alighieri, but found nowhere in his writing.

Of all the sub-disciplines of philosophy outlined in Chapter 1, the study of ethics is perhaps the most strikingly relevant and practical, especially given that so much of our life is awash in morality. For example, after the death of George Floyd on May 25, 2020,<sup>2</sup> some called for blood vengeance, others for reform, and still others for calm adherence to the rule of law. There were those who wanted immediate criminal prosecution, while many advocated complete defunding of police departments. When events like these occur, people are stunned into a new ethical awareness, frequently characterized by confusion and moral self-doubt. Questions are asked: "What should we do?" "What is the right response?"

Not only in such extreme cases as George Floyd's death, but also with respect to world events in general, a moral response is demanded from all of us. In plain view of poverty, hunger, global injustice or the inequitable treatment of minorities, for example, we may choose as moral agents to accept responsibility and take action. Quite possibly, however, we may do nothing by ignoring the problem, defensively rationalizing our noninvolvement, or blaming the victims who suffer. One should note, though, that even choosing not to respond is itself a moral response needing justification.

When it comes to the mistreatment and abuse suffered by racialized minorities, for instance, many concerned citizens have protested, yelling, "Silence is violence!" Doing nothing or standing on the sidelines while injustices are being perpetrated is tantamount to collusion or at least tacit approval, in the estimation of many people. So, even if neutrality is an ethical position that has consequences and requires justification, it would appear that there is, in fact, no escaping moral responsibility. What is more, an examined life—a life worth living—cannot be lived in a moral vacuum.

Given this, let's apply here in this context a metaphor used in Chapter 2: Recall the notion that we can either stay afloat in our *philosophical lifeboats*, by making ongoing repairs to our damaged and leaking *moral planks*, or we can break apart and capsize in a whirlpool of moral confusion and indecision. If we don't wish to be uncontrollably pushed this way and that by the turbulent waters of life, and if we wish to steer properly and maintain the integrity of our existential vessels with any success, morality is not something that should be left unattended. Our own safe travels on life's journey depend upon our having a working moral compass. We all need to know when to make proper directional adjustments in and during the course of our lives.

In view of the fact that morality is unavoidable and so important, the question arises as to why so many people still try to sidestep it. Part of the reason, perhaps, is because of morality's serious, difficult, and sometimes overwhelming nature. Morality often deals with the big issues of life, things like war, capital punishment, and euthanasia—favorite topics covered in many applied ethic textbooks.

Because most of us are not in the military, on death row, or dying from a terminal illness, however, these enormously important moral issues and others like them can sometimes appear like distant hypothetical concerns, things we needn't worry about while commuting to school in rush hour traffic or stocking the shelves at work. Nevertheless,

<sup>2</sup> George Floyd was an African American who was killed by a police officer in Minneapolis. The officer, Derek Chauvin, knelt on Floyd's neck for over nine minutes while Floyd was lying face down and handcuffed. Chauvin was sentenced to 2.5 years in prison.

### Take It Personally

To illustrate how philosophy can be useful and relevant to individuals, each chapter of *Experiencing Philosophy* begins by placing the material to be covered in a personal context. Students are shown how philosophical questions and concerns are often built into their daily life experiences. Grounding philosophical inquiry in the context of real life serves to motivate students and thereby helps instructors to teach more effectively.

### Quotations

Inspirational and thought-provoking quotations are sprinkled throughout the text as a way of generating interest and providing opportunities for personal reflection and meditation. They may be taken to heart by some readers or possibly remembered for purposes of finding personal meaning and direction in life. At other times, the quotations may simply be useful to capture the essence of points that are made in a much more detailed way in the main text. These philosophical zingers should give us all pause for thought.

## Know Thyself Diagnostics

This book takes seriously, as did Socrates, the Delphic Oracle's dictum to "*Know thyself*." To this end, students are provided self-diagnostics in each of the chapters to explore further their own philosophical values, ideals, and beliefs pertaining to truth, reality, ethics, the existence of God, the nature of knowledge, metaphysics, and the best system of political organization. By means of these diagnostics, students are given a chance to identify their underlying personal philosophies of life and to compare them with other worldviews that have been articulated over the centuries. Students are also able to assess their current logical thinking abilities so that they can establish how much work they will need to do in order to think more rationally.

### KNOW THYSELF

#### The Philosophy of Life Preference Indicator

This chapter examines four philosophies of life—Stoicism, Existentialism, Hedonism, and Buddhism—which offer us ancient and modern, Eastern and Western, theistic and atheistic, as well as rational and non-rational perspectives that have direct and immediate practical relevance to your personal life.

The purpose of this self-diagnostic is to help you establish your level of agreement or disagreement with the assumptions, values, and beliefs embedded in various philosophical viewpoints so that you might become clearer about your own thinking and personal worldview.

#### INSTRUCTIONS

Below you will find a number of statements that reflect one of four philosophies covered in this chapter. Next to each statement, indicate your level of agreement or disagreement using this scale:

- 1 = strongly disagree
- 2 = disagree somewhat
- 3 = agree somewhat
- 4 = strongly agree

After completing this task, follow the scoring instructions.

1. \_\_\_\_\_ Pleasure is the principal motive for living.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ Life makes no sense; it has only the meaning we give it.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ It is not important to win favor with powerful and influential people.
4. \_\_\_\_\_ Human existence is imperfect in a very deep way, filled with all types of suffering.
5. \_\_\_\_\_ It is of paramount importance to gain mastery over one's desires.
6. \_\_\_\_\_ The value of individuality or individual expression is extremely high.
7. \_\_\_\_\_ It is wrong to deny yourself enjoyment and pleasure.
8. \_\_\_\_\_ The root cause of human suffering is desire or craving.
9. \_\_\_\_\_ Live for the moment; tomorrow may never come.
10. \_\_\_\_\_ Everything that happens, happens for a reason.
11. \_\_\_\_\_ It is bothersome when people merely play roles and conform to social expectations.
12. \_\_\_\_\_ Grasping at the pleasures of life ultimately increases suffering.
13. \_\_\_\_\_ Life is difficult; then you die.
14. \_\_\_\_\_ The individual is the measure of pleasure; there are no objective standards.
15. \_\_\_\_\_ Coincidences are not random, but meaningful.
16. \_\_\_\_\_ In order to find happiness, we must eliminate selfish craving.
17. \_\_\_\_\_ Emotions often get in the way of life; they should be controlled.
18. \_\_\_\_\_ You're ultimately free to make life anything you will it to be.

### PHILOSOPHER PROFILE

#### Siddhartha Gautama, the Buddha

The person we have come to know as the Buddha was born circa 563 BCE as Siddhartha Gautama, the only son of a ruling king in what is now Nepal. The details of Siddhartha's life are sketchy since no complete biography of the Buddha was compiled until centuries after his death. Much of the information we have comes from tradition and myth, and it's difficult, therefore, to distinguish between fact and legend. What we do know is that his people were called the Sakyas; for this reason, the Buddha is sometimes referred to as Sakyamuni, or "the sage of the Sakyas." "Buddha" is not a personal name but an honorific title meaning *the awakened one*. Siddhartha Gautama (his clan name) did not actually become the Buddha until his mid-thirties, when he achieved enlightenment.

As the son of a royal ruler, the young Siddhartha led a life of luxury and pleasure. Legend has it that soon after his birth, a wise sage came to visit and noticed that there were 32 special markings on Siddhartha's tiny body. For the sage, this was a sign that Siddhartha was destined for glory. He would either become a universal monarch or great religious teacher.

Siddhartha's father, Suddhodana, was not entirely thrilled by this. The king wanted his son to succeed him, since if the prince abandoned his position in the royal palace, Suddhodana would be without an heir. Believing that the ugly, unpleasant, and painful things of life would turn Siddhartha's mind toward religion, Suddhodana decided that he should raise his son in a completely protected environment of comfort, beauty, and pleasure.

Three splendid marble palaces were built—one for each of the hot, cool, and rainy seasons. Siddhartha was confined to the upper stories of these palaces and provided with every kind of pleasure and luxury to prevent boredom from setting in. He lazed around the palace in fine silks, ate the most delicious foods, and enjoyed



armies of musicians, dancing girls, and the most sensuous courtiers who were on hand to amuse and entertain him. Shielded from him were illness and old age. Presumably, if Buddha never experienced the pains and miseries of life, he would never be drawn to religion and could therefore fulfill his father's wishes. At age 16, Siddhartha married his cousin Yasodhara, who bore him a son (Rahula) when he was 29.

Before the birth of his son, Siddhartha had already fallen prey to restless boredom, notwithstanding all of the efforts of his father. Ironically perhaps, unproductive self-indulgence simply could not make life satisfying for him. With his hired guardian, friend, and charioteer, Channa, Siddhartha made secret trips outside the palace walls. Channa became a tour guide of sorts, answering many of Siddhartha's questions about the harsh realities of life beyond his protected environment. It was during these secret trips that Siddhartha saw "the four signs" that would change his life forever.

On the first trip, Siddhartha encountered an old man; on the second trip, a sick man; and on the third trip, a corpse being carried away for cremation. Because Siddhartha had lived such a cloistered life for almost 30 years, these three encounters were quite traumatic for him. He had no concept of the true human condition: that all human beings are susceptible to sickness, old age, and death—including Siddhartha himself. Disturbed by this, he wondered how anyone could find happiness since, in the end, there is no escape from suffering and loss, with all of the associated sadness and disappointment. After witnessing the first three signs, all the pleasures and delights of palace life quickly lost their charm: Siddhartha had lost his innocence.

On a fourth trip outside the palace walls, Siddhartha and Channa came upon a wandering holy man. Alone, dressed in rags and possessing nothing, this ascetic monk displayed a demeanor that thoroughly impressed

## Philosopher Profiles

The student-centeredness of *Experiencing Philosophy* is evidenced again by putting names and faces to the ideas covered in the book. Pictures of influential and historically important philosophers are presented along with biographical information. Abstract ideas contained within the book are tied to real people with interesting real-life personal histories. This helps to bring the textbook material alive.

## PHILOSOPHERS IN ACTION

Does Buddhism make sense to you as a practical philosophy of life? How so, or why not? What, if anything, about Buddhism do you like most? What, if any, Buddhist notion is most challenging or most difficult for you to accept?

After thinking about this, imagine a conversation between Siddhartha Gautama and the Hedonist

Aristippus. What would they say to each other? Would they agree with each other's philosophy? Explain and elaborate, creating a kind of dialogue or debate that might transpire between them. You might even wish to stage a theatrical scene for the benefit of the class!

you. Perhaps a sudden outburst of anger soured your relationship with somebody for days, weeks, or possibly even years. Maybe a brilliant political career was ruined by a momentary moral lapse. Whatever the case, karma does not involve a punishing judge heaping on retribution; it's about the individual creating the consequences of his or her own future. Buddha teaches that

If a person speaks or acts with unwholesome mind, pain pursues him, even as the wheel follows the hoof of the ox that draws the cart. (*The Dhammapada*)

Another way of explaining karma is to say, "What goes around comes around." In this respect, *giving is indeed receiving*. Give unwholesomeness, and you get it back in return. Give wholesomeness, and you receive it in kind.

The notion of karma extends beyond current existence to past lives and future ones. For instance, your own karma has determined such matters as the species into which you were born (human), your beauty, intelligence, longevity, wealth, and social status. What you do in this life will, in turn, affect the karma of your next life. If you have been born with "bad karma," not to worry. There is a modifiability of the karma you've inherited. Furthermore, if you have already engaged in some unwholesome activities to this point in your life, it is not necessarily true that bad karma will result. It can be mitigated. On the subject of the modifiability of karma, the Buddhist monk Nyanaponika Thera writes:

A particular karma, either good or bad, may sometimes have its result strengthened by supportive karma, weakened by counteractive karma, or even annulled by destructive karma.<sup>49</sup>

For Nyanaponika Thera, a bad action, or any karmic actions for that matter, must be viewed from the total qualitative structure of the mind from which the action issues:

It is an individual's accumulation of good or evil karma and also his dominating character traits, good or evil, which affect the karmic result. They determine the greater or lesser weight of the result and may even spell the difference between whether or not it occurs at all.<sup>50</sup>

Appreciating that karmic results are modifiable frees us from the bane of determinism. It teaches moral and spiritual responsibility for oneself and others. It helps us to recognize that karmic action affects the doer of the deed. Even if bad words and deeds,

## Thinking about Your Thinking

*Thinking about Your Thinking* is an exciting new feature inserted into this second edition of the book. Metacognitive prompts require students to engage in higher-order thinking, not only about presented readings and ideas, but also with respect to their own values, assumptions, and beliefs. This type of *self-conscious thinking* or way of thinking with *self-awareness* reinforces learning about philosophy. It also helps students to develop a general understanding about themselves as learners and as rational agents in the world.

When students begin to think more about the content and structure of their own thinking, they are able to think more creatively, analytically, and objectively. Also, when they can bring to conscious awareness what was previously and unreflectively accepted or assumed, distortions due to psychological defensiveness can be reduced; at the same time, more objective attitudes can be cultivated. The ultimate result is a more expansive, nuanced, and open-minded view of the world, not to mention a richer experience of life.

## Philosophers in Action

Philosophy is often described as more of a method of thinking than as a body of knowledge. From this perspective, philosophy is something you *do*, not simply something you know. With this in mind, students are given many opportunities to practice doing philosophy. Students using this text are frequently asked to think critically and analytically in response to questions posed in the *Philosophers in Action* feature. These questions require them to conduct thought experiments, analyze concepts, as well as to discuss and debate controversial points.



### THINKING ABOUT YOUR THINKING

Make a list of 5-10 of your current desires that you've not yet satisfied, and 5-10 of your past desires that you've already satisfied at some earlier time. Why do you desire what you desire now? What, if anything, stands in the way of you satisfying your desires? Turning now to desires that you have successfully satisfied in the past, was the satisfaction of some of your desires more pleasing than the satisfaction of others? If so, why do you think that was?

According to Epicurus, the natural child, in its untutored state, would not desire logic and math as something pleasurable good. The Epicurean does not, therefore, glorify the contemplative life or the life of reason, as Plato and Aristotle did, for example. Mental pleasures are not any better or higher than bodily pleasures. Both are natural.

### Natural Desires

On this note, Epicurus instructs us to follow our **natural desires**. As Julia Annas, a scholarly expert on Epicurus, puts it in her excellent book about Stoicism and Epicureanism, *The Morality of Happiness*, "Natural desires ... do not pre-

clude mental rather than bodily pleasures; rather, the natural/not natural distinction cuts right across that of mental and bodily. Natural desires are those we cannot help having, so that in fulfilling them we are following, rather than forcing, our nature."<sup>51</sup> Thus, bodily desires for food and drink are, for Epicurus, as natural as the mental desire for tranquility of the soul (what some of us today would call peace of mind).

If we are to fulfill our natural desires, it is important that we not rely on **empty beliefs**, that is, on those that are false and harmful. Vain or unnatural desires based on empty beliefs do not come from nature but rather are products of teaching and acculturation. Their falsity results from the incorrect evaluative beliefs that ground them. Empty beliefs have a tendency to be vain and self-defeating, since they typically reach out for boundless objects that can provide no stability or long-term satisfaction. Natural desires, by contrast, can be well-satisfied because they do have limits.

By trying to satisfy artificial and limitless desires, we end up sabotaging our own *ataraxia*. Suppose, for instance, you are hungry. Simple bread could ease your hunger pangs. But if you believe that, given your station in life, you truly deserve *beluga caviar*, then if the caviar is unavailable, you will still remain troubled in your soul with frustration, even though you quiet your body's craving with bread. You will believe that you didn't get what you deserve and be upset by this belief. Needing food is natural; craving caviar is not. Though eating caviar may be pleasurable (if you like that sort of thing), not every pleasure is worthy of being pursued or troubled about if it's not available. Believing you deserve caviar and developing a desire for it are things you have been taught or introduced to, not things natural or necessary to the human organism. If we don't rid ourselves of empty beliefs like the one about caviar, we may end up satisfying our basic physical needs, but in ways that perpetuate our mental disturbances.

In his "Letter to Menoecus," Epicurus classified the various kinds of human desires. Some are **vain desires**, meaning that they are not rooted in nature. Becoming famous or owning jewels are things you may desire, but they do not come with being born human. Such vain desires are conditioned by false beliefs of what is required to make one happy.

**Natural desires**, by contrast, may be either necessary or unnecessary. The desire for sex is natural, yet many people live a celibate life without much, if any, frustration. Desiring delicious foods is also natural but unnecessary, for we could easily live on a bland diet. Those desires that are both natural and necessary are required for comfort, happiness, and life itself. Epicurus believed that practical wisdom and friendship contrib-

## Original Sources

*Experiencing Philosophy* seeks to balance accessibility and relevance with academic rigor. While introducing some beginning students to philosophy entirely by means of original writings might be regarded as inappropriate for a variety of reasons, doing so without any exposure at all to the primary works of the philosophers could be seen as equally misguided. To say that one has completed an introductory course in philosophy, but has not read any philosophy in the original, seems wrong somehow.

In efforts to strike an appropriate balance for beginning students, the bulk of this text will be comprised of descriptive outlines of philosophers and their theories. In addition, however, numerous *Original Source* reading selections—usually shorter excerpts from longer original texts—will be included as well to give readers exposure to the *real thing*, so to speak. Follow-up reading questions accompany the works included.

*Reading Questions and Metacognition:* While some reading questions aim to promote analysis and further comprehension, other questions are formulated as metacognitive prompts. These prompts draw students' awareness to the activity of reading itself, in order to develop their philosophical literacy in particular, and their skills for reading independently more generally. Together, both types of questions afford students the opportunity to engage in more self-reflection, to enhance their reading and learning strategies, to *do* more philosophy, and to practice their logical, critical-analytical thinking skills in a more directed, rigorous fashion.

## Other Features

Various summary tables, figures, and highlighted features are presented throughout the text as a way of illustrating or underscoring important points. These items add relevance by relating philosophical theory to real-world applications, experiences, and current events.

### ORIGINAL SOURCE

#### Jean-Paul Sartre, *Existentialism Is a Humanism*<sup>12</sup>

Sartre originally delivered *Existentialism Is a Humanism* as a public lecture at Club Maintenant in Paris in 1945. The following year, Simone de Beauvoir edited the lecture for publication.<sup>13</sup>

#### PART I

What, then, is "existentialism"?

Most people who use this word would be at a loss to explain what it means. For now that it has become fashionable, people like to call this musician or that painter an "existentialist." A columnist in *Clarinet* goes by the pen name "The Existentialist." Indeed, the word is being so loosely applied to so many things that it has come to mean nothing at all. It would appear that, for lack of an avant-garde doctrine analogous to surrealism, those who thrive on the latest scandal or fad have seized upon a philosophy that hardly suits their purpose. The truth is that of all doctrines, this is the least scandalous and the most austere: it is strictly intended for specialists and philosophers. Yet it can be easily defined. What complicates the matter is that there are two kinds of existentialists: on one hand, the Christians, among whom I would include Karl Jaspers and Gabriel Marcel, both professed Catholics; and, on the other, the atheistic existentialists, among whom we should place Heidegger, as well as the French existentialists and myself. What they have in common is simply their belief that existence precedes essence; or, if you prefer, that subjectivity must be our point of departure. What exactly do we mean by that? If we consider a manufactured object, such as a book or a paper knife; we note that this object was produced by a craftsman who drew his inspiration from a concept he referred both to the concept of what a paper knife is, and to a known production technique that is a part of that concept and is, by and large, a formula. The paper knife is thus both an object produced in a certain way and one that, on the other hand, serves a definite

purpose. We cannot suppose that a man would produce a paper knife without knowing what purpose it would serve. Let us say, therefore, that the essence of the paper knife—that is, the sum of formulae and properties that enable it to be produced and defined—precedes its existence. Thus the presence before my eyes of that paper knife or book is determined. Here, then, we are viewing the world from a technical standpoint, whereby we can say "production precedes essence."

When we think of God the Creator, we usually conceive of him as a superlative artisan. Whatever doctrine we may be considering, say Descartes's or Leibniz's, we always agree that the will more or less follows understanding; or at the very least accompanies it, so that when God creates he knows exactly what he is creating. Thus the concept of man, in the mind of God, is comparable to the concept of the paper knife in the mind of the manufacturer: God produces man following certain techniques and a conception, just as the craftsman, following a definition and a technique, produces a paper knife. Thus each individual man is the realization of a certain concept within the divine intelligence. Eighteenth-century atheistic philosophers suppressed the idea of God, but not, for all that, the idea that essence precedes existence. We encounter this idea nearly everywhere: in the works of Diderot, Voltaire, and even Kant. Man possesses a human nature; this "human nature," which is the concept of that which is human, is found in all men, which means that each man is a particular example of a universal concept—man. In Kant's works, this universality extends so far as to encompass forest dwellers—man in a state of nature—and the bourgeois,<sup>14</sup> meaning that they all possess the same basic qualities. Here again, the essence of man precedes his historically primitive existence in nature.

Atheistic existentialism, which I represent, is more consistent. It states that if God does not exist, there is at least one being in whom existence precedes essence—a being whose existence comes before its essence, a being who exists before he can be defined by any concept of

\* A knife designed for cutting the pages of a book, necessary then for reading French publications.

† The contemporary conformist middle-class member.

3.2 EXISTENTIALISM: BORN FREE, LET ME BE ME 159

## Stoicism and Stress Management

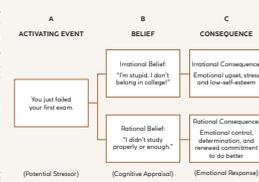
The psychologically healing powers of Stoic wisdom have managed to trickle down into contemporary society through psychotherapeutic practices of stress management. Albert Ellis, the internationally recognized developer of Rational-Emotive Behavior Therapy, has found through research and clinical practice that people feel largely the way they do because of how they think. Ellis says, "What we label our emotional reactions are mainly caused by our conscious and unconscious evaluations, interpretations and philosophies." When we feel anxious, worried, or stressed, it is frequently due to the irrational assumptions we make and the foolish beliefs to which we cling.

Consistent with Stoic thinking, Ellis argues that things and events, in themselves, don't *make us unhappy*; rather, our *interpretations* of them do. Therefore, if we could identify our irrational assumptions and beliefs and then abandon them, we would then begin to live a more rational lifestyle, one with significantly less stress and less negative emotion. By clinging to irrationality, we become architects of our own emotional disturbance and "dis-ease."

To illustrate how this is so, Ellis has conceptualized an A-B-C Model of psychological functioning which he incorporated into his therapeutic methods (Figure 3.2). The A represents the activating event—the real-life occurrence that is potentially stressful, although not necessarily so. The activating event could be a failure, loss, hurt, or anything else that could produce stress in your life. Intuitively, some

of us think that such events automatically cause a stress response. However, the emotional consequence—of failure, loss, or hurt—is not necessarily determined by such things. Coming between the activating event (A) and the ultimate emotional response or consequence (C) is the belief (B) about what just happened (A). The cognitive interpretation and appraisal of the activating event will ultimately determine the emotional response. Besides serving as an explanatory illustration for Ellis, Figure 3.2 also serves to underscore the stoic insight of Epictetus that *Men are not disturbed by things, but by the view that they take of them*.

FIGURE 3.2 Albert Ellis's "A-B-C" model



### Emotions in Life

Given the lengthy history of Stoicism and its many variations from different periods and geographic locations (Athens and Rome), academic interpretations regarding the Stoic position on **emotion** are not entirely consistent. Some analysts claim the Stoics rejected all emotions to the extent it was humanly possible; others contend that such a claim is only a half-truth, asserting that what the Stoics wished to abolish were the "excessive passions" that led to mental disturbance.<sup>15</sup>

The discrepancy seems to come from the fact that interpreters cite different sources in their translations from the Greek that either distinguish, or fail to distinguish, between the notions of *emotion* and *passion*. Where emotion is totally dismissed, the distinction between emotion and passion appears not to be made; where some expressions of emotion are permitted, the difference is recognized.

*"Things themselves touch not the soul, not in the least degree."*  
MARCUS AURELIUS

3.1 STOICISM: A PRESCRIPTION FOR PEACE OF MIND 145

## Progress Checks

Completion of the *Progress Check* at the end of each chapter can help to verify one's mastery of the material. Answers to the Progress Checks are found in the *Answers to Progress Checks* at the back of the book.

P **PROGRESS CHECK**

**INSTRUCTIONS:** Fill in the blanks with the appropriate responses listed below. (Answers at back of book.)

active engagement suffering friendship aphorisms craving causal determinism Aristippus <i>Nirvana</i> enduring immediate Middle Path	courageous acceptance ego fear uniqueness natural virtue vain Socrates synchronicity existentialism Diogenes	Epicurus essence Zeno unorthodox crowd <i>ataraxia</i> limits ethical hedonism blame ordered revolt	existence absurd pleasure worldviews self-control psychological hedonism Viktor Frankl emotional detachment subjectivity nature meaningful life
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1. Philosophies of life offer us different perspectives or \_\_\_\_\_.
2. The founder of Stoicism was \_\_\_\_\_ of Citium.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ was a model for both Cynics and Stoics alike.
4. The most famous Cynic in history is \_\_\_\_\_, someone who lived in a wine barrel.
5. The Stoic universe is one which is rational and \_\_\_\_\_.
6. A term for meaningful coincidence is \_\_\_\_\_.
7. Since life is fated and an expression of God's will, according to the Stoics, it is best that we develop an attitude of \_\_\_\_\_.
8. The purpose of life for the Stoic is to live according to \_\_\_\_\_.
9. If we are not to be adversely affected by events in the world, we must develop \_\_\_\_\_.
10. \_\_\_\_\_ is a philosophical movement that some prefer to see as an attitude or outlook, rather than as a formal philosophy as such.
11. Existential insights are sometimes best captured by \_\_\_\_\_ and other literary forms, not by rational deductive argument.
12. The reason some philosophers have problems with Existentialists is due to their \_\_\_\_\_ methods.
13. Existentialism is a \_\_\_\_\_ against rational, philosophical system building.
14. Existentialists underscore the importance of \_\_\_\_\_ and the \_\_\_\_\_ of individuals.
15. Atheistic Existentialists believe that \_\_\_\_\_ precedes \_\_\_\_\_.
16. With respect to human conduct, Existentialists reject the thesis of \_\_\_\_\_ and fate.
17. Without God to give it order and meaning, the Existentialist's universe is \_\_\_\_\_ and chaotic.
18. The Existentialist would warn you against being swallowed up by the \_\_\_\_\_.
19. If it is true that we are completely responsible for our actions, thoughts, and emotions, then we can't \_\_\_\_\_ others for what we do or how we feel.
20. \_\_\_\_\_, the noted psychiatrist, used many existential insights in the development of logotherapy.

PROGRESS CHECK 201

### STUDY GUIDE

## Summary of Major Points

1. **What is the historical background of Stoicism?**
  - flourished in ancient Rome and Greece for about five centuries (third century BCE–second century CE)
  - founded by Zeno; co-founded by Chrysippus
  - well-known Stoics: Epictetus, Marcus Aurelius, Seneca
  - influenced by Socrates and the Cynics
2. **What is the Stoic universe like?**
  - ordered, rational, structured, and shaped by design
  - synchronistic, fated
  - monistic (God is immanent in all things)
3. **How should we live in a fated universe?**
  - Be reassured; God orders things for the best.
  - See beyond evils and misfortunes; in a larger context, they make sense.
  - Appreciate your freedom to choose your attitudes and make your judgments.
  - Develop an attitude of courageous acceptance.
  - Live according to nature.
  - Try to develop Stoic apathy to live in *eudaimonia*.
  - Look upon the world with emotional detachment to develop peace of mind.
  - Abolish excessive passions.
4. **How do we progress morally?**
  - Know thyself.
  - Engage in daily self-examinations.
  - Monitor your thoughts, feelings, and actions.
  - Substitute good habits for bad ones.
  - Avoid temptations and wayward companions.
  - Become master in your own psychological home.
  - Eliminate disturbing passions and excessive emotions.
  - Forgive others.
  - Live up to some ideal of virtue (e.g., Socrates, Jesus, Buddha).
  - Perform your duties in accordance with right reason.
5. **Why is Existentialism difficult to define?**
  - It is something like an attitude or outlook; not a formal system
  - It comprises several different perspectives (atheist, theist, apolitical, Marxist)
  - It uses unorthodox methods (literary and artistic)
6. **Who are the major figures associated with Existentialism?**
  - Friedrich Nietzsche
  - Karl Jaspers
  - Gabriel Marcel
  - Jean-Paul Sartre
  - Simone de Beauvoir
  - Martin Heidegger
  - Albert Camus
  - Fyodor Dostoyevsky
  - Franz Kafka
7. **How is Existentialism a revolt?**
  - It is a reaction against pure rationality and philosophical systems-building.
  - It emphasizes subjective experience.
  - It uses literary forms and other unorthodox methods.
8. **What are some central themes of Existentialism?**
  - essence versus existence
  - freedom of choice
  - individuality and subjective experience
  - possibility and contingency
  - authenticity
  - negation
  - personal responsibility
9. **What constitutes a meaningful life according to Susan Wolf?**
  - It is a life that is actively and at least somewhat successfully engaged in one or more projects of positive objective value, as opposed to projects of subjective value.

## Study Guides

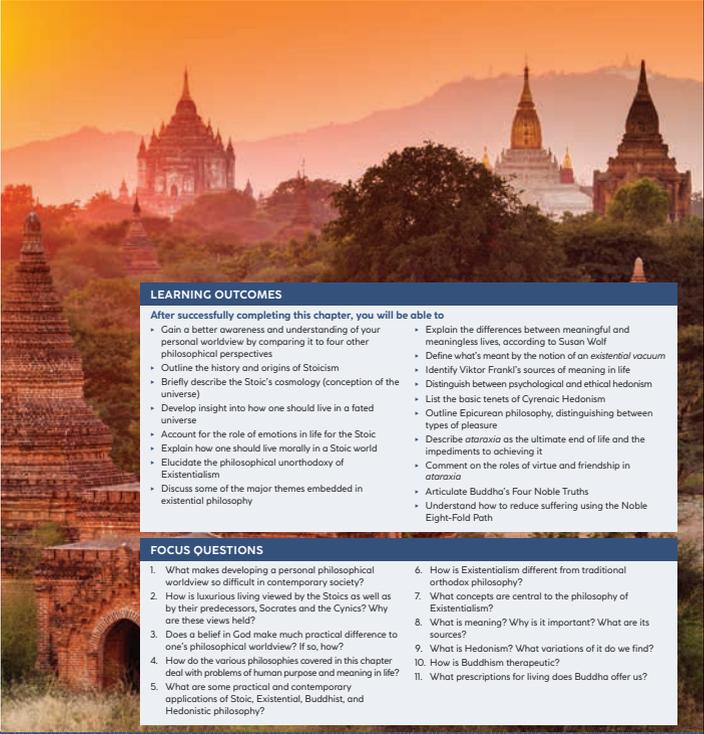
*Experiencing Philosophy* is designed to maximize student chances for success. Before students can properly analyze, discuss, and debate subtle and sometimes esoteric philosophical material, they must first master basic vocabulary and be able to grasp fundamental concepts. The study guide built into the end of each chapter is designed to help them do this. It contains a glossary of key terms and summaries of major points.

By enabling students to gain basic knowledge and understanding of the fundamental ideas contained within any one chapter, the book helps them to be better prepared to do philosophy when it comes to conceptual analysis, theoretical application, or critical evaluation. Note that the chapter end study guides themselves are part of a larger system of SQ3R learning incorporated into the text and described in what follows.

# The SQ3R System of Learning

This book incorporates the *SQ3R system of learning*. Its elements are listed and described below. SQ3R is the acronym for *survey, question, read, recite, and review*.

CHAPTER 3



## Philosophies of Life

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**LEARNING OUTCOMES**

After successfully completing this chapter, you will be able to

- Gain a better awareness and understanding of your personal worldview by comparing it to four other philosophical perspectives
- Outline the history and origins of Stoicism
- Briefly describe the Stoic's cosmology (conception of the universe)
- Develop insight into how one should live in a fated universe
- Account for the role of emotions in life for the Stoic
- Explain how one should live morally in a Stoic world
- Elucidate the philosophical unorthodoxy of Existentialism
- Discuss some of the major themes embedded in existential philosophy
- Explain the differences between meaningful and meaningless lives, according to Susan Wolf
- Define what's meant by the notion of an essential vacuum
- Identify Viktor Frankl's sources of meaning in life
- Distinguish between psychological and ethical hedonism
- List the basic tenets of Cyrenaic Hedonism
- Outline Epicurean philosophy, distinguishing between types of pleasure
- Describe *ataraxia* as the ultimate end of life and the impediments to achieving it
- Comment on the roles of virtue and friendship in *ataraxia*
- Articulate Buddha's Four Noble Truths
- Understand how to reduce suffering using the Noble Eight-Fold Path

**FOCUS QUESTIONS**

1. What makes developing a personal philosophical worldview so difficult in contemporary society?
2. How is luxurious living viewed by the Stoics as well as by their predecessors, Socrates and the Cynics? Why are these views held?
3. Does a belief in God make much practical difference to one's philosophical worldview? If so, how?
4. How do the various philosophies covered in this chapter deal with problems of human purpose and meaning in life?
5. What are some practical and contemporary applications of Stoic, Existential, Buddhist, and Hedonistic philosophy?
6. How is Existentialism different from traditional orthodox philosophy?
7. What concepts are central to the philosophy of Existentialism?
8. What is meaning? Why is it important? What are its sources?
9. What is Hedonism? What variations of it do we find?
10. How is Buddhism therapeutic?
11. What prescriptions for living does Buddha offer us?

## STEP ONE: Survey

Each chapter of the book begins with a list of *Learning Outcomes* and *Focus Questions*. Students are asked to survey these things to find out what is included in the chapter to determine what they will be expected to know and do upon successful completion of it. Think of outcomes as objectives or goals to be achieved. Study of the chapter is not really done until one demonstrates mastery of all of the outcomes listed up front in any particular chapter.

## STEP TWO: Question

Every chapter of *Experiencing Philosophy* contains *Focus Questions*. As you might guess, they are intended to focus one's attention while reading. Knowing what to look for helps one to be selective and to separate what needs to be known from what is nice to know or what is less important.

## STEP THREE: Read

Once students know what to look for and what they are supposed to accomplish by a study of the chapter, reading can begin. Of course, reading philosophy is not like reading the newspaper or a popular graphic novel. Philosophy contains a lot of technical vocabulary and terms with which students may not be familiar.

We recommend that individual students read each section slowly, repeatedly, and with an online or physical philosophical dictionary handy nearby. Some may find it helpful to highlight important sections of the text with a marker or pen. One should not be discouraged if a first reading leaves one bewildered sometimes. Philosophy requires everyone to pay attention to difficult matters and to think in a way that is not always encouraged by popular culture, social media, or mainstream news outlets.

While reading, students should take notice of the **boldfaced** terms and *italicized* passages. They indicate that an especially important concept or idea is being addressed. Footnotes (indicated by \* and † in the text, and found at the bottom of some pages) add some parenthetical bits. Numbered endnotes refer to bibliographical references at the end of the book.

## STEP FOUR: Recite and Review

After completing the chapter reading, it's time to begin the review and recitation process. Students are asked to look over the list of *Key Terms* and make sure they can understand and define each one. Another thing students may wish to do is to go back to the sections of the chapter that were highlighted and make notes from them by paraphrasing what was written in a language that is more easily remembered and understood. Chapter headings and subtitles can serve as organizational guides for note taking.

As part of the recitation and review process, students should also refer to the *Summary of Major Points*. Captured in each of the chapter summaries is the essential content to be grasped. Once students have studied their notes in light of the summaries provided, they can then go back to review the list of learning outcomes at the beginning of the chapter. They can also see whether they are able to answer the Focus Questions presented.



### THINKING ABOUT YOUR THINKING

Think about the last time your appetites, feelings, or passions directed your behavior. What did you do? If reason had directed your behavior, what would you have done differently and why? Would you have been better off in the short term if reason had been in charge? Would you have been better off in the long term? What does "better off" mean to you in this context?

people can be found in tyrannies, and so on. The point is that dominant individuals give rise to societies that, in turn, praise the qualities possessed by those individuals.

An interesting parallel between individuals and societies can also be seen by looking at the class system proposed by Plato for the just society—the system that functions in harmonious balance. In the ideal or just society, there would emerge three classes of people corresponding to the three parts of the soul. Each class would serve different, but complementary, roles.

First, there would be those whose lives would be driven primarily by the appetites. These would be the craftsmen, artisans, and traders. In modern times, we might see these people as the producers, workers, consumers, and business class. Second, there would be the auxiliaries, motivated in their lives mostly by spirit. They would serve to protect and preserve internal order under the guidance of rulers. Examples of this class in today's world would include the police, militia, and civil servants. Third, individuals would be selected from the auxiliaries to become the most highly trained and educated members of an elite **guardian class**, namely the philosopher kings/rulers.



"Know thyself."  
THE ORACLE AT DELPHI

Membership in any class would not be determined by birth or inheritance; rather, children would be moved from class to class according to merit and capability. Only those who passed the most rigorous tests and who would be best suited to work for the good of the community would become philosopher rulers. In the just society, the lower classes would not gain undue influence, or else internal anarchy would result, just as it does when appetite or spirit overrule reason in the individual. Reason must rule, as must those whose lives are governed by reason, not by greed (appetite) or self-assertion (spirit). Let us now look at the character of the philosopher king and examine in more detail the corrupt character types located at lower levels of society. Though the notion that an elite ruling class should govern society may not be popular today, Plato argued that "the human race will not be free of evils until either the stock of those who rightly and truly follow philosophy acquire political authority, or the class who have power in the cities be led by some dispensation of providence to become real philosophers." To paraphrase: rulers must become philosophers or philosophers must become rulers if we wish to establish the ideal social system. Just as reason must rule the soul, so too must philosophers rule the social order if the just society is ever to become a reality.<sup>6</sup>

### PHILOSOPHER KINGS/RULERS

According to Plato, the just society is a form of **aristocracy**.<sup>7</sup> In an aristocracy, **philosopher kings** who belong to the *guardian class* become the rulers. (Note that no gender discrimination is intended by the use of the label "kings." Plato was clear that qualified women also would be selected to serve as rulers in his ideal city.)

Philosopher kings (or rulers) are morally virtuous individuals. They are *temperate*, allowing no physical appetites or material desires to enslave them. Virtuous souls regulate their appetites by reason. Plato says, "It is because of the spirited part, I suppose, that we

\* For us, this word designates the "highest" class, often the hereditary nobility in its original meaning, and for Plato, an aristocracy was a state ruled by the best, by those—the "aristocrats"—whose nature made them most suitable to rule.

### STUDY GUIDE

#### Key Terms

##### Stoicism

**Albert Ellis:** psychologist; founder of rational-emotive behavior therapy 145

**Antisthenes:** disciple of Socrates; architect of Cynicism 139

**Chrysippus:** Co-founder of the stoic school of philosophy 139

**cosmology:** the study of the physical universe 142

**courageous acceptance:** a psychological posture; recognition of interior freedom to respond emotionally and psychologically as we choose; accepting what we cannot change 142

**Cynicism:** school of philosophy founded by Antisthenes; recommends living a life of virtue in accordance with nature 139

**Cynosarges:** another name for Stoicism; means "the (white or) silver dog" 139

**Diogenes:** a famous Cynical philosopher 139

**emotion:** feeling or passion 145

**Epictetus:** Greek stoic philosopher; born a slave 139

**eudaimonia:** often translated as happiness; normative concept related to "successful living" 142

**excessive passions:** unreasonable and unnatural emotions 146

**fated:** destined to happen; predetermined 140

**immanent:** inherent; operating or existing within; e.g., the divine encompasses or is manifest (is immanent) in the material world 140

**interior freedom:** psychological independence allowing one to determine one's attitudes and judgments about people, things, and events in the world 142

**Marcus Aurelius:** Roman emperor from 161 CE to 180 CE; stoic philosopher 139

**monistic universe:** the universe is one; all things are manifestations of the one 140

**ordered universe:** a universe that is rational and structured by design 140

**Seneca:** Roman stoic philosopher 139

**Stoic apathy:** a state of spiritual peace and well-being 142

**Stoicism:** Greek school of philosophy founded in Athens by Zeno of Citium 139

**Stoics:** followers of Zeno; so-called "men of the porch" 139

**synchronicity:** no causal relationship, but still a meaningful coincidence 140

**Zeno:** founder of Stoicism 139

##### Existentialism

**abstract universals:** that which is beyond material particulars (e.g., Plato's Forms) 155

**absurdity:** irrationality, unreasonableness, ridiculousness 152

**Albert Camus:** French philosopher, author, journalist, and 1957 Nobel Prize winner 153

**anti-political:** reaction or opposition to traditional politics and political policies 152

**aphorisms:** concise expressions of a general truth or principle 153

**atheists:** people who do not believe in God 152

**authenticity:** the degree or extent to which a person's actions and words are consistent with his or her true convictions and beliefs; honesty of expression 158

**Blaise Pascal:** French religious philosopher 153

**cogito, ergo sum:** Latin for "I think"; Descartes coined the phrase 156

Some students may wish to complete the Progress Checks that help to comprise the SQ3R system immediately after reading, prior to going over the summaries of key points and before reviewing key terms; others may wish to do them afterwards. Regardless, answers to the Progress Checks can be found at the end of this book. Note that mastery of more advanced philosophical reasoning will require individuals to practice logical, critical-analytical thinking skills covered in Chapter 2 and addressed in several of the pedagogical features included in the book, e.g., *Philosophers in Action* and *Thinking about Your Thinking*. *Reading Questions* that accompany each of the original philosophical sources presented in the text often require higher-order thinking as well.

In conclusion, success in the study of philosophy is going to require a lot of hard work and active involvement on the part of students. Quick or cursory reading and mere passive listening during lectures is not likely to be enough to ensure that they achieve at optimum levels. The SQ3R learning method and other pedagogical elements integrated into this text require students to interact with the material that is presented. It prepares the way for higher-order philosophical inquiry and critical-analytical discussion by facilitating a mastery of basic knowledge and understanding. While this learning method cannot guarantee success, it can pave the way for the first step toward achieving it.