



The Mission of Philosophy

Socrates and beyond

To Evaluate Thinking We Must Understand and Apply Intellectual Standards

Reasonable people judge reasoning by intellectual standards. When you internalize these standards and explicitly use them in your thinking, your thinking becomes more clear, more accurate, more precise, more relevant, deeper, broader and more fair. You should note that we focus here on a selection of standards. Among others are credibility, sufficiency, reliability, and practicality. The questions that employ these standards are listed on the following page.

Clarity:

understandable, the meaning can be grasped

Accuracy:

free from errors or distortions, true

Precision:

exact to the necessary level of detail

Relevance:

relating to the matter at hand

Depth:

containing complexities and multiple interrelationships

Breadth:

encompassing multiple viewpoints

Logic:

the parts make sense together, no contradictions

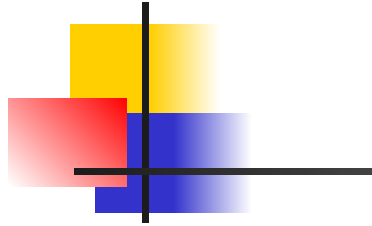
Significance:

focusing on the important, not trivial

Fairness:

Justifiable, not self-serving or one-sided





Clarity

Could you elaborate further?
Could you give me an example?
Could you illustrate what you mean?

Accuracy

How could we check on that?
How could we find out if that is true?
How could we verify or test that?

Precision

Could you be more specific?
Could you give me more details?
Could you be more exact?

Relevance

How does that relate to the problem?
How does that bear on the question?
How does that help us with the issue?

Depth

What factors make this a difficult problem?
What are some of the complexities of this question?
What are some of the difficulties we need to deal with?

Breadth

Do we need to look at this from another perspective?
Do we need to consider another point of view?
Do we need to look at this in other ways?

Logic

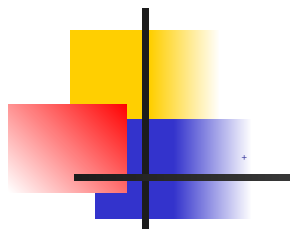
Does all this make sense together?
Does your first paragraph fit in with your last?
Does what you say follow from the evidence?

Significance

Is this the most important problem to consider?
Is this the central idea to focus on?
Which of these facts are most important?

Fairness

Do I have any vested interest in this issue?
Am I sympathetically representing the viewpoints of others?



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Overview

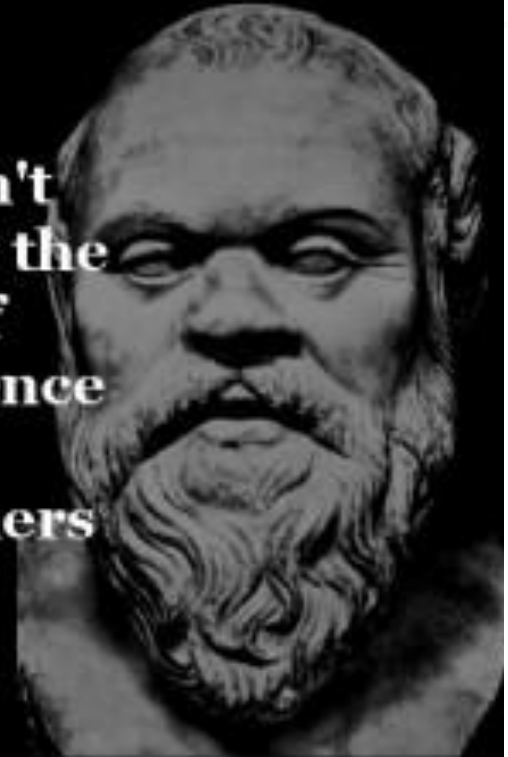
- Socrates' mission
- Wisdom as an integral vision
- Four dimensions of experience

Socrates

(circa 470–399 BC)

Socrates was born circa 470 BC, in Athens, Greece. We know of his life through the writings of his students, including Plato and Xenophon. His "**Socratic method**" – dialectics – laid the groundwork for Western systems of logic and philosophy.

I know you won't
believe me, but the
highest form of
Human Excellence
is to question
oneself and others
– **Socrates**



'The unexamined life is not worth living'

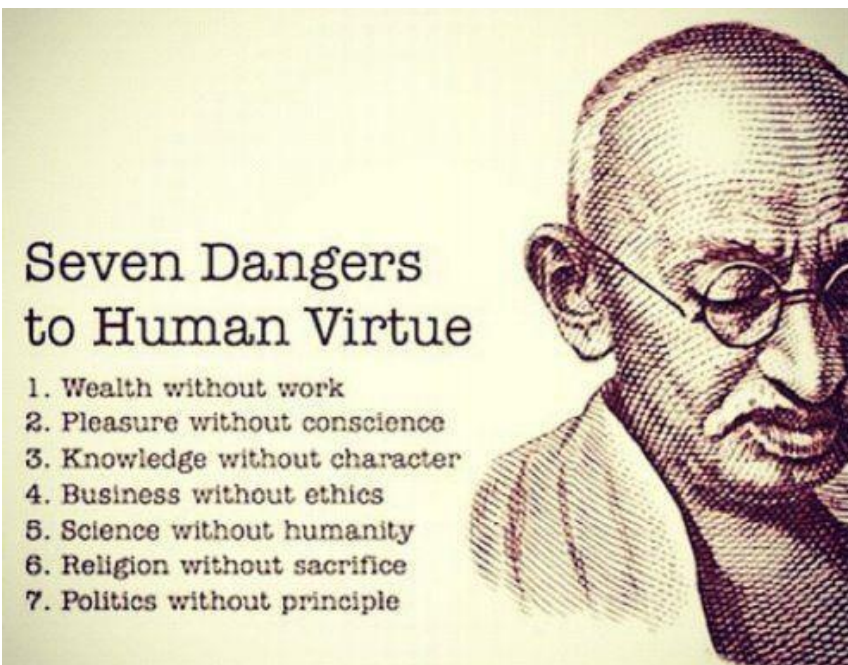
- "If I say again that daily **to discourse about virtue is the greatest good of man**, and that the unexamined life is not worth living, you are still less likely to believe me." (*Apology* 38a)
 - People who pursue wealth, fame or reputation as the means to happiness are **blind and totally ignorant of what virtue is**.
 - But the greatest problem of the human being lies in **the self-conceit that one knows what happiness is**.
 - Socrates duty was to let people **awaken from such a deep-rooted self-presumption**, and search for wisdom which alone promises true happiness.



Virtue (*arête*)

In Greek, **virtue** (*arête*) means 'excellence'.

- **Virtue** is that trait of character upon which the achievement of the good life (*eudaimonia*, the well-being of the soul) depends.
- Socrates once claimed: "it's the greatest good for a man to discuss virtue all day ... on the grounds that the unexamined life is not worth living" (*The Apology*).





Eudaimonia, the goal of human life

- Socrates was the first to teach **the priority of personal integrity** in terms of *a person's duty to himself*, and not to the gods, or the law, or any other authorities.
- **'Well-being' (eu) 'of the soul' (daimon) = eudaimonia** (Compare: **eu**thanasia)



Eudaimonia vs. Happiness

- Not used to describe transient moods or satisfactions, like 'happiness' in English
- Emotional balance
- Both objective features of happiness (attainment of good) and subjective (being content as the state of mind)
- "The end for which everything is done but which is not itself done for the sake of anything."





“I know that I don’t know”



- One of Socrates’ followers risked to consult **the Delphic Oracle**, if anyone was wiser than Socrates?
- And the Delphic Oracle answered:
- "No, there is no person living wiser than Socrates."

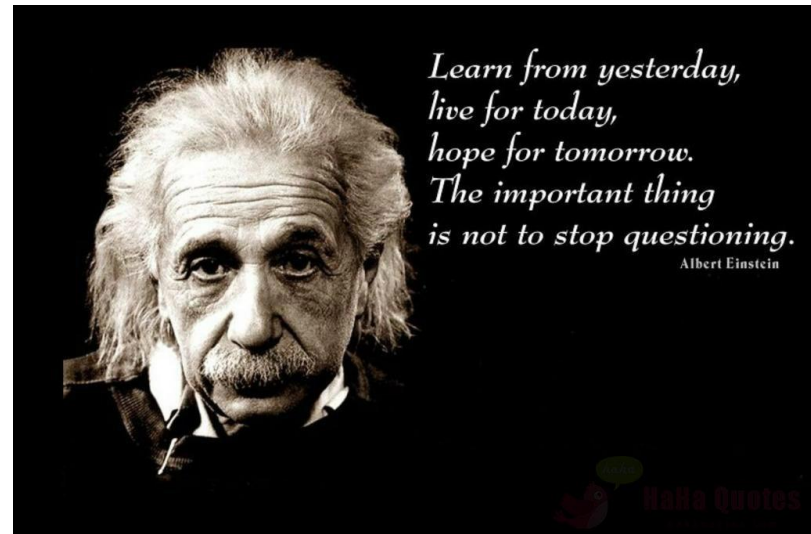
“I know that I don’t know” (cont.)



- Socrates was amazed at the answer. Not feeling himself wise, he cross-examined the ‘wise’ men of society (politicians, poets, artisans) and NOT find them wise.
- So, Socrates concluded: “While others profess knowledge they do not have, **I know that I don’t know**”.

Love of Wisdom

- The highest virtue is the **pursuit of wisdom** (philo-sophia).
- This explicit pursuit of knowledge and wisdom became possible by knowing one's own ignorance within oneself.
- In sum: **happiness** (the well-being of the soul) not only depends on the **philosophy** (the pursuit of knowledge), but they are inseparably **one and the same**.





Love of Wisdom (cont.)

- The pursuit of knowledge as the highest human virtue is an **intrinsic value**, that is, **the good pursued for its own sake**.
 - **But isn't it inconsistent with the previous thesis that happiness is the ultimate goal of all human beings?**
 - No, for wisdom and love of wisdom are from Socrates' viewpoint *NOT* mere **means to happiness**, or instrumental good (such as pleasure, honor, wealth, or the serenity of mind.)
 - Closer examination reveals that **wisdom and happiness (well-being of human soul)** are one and the same.

The Socratic Paradox

- 'Nobody commits evil deed consciously'

Explanation:

- Everyone seeks what is in his own self-interest. And he shouldn't be blamed for this, for such is human nature.
- But if he knew his true self-interest (well-being of his soul) he would never committed evil deed.
- So, all evil deeds are committed **due to human ignorance**, that is, **unconsciously**.



Paradox is a judgment that contradicts to dominant opinion or seems impossible, but is actually true or possible.

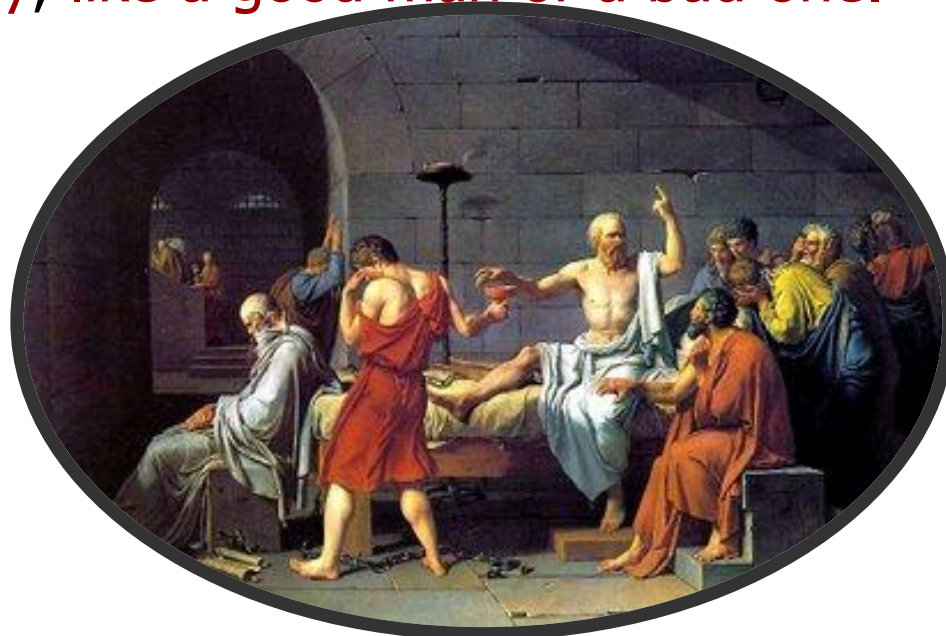
The Socratic Paradox (cont.)

- **Objection:** If evil were never done deliberately or voluntarily, then evil would be **an involuntary act** and consequently **no one could properly be held responsible for the evil** that is done.
- But Socrates means **moral responsibility**:
 - Everyone is responsible for **his own virtue**. Once one **knows** what is good (=what ought to be done), one cannot but **do this good**.
 - As for our attitude to fellow men, most proper would be **support and guidance**.



The Socrates' Death

- “If you think that a man who is worth anything ought to spend his time weighing up the prospects of life and death. He has **only one thing to consider** in performing any action — that is, whether he is **acting right or wrongly, like a good man or a bad one.**”





Socrates: a man for our times?

- **Wisdom** is an integral vision and ability to understand life in general.





Case 2.1. Truth-telling and Trust

- Thao, 80-year-old Asian woman is hospitalized with pulmonary tuberculosis.
- Her family asks that she not be told about her diagnosis, because in her home country **tuberculosis was considered fatal** and to tell her would be like giving her "a death sentence."

You are her physician and should examine carefully the case in all dimensions of experience:

- Objective
- Subjective
- Inter-subjective
- Inter-objective

How Integral Vision helps you to make a wise decision?



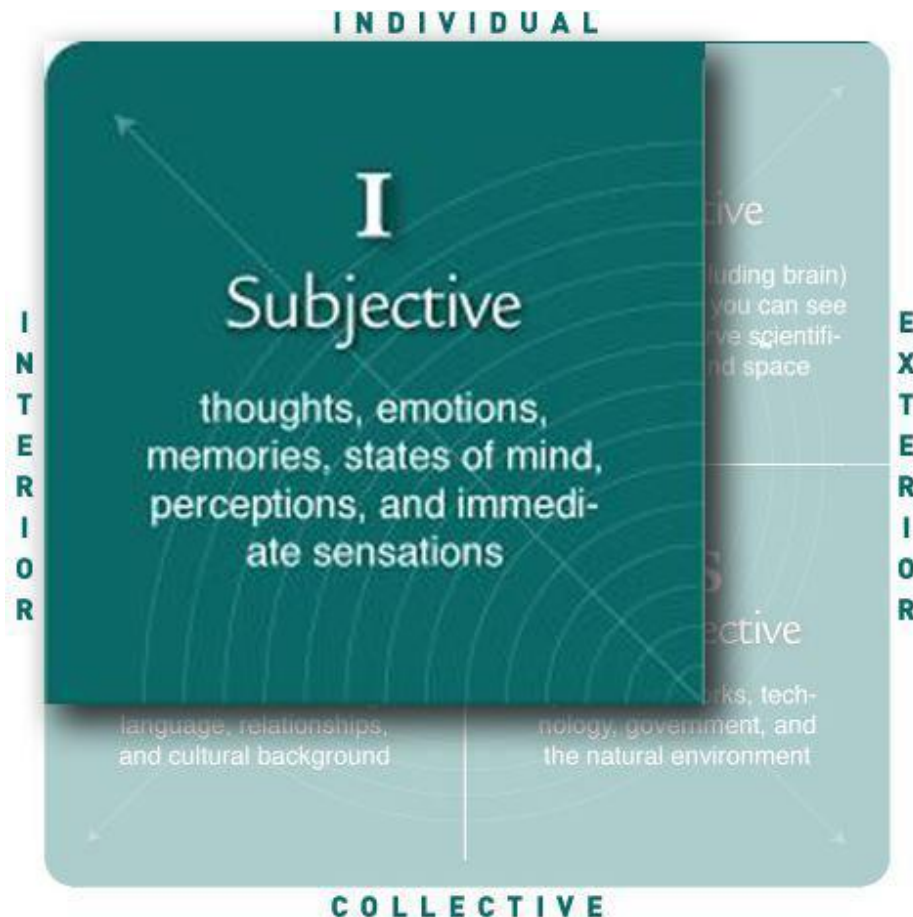
Objective dimension of experience



- In this dimension we find the world of ***individual exterior things***:
 - our **material body** (including brain) and
 - **anything** that you **can see or touch** (or observe scientifically) in time and space.
- We name this objective dimension **“IT” space**//‘It is lecture hall’, ‘It is a living body’

What physician can learn of Thao’s condition in this dimension of experience?

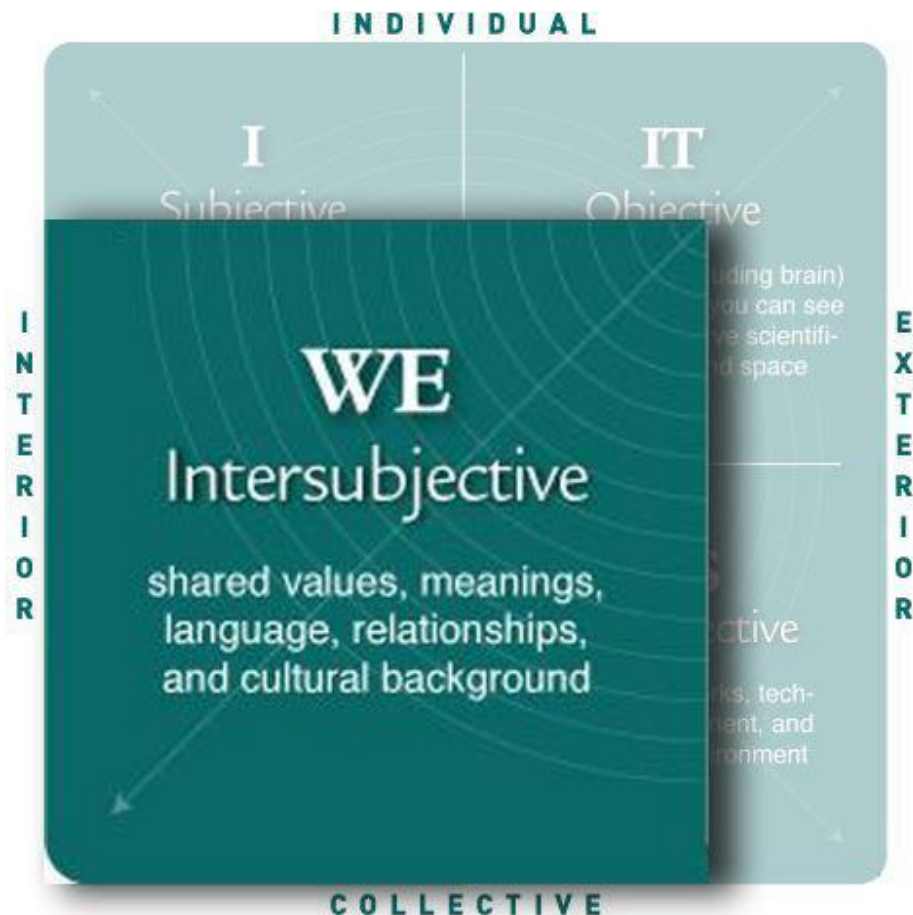
Subjective dimension of experience



- We find here the world of ***individual interior experiences***:
 - thoughts and emotions,
 - memories,
 - states of mind,
 - perceptions and immediate sensations.
- In other words, it is “**I**” space.
// “I feel the...”, “I believe in ...”,
“I’m sure that...”



Inter-subjective dimension of experience



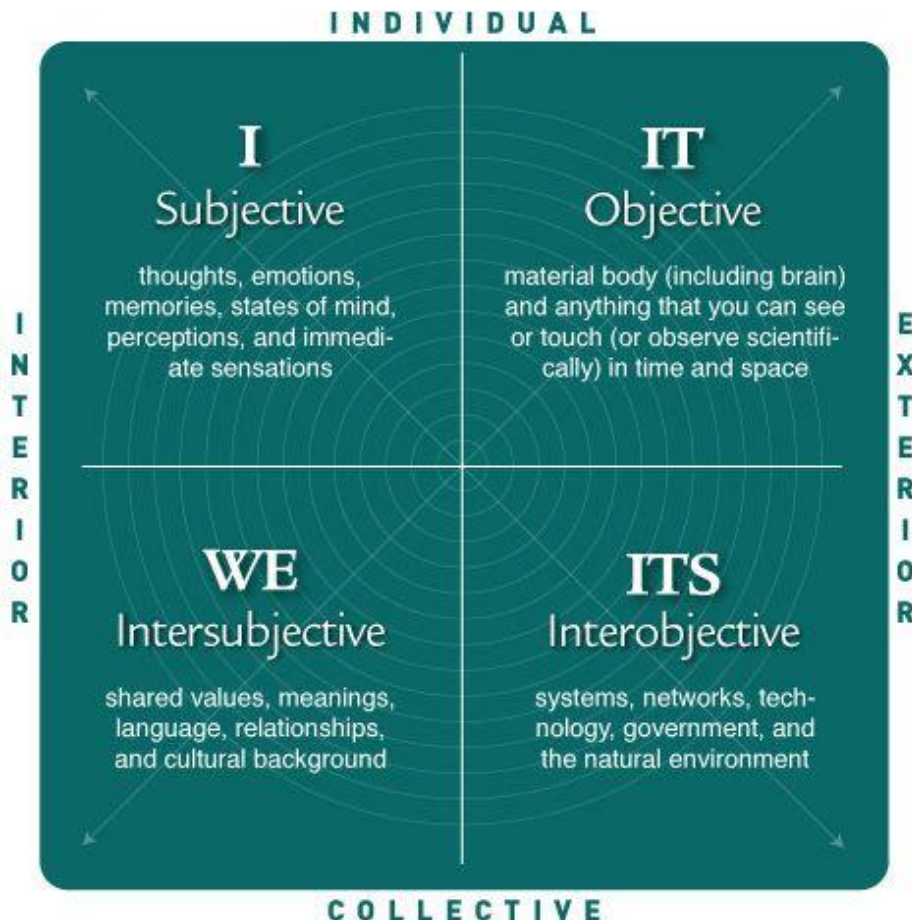
- We enter the world of ***collective interior experiences***:
 - our shared values,
 - meanings and language,
 - relationships, and
 - cultural background.
- In other words, it's "**WE**" space
// "To be healthy is a great thing...", 'God punish us for wrongs...'

Inter-objective dimension of experience



- This dimension opens for us the world of **collective exterior** things:
 - social systems,
 - networks, technology,
 - government, and
 - the natural environment.
- In other words, our inter-objective or **"ITS" space** // 'What is proper for...', 'What factors (environmental, social, individual) influence health status?'

Integral vision of experience



- What is the point of looking at the world **through a 4-dimension lens?**
- Simple answer: *Anything less is narrow, partial and fragmented!*
 - For example, to the question of *what is more real*, **the brain** (with its neural pathways and structures) **or the mind** (with its thoughts and perceptions), Integral Vision answers: **both**.
 - **Health** is a “state of complete physical, mental, and social well being, and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.” (WHO definition)

Health: an integral vision

