

The Meaning of Life

When you have no meaning in your life and don't know what to do with yourself, you tend to look around at what other people are doing. Whatever activity they all seem to agree with, you follow along. "Maybe that will give my life meaning," you say, shrugging your shoulders.

What you may soon discover, though, is that none of those people you are following really know what they are doing either. They are just following the people who came before them. You may find too late that joining the pack doesn't really give your life lasting satisfaction. It only fills it up with obligations.

The alternative is to find your own direction and meaning. If you independently know who you are and where you are going, it is a lot easier to resist the siren's call of marriage and all the other traditions people follow without knowing why. But how do you find this direction?

In short, what is the meaning of life?

It is a question philosophers have been grappling with for ages. Let's see if I can knock it off in a few pages. This is my own theory, a simple default philosophy in case you can't think of another.

What is the meaning of life? There isn't any! At least there isn't any one universal truth we can all agree on. Religions claim to have a monopoly on truth, but their explanations seem to go 'round and 'round. How do you know this path is the best? You just have to have faith, they say. I say no guru knows any more than any other. We have all been plunked down here on Earth without an instruction manual, and no one here has access to any special knowledge.

The only thing you know with reasonable certainty is life itself. Your own life. As you sit here reading this, you are occupying a body which seems solid and stable. Around you is a landscape filled with various objects and systems that also seem solid. Of course, it is possible that none of this is real. It could all be a virtual reality simulation inside an advanced supercomputer pumping inputs directly into your brain. (If you've seen *The Matrix*, you know the drill.) Nonetheless, this is still the best reality you have access to at the moment. You could call it "super virtual reality." No other reality is as complex, subtle and self-consistent as the one we were apparently born into, so we have to obey its rules.