

Earth

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Earth

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The Sensible Observer

Completed Essays

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1. [What is the meaning of life?](#) (11/24/96)

This is a silly, irrelevant question. Life has no meaning except what you choose to give it. You are coming closer to the point if you ask, "What is the meaning of *my* life?" but even then you are likely to get tangled up in your own thought processes and never come to a conclusion. The only question you can reasonably answer is, "What should I do now?"...

2. [What Motivates Human Behavior?](#) (12/7/96)

Each person is motivated by a pressure to exist. This is different than a survival instinct, because survival alone does not explain all the sadistic, masochistic, self-destructive and gratuitously unhealthy acts that human beings are capable of. The pressure to exist explains most of this behavior, because existing, in the human world, is much more complex and self-contradictory than merely eating and procreating....

3. [Does there exist a single, objective reality in which we can someday achieve consensus, or is it all subjective?](#) (12/7/96)

Another silly, irrelevant question. Why does it matter?...

4. [Why do people often sabotage themselves?](#) (12/26/96)

Anxiety is unavoidable; it is an intrinsic part of our humanity and our personal quest to "exist". We want to see ourselves as valuable, which implies that we feel uncomfortable whenever we see ourselves as not valuable. While one way to seek value and avoid anxiety is to do brave, constructive and admirable things, the other way to achieve relief is to avoid or neutralize the agents that seem to cause our distress. Nearly all self-destructive acts can be seen as a way to avoid hearing bad news about oneself without generating any good news.

For convenience, we can divide the internal tensions into three types: anxiety of evaluation, choice and regret. Each is a private, often unconscious sensation that can be easily denied after the fact....

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Created: 11/24/96 gc

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