

# Moderated Musings Discussion Outline

## Moderated Musings?

**Moderated** because we follow a general list of topics as outlined below. For each topic there is a discussion paper meant to prime the pump for individual **musings** and discussion.

## What we are

Format: an open discussion of basic ideas and questions. Drop-ins are welcome, nay encouraged!

Research into background material bearing on each question is helpful and would add value to the discussion but is not required. Each question/discussion will consider not only the abstract, but how/if the ideas are applicable to individual lives in today's world.

Participants are only required to have an open, inquisitive, and respectful mind.

The moderator, Kester (Ket) Watters, will lead the discussion and make every effort to involve all participants.

Here are the topics in a suggested order for consideration. Depending on interest and the ongoing discussion the time devoted to each topic will vary. This list may be modified based on input from the group.

Items in Blue (and in this font) are material to be distributed by email a week prior to the session. This material comprises questions, internet research, and Kester's personal musings.

### 1. What is a Good Life?

The Tao of the Cranberry

Thoughts on Philosophical Meaning

Thoughts on Meaningful Life

- § What is a good life? Can a "bad" person lead a "good" life?
- § What does the word "good" really mean? How do you tell good from bad?
- § How do you add value to your life?
- § On what should a person's ability to live a good life depend?

### 2. Ethics and Morality

Thought on Ethics and Morality

Thoughts on Evil

- § Are all decisions moral?
- § Is ethics just a matter of opinion, or do objective moral rules exist that are binding on every person?
- § Why should we be moral?
- § Why does the world contain so much evil?

### **3. Paths to Understanding**

#### Thoughts on a Meaningful Belief System

#### Thoughts on the Unconscious

#### Thoughts on Dogma

- § What is the difference between physical science, social science, religion, mythology, and philosophy?
- § Anthropocentric, asymptotic harmony.
- § Belief systems.

### **4. Is philosophy an intellectual pursuit or has it bearing on an individual life?**

#### Thoughts on Applied Philosophy

- § Are the answers to the ultimate meaning of the “universe” and man’s position in it of any value in living a daily life?
- § If you personally absolutely knew the ultimate meaning of Everything, what would you do?
- § In the face of eternity can any of man’s actions be considered truly important?
- § Is there a difference between “what is” and “what works”?
- § Is the objective of intellectual (or spiritual) inquiry control or acquiescence?

### **5. Mysticism and Logic**

#### Thoughts on Logic

- § Do they complement or counterpose?
- § What role does logic play in considering philosophical questions?
- § Can anyone prove what the truth is on the ultimate issues, or must we accept them as matters of faith?
- § What is faith?
- § Where does the concept of god come from?

### **6. What is Reality?**

#### Thoughts on the Nature of Reality

#### Thoughts on Nothing

- § What does it mean to say a thing exists?

### **7. How can we really know anything?**

#### George and Fred Converse

#### Thoughts on Facts and Truth

#### Thoughts on Paranormal

#### Virus Myths

- § Is knowledge objective or subjective?
- § What is truth? What is a fact?
- § What is the difference between fact and theory?
- § What is propaganda?

## **8. Individual Freedom**

Thoughts on Free Will

Thoughts on Freedom

Thoughts on Human Rights

UN Declaration of Human Rights

Thoughts on Hypocrisy

Thoughts on Modesty and Hubris

- § Are our actions and decisions freely chosen by us, or predetermined by some forces outside our control?
- § Do we have souls, or “minds”, or are we just physically complex organisms?
- § Is there any room for Chance? Is the result of a coin toss predetermined? By what causes?
- § Is there morality without freedom?
- § Is Libertarianism freedom?

## **9. Societies, Tribalism, and Humanity**

Thoughts on Homophily

Thoughts on Cultures

Thoughts on Personal vs Societal Values

Thoughts on Stereotypes

Thoughts on Immigration

Thoughts on Technology and Artificial Intelligence

- § How should humans organize and operate to achieve their purpose?
- § What are the characteristics of society, or other human groups/communities?
- § What are the characteristics of utopia?
- § What is the relationship between a citizen and their communities?
- § Does any person or group of people ever have a right to impose their will on another person or group of people? If so, does this “right” carry a responsibility?
- § What should we fear from homophily? What benefit should we expect?
- § Binary vs spectra classifications
- § What are the threats to humanity?

## **10. Education: its role in a society or tribe**

## Thoughts on Education

### New Map of Life

- § What is the difference between education and indoctrination?
- § What role does each play in a society or tribe?
- § What is the quality of education in America?

#### **11. What is death?**

- § What, if anything, is worth dying for?

#### **12. How do you stop seeing both sides of an issue and make a decision?**

- § What should be the balance between rationality and spontaneity?
- § Is it true that, “Nothing ever gets done unless it is done by a fanatic.”?
- § Understanding issue spectra.

#### **13. Is it possible to completely communicate?**

### Thoughts on Communications

- § What are the relative advantages of different media for communication?

#### **14. What is beauty?**

### Thoughts on Beauty

- § Is truth always beautiful?