



The 60-Second Philosopher: Expand your Mind on a Minute or so a Day!

Andrew Pessin

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Philosophy means "love of knowledge" in Greek. Unfortunately, as much as we all love knowledge, we don't all have the time to spend acquiring it! This fabulous little book provides the perfect antidote. Split into 60 one-minute chapters, Andrew Pessin offers you a snippet of philosophical wisdom everyday, giving you something to think about on your coffee break. From time travel and morality, to happiness and freedom, Pessin is bound to entertain you with his razor-sharp wit. The perfect way to hone your mental faculties, The Sixty-Second Philosopher will delight aspiring thinkers everywhere! Andrew Pessin is Chair of Philosophy at Connecticut College. He is the author of *Gray Matters: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Mind* and has appeared several times on the David Letterman show as "The Genius".

The 60-Second Philosopher: Expand your Mind on a Minute or so a Day! Details

Date : Published September 1st 2009 by Oneworld Publications

ISBN : 9781851686889

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Format : Paperback 152 pages

Genre : Philosophy, Nonfiction

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From Reader Review The 60-Second Philosopher: Expand your Mind on a Minute or so a Day! for online ebook

Jobson Lucas says

A primeira vez que eu li(em 2014), fiquei particularmente perturbado com o paradoxo do burrito: "se Deus é onipotente, poderia ele fazer um burrito tão quente que nem ele próprio conseguiria segurar?". Talvez seja bom prestar atenção que a ideia de onipotência não contraria a lógica proposicional/predicados, ou seja: respeita o princípio do terceiro excluído.

Murilo Batistela De Camargo says

Imagino que seja um ótimo livro para aqueles que não despertaram o seu "filósofo interior" ainda. Para os que são mais aventureiros nos questionamentos do mundo que nos cerca, ele não será um divisor de águas. Em todo caso, considero válida a leitura por ser um livro super pequeno e fácil de ler. Apesar de ser genérico, é bem provável que encontrará algum assunto ou ponto de vista novo.

Yasnani Yassin says

definitely not a book for me. the things discussed in the book sometimes dont make sense to me.I even argue with a few points made. but, there are a few fun points. it challenges me to think quite differently on some aspects, not all.

Nicole says

I wasn't that impressed. I read most of this while on the treadmill at the gym thinking it was an easy read. But I didn't really learn too much from it. I think the thing about philosophy is that as much as we want to shorten it or "dumb it down" for our own benefit, unfortunately for us, it's better to read stories at length. The more details the better when it comes to understanding!

Farhan Khalid says

Fish: Where is this great ocean I keep hearing about?

we're so used to seeing people that we stop reflecting on them

The most ordinary things contain a whole lifetime of questions

Let the child still within us—the philosopher within us—re-emerge

What a clock measures, in fact, is not time but rather how some physical things are correlated with other physical things

If there is truly nothing in it, then nothing can be happening, nothing can be occurring, and nothing can really be moving [including time]

Could it be, then, that nearly everything I believe about the world is false? [a dream?]

Minds also have a unique feature: their owners have a special access to them

“Goodness” is not the kind of property which is literally visible

Our eyes see only light and color

if we want to understand language, we must know more about what “meaning” is

Meaning is abstract. It doesn’t exist anywhere in space

GOD’S ODDS

When something incredibly unlikely occurs, it’s very difficult to believe it occurs by chance

Had any one of these properties [speed of light, charge of electron, strength of gravity] been even slightly different, then our universe could not have existed

And there is nothing quite as incredibly unlikely as precisely this universe, amongst all the possible universes that might have been

Perhaps we should just list the basic particles that physicists tell us compose the world

Maybe we should drop the idea that physical objects have a “true” color altogether

Objects have every color they appear to have, in their different contexts

Many of our choices are brought about by our particular beliefs and desires, or values

For sometimes what we know are facts or sentences

Other times it’s more like a skill or an ability

Other times it’s more like an experience

The moral value of an action is determined by how much overall happiness the action produces

Happiness is the fundamental thing we value

MENTAL BILLIARDS

The brain is a physical object undergoing a sequence of physical events

When you must choose between what's unbelievably improbable to go wrong and what's impossible to go wrong, you must choose the latter

Names simply mean the things they refer to

The meaning of a name must, in other words, be something other than the thing it refers to

Warmth and coolness are not really properties of the water, despite all appearances, but instead only sensations in the perceiver's mind

Can God create a stone so heavy that He cannot lift it? There are only two possible answers here: yes or no. Suppose, first, we say no. But then there is something that God cannot do: create such a stone. And if there's something He cannot do then He is not omnipotent after all. So suppose we say yes. If God can create such a stone then there could exist a stone so heavy God could not lift it. But then there could be something God cannot do, namely lift that stone. And if there could be something God cannot do, then again He is not omnipotent after all.

A longtime smoker dies of lung cancer. The family says the smoking caused it; the physician says it was the victim's weak lungs; and the tobacco company (who paid the physician) blames it on everything except the smoking. Who is right? Well, they all are. And no one is

Let's take a simple case: you strike a match and it lights. Most of the time we'd say the striking was the cause of the lighting. But in fact there were many other factors as relevant to the lighting as the striking. For starters, it's obviously crucial that the match was coated with appropriate chemicals, that it was made of a flammable wood, that oxygen was present, and so on. Equally necessary were the physical properties of the surface on which it was struck: had it been struck on butter or on water or on your nose, it would not have lighted. And even more fundamentally, we must include the very laws of physics and chemistry which dictate that when matches so made are so struck etc., a lighting will ensue

In short, we can't simply say that the striking of the match caused its lighting. We ought rather to say that more or less everything existing in the universe caused the lighting, as well as more or less everything not existing

SEEING RED

[having abstract knowledge of something and sensing it are two different things]

You notice five children playing on some railroad tracks. Absorbed in their play, they don't notice the train coming down the track towards them. But luckily, the track forks before them and you are standing right at the switch. By merely pressing the button you can divert the train and thereby spare the children. But then you notice that down the other track is a single child playing alone. To do nothing is to allow the train to kill the five children on the first track; to press the button is to save those five but send the solitary child to her destiny. What should you do?

we are moved out of empathy or compassion. [if we are compassionate we can cry on fiction]

The pain I learn about this way is not my pain [if we are not compassionate]

In fact, every molecule in your body is replaced approximately every seven years

In the beginning was the excuse. Adam blamed Eve, she blamed the snake, and the rest is human history

But then why should someone making you do something ever free you of responsibility for it?

People really are just complex programs already, running on the hardware of the brain

If you believe in morality you cannot believe that God created everything

What makes your existence contingent is that there are possible circumstances in which you wouldn't have existed, and perhaps other things would have existed in your place. (Think of that hiccup!) But if there really are other possibilities, then the world contains more than what is actual. It must also contain these possibilities

IT'S ALL RELATIVE

Every time we look at the thing we only get another perception of it, and never the thing itself!

Sometimes one cloud runs into another, forming a single larger cloud [$1 + 1 = 1$]

"Sameness" is inconceivable. So in fact every day is the same: utterly unique

Imagine you receive a book entitled Your Life. Chapter one starts with your birth and first year of life, and so on, all in impressive detail. Like all good biographies the book contains all and only true statements about your life. But then you notice that the book continues with (hopefully many) chapters on your future

It's impossible for you to be reliably informed of your future. Nobody could accurately know your future actions and inform you of them. And why is that? Because for almost any prediction you might be informed of, you could do otherwise. It's because, in other words, you have free will

If we're genuinely to explain why we persist from moment to moment, then, it seems we need to invoke the activity of something which could not possibly go out of existence. Could the simple fact that you are here now—and now—and now—mean that God exists?

[match striking --> lightning]

[match striking --> no lightning]

[no match striking --> lightning]

[no match striking --> no lightning]

[everything causes everything]

[everything causes nothing]

[nothing causes everything]

[nothing causes nothing]

The past does not exist—if it did, it would be present! And the future does not yet exist, in which case it does not now exist. So if time exists, it exists only as the present. But what is the present? The present is a moment of no duration. For if it had a duration (a day, an hour, a millisecond, etc.) not all of that duration would be present at once. Rather the present is composed, quite literally, of nothing

When people say they have no time for something, then, they don't realize how true that is

Good sense can sometimes lead to nonsense

Identity Crises: With each passing instant one person goes out of existence and another arises. So who are you, exactly?

We never genuinely perceive the physical objects in the world around us. It is all in your mind

There are three ways to acquire knowledge

--> Reason (cause and effect)

--> Experience (generalization past pattern)

--> Observation

Whenever you get in your car, light a cigarette, take a step, or hold up a liquor store, you are taking probabilities into account concerning crashes, cancer, sinkholes, or death in a hail of bullets

We may think about probabilities all the time. But when we really think about them we don't even know what we mean by them. And that is not a good thing. Probably

There are no genuinely physical objects. There are only minds and their sensations. It's not just beauty that's in the eye of the beholder, then: even the eyeball of the beholder is in the eye of the beholder

You have no real options about anything that you do

But then happiness must not be what we fundamentally value after all. For if it were we would all plug into the machine, which could give us whatever form of happiness we seek

If you believe a practice is wrong, then, have the courage of your convictions: it is wrong for everyone. You ought not to tolerate the tolerators

There's a philosophical joke: The optimist says, "This is the best of all possible worlds." And the pessimist agrees

That world just is this world, the world that you're in. This great ocean you may be looking for, you're already in it. You just have to start thinking about it. The very first drop in that bucket is a splash into the infinite. This is the beginning

Badr ????? says

This is an enjoyable read as a crash course in philosophy. It comes in tiny doses and written in a neat conversational style. One drawback is that with a play on words it treats some serious issues lightly and might confuse the otherwise confident, but then isn't that what philosophy is all about?

Henrique Maia says

Os livros genéricos têm o defeito de serem genéricos. A quem se dirigem? Quem será o tal leitor padrão que

"precisa" deste livro? Em boa verdade, ninguém faz parte desse grande todo anónimo que pouco sabe acerca de certos assuntos. Nem eu, nem você, nem ninguém. Embora gostemos de pensar que sim, fazemo-lo apenas por preguiça; ou real incapacidade de realmente pensar o todo no tudo que o faz como tal. Às tantas, se calhar, fazemos mesmo parte desse grande todo imbecil que julgávamos tão distante de nós. Sim, é verdade que este livro é genérico, mas ninguém sabe quanto de si é genericamente comum.

Talvez, sabe-se lá, este livro tenha algo para si.

Porque a filosofia, afinal, é feita de banalidades, o efeito colateral de estar consciente.

Adenda: O livro está escrito num português correto, mas a tradução às vezes é mazinha. A culpa, creio, não é tanto do tradutor – faltou um revisor mais capaz.

Rod says

60 short philosophical discussions. Some are even funny! This is the crap that goes through my head daily.

I consider myself a rebellious theologian. And in order to do that you must bash about in philosophy. And I do hate academic philosophy with a passion - too many rules and regulations. Socrates and I would probably fail their classes for questioning the prof's Ego's.

I can't quite figure this author out: He questions just about everything (which is good) but then he fails to question some absurdities. Like: Can God make a rock so big that he can't lift it.

If he did his homework he would realize that the biblical God is outside of the Space and time of our Universe and matter. Kind of like saying: "Can a ghost make a coffee so hot it will burn his apparition?" You are mixing matter with the spiritual. And the author even knows this - he comments on it later.

Quote: Page 38

"Can God create a stone so heavy that he cannot lift it?

There are only two possible answers here: yes or no."

And that is the problem - this guy occasionally insists that we get a yes or no. But often the problem is that the question is simply wrong or stupid or lacking insightful data. Which is strange: because he shows us this in other chapters and fails to realize it.

Which reminds me of that famous loaded Courtroom question: "tell us when you stopped beating your wife?" Any answer is not suitable to a faulty question.

I really enjoyed that the author posted his sources for all 60 chapters. Not that I trust historical philosopher's to even give me the time of day accurately - but it is fun to know how this stuff creeps into our reality and gets forced on kids in the hallowed halls of academia.

But like most philosophy: this book appears to really have no answers - just more questions. Thankfully the Bible is a book of answers. I'll stick with that.

I'm now curious to read this philosopher's other book: THE GOD QUESTION.

Carolina Morales says

Favorite quote from this book: "There are only two paths - the one I choose and the one I instantly regret of not picking". LOL. I really understand the task of getting 60 flashes together may be hard, but I had some difficulty starting my motors to run, at the beginning. It takes some time to get into the crazy logic of the exquisite train of thought here. By the 14th, or 15th chapter, I was totally in, though. I recommend it as an easy read on the way home, or going to work, at the train, subway, schoolbus... It also pleased me to see the "Seinfeld" aesthetic somehow brought back into life again. Congratulations, Mr. Pessin!

John Martindale says

Some of the readings are funny and insightful. It was a good book to have sitting above the toilet, so whenever I was downloading into the commode, I could simultaneously download some of Pessin's philosophical tidbits in my brain, but it his musing did not really digest, its almost like it all just went through me so quickly, so that by the time I left the Jon it was all forgotten

R. says

Reading it with my teenage daughter for school project.
Book its easy to read and discuss
Fun learning philosophical side of my daughter

Mike Malony says

I used this as night time 'distract me' reading, picking it up and reading one or two chapters to clear my mind of the day.
This book is broken into 60 short reads each on a topic of thought or reasoning. Many are sort of semantic banter, weaving one phrase into another to make you ponder what the first one meant. All manage to make a point. All left me pondering... whichever.
I liked it, I would read another like it, or this one again in a few years.

Stina says

This book ended up not meeting my expectations at all..

A lot of those little philosophical snippets that this book is made up of were things I'd already thought about and places my mind had already been..
And coming from a different background than the author it really annoyed me that so many of the chapter were about proving or disproving the existence of God.

I guess I just liked the idea more than the execution of it...

Kay says

I hope this is NOT a book that tells me I am a certain sort of person if I think certain thoughts.. my Facebook contacts often irritate me with their popular sayings, such as "Thinking good thoughts of your enemies will eventually make them your friends"... so if it's not a glib, egocentric book, I'll probably love it!

Jeanette "Astute Crabbist" says

This little book is a fun way to awaken your inner philosopher. Pessin's style is lighthearted and the material is suitable for everyone. There are 60 short gems in the book covering everything from the nature of God to whether you really are what you eat. It's playfully presented and easy to understand, but will also challenge your assumptions and lead you to some serious thought.

I've always believed there's no such thing as the "present moment." Now I have proof!--Or do I? Read #40 and decide for yourself.

Ever regretted a decision that determined your life's direction? Read #10, where you will discover there is no such thing as "the path not taken." (I found this discussion particularly comforting.)

I've had a lot of fun with this book, and also started looking at my world and my life just a little bit differently.
