ETHICS
(Philosophy 20)

Lecture Notes

David O'Shaughnessy
Invitation
Take a chance and try my fare;
It will grow on you, I swear;
Soon it will taste good to you.
If by then you should want more,
All the things I've done before
Will inspire things quite new.

Friedrich Nietzsche, The Gay Science

My Roses
Yes, my joy wants to amuse,
every joy wants to amuse.
Would you like to pick my roses?

You must stoop and stick your noses
Between thorns and rocky views,
and not be afraid of bruises.

For my joy -- enjoys good teases.
For my joy enjoys good ruses.
Would you like to pick my roses?

Friedrich Nietzsche, The Gay Science
Philosophy, more than most disciplines, is primarily a thinking and talking discipline....
Question: Why should you believe or commit to anything?

Proposed Answer: You should believe or commit to something because it WORKS better than any relevant alternative known and available to you.
The Criteria for Choosing –

"Working"

It is claimed that the criteria by which we choose something is nearly always the pragmatic criteria of whether something is "working" well for us or not. What do I mean by "working"?

I offer my readers a five-part criteria for something "working."

I. Something can work for us primarily cognitively -- it is something we believe, find convincing, appealing, plausible, or even just possible.

II. Something can work for us primarily affectively -- if feels right, or at least reasonable.

III. Something can work for us primarily instrumentally at the level of chosen physical actions -- our chosen actions are working when they seem to get us what we want. These chosen physical actions can be evaluated instrumentally as means to isolated chosen goals, as well as to ultimate chosen ends such a happy life or a sanctified soul.

IV. Something can work for us relationally with important others -- when a relationship is being strengthened, the particular action is probably working. Actions that seem to produce damage or distance with others, are suspect as to working.

V. Actions can be working socially with larger groups of those minimally concerned. When something is working, it is usually, but not always, at least tolerated by the groups whose jurisdiction you are in. Every group has to have some method of dealing with differing conceptions of "working" that come in conflict with each other.

Each and every thought or choice we have or make can be assessed (and probably usually is). Although overlap between areas can be readily admitted, "working" can be assessed meaningfully in each of the five areas, as well as overall, and comes in degrees.
Those things that are working ideally or "well" are generally (but not always) the things that you (and to a lesser degree others) probably do not give much thought or time to examining or working on. Things that no one has a problem with are probably working well.

On the other end of the spectrum, those things that are generally not working at all, or are working very, very poorly, are often not committed to, or in active "play" any longer. It is in the realm that reaches from the "working okay" to the "working badly" for things individuals choose that I think most people should invest their greatest examinations and efforts.

The above ideas are intended to be held pragmatically, as opposed to dogmatically, and should probably be held only to the degree that they work for you.

When things are not working well in some area, it is usually traceable to:
I. A problem in thinking (from perception, to presupposition, to principle, something happening in the psyche may not be serving us well).

II. A problem in execution (for some reason or reasons -- internal or external or both), we are not getting to our goals).
PHILOSOPHY

IN

GENERAL
ATTEMPTING TO DEFINE PHILOSOPHY

The etymology of the word "philosophy" is traced to the ancient Greeks. The Greek word philosophia can be broken down into two words: philo = love, Sophia = wisdom -- Therefore simply put, philosophia (philosophy) is the love of wisdom.

"Philosophy is a form of thought that thinks about itself. It is self-reflective in nature."  
Donald Palmer

"Philosophy is the no-man's land between science and theology, exposed to attack from both sides."
Bertrand Russell

"Philosophy is the rational inquiry into the structure of any thought system, its presuppositions, concepts, and the status of its claims."
William Capitan

"Philosophy is a free inquiry into the limits of human knowledge into the most general categories applicable to experience and reality."
Stuart Hampshire

"Philosophy is the ongoing critical activity of developing theories to describe, explain, or account for certain aspects of human experience."
Craig Channell

"Philosophy is the attempt to see how things, in the broadest sense of the term, hang together, in the broadest sense of the term."
Wilfrid Sellars

"Philosophy can be characterized as the persistent and reiterated posing of a set of questions about meaning, matter, truth, and consequences."
Peter Caws

"The task of future philosophy is to clarify men's ideas as to the social and moral strife of their own day."
Richard Rorty

"All traditional philosophy is an attempt to create an orderly system of ideas by which to live and interpret the world."
E. F. Schumacher

"The first impulse of the philosopher is to resist the displays of history, the world of appearances, and to search for some underlying unity."
Michael Walzer
PHILOSOPHY BASICS

1. The word "philosophy" can be used meaningfully in a number of ways, but I propose two major ways:

   A. The word "philosophy" can be used as a **method** (Detailed explanation coming).

   B. The word "philosophy" can be used as a **noun**. It can be a noun in the sense of being the subject matter or name of a discipline — "I took philosophy last fall" or in the sense of a single belief—"My philosophy on that is, "or a set of beliefs—"I follow the philosophy of Asoka as my guide to life".

2. While we are not all professional philosophers, we all are philosophers in that we often do, and cannot escape for very long doing, the things that involve or are intertwined with the different meanings of the word philosophy.

3. One of the main hopes of academic philosophers typically is to help equip students to become more capable philosophers, especially in the methodological sense of philosophy introduced above, so that they will be better equipped for the choosing they will do when it comes to philosophy in its sense as a noun or nouns.

4. It is a misnomer to say that philosophers have no answers. They must have some answers by necessity. What "good" philosophers have, in my estimation, are answers that are **always tentative** (not fixed or absolute) at least in degree. The poet Robert Frost said that, "Anyone with an active mind lives on tentatives rather than tenets. Good philosophers' answers should always be open to reexamination and possible revision or rejection of any of their particular "working conclusions."

5. Most philosophers shy away from embracing absolutism and using terms like **proof** and **certitude**. They are as Richard Rorty has said, "... not the people you come to if you want confirmation that the things you love with all your heart are central to the structure of the universe, or that your sense of moral responsibility is "rational and objective."

6. Philosophers should theoretically be open to examining **all of reality**, especially if such examination might prove helpful in providing better methods for dealing with the biggest problems in the world today. Responsible philosophers try and reasonably prioritize what might most fruitfully be philosophized about.
Common Characteristics/Attitudes of Formally Trained Philosophers

In addition to their already pointed-to more skeptical (because of perceived epistemological limitations) tendencies, it is being claimed here that formally trained philosophers commonly take issues related to reality to usually be much more complicated and controversial than most of the other members of their species usually do.

The tendencies listed above also typically result in more qualifying of their language, more seeing things in terms of degrees, trade-offs, paradoxes, and contradictions, as well as philosophers' displaying more intellectual tentativeness and (hopefully) openness than most of their brethren and sisthren.
The standard philosophical position is that reality is most often interpreted and responded to by most humans in too simplistic a manner... "It's often just not that simple!"
What Academic Philosophy Often Provides

I. Provides A Targeted Historical Perspective - Academic philosophy often provides a targeted historical examination of certain problems (certain cognitive problems and cognitive problems realized in the realm of the physical) and a certain specific sampling of the responses to such problems.

II. Provides Warrant For Doubt - Academic philosophy often attempts to make the case why all of our beliefs are to be held with a certain degree of intellectual skepticism, but not so much skepticism as to deny offering guides to choosing -- that is guides to choosing with less than full assurance. Academic philosophy is usually the voluntary foe of dogmatisms of any type. Academic philosophers typically model a tolerance for ambiguity.

III. Provides Certain Intellectual Tools - Academic philosophy often provides a certain repertoire of cognitive and linguistic tools for examining how things might or might not work at the broadest levels of existence, as well as for approaching problems at the most specific levels of existence.

IV. Provides Increased Options - Academic philosophy often provides itssamplers and takers with a wider menu of options for thinking about, interpreting, evaluating, and living in the world than most socializations normally provide for.

V. Provides Limited Ideals - Academic philosophy often provides a call to live under the guidance that it offers, and claims that such guidance is often good for the experience of living. It calls the individual person to examine his or her own life, to assess how he or she has been living in the past, and how it is she or he might choose to live in the present and future.

VI. Further Academic Preparation - Academic Philosophy often provides further skills development and literature familiarity necessary for further successful academic (and especially philosophical) study.
Major Academic Branches of Philosophy

Epistemology
Metaphysics/Ontology
Logic
Ethics/Axiology
Political Philosophy
Social Philosophy
Aesthetics

Philosophy of______________
(Second order approaches)
"The unexamined life is not worth living."  *Socrates*

"So long as we live, we will live either the examined or the unexamined life. It is the assumption of philosophy that the examined life is better."  *James Sire*

"What is the use of philosophy, if all it does is enable you to talk about some abstruse questions of logic, etc., and if it does not improve your thinking about the important questions of everyday life?*  *Ludwig Wittgenstein*

"The purpose of philosophy is to help make practice intelligent"  *John Dewey*

"The purpose of philosophy is to see whether sense can be made of the totality of experience."  *Donald Palmer*

"It cannot be too often repeated that philosophy is everybody’s business. To be a human being is to be endowed with the proclivity to philosophize... Only by the presence of philosophy in the general schooling of all is everyone prepared to discharge the obligations common to all... Everyone is called to one human vocation -- that of being a good citizen and a thoughtful human being."  *M. J. Adler*

"The better understanding of ideas, especially the great ideas, the better we understand reality because of the light they throw on it."  *M. J. Adler*

"Good philosophy must exist, if for no other reason, because bad philosophy needs to be answered."  *C. S. Lewis*

"Philosophy is the fundamental factor in human life; it is the basic force that shapes the mind and character of men and the destiny of nations. It shapes them for good or for evil, depending on the kind of philosophy men accept.

A man’s choice is not whether to have a philosophy, but only which philosophy to have. His choice is whether his philosophy will be conscious, explicit, logical, and therefore practical -- or random, unidentified, contradictory, and therefore lethal.

Man needs metaphysics, epistemology and ethics; i.e., he needs philosophy. He needs it by his essential nature and for a practical purpose: in order to be able to think, to act, to live.

The men who are not interested in philosophy need it most urgently: they are most helplessly in its power.

The men who are not interested in philosophy absorb its principles from the cultural atmosphere around them -- from schools, colleges, books, magazines, newspapers, movies, television, etc...

The battle of philosophers is a battle for man’s mind. If you do not understand their theories, you are vulnerable to the worst among them.

Philosophy studies the fundamental nature of existence, of man, and of man’s relationship to existence. As against the special sciences, which deal only with particular aspects, philosophy deals with those aspects of the universe which pertain to everything that exists...

Now some of you might say, as many people do: ‘Aw, I never think in such abstract terms -- I want to deal with concrete, particular, real-life problems -- what do I need philosophy for?’ My answer is: In order to be able to deal with concrete, particular, real-life problems... You have no choice about the necessity to integrate your observations, experiences, your knowledge into abstract ideas, i.e., into principles.”  *Ayn Rand*

"Philosophy is to be studied not for the sake of any definite answers to its questions, since no definite answers can, as a rule, be known to be true, but rather for the sake of the questions themselves; because these questions enlarge our conception of what is possible, enrich our intellectual imagination and diminish the dogmatic assurance which closes the mind against speculation...”  *Bertrand Russell*
"If the world were in order, there would be no need of me to change it."

Confucius
"The point of philosophy is to make practice intelligent."

John Dewey
Philosophical Method
"Ours is an age of methods."

John Dewey
Method and Mindset

The majority of contemporary philosophers prioritize method and mindset over substantive positions. Philosophers, when philosophizing, are doing something different than what preachers and politicians typically do.

"The philosopher's mission is to search into himself and other men."

Socrates in Plato's "Apology"
Philosophical Method

"It is not the answer" that we must seek but rather a continuous process of answering."

As an oversimplified starting and remembering approach, philosophical method emphasizes...

A Dozen "Ds"

Emphasizing Issue Raising and Reflection Activities
Dialoging
Deliberating
Doubting

Emphasizing Language Activities
Defining
Differentiating

Emphasizing Reasoning Activities
Developing Criteria
Driving Things Backward or Forward
Deductive Reasoning
Dialectical Reasoning

Emphasizing Rational Actualization Activities
Deciding
Defending
Doing
DOUBT

Philosophy has traditionally provided a warrant for doubting, and welcomes doubting into its methodology.

Yet, there comes a point beyond which doubt, although possible, is no longer reasonable.

The mere possibility of error is not, in and of itself, a very convincing reason to continue doubting something.
Philosophy's method is typically to go from the **GENERAL** to the **SPECIFIC** and to generally go from the **ABSTRACT** to the **CONCRETE**
It is noteworthy and remarkable to see how man, besides his life in the concrete, always lives a second life in the abstract... where in the sphere of calm deliberation, what previously possessed him completely and moved him intensely appears to him cold, colorless, and distant. He is a mere spectator and observer.

Schopenhauer
Rene Descartes on Method

I. Divide each of the difficulties at hand into smaller parts.

II. Starting with what is simplest and easiest to have justified confidence in, ascend little by little to the more complex.

Discourse on the Method of Rightly Conducting One's Reason and of Seeking Truth in the Sciences
As humans, we usually do our most productive thinking when we do it together, especially when there are highly developed thinkers involved in the thinking at hand.
No one is primarily interested in abstractions; one becomes interested in an effort to achieve mastery of the unique and the immediate.

Allen Wheelis, *The Quest for Identity*
Life can be compared to a piece of embroidered material of which, everyone in the first half of his time, comes to see the top side, but in the second half, the reverse side. The latter is not so beautiful, but is more instructive because it enables one to see how the threads are connected together.

Schopenhauer
A Criteria For The Best Explanation

A proposition is beyond a "reasonable doubt" when it provides the best explanation for the issue at hand. Philosopher William Wainwright suggests in a schemata that the "best explanation" may have as many as twelve characteristics:

A. The facts that the system explains must actually exist
B. A good metaphysical system should be compatible with well-established facts and theories
C. It must be logically consistent
D. It shouldn't be "self-stultifying"
E. It should be coherent
F. Simpler systems are typically preferable to more complex systems
G. Good metaphysical systems should avoid ad hoc hypotheses
H. Metaphysical explanations should be precise
I. A system's scope is important; it should explain a wide range of phenomena
J. One should consider a system's fruitfulness
K. Good metaphysical systems provide illuminating explanations of the phenomena within their range
L. Philosophical theories should be judged by their efficacy in the life process.
"A wise man proportions his belief to the evidence."

David Hume
Scientific Method Helps Considerably With Means -- But Not Much With "Ends."
Everything has been figured out -- except how to live.

Jean Paul Sartre
Epistemology

(Theory of knowledge)

What can be known?

With what degrees of confidence can we know things?

How do we defend our claims to knowledge?
Epistemological Spectrum

Absolutism           Pragmatism         Extreme Skepticism

Ethical/Social Response
Correlates to Above

Absolutism           Pluralism           Relativism
Most Want Pluralism. But There Are Trade-offs and Tensions That Come with It

I. Anomie (Normative confusion).

II. Social consequences you might not feel excited about that come from increased individual freedoms.

III. Continued challenges of selecting some shared values, and sorting out what is tolerable from what is intolerable.

"Negative morality accepts the acceptance of strangers, knows there will always be a "they," that "we" and "they" will be divided at times on the most basic issues, unable to agree on the nature of the good. Because of the inevitability of such division and opposition, negative morality urges the acceptance of abstract rules of fair conduct in order that individuals and groups of divergent values, conflicting purposes, may live together without destroying each other.

Positive morality dictates our purposes, negative morality leaves purposes for us to determine, but sets limits which guard the freedom of others to preserve their purposes.

Allen Wheelis, The Moralist
TRUTH

"The need of truth is more sacred than any other need."  
Simone Weil

"Truth is a mobile army of metaphors."  
Friedrich Nietzsche

"Truth is to be understood as a system of ordered procedures for the production, regulation, distribution, circulation, and operations of statements."  
Michel Foucault

I. Truth exists in relationship to linguistic utterances, most specifically statements.

II. Truth is traditionally defined to be the agreement or correspondence between mind (and statements that come from a mind) and reality.

III. It is easier to define "truth" than to know what the truth is in specific situations (If that is even possible with certainty).

IV. We may differ in our judgments about what is true, but that does not effect the truth of the matter itself.

V. The fact that we often disagree with one another's judgments about what is true ought probably to persuade us of the infirmity, frailty, and fallibility of the human mind in its efforts to get at truth. Being persuaded of this should not lead us to abandon those efforts as entirely futile or fruitless, but it should restrain us from claiming certitude, finality, and incorrigibility for judgments that are subject to doubt, change, and correction.

REALITY

I. Simply and traditionally defined, reality is "That which is."

II. Each person has their own subjective perceptions and experiences, but there are reasons (and good ones) for believing that there is an external reality independent of individual perceptions.

III. It is controversial as to whether it is possible to verify external reality definitively.
Opinions might be best thought of as beliefs and positions that have not (yet at least) acquired the status of facts, truths, or knowledge. Opinions with very thin or questionable evidence and reasoning undergirding them are often referred to as "mere opinions." The quality of an opinion is related to the quality of evidence and reasoning that supports it; on this basis, some opinions can be talked about as being better than others.

"My dear Crito," said Socrates, when Crito ended, "I appreciate your warm feelings very much. Your zeal is valuable, if you are right. But if you are wrong, the greater the zeal, the greater the danger." *Socrates*

"I ask you, Crito, don't you think that this is a sound principle, that one should not regard equally all the opinions that people hold but only some and not others? What do you say? Is that not a fair statement?"

"Yes, it is," said Crito.

"In other words," Socrates continued, "a person should regard the good opinions and not the bad?"

"Yes."

"The opinions of the wise being good, and the opinions of the foolish bad."

"Naturally," answered Crito. *Socrates*
WE DO NOT EXPERIENCE REALITY DIRECTLY

The idea that our normal perceptions have a direct, one-to-one correspondence to reality -- that they are like photographs of the outer world -- is easily challengeable. The clearly dominant position in the discipline of science is that perception is constructive. What we perceive is determined not only by what our senses take in, but how our brains organize that data.

The philosopher Immanuel Kant realized long before modern scientists that all of our sense data are filtered through our neural apparatus and reassembled therein to provide us with a picture we call reality but which in fact is only a chimera, a fiction that emerges from our conceptualizing and categorizing mind. Indeed, even cause and effect, sequence, quantity, space, and time are conceptualizations, constructs, not entities “out there” in nature. The primary entity, which Kant called the Ding an sich (the thing in itself) will seemingly remain unknowable in a direct sense to us.

This is not to say that there is not good reason to believe that a reality external to our subjective experience actually exists. Martin Gardner tells us, “The hypothesis that there is an external world not dependent on human minds, made of something, is so obviously useful and so strongly confirmed by experience down through the ages that we can say without exaggerating that it is better confirmed than any other empirical hypothesis.”

The belief that there is an external reality is the best explanation of our experience. Though we may “see through a glass darkly,” we seem to see clearly enough to navigate somewhat successfully through reality. Additionally, although what we take in through our senses is likely a reliable approximation of reality, it is not an infallible one. Humans are certainly capable of constructing fictions they call truths and of making errors of perceptual interpretation and reasoning, but if we collectively use good method on our voyages in reality, our journeys will more often be fruitful.
Some of the Major Reasons We Do Not Always Know

I. Our best evidence and reasoning shows us that we do not experience reality directly, and that we use the limited filters of brains to interpret reality.

II. Brains (Yours and others) sometimes make organic errors of perception,

III. Brains (Yours and others) sometimes make organic errors of cognition.

IV. Brains (Yours and others) commonly make errors of learning.
There is a clear difference between subjective (personal) certainty and philosophic certainty...
"The intellectual life of man consists almost wholly in his substitution of a conceptual order for the perceptual order in which his experience originally comes."

William James
"The World We Live In"
Humans Construct Many Simplified Stories About The World

"We know that the first step towards the intellectual mastery of the world in which we live is the discovery of general principles, rules and laws which bring order into chaos. By such mental operations we simplify the world of phenomena, but we cannot avoid falsifying it in doing so, especially when we are dealing with processes of development and change."

Sigmund Freud
"Analysis Terminable and Interminable"
Routes to Interpreting Reality

Two different (Hard-to-deny overlapping) major routes to coming to interpret reality have been argued about for at least the last three thousand years!
They are:

**Rationalism**
- We come to know
- Through the mind

**Empiricism**
- We come to know
- through the senses

The tools used in each approach emphasize different things

**Cognitive Primacy**
- Interpretation
- Reasoning
- Deduction
- Analytic Statements
- Apriori Reasoning
- Internal World (Systems)

**Experiential Primacy**
- Perception
- Observation
- Induction
- Synthetic Statements
- A posteriori Reasoning
- External World
But the world is neither intrinsically fair or exact: it is composed of subtleties that require less simplistic approaches. A healthy civilization can accept the uncomfortable ambiguities. Attempts to eradicate or ignore uncertainty intend to encourage a borderline society.

Jerold Kreisman and Hal Straus
It would be nice to “know” absolutely but...

Life is a treasure hunt. I have to play, there isn’t anything else, but I am being given mischievous clues. “Find a pearl in the outhouse.”

A chorus of contending voices, each with a catchy tune, and each claiming to be the one true theme. How we are to make sense of our lives is not something that some great genius can get straight once and for all, but an ongoing task of interpretation in a changing field.

Offering a vision of life that makes sense of our experience, but it doesn’t make complete sense, or exclusive sense.

Irving Yalom
"Have patience with everything unresolved and try to love the questions themselves."

Rilke
Certainty Verses Probability

For certainty in a (philosophical as opposed to psychological sense) to be a viable concept, the validity of an absolutist epistemology (theory of knowledge) must be assumed. That is, we can know and verify (at least some people some of the time) what the nature of reality is with certainty.

The pragmatist philosopher rejects "certainty" and settles for "probability" because he or she does not believe that it can be intellectually demonstrated to be true, or even justifiable. This is because:

I. We are each locked into our own subjective (unique to the individual) lenses through which we experience and interpret the world.

II. We are limited (not omniscient) creatures.

III. Our shared experiences of our subjective stories provide us with some overlapping story lines, but they also provide us with many disagreements as to what the true story is, is based on, or should be.

IV. The pragmatist philosopher believes that when the overlap of thought achieves social consensus, then "objectivity" is conferred, although it is not absolute in nature. This type of objectivity gives us the basis for talking about "probability."

V. Knowledge, then, in the non-absolutist paradigm, is the evolving body of socially constructed and socially approved stories.
We Cannot Help Sometimes Deferring to Other Guides, But Which Guides, and On What Basis, Shall We Choose Those to Whom We Shall Defer?

“Because we are social creatures, we often utilize an indirect mental mode that allows us to rely on someone else or on something else in order to draw a conclusion without having to see, or feel, or think it through from the beginning on our own. However, in order to use an authority, we must first accept it as valid, and in order to do that we must become convinced of its reliability by our sense experience, logic, emotion, or intuition, and hence come to trust it, which is why this mode is synthetic.”

Hunter Lewis
GROUNDING

The "grounding" is at the minimum the starting/ending point by which all of the argumentation parts (listed above) might find their anchoring.

This attempt at grounding is done to combat being more arbitrary than is necessary.

Among the most prominent attempts at grounding have been (at the general level)

Power
Morality
Law
Reason
Emotion
Observed Regularities (laws) of Nature
Human Nature
Biology
Intuition
Conscience
Custom
Tradition
Authority (god(s), church, governments, experts, science, leaders, laws, books, etc.)
Personal Preference
Pleasure
Self-Interest
Survival of the Fittest

The extreme skeptic is typically highly un-persuaded at attempts at grounding things very deeply, and often has even given up the attempt at such endeavors. Mildly skeptical thinkers have usually given up the attempt at grounding things ultimately, but might try to do this activity in limited ways (in smaller groups, enlisting volunteers, with lots of qualifications, pragmatically, etc.).
It may very well be that the challenge of justifying an absolute grounding for ethics is impossible, and, if so, we will then be invited to ground our ethics upon less firmer ground, but ground still capable of supporting us.

“We may present a coherent and enlightening picture without providing anything and, indeed, without claiming to present moral knowledge or moral truth. The hand that steadied us as we learned to ride our first bicycle did not provide propositional knowledge, but it guided and supported us all the same, and we finished up, 'knowing how.'”

Nel Noddings
Probability

"When it is not in our power to determine what is true, we ought to follow what is most probable."

Rene Descartes

Those using either philosophical and or scientific methods are best thought of as primarily dealing with PROBABILITY STATEMENTS.

An almost infinite number of things are "possible," but we almost always are better served by following those claims, hypotheses, ideas, and theories that are most "probable."
Starting Assumptions

It is claimed that you cannot formally demonstrate everything. Everyone ends up committing (through their cognitions and or behavior) to some starting assumptions.

The principles of thought (I.E. - adherence to ideas like "coherence," or "self-evident" principles like the "law of non-contradiction" [illustrated by a statement such as "something cannot exist and not exist at the same time."]) are the basis for logical demonstration, but they themselves cannot be proven or even demonstrated in a formal sense.

Demonstration of everything would lead to an infinite regress with which one could never get to the front of the line.

A more pragmatic (it works well or even best) criteria for committing to starting assumptions is usually hoped for by philosophers and scientists. If the principles of thought are not convincing to someone (things making sense, some claims, ideas, theories, etc. being more defendable by the standards and methods of reasoning than others, then something other than the principles of thought is being used to guide (at least significantly) the person in committing to their starting assumptions (I.E. - irrationality, affectivity, deferring to authorities, etc.).
The Need for Commitment

When there exists less than certainty, what fills the gap for humans both collectively and individually is commitment.

It would seem that some propositions ask for more commitment than others. This seems to indicate that some things seem far less convincing than others to humans.

The motivations and methods with which one commits to something is an area ripe for examination! Some ways of committing are likely more defensible than others.
CHOICE THEORY
Choosing

Unless philosophical determinism is accurate (and there are good reasons to think that it is not (at least) at the level of human choosing), our lives consist significantly of the choices we make. These choices occur nearly without cessation. We make choices of commission (that which we actively pursue) and choices of omission (that which we fail to actively pursue). Not actively choosing something involves making a choice.

The realm of human choosing is an incredibly wide realm, but it does have limits; there is not unlimited choice in life. It is more defendable to claim that we have some "will," as opposed to free will.

When might you not have choice? You have no choice when you have no alternatives at that particular moment for choosing. Sometimes we have "potential choices," but for a number of reasons potential options are not "live options" at that particular moment, while other choices simply are not possible for you to bring into actuality -- no matter what you decide or attempt.

What limits alternatives for potential choosers? Alternatives can be limited or eliminated by a stronger (real or perceived) force.

Such a constraining force might come from a number of potential sources:

Supernatural powers                Automated behavior              Drives
Stronger opponents                 Unconscious forces              Ignorance
Facticity (physical) limitations   Mental impediments              Fears

Force that is stronger, but not overwhelming, reduces, but does not eliminate choice altogether in such situations. There is often a distinguishing made between being able to choose one's thoughts (and attitudes) even when one is not able to choose one's behavior more fully.

Often times in life, we do have alternatives, but many of these times the alternatives might be significantly limited in number and or appeal.

Many of life's choices are not experienced as choices. They evolve, or happen without systematic deliberation.

Major challenges for humans as regards choosing involve:

I. Not recognizing that we are choosing
II. Not recognizing what we are choosing
III. Not wanting to do the work of responsible choosing
IV. Not wanting to accept responsibility for our choices
V. Not knowing what to choose
It is proposed that in human society, there is a constant competition of values, principles, and ideals, and more often than not, this competition is more implicit than explicit, making it, as it were, an often silent, or, subtle socialization of the outcome of this competition...
Ethics requires that humans have some degree of choice. Only to the level that we can make choices can we be held morally culpable.

In ethics we typically want people to accept appropriate responsibility for the choices that they are already making, and to increase their range of options for the choices that they possibly could be making.
Character Verses Personality

In the *Oxford English Dictionary*, “Character” is defined (in part) as “the moral and mental qualities that distinguish an individual.”

Personality and character cannot be completely separated, but they can be meaningfully differentiated.

“Character” has moral overtones that the word “personality” lacks. Personality tends to be explained as resulting from a combination of nature and nurture (genetics and environment).

The acquisition of character can be explained somewhat through learning, but also through the choices one makes. Character emphasizes more about whom a person has developed morally to be. The image of character that has emerged is what a person is, especially in the areas of her or his life’ that concern major choices. Less what you are born with, character emphasizes who you choose to be – to the level you are able to choose.

To have a “good character” suggests the presence of virtues and the absence of vices.
Means For Your Choosing

Two main means to your choosing are suggested:

I. Primarily Highly Cognitively Complex Approaches to Choosing
Primarily highly cognitively complex approaches to choosing are characterized by high neo-cortex activity in the brain, manifested through noetic activity -- reflection, reasoning, abstraction, and most of the other tools that the "philosophical method" employs.

This route is generally not done quickly, and is often characterized by varying degrees of social checking in an effort to move in the direction of social "objectivity." This route is associated with more conscious "acting," and less "re-acting."

II. Primarily Less Cognitively Complex Approaches to Choosing
Primarily less cognitively complex approaches to choosing are, first and foremost, approaches not characterized by a preliminary use of the highly complex approach to choosing (as introduced above) in which a heavy reliance is placed upon choosing to respond to possible suprarational messages, physical drives, intuitions, emotions, or by an unquestioning following of beliefs, traditions, authorities, or socializations.

This route is often characterized by less time being involved in coming to decisions, as well as by having less of an emphasis on social checking, with a seeming contentment coming from a heavy reliance upon individual subjectivity. This route is associated with more "re-acting" and less conscious "acting."

It should be said that both routes to choosing are probably highly traceable to brain activity, and are, with little doubt, part of a synergistic relationship between the parts of the brain.
SUGGESTED DOMINANT TRIO EXPLAINING MUCH OF HUMAN BEHAVIOR

Granted varying in degrees and overlapping of categories -- among and within individual humans...

We Follow It...

We Feel It...

We Think It...
"P" THEORY

PROPOSED PRIMARY GUIDES TO UNDERSTANDING MOST OF HUMAN BEHAVIOR EXPLAINED BY ENVIRONMENTAL INFLUENCES -- WHERE WE FIND MANY OF THE "WHY"S.

TEN PRIMARY GUIDES

PHYSIOLOGY
PLEASURE/PAIN - PURSUIT/AVOIDANCE
PRIOR CIVILIZATIONS
PARENTS
PRIOR RELIGIOUS COMMITMENTS
PEERS/PARTNERS
POPULAR CULTURE
POWER
PRESTIGE
POLITICS
"There are many people who arrive at the result of their lives like schoolboys; they cheat their teacher by copying the answers from the key in the arithmetic book, without bothering to do the sums themselves."

Soren Kierkegaard,
1837
There are precious few at ease with moral ambiguities, so we act as if they don't exist.

Wicked
There are no problems
few or none
mental anguish
so we act as if
they don't exist.

MICOL
ETHICS

SPECIFICALLY
"Philosophical" Ethics is the discipline that studies character and conduct.

(Character and conduct reaches from at the broadest level to cognitions such as ideals, values, motivations to the narrower level of behavior)
TYPES OF ACADEMIC ETHICS

Metaethics

Social Ethics

Normative Ethics

Applied Ethics

Personal Ethics

What are usually not included in academic ethics as a primary focus or sub-discipline:

Descriptive ethics
Law
Etiquette
Tradition
SOME INTRODUCTORY THOUGHTS ABOUT ETHICS

"You can split the atom, but you aren't sure about know how to live. Why is that?"

Ishmael (in the novel of the same name by Daniel Quinn)

"Ah how the mind boggles when it turns to moral or ethical considerations! Better to rely more on the body -- the body is more dependable. It shows up for meetings, it looks good in a sports jacket, and it really comes in handy when you want to get a rubdown."

Woody Allen in "The Condemned"

"Inevitably we find ourselves appraising all important matters in terms of fundamental values." John Oesterle

"Tut, tut, child!" said the Duchess. "Everything's got a moral, if only you can find it." From Alice's Adventures in Wonderland
Two Main Points About Ethics

I. The realm of the ethical is wide.

II. Most people approach ethics either too generally or too narrowly.
The Main Ethical Dilemma

What to do with and for yourself and what to do with and for others.
Parable of the Beans

Wealth at last is translatable into cans of beans and blankets. WEALTH IS TRANSLATABLE INTO LIFE, into health, and to freedom. We would think it madness were we to visit a man who had already acquired ten square miles of canned beans, the cases of beans stacked twenty stories high, with an endless train of trucks laden with more beans entering the compound while the compound itself, always expanding, was protected by a surrounding fence and thousands of guards to keep the starving outside.

"What are you doing?" we might ask the Bean Man. "Can't you see people are starving?"

"This is free enterprise," the Bean Man might reply.

"I know, but you can only eat so many beans. And, after all, you can't take the beans with you."

"I'm leaving the beans to my kids. Besides, I use beans to keep score. That's my hobby. I am a bean counter."

"What do you mean 'keep score'?" a pale, gaunt woman in rags asks through a crack in the fence. "Can't you see my child is starving?"

"Go to work," the Bean Man says. I worked for my beans, you work for yours. And don't forget, I'm giving ten cans of beans to the scholarship fund of my university next month."

Then he orders one of his men to board up the hole through which he hears the woman, and after which he cannot hear the remonstrations of the mother or the whimpering of the child, for all he can hear is the sound of his own voice as he continues to count his beans.
METAETHICS

Metaethics involves...

I. Ethical Language

II. Ethical Classification

III. Ethical theories
(at the broadest levels of analysis; (as opposed to normative, social, and personal ethical theories) metaethical theories generally do not guide one to what is specifically good or ill, right or wrong as NORMATIVE ETHICAL THEORIES do).

Metaethical theories are usually about issues and questions involving:

- Attempts at grounding (or pulling out the grounding from under) ethical theories of all types
- Ethics and freedom/determinism/choice/responsibility
- Ethics and absolutism, universalism, pluralism, relativism
- Reconciling individual and social ethical systems
- Ethics and human nature
- Ethics and human socialization/social learning
- Ethics and human well-being/functioning/thriving
- Ethics and good and evil
- The question of "why should one be moral?"
- Debates over emphasizing character or conduct
- Criteria for evaluating normative theories
D.B. O'Shaughnessy

Lawrence Kohlberg's Levels Stages of Moral Development

Kohlbergian Ground Rules

1. Stages are "structured wholes," or organized systems of thought. This means individuals are consistent in their level of moral judgment.

2. Stages form an invariant sequence. Under all conditions except extreme trauma, movement is always forward, never backward. Individuals never skip stages. These principles are true across cultures.

3. Stages are "hierarchical integrations." Thinking at a higher stage includes or comprehends within it lower stage thinking.

The Kohlberg Levels and Stages

I. Preconventional Level

Stage 1: The punishment and obedience orientation

Stage 2: The instrumentalist-relativist orientation

II. Conventional Level

Stage 3: The interpersonal concordance or "good boy - nice girl" orientation.

Stage 4: "The law and order" orientation

III. Postconventional, Autonomous, or Principled Level

Stage 5: The social contract, legalistic orientation

Stage 6: The universal-ethical principle orientation
**ETHICAL LANGUAGE**

When discussing moral questions, there can be:

**Factual Issues**
(When is a fetus viable?) Potentially solved by appealing to empirical investigation.

**Conceptual Issues**
(What constitutes a person?) Potentially settled by determining and justifying the usage and meanings of concepts and terms.

**Moral Issues**
(Should the lives of persons be protected?) Potentially resolved by appealing to moral principles or standards. Moral statements cannot be confirmed by appeal to factual statements alone.

The three levels that a NORMATIVE moral theory can operate at:

**Moral Judgments**
(Jalapeno shouldn't have beaten Tu-song for being late.)

**Moral Principles**
(One shouldn't physically harm others without justification.)

**Moral Standards**
(Those things are right that advance the human condition, and those things that don't are wrong.)
Power Theory

Thesis: “Ethics involves what you choose to do with your power.”

Power (the ability to actualize one’s choices) manifests itself in a number of mediums. For instance:

- Physical power
- Legal power
- Intellectual power
- Charismatic power
- Sexual power
- Ideological power
- Ethical power

- Economic power
- Communication power
- Emotional power
- Relational power
- Institutional power
- Cultural power
- Group power

It is a complicated and controversial ideal debate as to what should be done with one’s power, and since ethics tends to be defined as a “social activity,” the debate cannot probably stop responsibly with just the individual. But as a starting point, if an individual starts off articulating what his or her reflected and chosen “ethical ideal” is, and then attempts to move her or his actions toward that ideal, then the person probably can make a reasonable claim to trying to live the ethical life when they do, indeed, move their chosen actions closer to that ideal.

What are the major (but general) options for what one does with his or her power?

- Try and increase it
- Try and maintain it
- Try and re-distribute it to others
- Try and discipline/control it

And then with whatever power one does have in his or her possession, further choices have to be made about how one will use her or his power (for good or for ill and what that might mean in terms of your specific chosen ethical ideal) as regards:

- Oneself
- Those in one’s chosen circle of concern
- Those one has some direct contact with
- Those in one’s direct connection
- Those outside one’s direct contact or connection

Power has also been classified as being viewed either as sovereign (an individual’s power over) or mutual (a dyad or group’s collective power (power with).
Motives

We often have more than one motive when we are consciously choosing something, although with reflection the motives involved in any choice can usually be ranked from greatest to least as to motivating influence.
Conscience

What Is Conscience? Conscience can be defined as an aptitude, faculty, intuition, or judgment (primarily of the intellect) that helps distinguish right from wrong within society and (most critically) the individual. Conscience often starts with a feeling ("voice within," "inner light," gut feeling, guilt, shame, sense of obligation or duty, feelings of "should" or "should not," etc.) In fact, J.J. Rousseau defined conscience as, "...the feeling that urges us, in spite of contrary passions, toward two harmonies: the one within our minds and between our passions, and the other within society and between its members."

Damage or limitation in the (midbrain) limbic system (most notably the Amygdala) correlates with lessened affective life -- including diminished feelings of guilt, shame, remorse, regret, etc. that are the emotions that are commonly said to flow from a good or healthy conscience when it has done wrong or violated its own or society's norms (and conversely increased feelings of "peace" and "clearness" when doing that which is right or in line with one's conscience).

Yet most explanations of the conscience continue beyond feeling to the intellect. There is often said to be a battle within the mind (good angel - bad angel) or a "goad to the good" from one's conscience (Jimminy Crickett exhorting Pinocchio, etc.) This part of the conscience that has a cognitive primacy has often been referred to as "critical conscience." Immanuel Kant considered critical conscience to be "... an internal court in which our thoughts accuse or excuse one another." Much of "critical conscience" brain activity has been shown to be concentrated in the anterior prefrontal cortex, and those with under-activity or injury in this region have been shown to have less ability to reason morally.

Where Does the Conscience Come From? There have been competing explanations throughout history as to where the conscience comes from. For example, competing Christian explanations range from the conscience being something everyone is born with -- The Imago Dei (image of God) to something that is acquired (I.E. - the Holy Spirit comes to dwell within).

Common secular or scientific views regard the capacity for conscience as genetically guided (analogously the hard-wiring), with its specific subject matter (analogously the software) learned, or imprinted (like language) through socialization.
Sigmund Freud regarded conscience as originating psychologically from civilization. Freud claimed that both the cultural and the individual super-ego set up strict ideal demands with regard to the moral aspects of certain decisions as an internal curb to drives.

Erik Erikson placed the significant beginning of the development of the conscience in the pre-schooler's stage of his eight-stage theory of psycho-social development.

Contemporary scientists in the fields of ethology, neuroscience and evolutionary psychology seek to explain conscience as a function of the brain that developed to facilitate reciprocal altruism within societies. Charles Darwin had long before theorized that conscience evolved in man as an outcome of having to resolve conflicts between competing natural impulses - some about self-preservation, but others about safety of a family or community. Thus conscience from this perspective is viewed as the outcome of those biological drives that prompt humans to avoid provoking fear or contempt in others by internalizing guilt, shame, remorse, and like feelings in differing but similar ways from society to society, and from individual to individual.
But where would she fit in -- in this world you're building? You've got to make a place where she can live; that's what fathers do -- they build a world for their children. If you want her to live in a loving world, then it is up to you to construct that world -- and you have to start with your own behavior. You can't be outside your own law -- that's the basis of every ethical system.

Irving Yalom
Normative Ethical Theories
A Common Criteria for Evaluating Normative Ethical Theories

I. Justification

II. Coherence

III. Usefulness

III. Plausibility
Attempting to Classify
Normative Theories

In metaethics we try to explore the nature of ethics. We classify in order to
distinguish things one from another. This will hopefully aid us in our quest for
understanding. In classifying normative theories of ethics, the classification can become
very complicated, but let us be content for our purposes in saying (although this is
admittedly oversimplified) that normative theories can be categorized in the following
three major ways:

I. Largely *Consequentialist* theories of ethics: No act is good or bad in itself. Rather, an
act is good or bad only in terms of its consequences. Consequentialist theories tend to be
predictive in nature; that is that at the point of decision making, one can only predict what
the possible consequences of an action might be. Only in retrospect is one able to fully
evaluate what the consequences of a particular action are.

Largely *Nonconsequentialist* theories of ethics: The goodness or badness of acts is not
determined by the consequences of the acts. The goodness or badness of acts in largely
nonconsequentialist theories is determined typically by whether or not one adheres to
specific laws, principles, rules, duties, etc. in ethical decision making. Another common way
of labeling such law, principle, rule, etc. approaches is *deontological*.

Nonconsequentialist approaches tend to be more concrete as moral guides (they
have specific rules one follows) as compared to consequentialist theories.

The qualifier "largely" precedes the terms of classification above to make the point
that most normative theories are not pure; that is most theories take into account to some
degree (even if only a very small degree) both consequentialist and nonconsequentialist
considerations. Yet, we can usually say that a theory belongs basically on one side of the
consequentialist/nonconsequentialist line or the other.

II. Normative theories can usually be classified as being *largely an ethics of conduct* (How
do we decide what is right or good to do?) or *largely an ethics of character* (How should a
person or people be?). Most normative theories take the ethics of conduct approach.
*Virtue* ethics (in all its approaches - Platonic, Aristotelian, Confucian, Christian, etc.)
follows the ethics of character emphasis.

III. Theories of ethics can take either *primarily micro* (individual) or *primarily macro* (collectivity) emphases. The majority of normative theories emphasize the micro approach.
The macro approach is notably prominent in the ethics of justice and in John Stuart Mill’s
version of utilitarianism.
Leading Traditional Philosophical
(Ethical) Normative
Theories/Theory Categories

(And their standards summarized/simplified)

I. Kantianism
Categorical Imperative 1 - Act only according to that maxim by which you can at the same time will that it should become a universal law.
Categorical Imperative 2 - (Principle of humanity) Act so that you treat humanity, whether in your own person or in that of another, always as an end and never as a means only.
Categorical Imperative 3 - (Principle of autonomy) Act only so that the will through its maxims could regard itself at the same time as universally lawgiving.

II. Utilitarianism
Do that which produces the greatest good for the greatest number in both quantity and quality.

III. Virtue Ethics
Do what the virtuous (moral exemplar or ideal) person would do.

IV. Divine Command Ethics
That which God commands or prohibits is to be adhered to.

Less Dominant Ethical Normative Theories

V. Natural Law Ethics
Do/promote that which is natural (Life, procreation, knowledge, socialbility)

VI. Ethics of Justice (John Rawls)
Act justly, be just, do the just thing, bring about justice.

A. Rawls has two main principles by which goods should be distributed (these principles would be selected by rational individuals behind the veil of ignorance):
First: each person is to have an equal right to the most extensive basic liberty compatible with a similar liberty for others.
Second: social and economic inequalities are to be arranged so that they are both (a) reasonably expected to be to everyone's advantage, and (b) attached to positions and offices open to all.
VII. Ethics of Existentialism (John Paul Sartre)
Maximize creative freedom, accept responsibility for one's choices, create one's own values by oneself.

VIII. Situation Ethics (Joseph Fletcher)
Act lovingly, love as much as you can, bring about as much loving kindness as you can, do the most loving thing that you can given the options set before you, let love be your guide.

IX. Ethics of Caring
Be caring, act caringly toward others, promote relationships

X. Ethical Egoism
Out of the options available, choose that which will most rationally maximize one's own self-interest.

XI. Moral Hedonism
Increase pleasure, decrease pain given your options.

XII. Contextualism
Strive to be a person that tries to do the actionably right thing.

XIII. Ecological Ethics (Ecocentric, Biocentric, Sentience)
Protect all of life (ecoc-systems, feeling creatures) Promote living harmony

XIV. Rights Ethics
Honor Rights

XV. Prima Facie Duties (D.W. Ross)
Do your duty (Our actual duty is what we should do in a specific situation, all things considered, and after we have weighed all applicable prima facie duties reasonably).
ETHICS - CLASS CONCLUSIONS

I. Ethics can be approached rationally, and such approaches can bear much fruit.

II. One cannot be very fruitful in the study of ethics if one is an ideologue (not open to reason or possible significant change guiding one's ethical thinking process).

III. Absolutism, extreme skepticism, nihilism, and relativism are all (fairly) rationally problematic.

IV. Absolutist language as regards rationally and morality is best used very cautiously.

V. Because absolute knowledge and grounding are probably not possible, the best way of talking about ethics (in the philosophical approach) is probably not with the truth paradigm, but with the rationality paradigm. What is the best decision? What is the most rationally defensible judgment? How well are my standards justified? Is my method sound?

VI. Ethics do not necessarily have to be grounded absolutely to be justified moral guides. We shouldn't think that because we can't settle things absolutely that we can't settle anything. Philosopher James Rachels says along these lines:

The fact that rationality has limits does not subvert the objectivity of ethics, but it does suggest a certain modesty in what can be claimed of it. Ethics provides answers about what we ought to do, given what kinds of creatures we are, caring about the things we care about when we are as reasonable as we can be, living in the sort of circumstances in which we live. This is not as much as we want, but it is a lot. It is as much as we can hope for in a subject that must incorporate not only our beliefs but our ideals as well.

Philosopher Donald Palmer echoed Rachels' thoughts when he said, "A moral theory can be part of an argument meant to motivate a certain kind of thinking and acting...." Philosopher Bernard Williams has said, "The role of philosophy in this region is not to discover the foundations of morality, but to help us construct a world that will be our world, one in which we have a social, cultural, and personal life." So here, as elsewhere, if we do not expect too much of philosophy, she can be an excellent companion.

VII. There are a good number of ethical theories that have emerged throughout history. These theories offer standards from which principles and judgments can be reasoned. It is probably too simplistic to simply say that something is right or wrong, because in actuality it is really being claimed to be right or wrong according to some standard. Strict deductive
Proofs of moral standards are probably impossible. At best, a moral philosopher can show reasons why accepting one standard rather than another is more plausible.

VIII. Ethical theories can be used eclectically -- to a point. At some point contradiction may arise. Philosopher Bernard Williams claims in this regard, "We should not feel this quest (the ethical quest) must be guided by only one principle... Rather, we should develop some system of moral mapping."

IX. No one ethical theory has "won out." A person can probably be rational and hold any of the major ethical theories, even if some of the theories can be shown to be more defendable than others. The issues (metaethical and normative) of ethics will continue to puzzle and frustrate us.

X. We should keep in mind that whatever the nature of reality, and however the universe came into being, morality is now a part of it. Love, hate, values, thoughts, feelings, emotions, obligations, virtues, and principles -- the elements of morality -- are in their own way as real as atoms and electrons, and to understand our world fully we must be prepared to study them as seriously as we do the chemical and physical properties of things; virtually little is of greater importance.

XII. There is a next step after acquiring ethical knowledge -- that next step is ethical decision making. Personal judgment and commitment should follow instruction, reflection, reasoning. These words from Soren Kierkegaard seem appropriate:

What I really need is to become clear in my own mind what I must do, not what I must know -- except in so far as knowing must precede every action. The important thing is to understand what I am destined for, to perceive what the deity wants me to do; the point is to find the truth for me, to find that idea for which I am willing to live and die. What good would it do me to discover a so-called objective truth, though I were to work my way through the system of philosophers and were able, if need be, to pass them in review?

Ludwig Wittgenstein said along these lines, "What is the use of philosophy, if all it does is enable you to talk about some abstruse questions of logic, etc., and if it does not improve your thinking about the important questions of everyday life?"
Philosophical (Ethical) Therapy

I. Commit to taking ethics seriously.

II. Labor at clarifying and improving one's philosophical method.

III. Work out your metaethical working conclusions.

IV. Identify and rank your main normative guides to behavior, as well as more specifically identify and rank your top values and ideals.

V. Start taking (at least) "baby steps" in more closely and completely aligning your behavior with your chosen normative guides, and your chosen top values and ideals.
The ethical person needs to try an increase ethical SKILL and ethical WILL
“Action from principle, -- the perception and the performance of right, -- changes things and relations; it is essentially revolutionary... (such action) divides the individual, separating the diabolical in him from the divine."

“For it matters not how small the beginning may seem to be: what is once well done is done for ever....”

Henry David Thoreau “Civil Disobedience”
When you choose an action, choose as if the whole world were watching you, or at least as if those that matter most to you were...
If you want to be proud of yourself, then do things in which you can take pride.

Integrity is what makes us desirable to ourselves.
giving poor people the feeling that they too are human beings, we wouldn't necessarily have to give money or material things, since not everyone has them to give.

Everything starts in small ways, so in this case you can begin in small ways too. On streetcars, for example, don't just offer your seat to rich mothers, think of the poor ones too. And say "excuse me" when you step on a poor person's toe, just as you say it to a rich one.

It takes so little effort, yet it means so much. Why shouldn't you show a little kindness to those poor urchins who are already so deprived?

We all know that "example is better than precept." So set a good example, and it won't take long for others to follow. More and more people will become kind and generous, until finally no one will ever again look down on those without money.

Oh, if only we were already that far! If only Holland, then Europe, and finally the whole world realized how unfair it was being, if only the time would come when people treated each other with genuine good will, in the realization that we're all equal and that worldly things are transitory!

How wonderful it is that no one has to wait, but can start right now to gradually change the world! How wonderful it is that everyone, great and small, can immediately help bring about justice by giving of themselves!

As with so many things, most people seek justice in very different quarters, and grumble because they themselves receive so little of it.

Open your eyes, be fair in your own dealings first! Give whatever there is to give! You can always—always—give something, even if it's a simple act of kindness! If everyone were to give in this way and didn't scrimp on kindly words, there would be much more love and justice in the world!

Give and you shall receive, much more than you ever thought possible. Give and give again. Keep hoping, keep trying, keep giving! People who give will never be poor!

If you follow this advice, within a few generations, people will never have to feel sorry for poor little beggar children again, because there won't be any!

The world has plenty of room, riches, money and beauty. God has created enough for each and every one of us. Let us begin by dividing it more fairly.

Note: For further information on Anne Frank the Writer see "An Unfinished Story" at www.ushmm.org