



## The Diligo Vita Manual

A psychological & philosophical guide  
for child to adult transition

Sheet 2

**“Why am I, who am I”?**

An intermediate level exercise



## Why am I who I am?

Having completed sheet 1: “what am I?” it would not be unreasonable of you to assume the next sheet would be “who am I” but there are some philosophical profundities that must be considered first before we can truly understand the nature of who we are: “why am I who I am?”

In Sheet 1 we looked at “what we are”. We found that by first expanding our exploration of what we are, we came to a more holistic awareness; that we have a commonality with everything around us. Then, by being analytical of the differences of those things around us we began to quantify what is was that made us, us. We saw that, compared to other higher animals we possess certain mental abilities which we attributed to our mastery of complex language: communication, abstract thinking, consequential corollary, self-awareness + ego. We did not however look at the very complex implications that these abilities gave us and with that the very profound difference we have from other animals. Sheet 2 looks at those implications and profound differences:

- 1) We are all philosophers.  
Putting to rest the truly imponderable.
- 2) We are not responsible for what we have been taught  
or what we have experienced.
- 3) We have needs beyond the physical to function properly.  
A shared motivation



## Why am I who I am?

**We are all philosophers:** Putting to rest the truly imponderable.  
The first of our “complex implications” that we are going to look at is an aspect of our self-awareness; that we can consider our own existence.

- 1) We are all philosophers.  
Putting to rest the truly imponderable.

### Considering our own existence

This **IS** a big deal, it may not seem like it but it is. It is not something we are asked to think about, to become fully conscious of:

**“I exist”.**

Take 5 minutes to meditate on this: close your eyes and picture yourself where ever you are now; sitting, thinking, become aware of yourself, the things around you, the people near you, draw back above yourself and see the room your in, and further back still to the house, the street, county, country still mindful of yourself in the chair. As your draw back from the earth in to space become aware of time, the time you live in, being mindful of history stretching back as the future dose forward, as you still see yourself sitting in that chair back on earth in your room say to yourself “I exist.” in this moment of time.

**next**



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- 1) We are all philosophers.  
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### Considering our own existence

For some this exercise may have more meaning and emotion than for others, but any response including “it was boring”, “embarrassing” is fine.

Before we take the opportunity to discuss the exercise have a look at a poem:

**Tangled Construction**

**16+ an analysis  
of the poem**



## Why am I who I am?

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Take some time to discuss both your meditation and the poem:

- How did you feel doing the meditation?
- What if any, meaning did it have for you?
- What resonances did the poem have for you?

I have to confess there is an element of an intangible quality to this “Big Deal” (considering our own existence) perhaps more in the fact that we have been brought up semi-aware of it all through our child-hood, but it’s relevance can be seen more in the exploration of consequential changes it makes to our subliminal thinking. How do we go about exploring this?

We are now going to look at **philosophy**



## Why am I who I am?

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You have possibly always considered philosophy as being a very intellectual erudite study and it is true that the academic study of philosophy in terms of its history is one of great complexity; fathoming all the pedantic argument of historical thinkers (no slight intended) but in reality, to philosophise is nothing more than a type of thinking. I say a type, it can certainly be said, the posing of particular questions that I am sure you all will have done would, “fit that bill”. In fact philosophising is an inevitable consequence of what we learnt in the first sheet: **abstract thought.** (leading to self-awareness) By the time we reach our early teens we have all considered questions that relate to our own existence:

why am I here?, what happens when I die?, Where did I come from?, etc. So why do we ask such questions?..... well we perhaps should spend some time considering some words and their meanings first and where better to start than an anecdotal look at Philosophising:

16-

**Barking at the balloons**

16+

**Barking at the balloons**

## Why am I who I am?

We are all  
philosophers  
but....

What is  
philosophy ?



"his comfy spot out side his  
kennel, head down between  
crossed front paws".

*On the crisp clear air of a late summers dawn, Don Nicolij Korstoma, standing on his hind legs, erect and tall, front paws resting on the fence, he announced his philosophy to the world in harsh yelps and barks. His wispy coat, swept back by a gentle breeze, shimmered in the iridescent light of a climbing sun. I watched him as he cocked his head from one side to the other, in the manner of perplexed curiosity, his gaze transfixed on the sky just above the horizon. For an hour or so this went on, and suddenly, perhaps fed up by the new phenomena, he retired to his comfy spot out side his kennel, head down between crossed front paws, but eyes still following the multicoloured orbs as they tracked across the morning sky.*

To anthropomorphise this event, I considered that my Russian wolf hound was, in his aristocratic way, philosophising; speculating on the unfathomable, his sudden retirement announcing the arrival of an imaginary design that explained, for him the phenomena of the hot air balloons that invaded his morning view.

next



What do you think Don Nicoly was philosophising about?

What made that philosophical?

What do you think Don Nicoly thought the balloons might be?

Why would that have been philosophical?

Have an open discussion on these questions.





What do you think Don Nicoloy was philosophising about?

Well he asked a question: what is that ? I've never seen that before. He clearly had no knowledge of what a hot-air balloon is, as far as he was concerned it was it was a UFO. In many ways practical philosophy starts with an ignorance that prompts a question.

What made that philosophical?

Well remembering I am anthropomorphising my dog's thinking; I suggested he was **speculating on the unfathomable**, That is to say he was looking for some kind of resolution as to what the phanomina might be: he was looking for an answer to his question.

What do you think Don Nicoloy thought the balloons might be?

As a animal, programmed to survive his primary concern must surely have been one of "is it a threat": it was very big and may be dangerous. He like us would have had an instinctual vested interest in his own well-being that would motivate the question in the first place. Conversely but from the same motivation: survival, he might have considered it something to eat; a very big loly-pop

Why would that have been philosophical?

Earlier I sad that the first step in being philosophical was to ask a question~: the second step is to answer the question.~ But remember he is NOT answering it from knowledge, but from a constructed belief that can bring some kind of resolution to this imponderable.

This is what we do to our imponderable question: find some kind of resolution....

**we philosophise.**

*Diligo  
Vita*

Why am I who I am?

We are all  
philosophers  
but....

What is  
philosophy ?



I enjoyed my anthropomorphic interpretation of Don' antics. Not only because the notion of a philosophizing dog fitted his character but also, I felt that it represented a faithful paradigm that helps to illustrate a meaning for philosophy, "speculating on the unfathomable". It is difficult to give a simple definition of Philosophy that on the one hand dose justice to philosophy's divers disciplines of to day and yet still capture quite so succinctly what I believe is the historical the spirit of philosophy. - Speculating on the unfathomable.

When all knowledge was still in its infancy, like Don Nicolý the early philosophers could have done little more than speculate on the mysteries of life that tantalized their insatiable curiosity but man initial ignorance, unlike Don Nicolý's was short lived and much of what was speculation became Knowledge.

Such speculating, or philosophising makes a starting point for thoughts on a given subject, a benchmark for others to foil against as it were. So in many ways philosophy can be seen as the vanguard to man's knowledge. The plethora of scientific disciplines that we have today, owe their existence to the initiating speculative guesswork of yesterdays philosophers.

From my assertion that all knowledge has been initiated by the speculation of philosophy one might assume that philosophy, as the mother of all knowledge, could claim the pursuit of facts as one of its aspiration but I would suggest that philosophy reflects a more human countenance!

To wax lyrical for a moment- in a daydream I imagined a personified *Philosophus* as the tragic hero of a classical play, cursed by the Gods to be forever jilted, never to celebrate his marriage to one of the Knowlegia sisters. For when ever he is about to be wed to his betrothed she changes her mind and marries one of the Siencius brothers instead. Philosophy is the "speculation" and not the knowledge it's self- that belongs to a science.



## Why am I who I am?

We are all philosophers: Putting to rest the truly imponderable.

I hope that the my anecdote about my speculating Borzoi (Russian wolf-hound) has helped, in giving you an understanding of the creative aspect of Philosophy but before I hear the howls of protestation from the ranks of the philosophical cognoscenti I should point out that philosophy has a myriad of very divers some times very academic disciplines but in my defence, to paint philosophy a as the sole preserve academia would be equally remiss and it is on that note we should consider ourselves as **speculators on the unfathomable**, after all there are, no matter how hard we try, some questions that just cant be answered definitively; that is to say that any answer to them they cannot be proved, consequently such answers must live in the realms of belief, out-with the corollary of logic.

In moving on from, “what philosophy is” to how and why we do it we should consider our own contributions as philosophers. To help with some ideas for discussion read the following article:

**We are all philosophers**



## Why am I who I am?

We are all philosophers: Putting to rest the truly imponderable.

Not everyone is a Plato or a Socrates and yet all of us are philosophers. I suspect that everyone, at some time in their lives, has considers the meaning or purpose of life. I certainly remember in my teenage years having deep discussions of wonderment at; the miracle of life, the existence of God, a belief in ghosts and aliens, the vastness of the universe and sometimes just the silence of experiencing a mystical moment, lying on ones back of a summers night pondering the immensity of the universe (and perhaps by contrast the insignificance of ourselves). Of course amongst those thought for us mortals would be beginning and endings: the glory and wonderment in a dawns rise or the sadness at the loss of a loved one. We Spent hours speculating on the hereafter, creating a homogenous mixture of traditional and home spun religious philosophy, determined more by our individual predilections rather than an objective philosophical critique, a sort of philosophical pick and mix. All of which were as valid or as invalid as each other, as none were provable or disprovable. Such experiences, by my definition of philosophy, "Speculating on the unfathomable", were philosophizing of the purest kind. However, what was happening in those discussions was not just ideal speculation, nor for that matter the development of any great philosophical theorem, but I believe a necessary function was being played out. Like our ancient forbears trying to make sense of the world they live in, so too do we as individuals, as we become aware of ourselves as an abstract entity in the world we find ourselves in. This becoming aware possess is of momentous importance as the outcome of what we think influences the rest of our lives. (continued)

[next](#)



Why am I who I am?

Ok now its your turn, by all means make up your own philosophical questions but just in case you get stuck here are some for you to consider:

For 16yo and older there is a much larger exploration

[Go To](#)

Do you think  
There is a purpose  
To life?

What is religion  
all about?

Can there be  
Such a thing as  
a just war?

What's a spirit  
Do I have one?

Why are things  
so unfair?

Is it good  
to be good  
if so what is good?

I think the world  
is going to hell  
in a bucket.

Do you think we  
Are the only life  
In the universe?

Life is quite  
the most amazing  
Thing.



## Why am I who I am?

Ok now its your turn, by all means make up your own philosophical questions but just in case you get stuck here are some for you to consider:

I started this sheet looking at the very complex implications that the abilities of language gave us: communication, abstract thinking, consequential corollary, self-awareness + ego. I listed three areas that had the very profound implications of which: 1) We are all philosophers.

Putting to rest the truly imponderable. Was the first. This sheet is by no means a definitive look on this subject but I hope has given a starting point to understanding one of the bed-rock condition we humans view life. There will be more elements to this topic as move on in the manual. The next sheet deals with second on our list of profound implications:

2) We are not responsible for what we have been taught or what we have experienced.

The following article concludes sheet two

[next](#)



## Why am I who I am?

We are all philosophers: Putting to rest the truly imponderable.

I believe we all acquire answers in the form of beliefs in regard to our unfathomable philosophical questions. Even if we claim to be a nihilist and believe in nothing, that in its self is a belief. Our "condition" is not set by our answers but by the fact that we can ask the question. The **how** we arrive at our belief may well be in part from our imagination and indeed, perhaps, what we would like to be the "truth". The putting to rest of our truly imponderables; in regard to: life, death, impotence, is of great importance: as a self-aware, egotistical animal we want to have answers we can believe in. It is perhaps this very compulsion that makes the **why** we do it. Historically, man the philosopher, being faced without a definitive answers to his imponderables, has felt compelled to create very complex belief structures. (We are going to look at this later)

As it was for our philosophical for-bares so it is for our young people looking for answers to day; for some, this may be well considered and thought out, others may be "brainwashed" into the excepted norms of family or society and for yet others, some issues will be seldom looked at for fears sake, too frightening.

For most of us, as we get older, we become less philosophical, in the sense that things become "set": we tend conform to what is expected, as part of the integration in to a group and societal identity. With a *diminishment* to a sense of wonder, as experiences are no longer new, we can tend to lose the enquiring philosophical mind of youth and with that the skills to maintain a philosophical attitude; a degree of honest self-awareness, and open, questioning mind.



## Why am I who I am?

This page is for older children and should be done once you have already done the ordinary version by clicking on each of the objects you will be taken to an article that explores the topic for material to think on.

Do you think  
There is a purpose  
To life?

What is religion  
all about?

Can there be  
Such a thing as  
a just war?

What's a spirit  
Do I have one?

Why are things  
so unfair?

Is it good  
to be good  
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I think the world  
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Do you think we  
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Life is quite  
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