

Exercise 2.3. – Philosophy of life

Educational objective	The students understand that values have different practical implications.
Resources	A list of different ways of life on a poster or on the blackboard.

Procedure

1. The students assess each “way of life” with the help of the following scale:
 - 7 – you like it very much
 - 6 – you like it
 - 5 – you quite like it
 - 4 – you are indifferent to it
 - 3 – you don’t care for it
 - 2 – you don’t like it
 - 1 – you don’t like it at all.
2. The teacher asks the students to compare their rating in pairs or in groups of three or four.

Extension

The students write a description of their ideal way of life (they should try to avoid describing their own present way of life). They find out what the contradictions are; do they conform to their scale of values?

Materials

(see next page)

Different ways of life

1. The following are needed in life: moderation, intelligence, balancing of extremes, friendships, self-control, discipline, foresight, good manners and respect for certain traditions.
2. What counts in life are individual and intellectual freedom, indifference to the material and physical world.
3. The most important attributes are affection, love, devotion, control of one's passions and interests, openness to others. Bold intellects, quest for power and egotism are to be mistrusted.
4. Enjoying life is more important than changing the world: a refusal of ethics, discipline and personal sacrifice; the need for sociability but with periods of solitude.
5. One should identify with a group and seek comradeship. Sociability and action are important, as is a refusal of meditation as an abstraction, of solitude and material interests. Positive emotional externalisation and shared pleasures are preferable.
6. One should seek exuberant physical activity, exploration of one's world and practical senses, a preference for work, the refusal of dreams as nostalgia, the rejection of comfort and self-satisfaction.
7. The days follow each other but they are all different. Instability and adaptation are central, and one should desire to enjoy every important moment. Above all, do not be the slave of an idea.
8. Simple pleasures are important: comfort, friendship, rest, good health, refusal of intense, complex pleasures, rejection of ambition and fanaticism.
9. Openness and receptivity are necessary: pleasures and successes will come on their own; wait calmly and receptively.
10. One must have self-control, but be vigilant, aware of the forces of the world and of human limitations. One must be generous, but not utopian, and go through the world with self-control and dignity.
11. Contemplation is important. The world is too big and too aggressive. The inner life of the soul is essential and has priority over a futile, painful world that must be rejected.
12. The focus is on action, execution, challenge, construction; the body, the hands, the muscles are the true life. Prudence, comfort and relaxation must be rejected.
13. Human beings exist to serve: being useful to others to foster their personal growth. Abandon oneself to the world; be humble, constant, faithful, flexible. Receive without asking, work for the reign of the Good.