Introduction to the Philosophy of the Human Person
Quarter 2 - Module 8:
The Meaning of His/Her Own Life
WHAT I NEED TO KNOW?

An unexamined life is a life not worth living (Plato). Man alone of all creatures is a moral being. He is endowed with the great gift of freedom of choice in his actions, yet because of this, he is responsible for his own freely chosen acts, his conduct. He distinguishes between right and wrong, good and bad in human behavior. He can control his own passions. He is the master of himself, the sculptor of his own life and destiny. (Montemayor)

In the new normal that we are facing right now, we can never stop our determination to learn from life. “Kung gusto nating matuto maraming paraan, kung ayaw naman, sa anong dahilan?”

I shall present to you different philosophers who advocated their age in solving ethical problems and issues, besides, even imparted their age on how wonderful and meaningful life can be. Truly, philosophy may not teach us how to earn a living yet, it can show to us that life is worth existing. It is evident that even now their legacy continues to create impact as far as philosophy and ethics is concerned.

This topic: Reflect on the meaning of his/her own life, will help you understand the value and meaning of life since it contains activities that may help you reflect the true meaning and value of one’s living in a critical and philosophical way.

- Reflect on the meaning of his/her own life (PPT11/12-Ii-8.2)

After going through this module, you are expected to understand and reflect the meaning of life from the different perspective of philosophers.

WHAT’S IN?

On the previous module you were able to understand clearly your goal regarding what you want to achieve as well as to define the project you want to do in your life. These two events were determinants towards self reflection as you seek yourself better.

Instruction: Explain briefly. Why is it important to recognize our strength and weaknesses?

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WHAT’S NEW?

Activity 1
Brainwriting: “Live as if your first day, your only day and your last day.”

1. Come up with your own ideas regarding this saying above of Mother Theresa of Calcuta.
3. Write a short reflection regarding your thoughts about this quote.
4. Post it on an online whiteboard or in your timeline.
5. Include the notion whether you agree or disagree.

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Activity 2

View and ponder: “Nothing exists without a purpose.”

1. **Candle** – it gives light as it consumes itself.
Some people stand up for truth even at the expense of their lives such as heroes, martyrs and those who died just to stand for justice and truth. What meaning is there in their cause (martyrdom)?
2. **Bridge** – it connects two places as it stretches its body.
Some people died without accomplishing their mission, but their work inspire others to continue their legacy. What is there in their legacy?
3. **Tree** – it grows and bears fruit also to be consumed by humans and animals.
What is there in the act of giving? These three types of example are the only ways that keep us ponder on how man finds fulfilment in what they do. What meaning has it there when they are willing to spend their lives just to perform such feat?

**WHAT IS IT?**

Philosophers’ Perspective on the Meaning of Life

**Socrates** (469-399) A noble and original thinker.

He was a blue blooded Athenian, strikingly ugly, physically strong and indifferent to comfort. He possessed great physical and moral courage.

Socrates was charged of impiety, since he did not honor the gods of the state, as well as corruption of the minds of the youths. Socrates discarded the arts and the airs of the sophists of his day who sought more to impress others than to teach, to lay emphasis on the form rather than the substance; who was more concerned with protecting their prestige than showing their sincerity in their search and reacting for the truth. Socrates wrote nothing. The personality of Socrates is described practically in all of Plato’s Dialogues. The meaning of life for Socrates is to distinguish the truth and live accordingly even in the midst of adversities.

**On Ethical Teaching:**

“If a man should develop himself, he should cultivate his soul. Man’s nature is determined by his soul. Soul is the center of moral life. To develop one’s soul, he must acquire knowledge. Knowledge enables one to act correctly, for without knowledge he does evil. Ignorance is the source of all vice.” *Enirratea* or *self-mastery* is the power of the soul over the body. It is the mastery of the reason over the sense.
Plato (427-348 B.C.) Nicknamed “Aristocles” (Broad shoulders)

Plato was born at Athens of an Aristocratic family. The greatest influence on Plato was his relationship with Socrates with whom Plato was closely associated for more than ten years before Socrates’ execution in 399. Plato was the founder of “Academy” which was the school of Aristotle.

On the Ideal Man, the Perfect Man:

For Plato, man in his present existence is only an imperfect copy of his original self, the perfect man exists in the realm of ideas. Through the process of remembering his former self and his perfections, and by constant imitation of his ideal or exemplar by the practice of virtue, man regains his perfection which he lost during his long earthly exile and his imprisonment of the body as a punishment for sin. Man now is imperfect, can be perfected again. Man’s perfection consists in constant recollection and imitation of his former perfect self. (The process of knowledge then therefore is the process of reminiscing; it is remembering of what had always been present to the soul.)

Aristotle (384-322 B.C.)

Aristotle was born in Stagira, Northern Greece (died at 62 years old). In 366 entered the Academy and stayed there for 20 years until Plato’s death. In 343 He became the teacher of Alexander the Great at Pella. He returned to Athens on 334 and founded his own school the “Lyceum.” His disciples were called Peripatetics, from “Peripatos” meaning covered walk. On 323 In the outburst of anti-Macedonian feeling after Alexander’s death, he was charged of impiety. He retired to Chalcis in Euboea where he died a year later.

Aristotle was known to be a scientist, Philosopher, researcher, writer and teacher. The anecdotes about Aristotle reveal him to be kind and affectionate person. His will, which has been preserved, shows the same traits in its reference to his happy family life and its solicitous care for the future of his children and servants. He was married twice, first to Phytias and second to Herpyllis, by whom he had a son Nichomachus and a daughter. (Development of Western Thought vol. 1 pp57-58)

For Aristotle, man is not a pure mind or spirit as Plato his former teacher taught man originally to be. Man, in his present earthly existence is a composite of body and soul, mind and matter, sense and intellect, passion and reason. (Montemayor 1995)

Man and Reason:

For Aristotle, the imperative quality of a judgment of practical intellect is meaningless apart from the will. It is reason that elevates man far above other brute creation. It is reason that makes man resemble the Supreme Reason that rules and guides the destinies of individuals and nations, and leads all things to their proper ends.

The real meaning that a man can experience is the attainment of the golden mean
Where man by practicing moderation can attain his fulfillment and happiness in life.
St. Augustine of Hippo (354-430 A.D.)

**Philosophy of Love**

Morality consists in the constant imitation of the divine model, Augustine, following his great predecessor and educator, teaches that morality consists in love since it is love that makes us like into Love (God).

Accordingly, life to Augustine is a dialectic movement towards Love. Virtue, which is the art of living rightly and well has been defined by Augustine as “the order of love”. A virtuous life is dynamism of love, a constant following of and turning towards love, while a wicked life is a constant turning away from love. Now, to love God means necessarily to love one’s fellowmen, and to love one’s fellowmen means never to do any harm to another, or, as the golden principle of justice requires, to do unto others as you would others do unto you. Hence, in Augustine’s ethics, love and justice, the two foundation stones of individual as well as social ethics, are skillfully joined together.

St. Thomas Aquinas (1227-)

**a. Man’s Ultimate Destiny**

The supremacy of reason (rationalism) in man, and maintained that man can know the truth with certainty by the use of his reason.

**b. Philosophy of Happiness**

This perfect happiness which all men seek can be found in God alone, according to St. Thomas Aquinas.

**c. The Universal Man**
Man in his present state of existence on earth is mortal, finite and imperfect; but with the attainment of his supreme purpose and union with God, he is elevated to the rank of the Divine. The Immortal, the Perfect.

The meaning of life for Thomas Aquinas is to see the face of God in all things and the struggle to find the purpose of life “not to seek how the heavens go, but how to go to heaven.”

**Arthur Schopenhauer**, born on February 22, 1788 in Gdansk, Poland. For him, “life without pain is meaningless, (Brittanica)” for “unless we do become ourselves, life is meaningless (Ramos, 2016).”

Schopenhauer believes that every individual is a unique person but not all have the insight and determination to be realistic in developing one’s potentiality thus, we are the only ones responsible for our own success. For Scopenhauer, as part of the natural world we are motivated by our inclinations, we ignore the profound reality that underlies it. In other word, the real meaning and value of life for him is to have the will in overcoming our desire for the worldly pleasures instead use the power of will despite pain and suffering just to be our true and real self because he believes that misuse of will (life) can hurt others, and by hurting others we also in turn hurt ourself.

We may conclude therefore that, the only way to find meaning in life is not to conform with the world, rather despite all odds we tend to make a difference, for only then we can find the true meaning of life, being a meaning to others which bounds back yo us.

**Karl Theodore Jaspers**, born on February 23 1883 at Oldenburg Germany, was a German-Swiss psychiatrist and Philosopher. (www.Britannica.com)

Jasper’s philosophy places the person’s temporal existence in the face of the transcendent God, an absolute imperative. Transcendence relates to us through limit-situation. In the face of sickness, unemployment, guilt or death, we are at the end of our line. At that limit, one comes to grief and becomes aware of the phenomenon of one’s existence.
To live an authentic existence always requires a leap of faith. And this authentic existence is no other than freedom and God. (Ramos, 2016)

We may conclude therefore that man out of desperation realizes the true value of things. “Saka mo ma-miss ang isang tao pag wala na siya sa iyo.” “Diyos na lang ang bahala sa akin.” “You can only appreciate the value of health when you get sick.”

Gabriel Honore Marcel was a French philosopher, born on December 7, 1889 at Paris France. He was a playwright, music critic and leading christian existentialist. (www.Britannica.com)

Human life according to Marcel is the embodiment of the human subject; the unity of body and mind; and the central human experiences (often referred to as the “concrete, approaches”) of faith, fidelity, hope, and love.

Gabriel Marcel is deeply concerned about life as it affects the individual in his situation-in-the-world….His whole philosophy can be summed up as the expression of an option: that life can have a positive meaning. (ir.canterbury.ac.nz)

The question “What am I?” cannot be fully answered on human level. The questioned that proved an answerable on the human level turns into an appeal. Beyond one’s experience, beyond the circle of fellow human beings, one turns to the Absolute Thou, the unobjectifiable Transcendent Thou. When a person loves and experience the inevitable deficiencies of human love, he or she sees the glimpse of an absolute I-Thou relationship between the totality of one’s being. Thus, philosophy leads to adoration. (Ramos, 2016)

We may conclude therefore that Marcel’s meaning of philosophy is transcendental by nature and that human life should always be treated not as any means but as the end towards everything, just as God has entrusted man the world and his creations, there should be a sense of unconditionality. The true meaning of life is to live in accordance with the unity of mind and body, not struggling in the worldly pleasures or selfseeking activity nor with the notion of utilitarianism but the relationship of I-Thou in treating others with respect. Respect in the sense of ought that goes beyond must.

This powerful words “faith, fidelity, hope and love” are something that we miss in our contemporary times. We see people use one another such as, “making friends with benefits”, “I love you if you love me,” “plastikan pa more!” and the often way of serving others in a politically motivated and pharisical mode, that is taking advantage of others not as an act of service but of profit. There is indeed a disparity between an act of duty and an act of love.
WHAT’S MORE

The following activities are to be performed in order to test your ability to reflect on the different learnings and your perception about the subject.

Activity 3 - Venn Diagram
Instruction: Compare the philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas and St. Augustine of Hippo. What are their similarities and differences?

![Venn Diagram]

1. Thomas Aquinas
   1. 
   2. 
   3. 
   4. 
   5. 

2. Augustine of Hippo
   1. 
   2. 
   3. 
   4. 
   5. 

Activity 4 - Short Essay
Instruction: Why do you think Marcel believes that the question “What am I?” cannot be fully answered on a human level?

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WHAT I HAVE LEARNED
8.4 Reflect on the Meaning of Your Own Life

After learning from the views of the different philosophers, write your own short reflection regarding the meaning of life. There should only be 5-7 sentences. You are also opted to write on your personal blog.

Reflect: *Who AM I?*

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If you are to choose among the three examples given on the first activity, which example will you choose among the candle, bridge, or tree to describe yourself? (You may use other option aside from the three given)

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What does this saying of Mother Theresa means, “Live as if your first day, your only day, and your last day.”

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**WHAT I CAN DO**

Let’s Apply
Instruction: If you knew that you have three more days left to live, how are you going to spend your life and make it meaningful?

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**ASSESSMENT**

Read each item carefully and write the correct letter of the answer on the space provided before each number.

___1. He was charged of impiety and corruption of the minds of the youths, he also said that, “knowledge enables one to act correctly, for without knowledge, man does evil.”
   A. Aristole  
   B. Zeno  
   C. Plato  
   D. Socrates

___2. The Greek term for “self-mastery,” also known as the power of the reason over the sense.
   A. Daimonyon  
   B. Enilratea  
   C. Crisis  
   D. Peripatos

___3. It is said by Aristotle that the imperative quality of a judgment of practical intellect is meaningless apart from___.
   A. will  
   B. mind  
   C. conscience  
   D. the jen

___4. It is said by this philosopher, that man in his present state of existence is a composite of body and soul, mind and matter, sense and intellect, passion and reason.
   A. Aristole  
   B. Zeno  
   C. Plato  
   D. Socrates

___5. What is this particular act that which is in our power and we are responsible for it?
   A. Amoral act  
   B. Immoral act  
   C. Moral act  
   D. Vicious act

___6. The philosopher who said that man in his present state of existence on earth is mortal, finite and imperfect; but with the attainment of his supreme purpose and union with God, he is elevated to the rank of the Divine, The Immortal, the Perfect.
   A. Augustine  
   B. Aquinas  
   C. Aristotle  
   D. Socrates

___7. For him, to live an authentic existence always requires a leap of faith.
   A. Martin Heidegger  
   B. Socrates  
   C. Immanuel Kant
8. The two foundation stones of individual as well as social ethics which are skillfully joined together according to St. Augustine:
   A. Faith and hope
   B. Rights and duties
   C. Love and justice
   D. Honor and integrity

9. Who said this saying: “Live and do your part as if it is your day, your only day, and your last day.”
   A. Mother Theresa of Calcutta
   B. The Stoics
   C. Carol Wojtyla
   D. The Almighty God

10. Which philosopher stated that “life can have a positive meaning?”
    A. Martin Heidegger
    B. Soren Kierkegaard
    C. Immanuel Kant
    D. Karl Jaspers

11. Which among the options relate to this passage: “man in his present earthly existence is a composite of body and soul, passion and reason?”
    A. Dualistic entity
    B. Unified entity
    C. Total entity
    D. Non entity

12. Which among the options refer to this passage of Aristotle: “It is reason that elevates man far above other brute creation?”
    A. Distinction of man from animals
    B. Similar attributes of man from animals
    C. Man are not animals
    D. Animals are like men

13. Which among the options refer to the state of man in his earthly existence according to St. Thomas?
    A. Infinite and immortal
    B. Supreme and divine
    C. Limited and temporal
    D. Unique and Perfect

14. Which among the options refer to the passage of Carl Jaspers: To live an authentic existence always requires a leap of faith?”
    A. Experience freedom and love of God
    B. Experience trials and tribulation
    C. Desire to possess others
    D. To seek pleasure at all cost

15. Which among the options refer to the passage of Schopenhauer: “Unless we do become ourselves, life is meaningless?”
    A. Passion to follow our desires
    B. Will in overcoming our desire
    C. Desire to possess others
    D. To seek pleasure at all cost
### References


# GENERAL RUBRICS FOR WRITTEN COMPOSITION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Components</th>
<th>5</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ideas</td>
<td>The paragraph is fully focused and contains a wealth of ideas explaining how critical thinking is shown in their script (A1-6 output)</td>
<td>The paragraph is consistently focused and contains ample ideas and explanations.</td>
<td>The paragraph is sufficiently focused and contains some explanations</td>
<td>The paragraph is minimally focused. The provided explanation is vague or general.</td>
<td>The paragraph shows little or no focus and the explanation is unclear, irrelevant, or repetitive.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Logical Organization</td>
<td>The organization of ideas supports the writer's focus. Ideas are grouped in a logical manner. Effective and varied transitions are used.</td>
<td>The organization is appropriate and the sequencing of ideas is logical. Varied transitions are used.</td>
<td>The organization is generally appropriate and the ideas are clearly sequenced, but may be repetitive. Transitions are used.</td>
<td>The organization is formulaic or inappropriate. The response may lack a clear introduction or conclusion. Transitions are rare.</td>
<td>The paragraph shows little evidence of organization or sequencing. Transitions are not used. The response is incomplete or too brief.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>The student displays substantial content which is evident and reflects an advanced critical thinking skills.</td>
<td>The language and tone of the paragraph shows a good content which is evident as a sign of learning.</td>
<td>The language and tone are not that. Substantial ideas are not adequate, but may be simple or ordinary. Some sentences variety is evident.</td>
<td>The language and tone are uneven. Word choice is simple, ordinary, or repetitive. There is minimal variation in sentence length and structure.</td>
<td>The language and tone are inappropriate. Word choice is incorrect or confusing. The response is incomplete or too brief.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflective Meaning</td>
<td>The student demonstrates full understanding of each topics and can easily project critical thinking towards application.</td>
<td>The student demonstrates knowledge of the topics. Errors are minor and do not interfere with meaning.</td>
<td>The student demonstrates sufficient knowledge on the subject. Errors may interfere with meaning, but are not out of topic.</td>
<td>The student demonstrates minimal understanding or show less interest. Errors are frequent and interfere with meaning.</td>
<td>The student lacks understanding of the subject. Errors are pervasive. The response is incomplete or too brief.</td>
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My Final Farewell

Let the sun draw the vapors up to the sky,
And heavenward in purity bear my tarry protest
Let some kind soul o’er my untimely fate sigh,
And in the still evening a prayer be lifted on high
From thee, O my country, that in God I may rest.

Pray for all those that hapless have died,
For all who have suffered the unmeasur’d pain;
For our mothers that bitterly their woes have cried,
For widows and orphans, for captives by torture tried
And then for thyself that redemption thou mayst gain

And when the dark night wraps the graveyard around
With only the dead in their vigil to see
Break not my repose or the mystery profound
And perchance thou mayst hear a sad hymn resound
’Tis I, O my country, raising a song unto thee.

And even my grave is remembered no more
Unmark’d by never a cross nor a stone
Let the plow sweep through it, the spade turn it o’er
That my ashes may carpet earthly floor,
Before into nothingness at last they are blown.

Then will oblivion bring to me no care
As over thy vales and plains I sweep;
Throbbing and cleansed in thy space and air
With color and light, with song and lament I fare,
Ever repeating the faith that I keep.

My Fatherland adore’st, that sadness to my sorrow lends
Beloved Filipinas, hear now my last good-bye!
I give thee all: parents and kindred and friends
For I go where no slave before the oppressor bends,
Where faith can never kill, and God reigns e’er on high!

Farewell to thee, too, sweet friend that lightened my way;
Beloved creatures all, farewell! In death there is rest!

Region IX: Zamboanga Peninsula Hymn – Our Eden Land

Here the trees and flowers bloom
Here the breezes gently Blow,
Here the birds sing Merrily,
The liberty forever Stays,
With the Yakans in unity

Farewell, dear Fatherland, clime of the sun caress’d
Pearly of the Orient seas, our Eden lost!
Gladly now I go to give thee this faded life’s best,
And were it brighter, flashier, or more blest
Still would I give it thee, nor count the cost.

On the field of battle, mid the frenzy of fight,
Others have given their lives, without doubt or heed;
The place matters not-cypress or laurel or lily white,
Scaffold or open plain, combat or martyrdom’s plight,
T is ever the same, to serve our home and country’s need.

I die just when I see the dawn break,
Through the gloom of night, to herald the day;
And if color is lacking my blood thou shalt take,
Pour’d out at need for thy dear sake
To dye with its crimson the wakening ray.

My dreams, when life first opened to me,
My dreams, when the hopes of youth beat high,
Were to see thy lov’d face, O gem of the Orient sea
From gloom and grief, from care and sorrow free;
No blush on thy brow, no tear in thine eye

Dream of my life, my living and burning desire,
To dye with its colors my life’s blood
And if color is lacking my blood thou shalt take,
Pour’d out at need for thy dear sake
To dye with its crimson the wakening ray.

If over my grave some day thou seest grow,
In the grassy sod, a humble flower,
Draw it to thy lips and kiss my soul so,
While I may feel on my brow in the cold tomb below
The touch of thy tenderness, thy breath’s warm power.

Let the moon beam over me soft and serene,
Let the dawn shed over me its radiant flashes,
Let the wind with sad lament over me keen;
Let the dawn shed over me its radiant flashes,
Let the moon beam over me its space and air
With color and light, with song and lament I fare,
Ever repeating the faith that I keep.

My Fatherland adore’st, that sadness to my sorrow lends
Beloved Filipinas, hear now my last good-bye!
I give thee all: parents and kindred and friends
For I go where no slave before the oppressor bends,
Where faith can never kill, and God reigns e’er on high!

Farewell to thee, too, sweet friend that lightened my way;
Beloved creatures all, farewell! In death there is rest!

I am a Filipino, by Carlos P. Romulo

I am a Filipino–inheritor of a glorious past, hostage to the uncertain future. As such I must prove equal to a two-fold task—the task of meeting my responsibility to the past, and the task of performing my obligation to the future.

I sprung from a hardy race, child many generations removed of ancient Malayan pioneers. Across the centuries the memory comes rushing back to me: of brown-skinned men putting out to sea in ships that were as frail as their hearts were stout. Over the sea I see them come, borne upon the billowing wave and the whirring wind, carried upon the mighty swell of hope–hope in the free abundance of new land that was to be their home and their children’s forever.

I am a Filipino. In my blood runs the immortal seed of heroes—seed that flowered down the centuries in deeds of courage and defiance. In my veins yet pulses the same hot blood that sent Lapulapu to battle against the first invader of this land, that nervèd Lakandula in the combat against the alien foe, that drove Diego Silang and Dagohoy into rebellion against the foreign oppressor.

The seed I bear within me is an immortal seed. It is the mark of my manhood, the symbol of dignity as a human being. Like the seeds that were once buried in the tomb of Tutankhamen many thousand years ago, it shall grow and flower and bear fruit again. It is the insignia of my race, and my generation is but a stage in the unending search of my people for freedom and happiness.

I am a Filipino, child of the marriage of the East and the West. The East, with its languor and mysticism, its passivity and endurance, was my mother, and my sire was the West that came thundering across the seas with the Cross and Sword and the Machine. I am of the East, an eager participant in its spirit, and in its struggles for liberation from the imperialist yoke. But I also know that the East must awake from its centuried sleep, shake off the lethargy that has bound his limbs, and start moving where destiny awaits.

I am a Filipino, and this is my inheritance. What pledge shall I give that I may prove worthy of my inheritance? I shall give the pledge that has come ringing down the corridors of the centuries, and it shall be compounded of the joyous cries of my Malayan forebears when first they saw the contours of this land loom before their eyes, of the battle cries that have resounded in every field of combat from Mactan to Tirad Pass, of the voices of my people when they sing:

“I am a Filipino born to freedom, and I shall not rest until freedom shall have been added unto my inheritance—for myself and my children and my children’s children—forever.”