

# What compels our questions and answers?

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Drawn from Philip Bitar, *Why? In Pursuit of the Ultimate Answer: Abridged* (2008)

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## ◆ Reason for asking questions

- ◇ To acquire knowledge

## ◆ Reason for accepting answers

- ◇ Belief that they give us knowledge

## ◆ Reason for seeking knowledge

- ◇ To enhance life
- ◇ Knowledge is given by the simplest, most accurate model for predicting observations
- ◇ Better prediction allows greater ability to enhance life

## ◆ Facets of human life

- ◇ Interdependence — mutual need in surviving
- ◇ Intimacy — mutual meaning in relations

## ◆ Meaning tradeoff

- ◇ Egoism vs. altruism
- ◇ We realize meaning in life by balancing egoism and altruism in the context of human mortality. We help other people survive as we work to survive.

## ◆ Timeframe tradeoff

- ◇ Short-term vs. long-term
- ◇ We may compromise short-term enhancement in order to better achieve long-term enhancement.
- ◇ We may compromise long-term enhancement in order to better achieve short-term enhancement.