

# Thinking Critically About Technology

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## The Good Life

# Technology: My Alternate Definition

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1. Technology is the means by which we extend and amplify our physical and mental abilities to impose our will on the material world and realize (what we believe to be) The Good Life.

# The Good Life

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- How would you define The Good Life?

Reflect on

- Mead's chapters,
- what you want out of life,
- what you would like to be able to say about your life when you are nearing its end, and
- what you would like others to say about you and your life when you are gone.

# The Good Life Is a Life of Pleasure

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- Aristippus of Cyrene
    - ~435 - ~356 BC
    - Pupil of Socrates, but departed from him in philosophy and life.
    - Lived luxuriously, happy to seek sensual pleasure, e.g., with his consort, the courtesan Lais.
    - Advocated a pure form of hedonism, but was not himself a slave to passion.
    - Founded the Cyrenaic, ultra-hedonist, Greek school of philosophy.
  - Philosophy:
    - All good is determined by pleasure.
    - All pleasure is fundamentally the same: no lower/higher pleasures.
    - Intensity, immediacy the only criteria.
    - Adapt circumstances to oneself, not self to circumstances.
    - The Good Life is that which yields the greatest amount of the most intense pleasure.
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# The Good Life Is a Life of Pleasure

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- Epicurus
    - A Greek, 341/2 – 270 BC
    - A more moderate hedonist than Aristippus.
    - Pleasure is the beginning and the end of the blessed [Good?] life, the first good innate in us.
    - From pleasure we begin every act of choice and avoidance: psychological hedonism.
  - Pleasure IS NOT
    - sensuality
    - drinking and reveling
    - satisfaction of lusts
  - Pleasure IS
    - freedom from pain and trouble in mind
    - sober reasoning
    - searching out the motives for choice and avoidance
    - banishing mere opinions, “which are the greatest disturbances of the spirit” (i.e., having true knowledge)
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# The Good Life Is a Life of Pleasure

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- Jeremy Bentham: Utilitarianism (“Social Hedonism”)
  - British philosopher, 1748-1832, founder of modern utilitarianism
  - Principle of utility: principle which approves or disapproves every action to the extent that it increases or diminishes happiness or pleasure.
  - Bentham's Hedonic Calculus: the goodness/value of any action must be judged with reference to
    1. the intensity of the pleasure or pain it produces
    2. the duration of either
    3. the certainty or uncertainty with which they will occur
    4. the promptness of their occurrence
    5. their fecundity (likelihood that they will be followed by similar sensations)
    6. their purity or lack of accompaniment of dissimilar sensation
    7. their extent; the number of persons affected by the sensations
  - “The greatest good for the greatest number.”

# The Good Life Is a Life of The Higher Pleasures

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- J.S. Mill: The Higher Pleasures
  - English philosopher, 1806-1873
  - Nothing is desired but happiness/pleasure.
  - Anything else desired is desired either as a means to happiness or as a part of happiness. (psychological hedonism)
  - The Good Life is a life of pleasure, and only a life of pleasure.
  - But the Good Life is better if the pleasures are of a higher sort, pleasures of the higher faculties:
    - the intellect
    - feelings and imagination
    - moral sentiments
  - Even if virtue seems to be desired for its own sake, that is so because consciousness of it is a pleasure and consciousness of its absence is a pain.

# The Good Life Is a Mixture

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- Plato/Socrates: The Good [Life] is a mixture of
  - First Class Elements: measure (temperance?), the mean, the suitable, etc.
  - Second Class Elements: the symmetrical, the beautiful, the perfect or sufficient
  - Third Class Elements: mind, wisdom
  - Fourth Class Elements: science, the arts, true opinion
  - Fifth Class Elements: painless pleasures (e.g., *theoria*)



# The Good Life Is a Life of Moral Virtue

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- Cicero: The Good Life is a life of moral virtue.
  - Moral goodness alone is sufficient to the Good Life.
  - “... being good is the same thing as living virtuously, honorably, laudably, and, in a word, well.”
  - To live well means staunchness, dignity, wisdom, and courage.

# The Good Life Is a Life Free of Desire

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- *Baghavat-Gita*: The Good Life is freedom from desire.
    - The illumined soul [who lives the Good Life]
      - is free from desire and craving
      - is unaffected by adversity and happiness
      - is free from fear, anger, etc.
      - controls his senses, recollects his mind
      - exercises discrimination
      - meditates
    - As a result, he
      - walks safely among the things of lust and hatred
      - is undisturbed
      - has a quiet mind
      - knows peace
      - is awake in the knowledge of Atman (the inner self or soul, i.e., is self-aware)
      - is alive in enlightenment, even in death
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# The Good Life Is One Free of the Suffering of Attachment

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- The Buddha: The Good Life Is One Free of the Suffering of Attachment
  - The Eightfold Path:
    1. Right view (wisdom)
    2. Right intention ( “ )
    3. Right speech (ethical conduct)
    4. Right action ( “ )
    5. Right livelihood ( “ )
    6. Right effort ( “ )
    7. Right mindfulness (mental development)
    8. Right concentration ( “ )

# The Good Life Is a Life of Fulfillment and Satisfaction

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- Brand Blanshard: The Good Life is a life of fulfillment and satisfaction.
  - American philosopher, 1892 – 1987, defender of reason
  - Goodness lies in the union of
    1. fulfillment: “achieving the end that impulse is seeking” and
    2. satisfaction (pleasure): “the feeling that attends this fulfillment”

# The Good Life Is a Life of Fulfilled Needs

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- Abraham Maslow
  - American psychologist, 1908 – 1970
  - Studied what motivates people, especially high-achieving, “exemplary” people, like Einstein
  - Maslow's famous hierarchy of needs: The Good Life is a life of (bottom to top)

Self-actualization  
Esteem  
Love  
Safety  
Physiological needs (fulfilled)

- One is not motivated to seek a higher level until the lower level is at least partially satisfied.

# The Good Life Is a Life of *Eudaemonia*

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- Aristotle: The Good Life is a life of *eudaemonia*.
  - Most of our activities and the goods they bring are only means to ends.
  - Most of the “ends” are themselves, or they only lead to, activities that are means to better ends, higher goods.
  - The highest end and greatest good Aristotle called *eudaemonia* (prosperity, happiness, well-being, vital well-being).
  - *Eudaemonia*, a creature's *sumum bonum*, is found in the fulfillment and full development of what makes it unique and distinct from other creatures.
  - Rationality is what makes man a unique creature, thus, man's *eudaemonia*, man's greatest pleasure or happiness lies in *theoria* (pure intellectuality, thinking for the sake of thinking).
  - The Good Life is a life of *eudaemonia* = *theoria*.
  - And it does not take much to provide for a life of *theoria*.

# The Good Life Is a Life of Happiness: Living the Life One Was Made To Live

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- A.E. Taylor: *Eudaimonia* (  $\approx$  Happiness) is living the life one was made to live.
  - British idealist philosopher, 1869-1945
  - For Plato and Aristotle, *eudaimonia* is not getting what is desired, but living the life one has been constructed by God or nature to lead:

“We do not lead that life as a 'means' to the 'enjoyable results' of doing so, ... we enjoy the pleasure ...because we are living the life for which we were made.”

# The Old Testament Idea of The Good Life

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- David (1040 – 970 BC; shepherd, psalmist/poet, 2<sup>nd</sup> king of ancient Israel)
  - The Good Life (Psalm 23) is a life of
    - basic needs met (food, clothing, shelter)
    - abundance
    - safety, security
    - wisdom
    - peace, rest, quietness
    - beauty
    - moral goodness
    - meaningful work to do
    - etc.
- Qoheleth (maybe Solomon, son of David, 3<sup>rd</sup> king of ancient Israel 970 - 931 BC)

I have seen the task which God has given the sons of men with which to occupy themselves. ...

I know that there is nothing better for them than to rejoice and to do good in one's lifetime; moreover, that every man who eats and drinks sees good in all his labor—it is the gift of God. (Ecclesiastes 3:10, 12-13)



# My Idea Of The Good Life

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# My Idea Of The Good Life

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- The Good Life is a life of
    1. sufficient food, clothing, and shelter, of adequate quantity and quality to sustain life;
    2. wellness (good health), safety from physical, mental, or emotional harm, and security, both physical (overlapping safety) and financial;
    3. love and belonging, mutual affection, intimacy, significant participation in fellowship, community;
    4. accomplishment, the satisfaction of worthy challenges met, good work well done, struggle, suffering, and pain endured, problems solved, difficulties overcome;
    5. rest from work and struggle, peace and tranquility for the exercise of wisdom, self-examination, etc.;
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# My Idea Of The Good Life

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- The Good Life is a life of
  6. knowledge obtained from a balance of authority, experience, reason, intuition, and divine revelation;
  7. beauty apprehended, appreciated, internalized, expressed;
  8. virtue: wisdom, courage, temperance/self-control, justice/righteousness, faith, hope, and love;
  9. transcendence, or, engagement with that which is bigger, which goes beyond, which pre-existed and will survive oneself; and
  10. beneficence, that is, helping others to live the Good Life.

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