

Example Plays

A) Example : Darwin to Derrida In 8 Steps

Start: Charles Darwin → *How does change over time shape who we are as a species?*

End: Jacques Derrida → *If meanings are never fixed, how do we live with shifting truths?*

Path of Ideas (7 cards across the quadrants)

1. **Søren Kierkegaard (Self & Identity)** → *How do we become our true selves?*
 - From Darwin's species-level change to Kierkegaard's personal angst: evolution shapes life, but what about the inner struggle to become authentic?
 2. **Niels Bohr (Knowledge & Truth)** → *Can two opposite views of reality both be true?*
 - Kierkegaard's paradox of faith flows into Bohr's paradox of physics — truth can wear contradictory faces depending on perspective.
 3. **Epicurus (Values & Culture)** → *What simple things bring us the most joy?*
 - If reality is uncertain and selves are fragile, Epicurus grounds us in small pleasures and cultural practices of living well.
 4. **Alan Turing (Systems & Society)** → *What happens when machines begin to think like us?*
 - From joy in simplicity, we leap to the complex: systems that mimic or replace us. What does "being human" mean in such a world?
 5. **Hannah Arendt (Systems & Society)** → *What should we do when we see something that is not right?*
 - Turing's machines raise responsibility: if systems shape us, Arendt insists on individual moral courage in public life.
 6. **Martha Nussbaum (Values & Culture)** → *How can we treat everyone with care even when we disagree?*
 - Arendt's responsibility expands into Nussbaum's ethics of dignity, compassion, and pluralism — holding communities together.
 7. **David Chalmers (Self & Identity)** → *Why do we feel anything at all, instead of just reacting like machines?*
 - Returning to the inner mystery: if Darwin showed life evolving and Turing showed machines thinking, Chalmers asks why there is *feeling* at all.
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From Darwin's **evolutionary change**, through Kierkegaard's **selfhood**, Bohr's **contradictions of truth**, Epicurus's **joy**, Turing's **machines**, Arendt's **responsibility**, Nussbaum's **compassion**, and Chalmers's **consciousness**, we end with Derrida:

- Meaning is never fixed, always shifting.
 - Our task is not to pin it down once and for all, but to *live well within the play of meanings*.
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This journey shows the quadrants at work: **Self → Truth → Culture → Society**, then looping back through compassion and consciousness into Derrida's deconstruction.

B) Example: Nietzsche to Confucious In 5 Steps

Start & End

Start: Friedrich Nietzsche → *What does it mean for us to grow stronger through challenges?*

End: Confucius → *Why should we honour those who came before us?*



Path of Ideas (5 cards drawn)

1. **Ludwig Wittgenstein** → *Do we only understand truth through the way we use words?*
 - We begin with Nietzsche's challenge of self-overcoming, then shift to how we frame "growth" and "strength" in the *language games* we play.
 2. **Rumi** → *How can we listen more closely to the voice inside us?*
 - From words to the inner voice: where Wittgenstein emphasizes public language, Rumi reminds us of the *inner* dimension of meaning and resilience.
 3. **Lynn Margulis** → *How much of life depends on cooperation, not competition?*
 - Nietzsche and Rumi spoke of the self, but Margulis reframes growth not as solitary struggle but as symbiosis — thriving together.
 4. **Democritus** → *How do we know something is real if we cannot see it?*
 - Symbiosis invites us to look at hidden forces; Democritus shows us the unseen atoms shaping reality, just as unseen values shape societies.
 5. **John Stuart Mill** → *How can we make decisions that help the most people?*
 - From atoms to actions: Mill grounds the unseen and the communal into ethics, weighing how our choices impact others.
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Resolution with Confucius

Confucius's question about honouring those before us becomes a **culmination**:

- Nietzsche showed growth through struggle.
 - Wittgenstein and Rumi showed how meaning is both in words and in the inner voice.
 - Margulis and Democritus revealed that cooperation and unseen forces bind us.
 - Mill emphasized collective well-being.
 - Confucius crowns this journey: honouring the wisdom and struggles of the past is how we carry strength and meaning into the future.
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✨ This path takes us from *the self (Nietzsche)* → *language and inner voice* → *cooperation and unseen forces* → *ethics of the many* → *respecting tradition (Confucius)*.

C) Chalmers To Marcus Aurelius In 6 Steps

Start: David Chalmers → *Why do we feel anything at all, instead of just reacting like machines?*

End: Marcus Aurelius → *How can we stay calm when life feels chaotic?*

Path of Ideas (6 cards)

1. **Baruch Spinoza** → *How are we connected to the universe and everything in it?*
 - From Chalmers's question of consciousness, Spinoza expands: the self is not isolated but bound into the whole of nature.
 2. **Albert Camus** → *Can we create our own meaning even if life feels uncertain?*
 - Spinoza's cosmic unity flows into Camus's existential struggle — meaning may not be given, so we must invent it.
 3. **William of Ockham** → *Is the simplest explanation always the best one?*
 - Camus's uncertainty meets Ockham's razor: in searching for meaning, how much should we cut away to see clearly?
 4. **Buddha (Siddhartha)** → *Where does our suffering come from and how can we respond to it?*
 - From Ockham's simplicity to Buddhism's profound insight: suffering is not solved by complexity, but by mindful awareness.
 5. **Heraclitus** → *How do we deal with the fact that everything around us is always changing?*
 - The Buddha's diagnosis of suffering resonates with Heraclitus's view of constant change — impermanence is the ground of life.
 6. **Niels Bohr** → *Can two opposite views of reality both be true?*
 - Heraclitus's flux meets Bohr's complementarity: reality is paradoxical, and opposites coexist.
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Resolution with Marcus Aurelius

- From Chalmers's *mystery of consciousness* → Spinoza's *unity of all things* → Camus's *existential creation of meaning* → Ockham's *simplicity* → Buddha's *end of suffering* → Heraclitus's *flux* → Bohr's *paradoxical truths* ...
 - Marcus Aurelius concludes: calm does not come from solving every paradox, but from *accepting change, paradox, and suffering with equanimity*.
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✦ This path moves from **the mystery of experience** → **our connection to the universe** → **the creation of meaning** → **the simplicity of truth** → **suffering and impermanence** → **paradoxical reality** → **stoic calm**.