Dominance

An important argument for two-boxing is based on the following observation.

In a Newcomb case, there is one key matter you have no control over: whether or not the large box is full. And regardless of how this matter turns out, you will be better if you two-box than if you one box:

- If the large box is empty, you'll be better off if you two-box than if you one-box.
- If the large box is full, you'll be better off if you two-box than if you one-box.

Decision theorists sometimes summarize this by saying that two-boxing **dominates** one-boxing. (In general, one says that option A (strictly) dominates option B if however matters you have no control over turn out, you'll be better off choosing A than choosing B.)

The fact that two-boxing dominates one-boxing is a powerful argument for thinking that you ought to two-box.

One way to bring this out is to imagine that you have a friend who has your best interests at heart, and who knows whether the large box is empty or full before you walk into the Newcomb room. How would your friend want you to choose? If the large box is empty, your friend will be hoping that you two-box, so that you at least get the $1000. If, on the other hand, the large box is full, your friend will be absolutely delighted, because she knows you'll be rich whatever you decide. But she'll still be hoping that you two-box, so you get the extra $1000.

Actually, you needn't bother asking your friend for advice. You know from the start that she'll recommend two-boxing. For that matter, you don't even need the friend. You know from the start that if you did have a friend who knew what was in the boxes and had your best interests at heart, she would recommend two-boxing!

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  In the original Newcomb's Paradox, the predictor was infallible, so she was not only correct with ...
- This completely ignores the additional information — 10
  The argument above completely ignores the additional information that the boxes were filled ba...
- How much human thinking can be confused — 1
  I find the above arguments very interesting because it shows well how much human thinking can...
- It's all about how you interpret the question. — 4
  These are fascinating questions because they force us to think about questions more deeply tha...
- A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush — 1
  Take the two boxes and insure yourself of at least 1000 and essentially ignore everything about p...
- Considering an "if" proposition — 1
  If a person was normally a one boxer and was going to decide to select one box, would they be b...