

Introduction

Our beliefs and values change over time. Some think that marriage is essential to a flourishing life and then find themselves thinking a solitary life the best. Some think that money is the only thing of value, but come to realize that, for them, family trumps wealth. Some are atheists when they are young, but find God later in life. Still others follow the religion of their parents and abandon it when they become adults. You too have changed over time. There is some belief your younger self held that you no longer share. It may concern politics, or the nature of a meaningful life, or the nature of friendship, or God, or your ethical requirements, or the nature of the mind, etc. You will have changed your mind about at least one thing!

Purpose

The purpose of this assignment is to help you practice the following skills that are essential to your success in this course and others.

1. Identifying your own beliefs about important philosophical topics.
2. Questioning your beliefs as Socrates questioned his own and others. This requires identifying reasons for your beliefs, being honest if you find none, and being courageous enough to change your mind.

Task

Write an e-mail to your younger self. This email must include the following:

1. Identify the belief your younger self holds that you no longer do.
2. Identify how that belief shaped your younger self. You can do this by, for instance, identifying how this belief affected their relationships, education, career choices, etc.
3. Tell your younger self why they likely hold this belief, i.e., identify the reasons they have for thinking it true.
4. Explain to your younger self why you now think that belief is false.

Word Count

500-750 words long. Essays shorter than 500 words or longer than 750 words will lose points.

Further Instruction

- This assignment covers material contained in Ch.1.
- This is an e-mail. Include all appropriate headings, salutations, etc.
- You are writing to your younger self. Talk directly to them, not to me. Imagine what you would say to your younger self and how you might convince them to change their minds.
- Use simple examples.

Due Date

Please consult the syllabus and course website for the due date.

Late Submissions

Per the policies outlined in the syllabus, late work will not be accepted. Any request for special treatment will be ignored. If you foresee difficulties submitting work on time, either because of personal or work commitments, then you should start this paper early and submit it early.

Plagiarism

Please review the plagiarism policy on the syllabus. It is critical that you prepare your assignment by yourself. Use only the textbook and handouts—it will take you less time to work through these materials than to find and read other sources. I will be checking for significant overlaps between submission as well as checking answers against Wikipedia, internet search results, standard essay sites, etc. If you include material in your essay without citing it, you will receive 0 for the assignment. A second violation will result in a 0 for the course, a report to the Dean, and a petition for a note to be added to your permanent academic record.

Format

Submit your works by first clicking on the relevant assignment in Blackboard. Click on 'browse computer' and upload your document as a .doc, .rtf or .pdf file. Please use 'attach document'. Do not send it to me by e-mail or through Blackboard's messaging application.