

# Introduction to PHIL110B



I am going to auction  
off this \$20 Bill

# Rules of the auction



Whole-dollar bids only

Highest bidder pays me  
their bid, gets the \$20

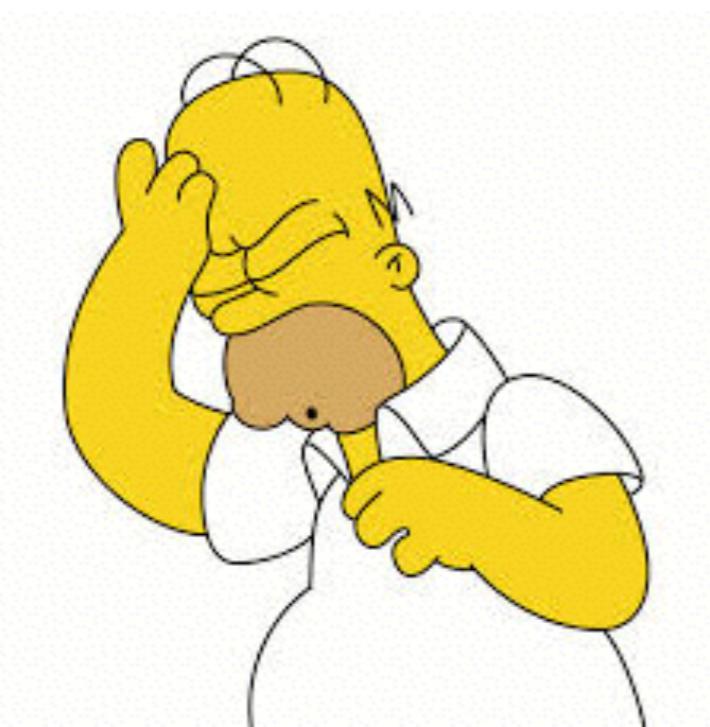
Second-highest bidder  
pays me their bid

I will collect

# 5

# Irrational escalation





Distinguish  
between good  
outcomes and  
good decisions

You find out your philosophy prof goes to church every Sunday

What is the most probable explanation?



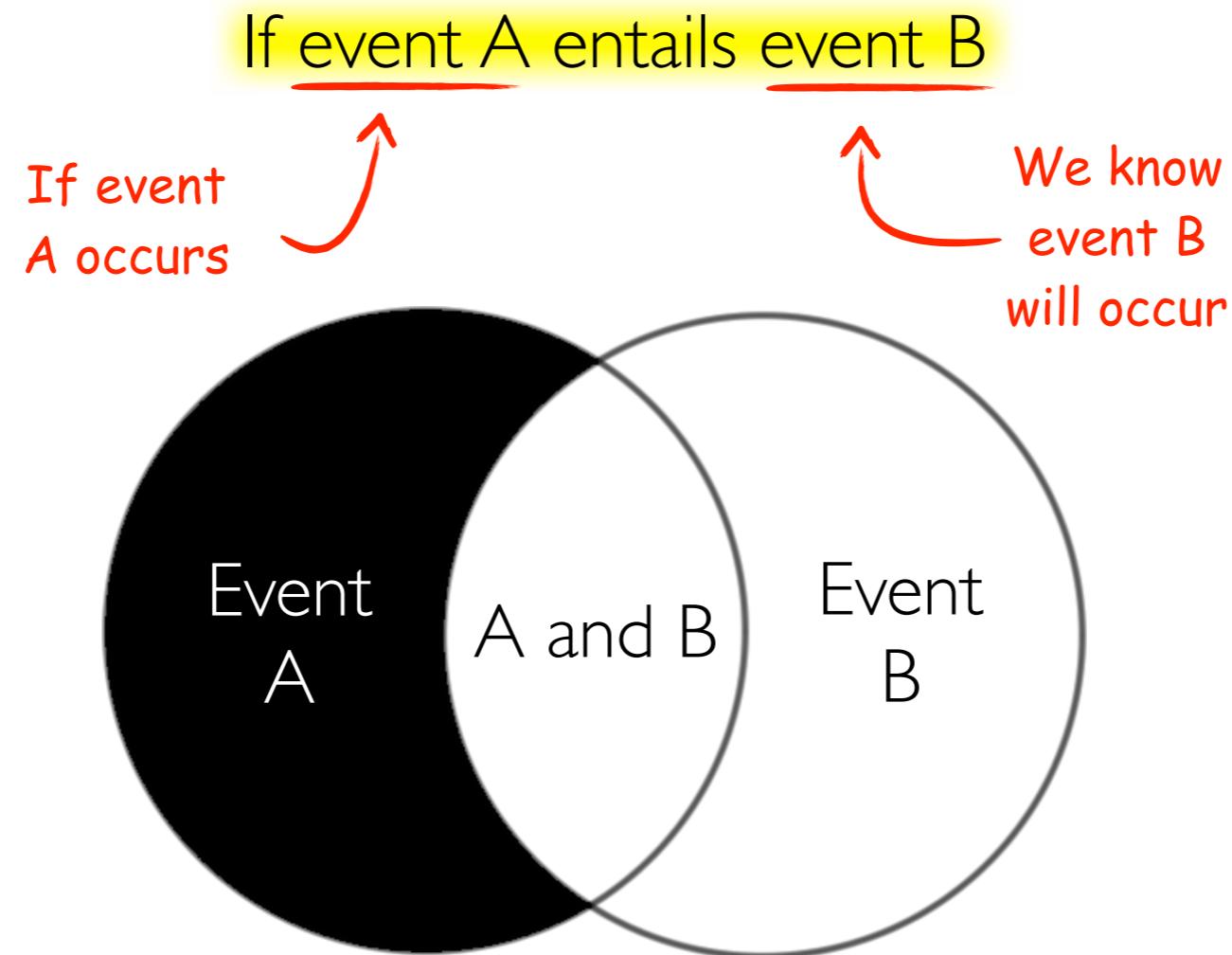


# Poll

## Question:

What is the most probable explanation that best explains your prof's behaviour?

- A He enjoys networking at church
- B He is a believer who enjoys networking at church
- C He is a believer and enjoys going to church to network

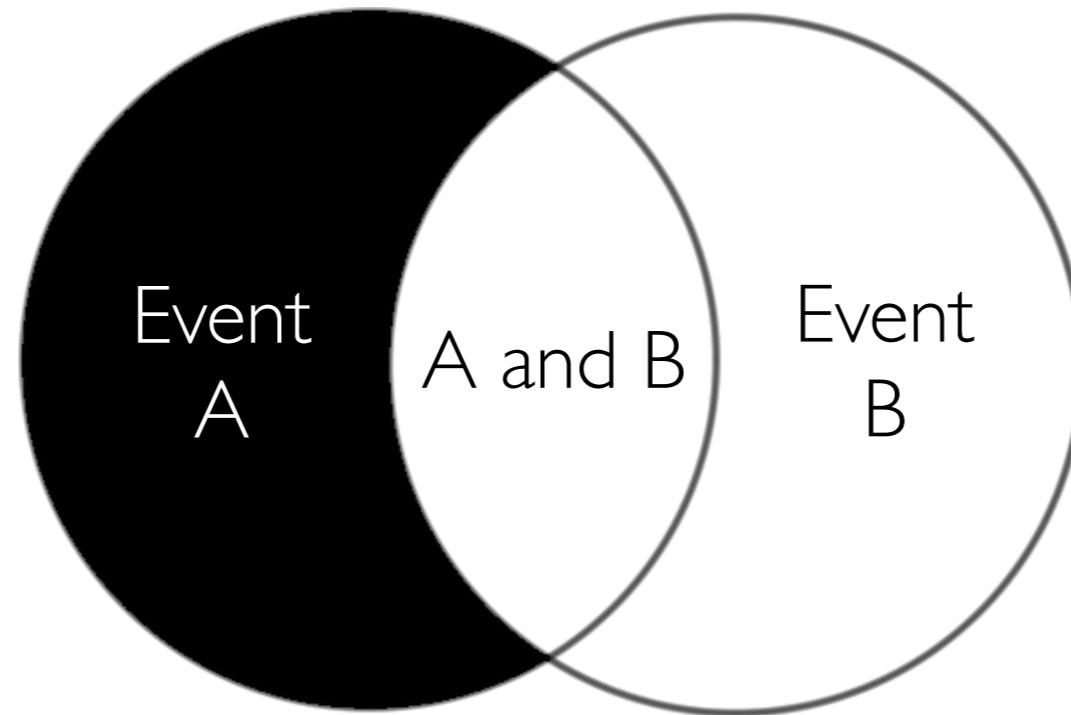


Then  $p(A) = p(A \text{ and } B)$



But

$$p(A \text{ and } B) = p(A) \times p(B)$$



So

$$p(A) \times p(B) \leq p(B)$$

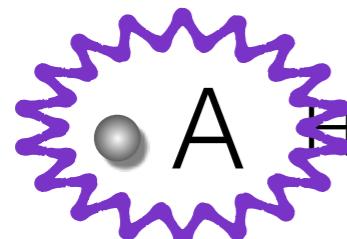




# Storytellers

## Question:

What is the most probable explanation that best explains your prof's behaviour?

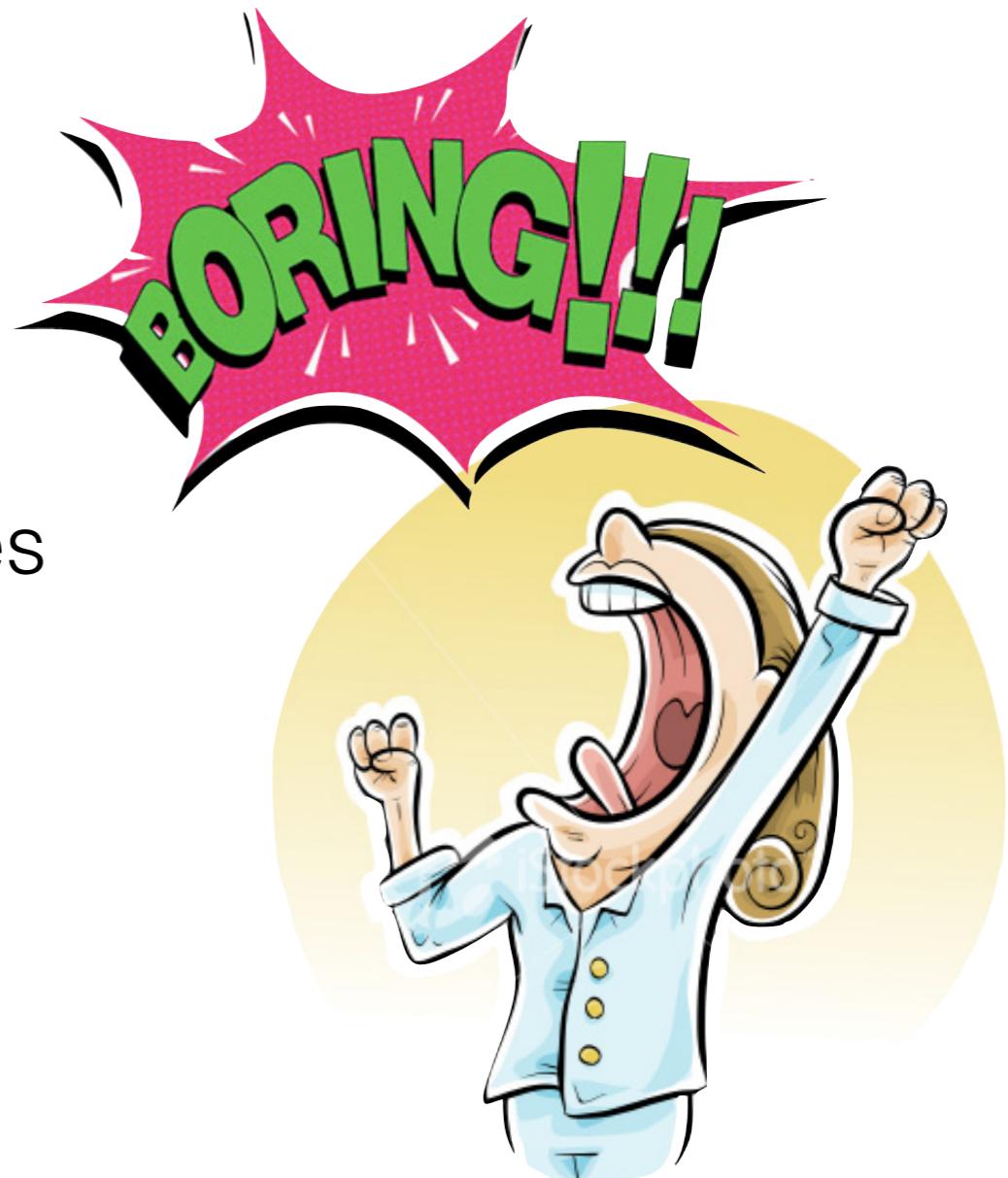


- A He enjoys networking at church
- B He is a believer who enjoys networking at church
- C He is a believer and enjoys going to church to network

We like telling interesting stories

We like listening to interesting stories

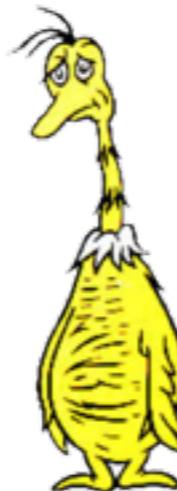
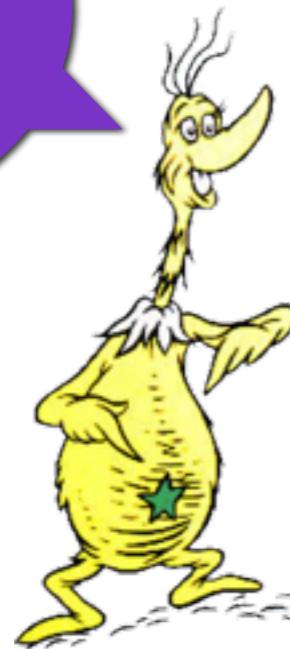
We don't like doing work



We are comfortable with our preconceptions



We're the  
best kind of  
Sneetches!





We don't think we need to do the hard work

# Confirmation bias



We focus on evidence that proves that we are right

We ignore evidence that suggests that we're wrong

**Question:**

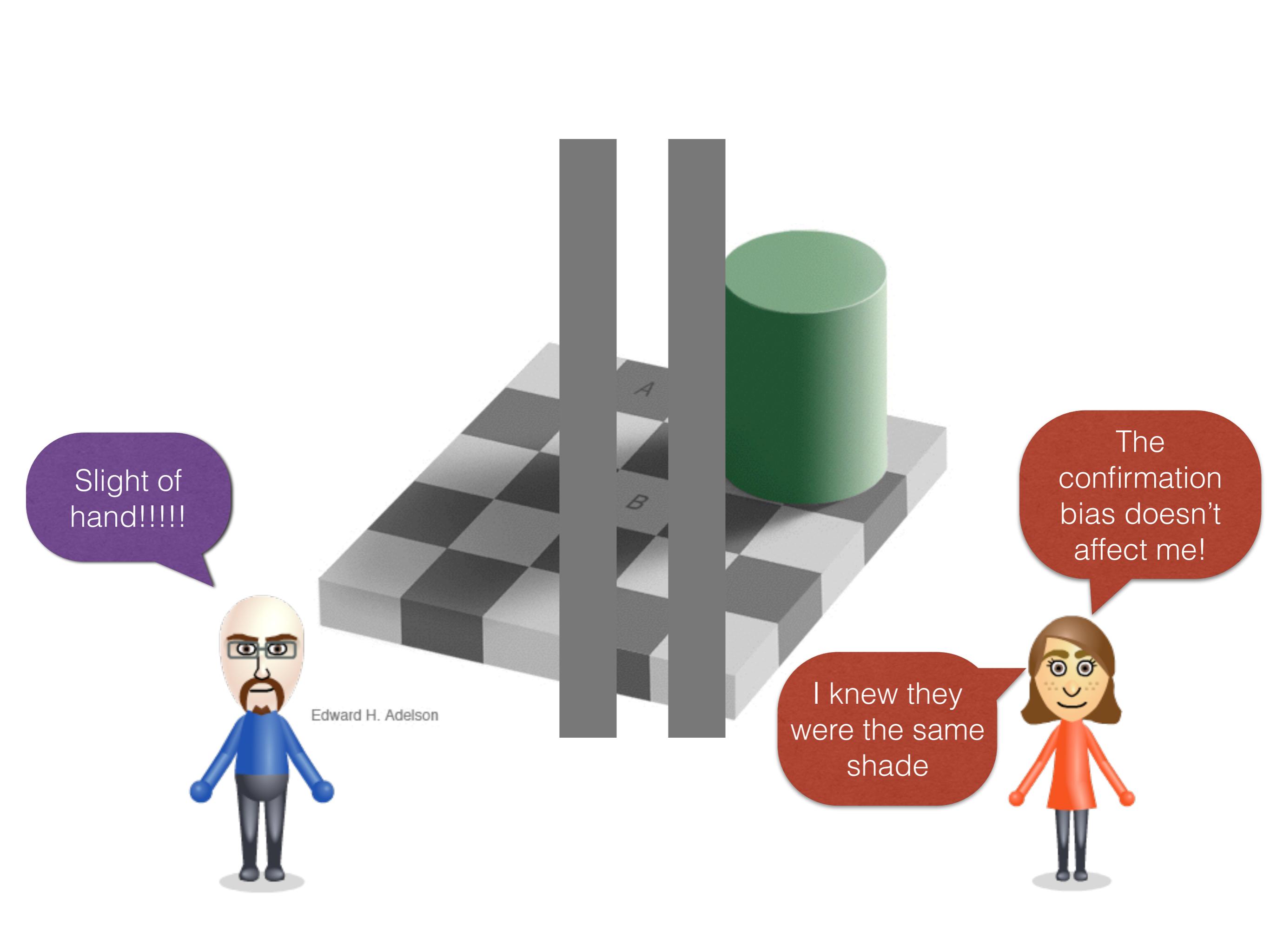
Be honest...which is easier to believe?

- A The squares are the same colour
- B The image on the right has been photoshopped

**Question:**

Are the squares labelled A and B the same shade of grey?

- A Yes
- B No



Slight of hand!!!!!



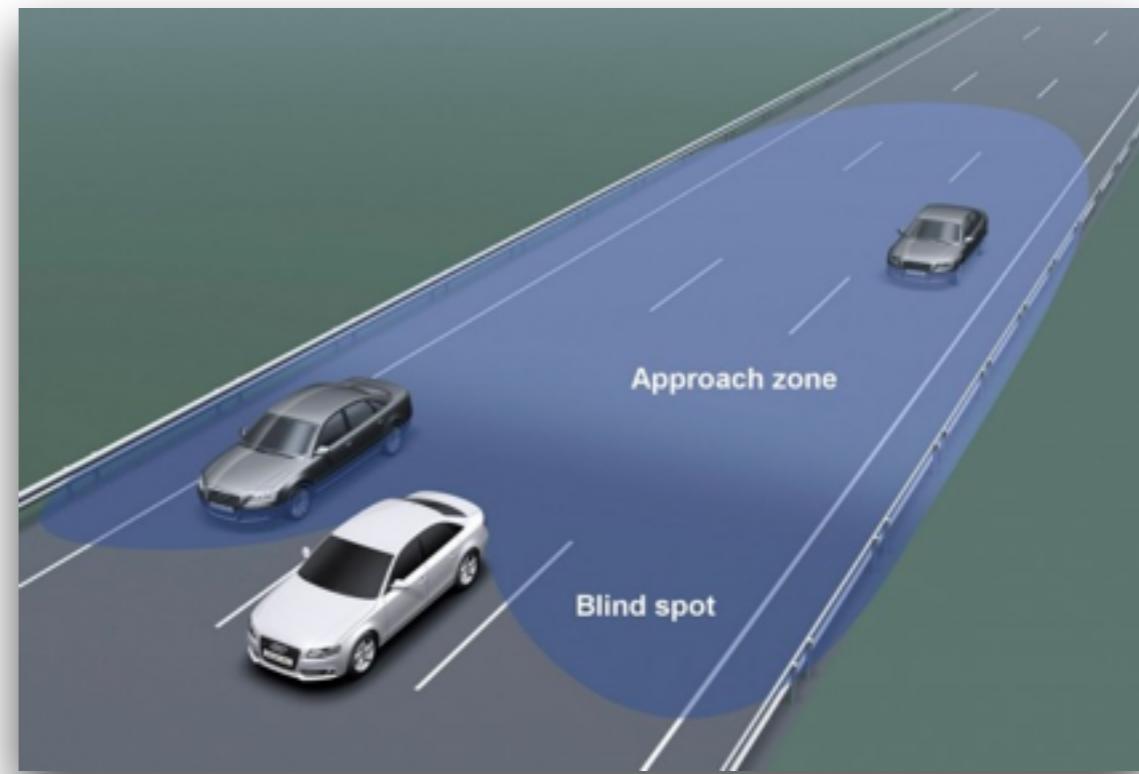
Edward H. Adelson

I knew they  
were the same  
shade



The  
confirmation  
bias doesn't  
affect me!

Even though we are susceptible to the same type of error, we think we are the exception.





# Poll

## Question

What has been the biggest influence on the formation of your ethical worldview?

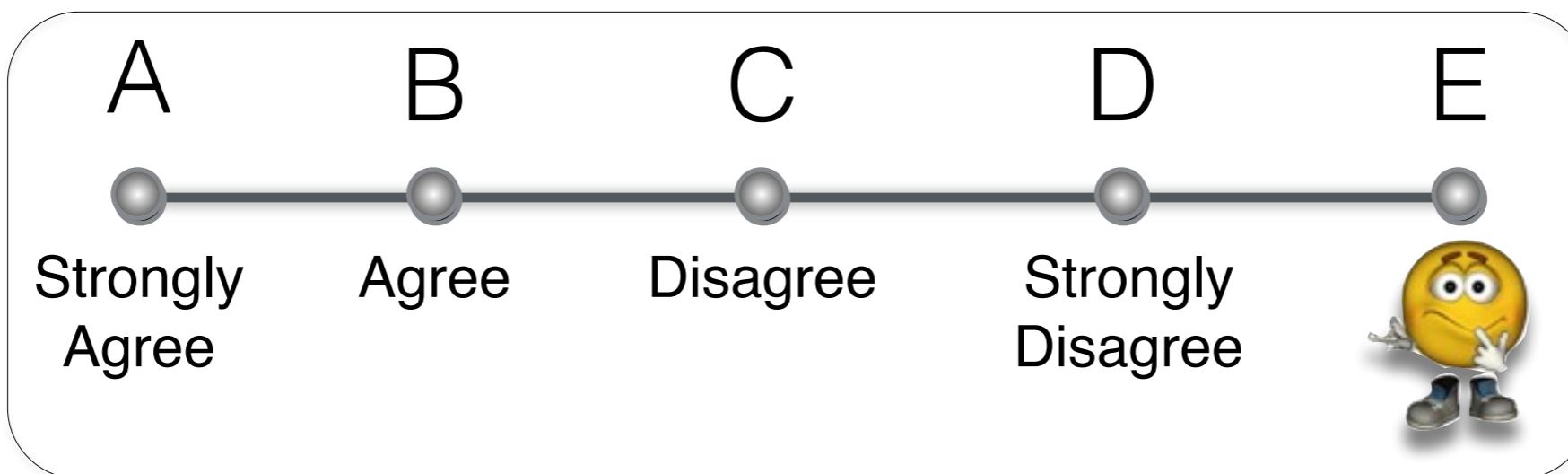
- A Parents
- B Media
- C Religion
- D Friends
- E Other



# Poll

## Claim

I am confident in my ability to make ethical choices.



# I'm not a racist, but...

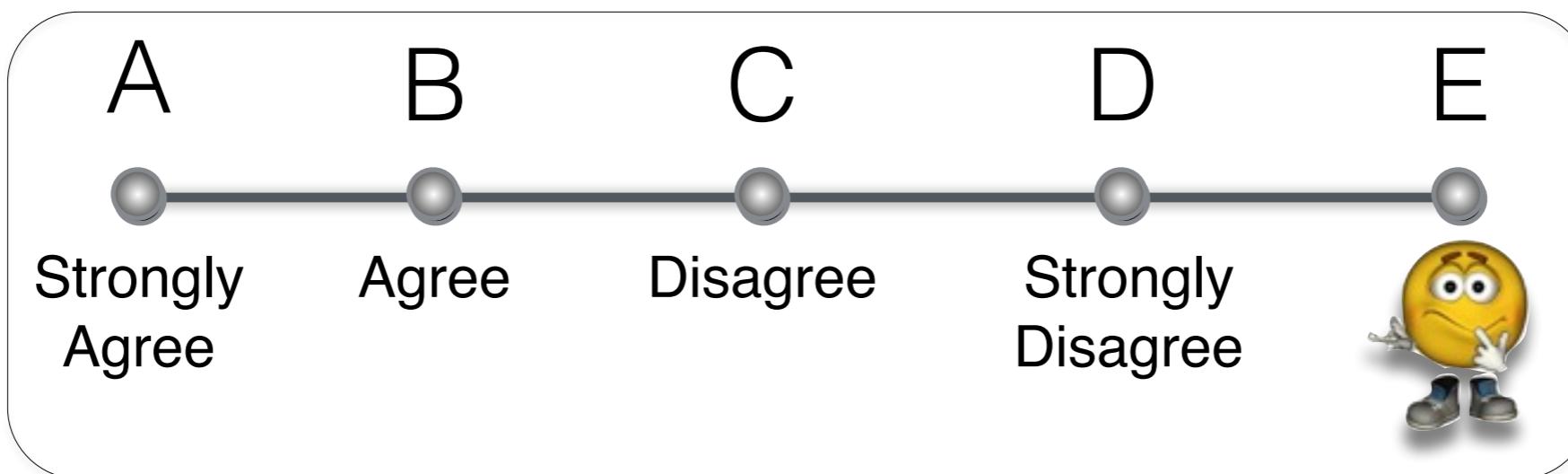




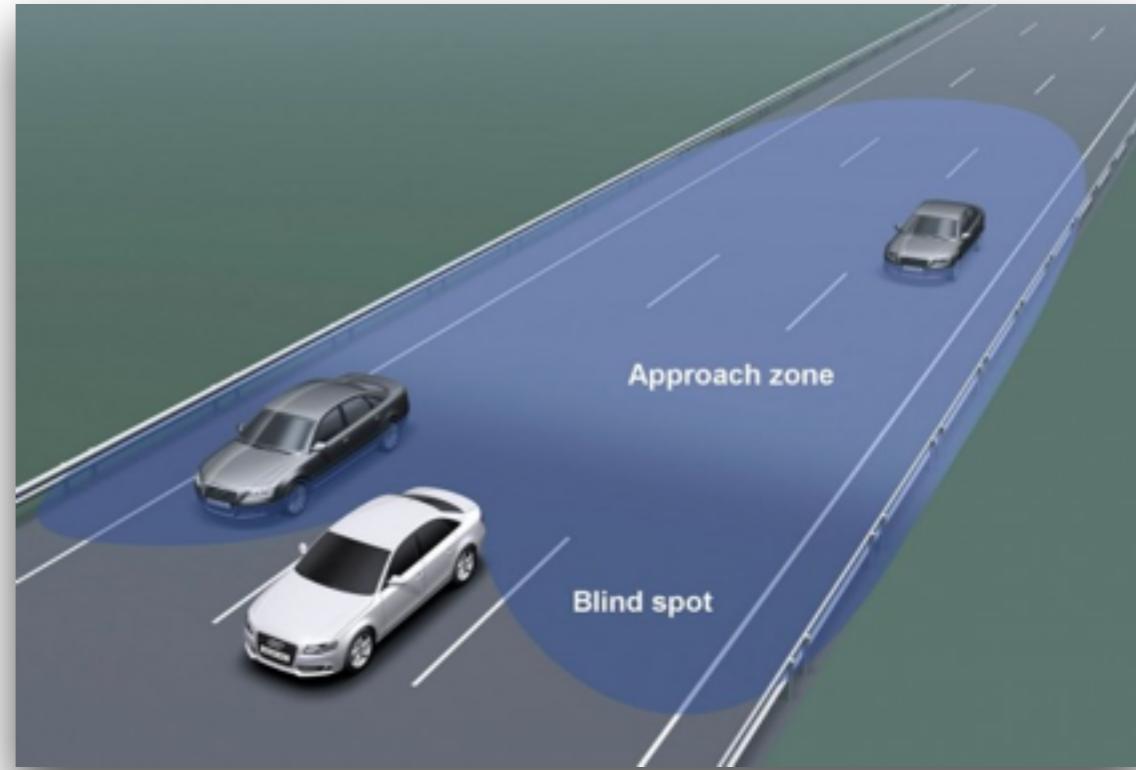
# Poll

## Claim

I am confident in my peers' ability to make ethical choices.



Even though we are susceptible to the same type of error, we think we are the exception.



# The hard work of philosophy

We sometimes make bad decisions

We are comfortable with our preconceptions

We don't think we need to do the hard work



25

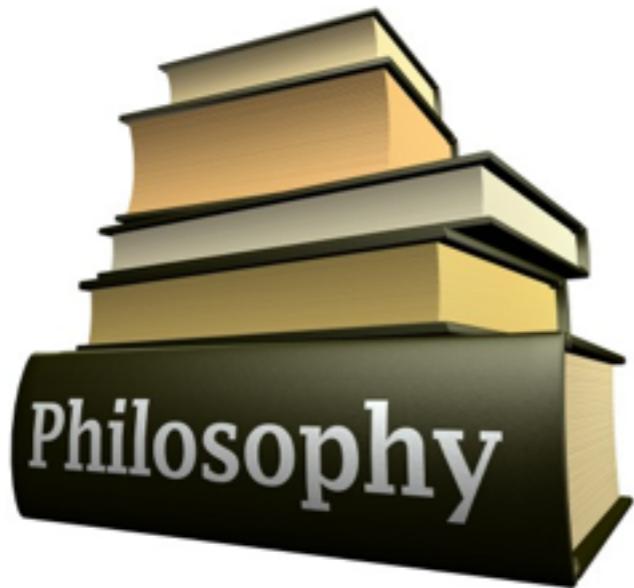
# Who am I?

Introduction to Ethics and Values

Greg Andres, Ph.D.  
University of Western Ontario

Everything you need to know  
about the course is in Learn





What have you heard about philosophy?

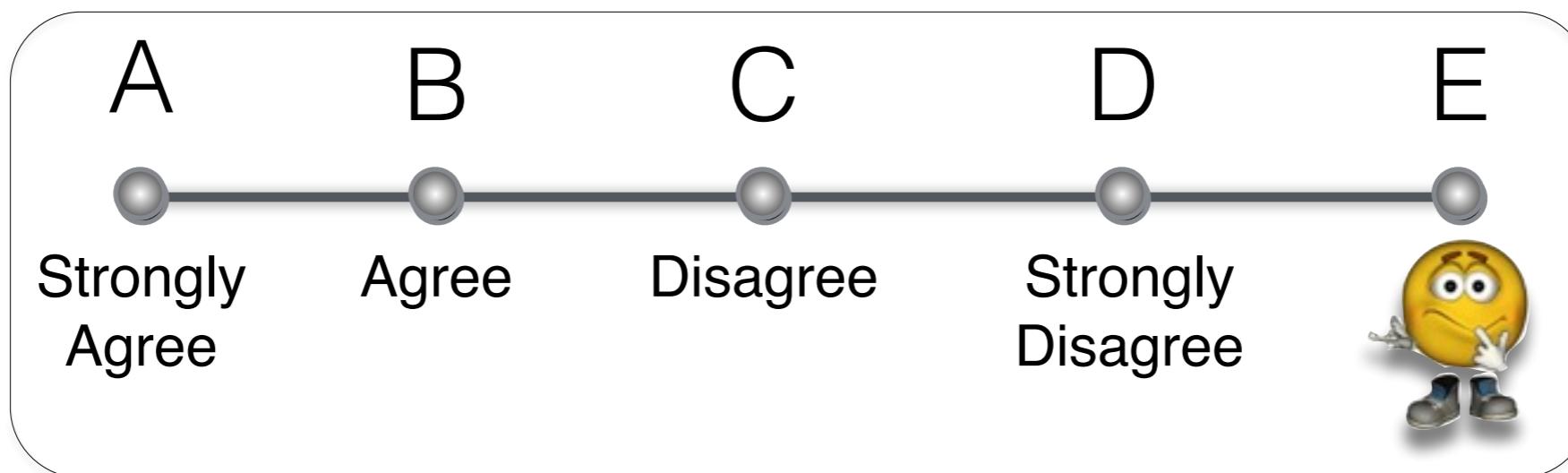
What have you heard about ethics?



# Poll

## Claim

Shane was justified in sacrificing Otis in order to save his best friend's kid

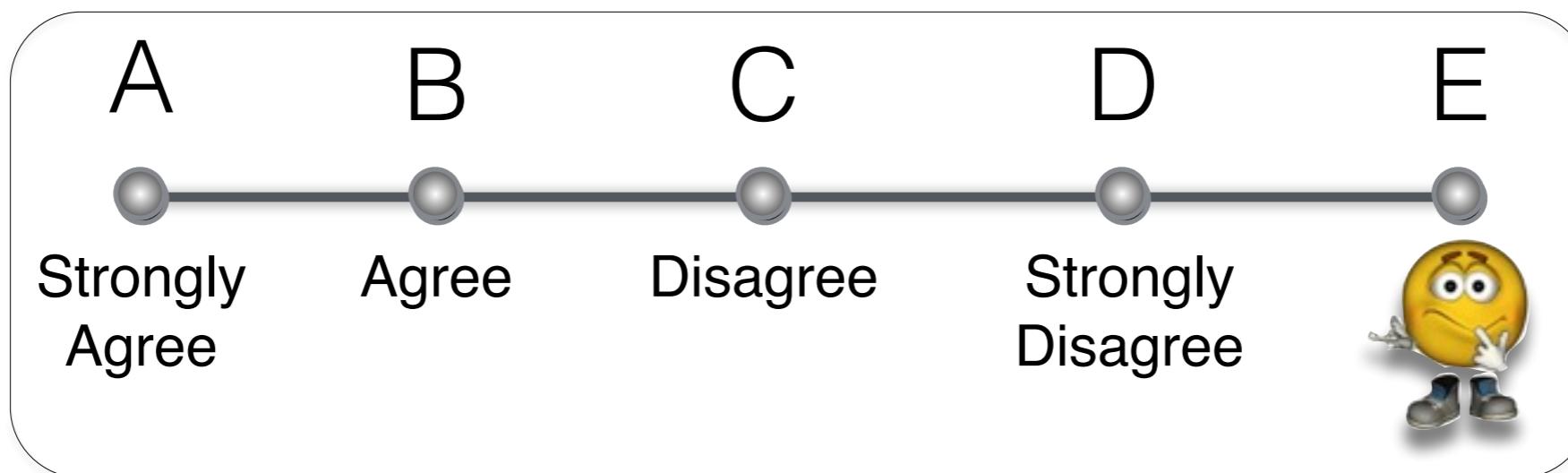




# Poll

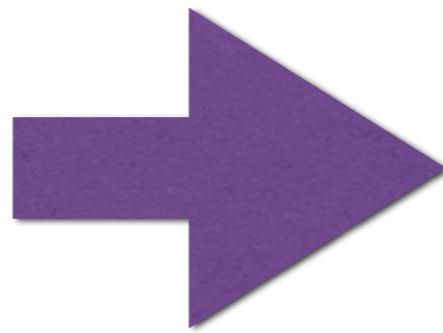
## Claim

I would gladly be killed just so that someone else could benefit



# What is philosophy? ethics?

**Reasons**



**Actions**

**Beliefs**

**Opinions**

# What is philosophy? ethics?

Your  
opinion is  
wrong



2. Then this guy  
is right,

3. Which means  
this guy is wrong

And all  
opinions are  
right

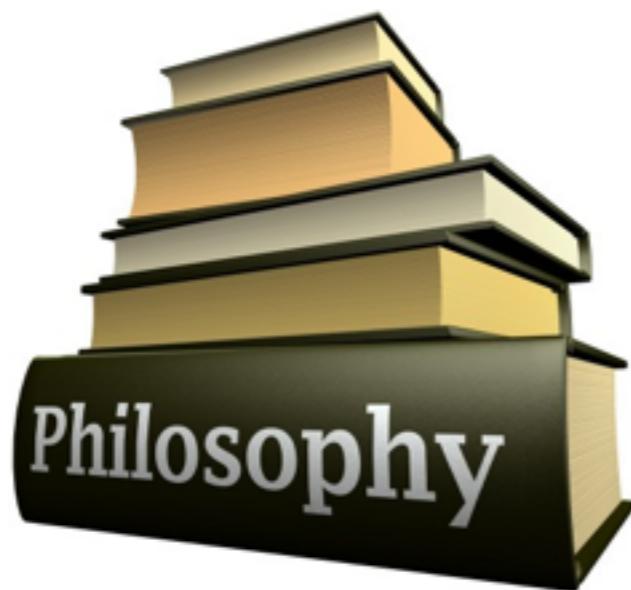
1. If this guy is  
right,

Philosophy  
is just about  
expressing your  
opinions



Pfffft

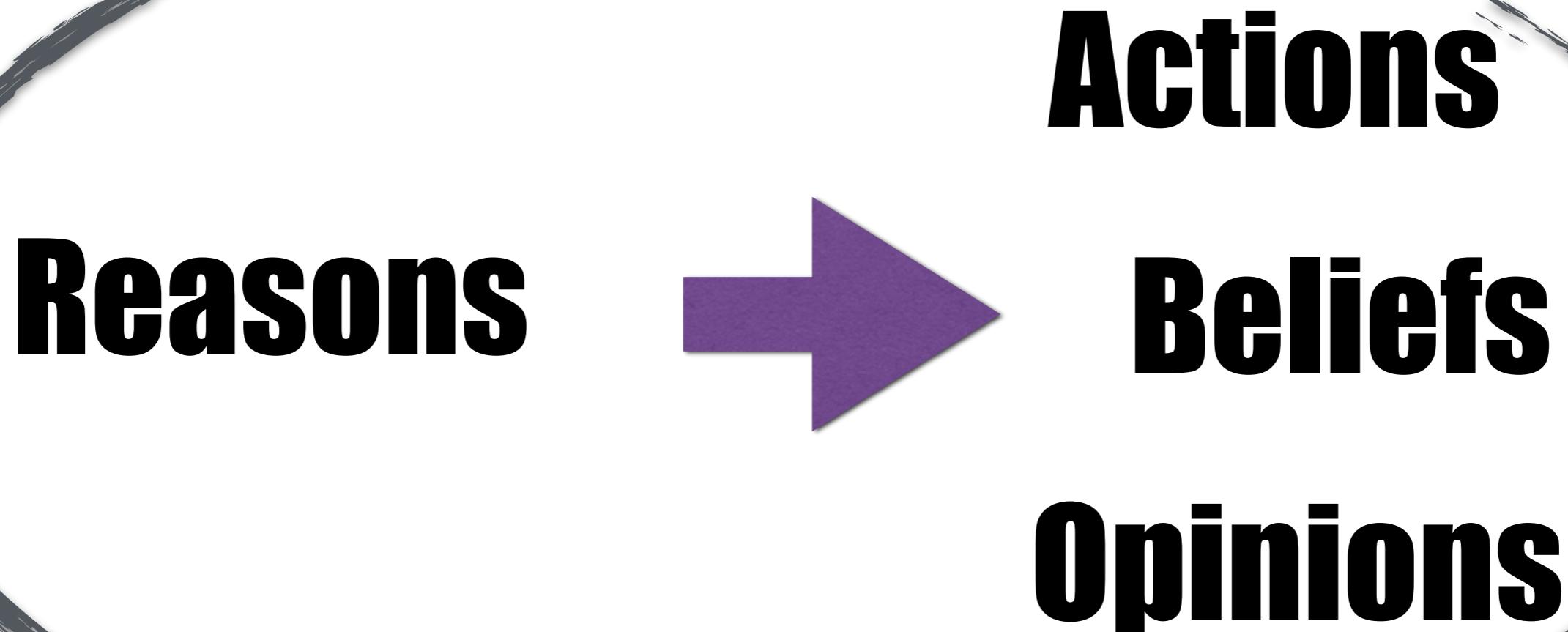
# What is philosophy? ethics?



Not all opinions are equal

Some opinions are better  
than others

# What is philosophy? ethics?



# What is philosophy? ethics?

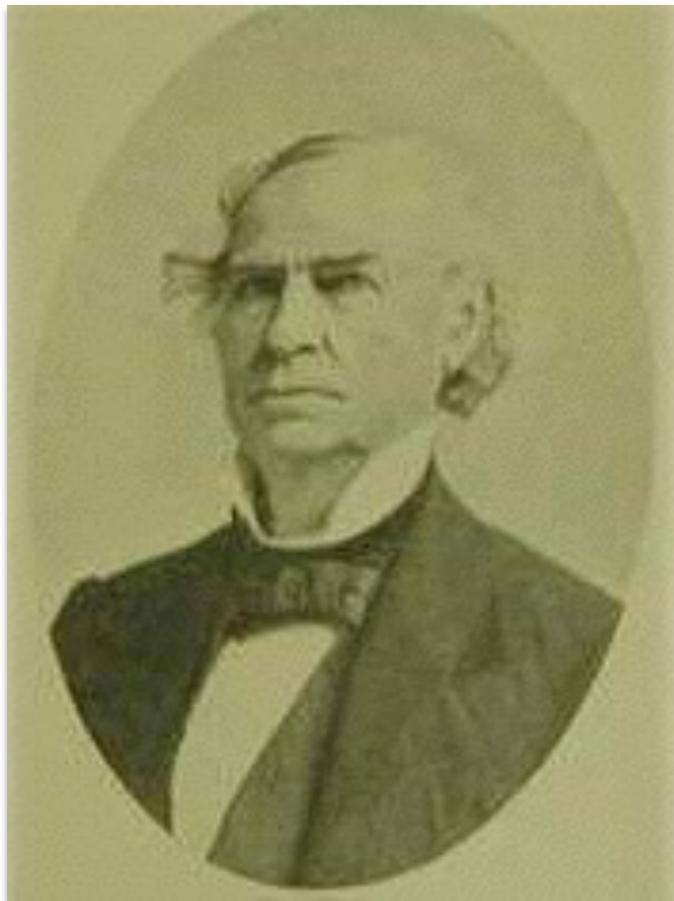
What does philosophy involve?

Argumentation

What is argumentation?

Reason giving

# Racists say what?



William John Grayson  
1788 - 1863

conclusion

66

Slavery is the negro system of labor. He is lazy and improvident... What more can be required of Slavery, in reference to the negro, than has been done? It has made him, from a savage, an orderly and efficient labourer. It supports him in comfort and peace. It restrains his vices. It improves his mind, morals, and manners.

- William John Grayson

99

P1 Heroin is a drug  
P2 Selling heroin is illegal  
C Selling heroin is immoral

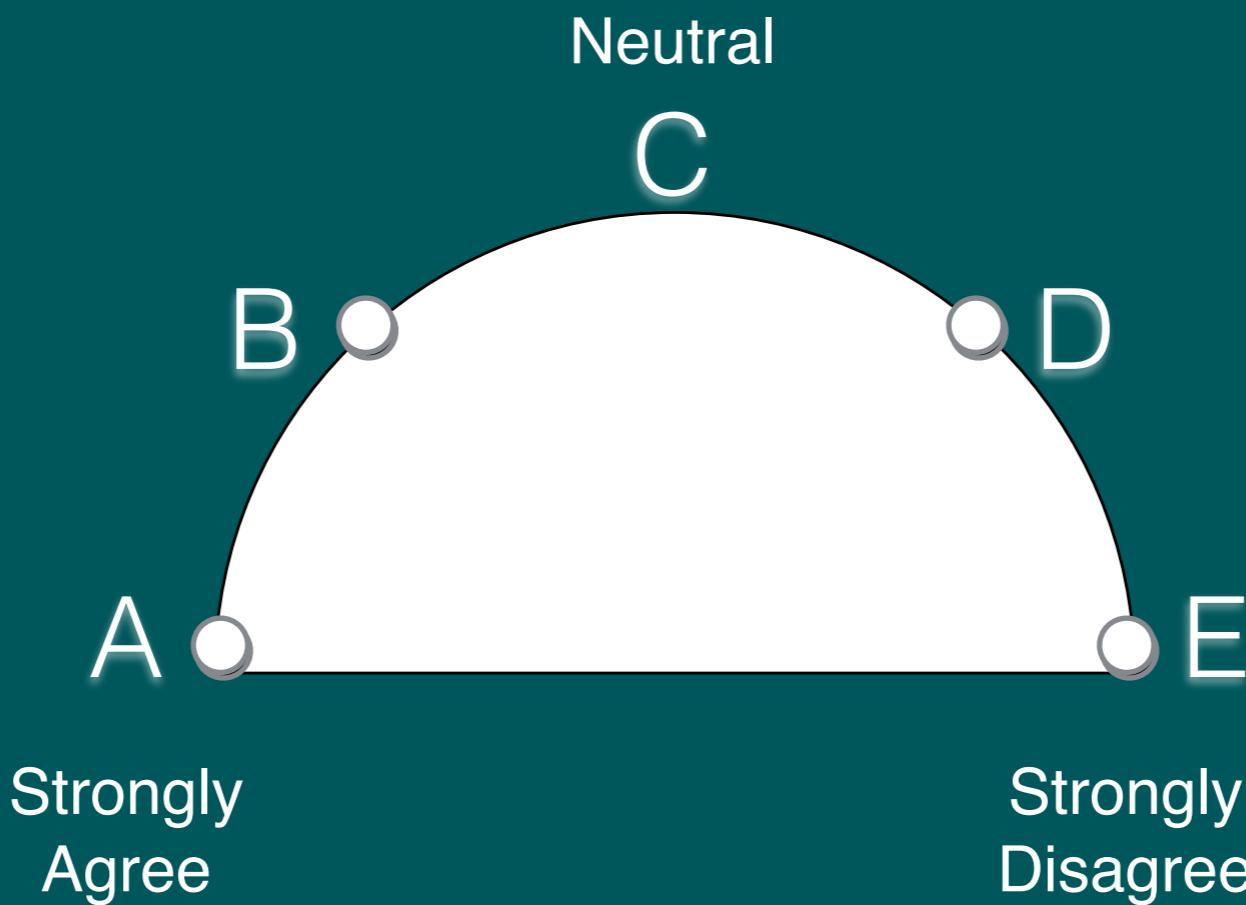




# Argumentation

## Question

Does the conclusion follow from the premises?



P1 All roses are flowers  
P2 Some flowers fade  
C Some roses fade

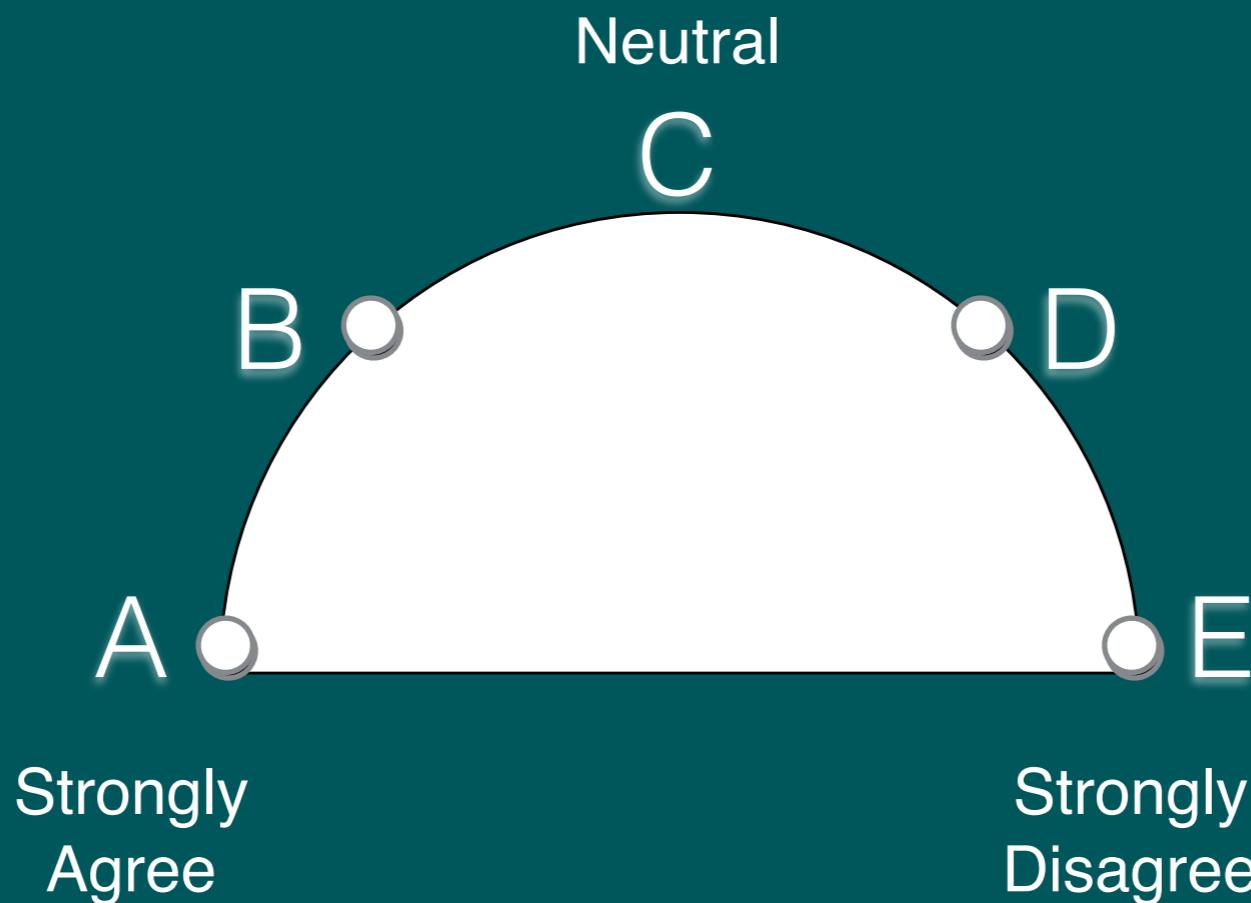




# Argumentation

## Question

Does the conclusion follow from the premises?

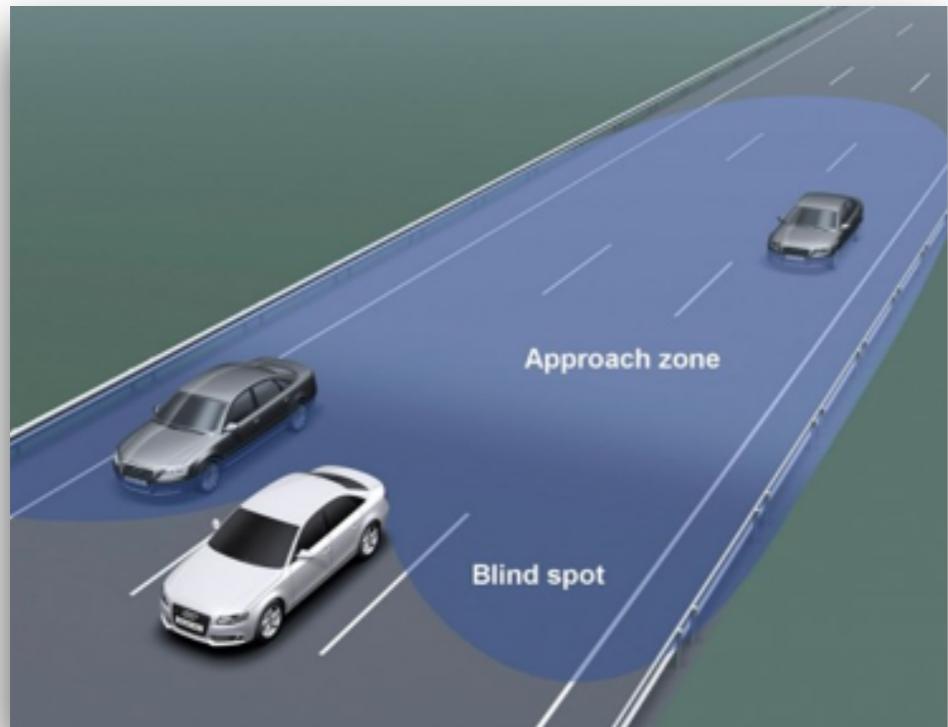




We are so committed to our belief that roses fade, we overlook the fact that the premises leave us in a state of informational ignorance



We are so committed to our beliefs that we will seek out whatever evidence fits with what we believe



We know that there are times when we will make errors in reasoning...

...but we convince ourselves that this is not one of those times

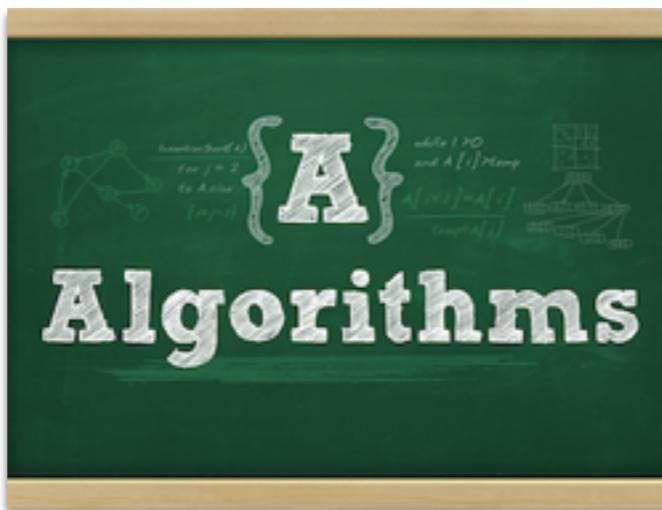
# The nature of ethics



It's a personal thing



It's following rules



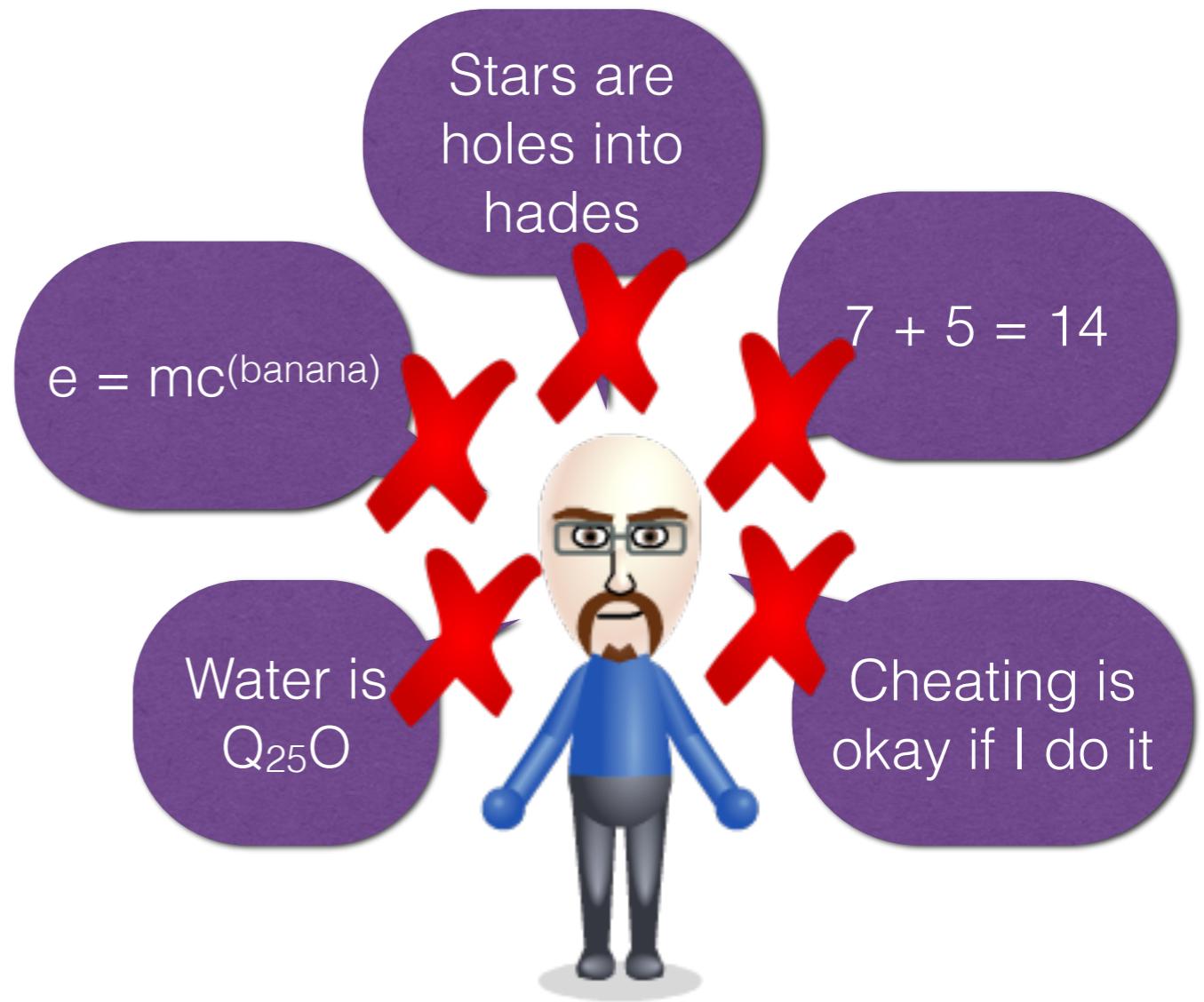
It's algorithmic

# First misconception



It's a personal thing

# First misconception



# First misconception

Insofar as our actions affect the well-being of another person, ethics has something to say about it

# First misconception

No one is an island



# Second misconception



It's about following rules

# Second misconception



Rule:  
Live according to tit-for-tat

# Second misconception



# Second misconception



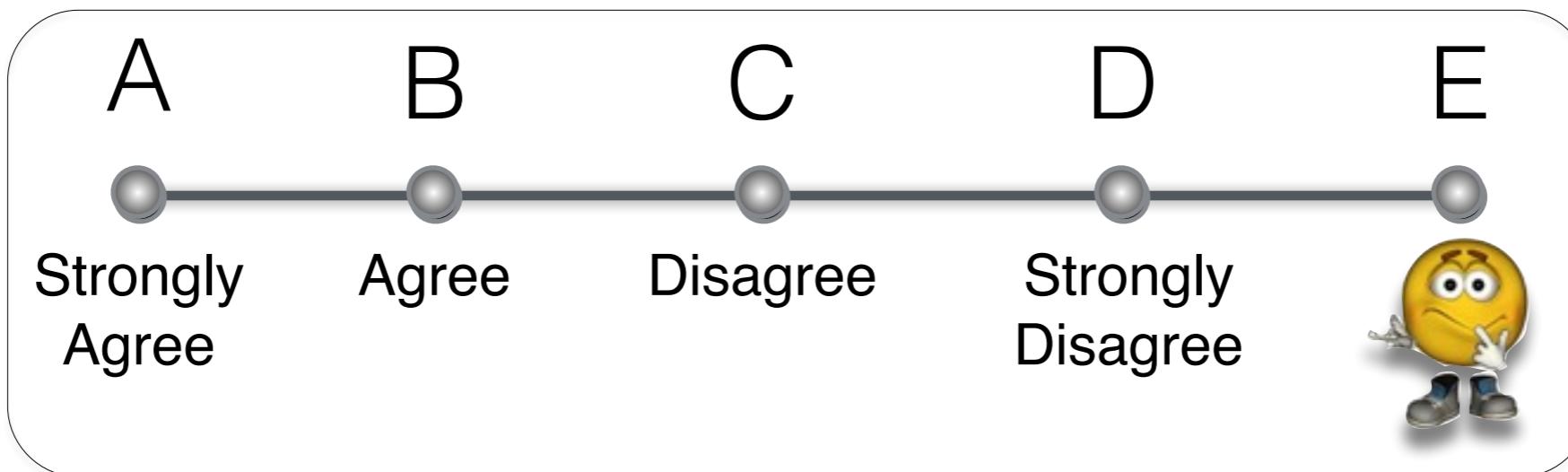
Rule:  
When the alarm sounds,  
shut down the Pump



# Poll

## Claim

The workers in the control room made the right decision to not follow the rules



# Second misconception



Following the rules is important...  
...but not always

# Second misconception

The screenshot shows the BBC ON THIS DAY website for September 1st, 1983. The main headline is "1983: Korean airliner 'shot down'". Below it, a map of Europe shows Soviet Union territories in red, with population figures: USSR 2,900,000, GRD+Poland+CSSR 1,060,000, FRG+Denmark+Benelux 1,084,200, France 500,000, Portugal 200,000, Spain 9,000, Iceland 3,700, and Norway 36,000. A small inset image shows several naval ships at sea.

**ON THIS DAY** 1950-2005

**1 September** BBC NEWS

Search ON THIS DAY by date 1 September GO < >

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**1983: Korean airliner 'shot down'**

The United States has accused the USSR of shooting down a civilian airliner which is missing over Russia's eastern coast.

All 269 people on board Pan American Airlines flight KAL 007 are presumed dead.

Moscow has so far only admitted to an incident with an "unidentified aircraft" in Soviet airspace.

Iceland 3,700

Norway 36,000

Great Britain 320,000

USSR 2,900,000

FRG+Denmark+Benelux 1,084,200

GRD+Poland+CSSR 1,060,000

Hungary+Romania+

France 500,000

Portugal 200,000

Spain 9,000

**Stories From 1 Sep**

- 1939: Germany invades Poland
- 1983: Korean airliner 'shot down'
- 1997: Diana driver was 'drunk and speeding'
- 1976: Water crisis deepens

# Second misconception



Lieutenant Colonel  
Stanislav Petrov

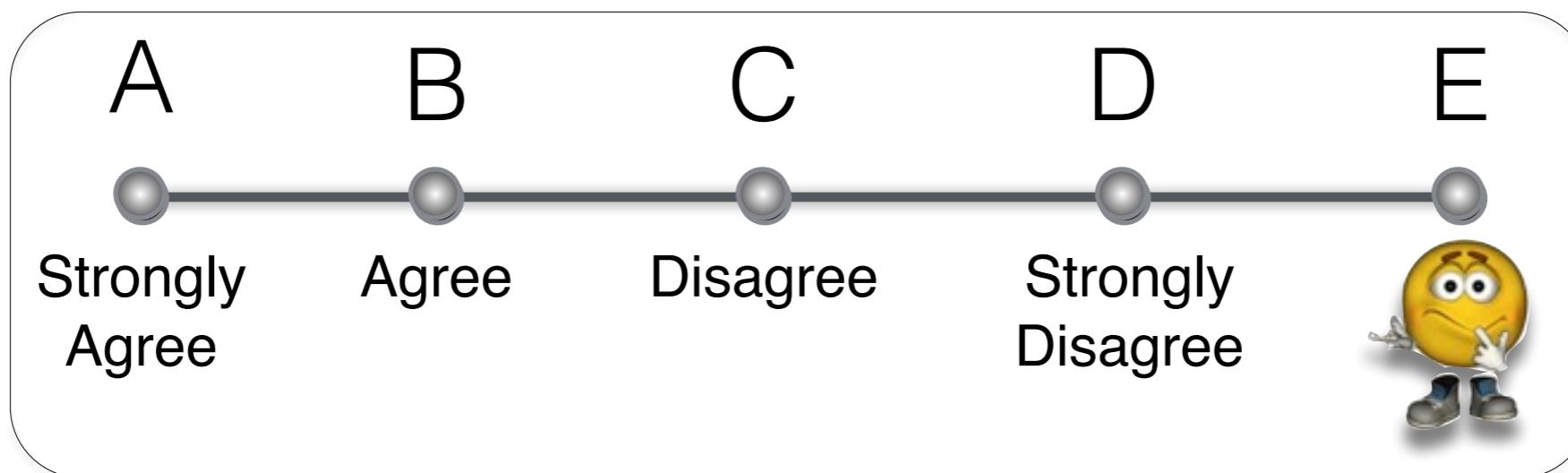




# Poll

## Claim

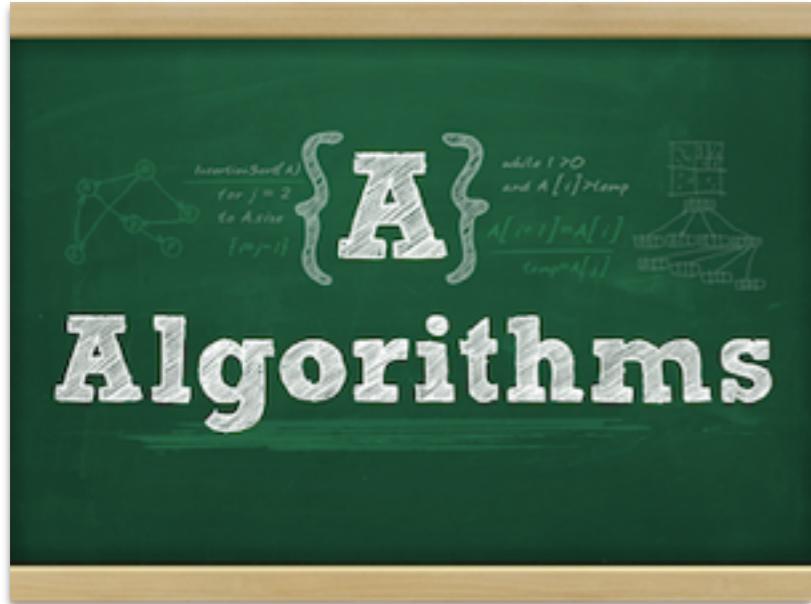
The Soviet Officers made the right decision by not following the rules



# Second misconception

Rules were not followed!





It's algorithmic

# Third misconception





Russ Shafer-Landau

“

I encourage you to resist the diagnosis that in ethics, anything goes. As you'll see, good moral thinking is disciplined thinking. There are many ways that we can go wrong in our moral reflections, and failures here can have the most disastrous results.

- Text, p. 5

”



Russ Shafer-Landau

“

Though it is sometimes hard to know when we have got it right in ethics, it is often very easy to know when we...have made a mistake. There are clear cases of people ruining their lives, or doing morally horrific things.

- Text, p. 5

”



Russ Shafer-Landau

“

We should keep that in mind before siding too quickly with a skepticism that says that every moral view is as good as every other.

- Text, p. 5

”