

Exploration #1 — Interview: “Be The Gadfly”

“If you were to execute me you would not easily find another person like me, who is (although it is rather funny to say) attached to the city by the god just as though to a great and noble horse that’s somewhat sluggish because of its size and needs to be provoked by a sort of gadfly. This is just the way, I think, the god attached me to the city, the sort of person who never ceases provoking you and persuading you and reproaching each one of you the whole day long everywhere I settle.” — Socrates, Apology (30e)

Assignment

Your task for this “Exploration” is to experiment with being like Socrates in your life – to “be the gadfly” and try your hand at provoking someone out of their sluggish beliefs. Specifically, I’d like you to **record a conversation between you and someone else, where you ask them what they think matters in life and examine their opinions Socratically**. It is up to you to determine what “examining their opinions Socratically” should involve, but at a minimum it should include investigating the reasons behind their opinions and testing the veracity of those reasons.

Your conversational partner (or “interlocutor”) can be whoever you like, but ideally it will be someone close to you whom you know has strong opinions about what matters in life – perhaps a parent, or a mentor, or an opinionated friend. You’re also welcome to try striking up a conversation with a complete stranger. (Just be sure to get their permission before recording!)

Requirements & Structure

Your submission should include the following three components:

- (1) **The audio file of your interview:** Upload the recording of your conversation, in whatever file format you like. Your conversation should be at least 5 minutes long. It is your responsibility to figure out how to record and upload your conversation. (If for whatever reason you are unable to submit an audio file, you may instead submit a full written transcript of your conversation.)
- (2) **A summary of your interview:** Provide a brief overview of your conversation, noting: (1) your interlocutor’s initial answer to your question; (2) what was revealed about their answer over the course of your conversation; and (3) where the conversation ended. Your summary may be written in full sentences or as bullet points, so long as these three points are made clear.

(3) **A reflection on your interview experience:** Write a short reflection, of at least 150 words, reflecting on how you felt and what you learned from the experience of “being the gadfly”.