

## What do philosophers say about the possibility that we can be selfless or perhaps never are?

They find free will doubtful and that stems from a suspicion about altruism. We have no free will to be really about being good for everybody.

We are all about ourselves. This insight came from Nietzsche. "Ultimately one loves one's desires and not that which is desired" (Beyond Good and Evil, page 106, Maxim 175).

All Nietzsche meant was that anything we want it is not it we want but the happiness we think we are going to get from it. The greedy person keeps trying to get happiness from money though she or he has known only misery over it so far.

If I have a way to help and save the starving children I won't do it unless I find something in it that I think will make me happy or happier or keep me happy I won't do it. I weigh my sense of wellbeing against their lives.

I cannot think of or be aware of more than one desire at a time. Altruism is impossible and unnatural for we only do what fulfils the strongest desire we are conscious of at any given moment. Moreover, it is the desire not what is desired that is important to us so if we desire to be holy it is the desire not the holiness that matters to us and which we cherish and like so we are really evil and satanic or unholy.

People think that desire means pleasure. It does not mean going after the most pleasurable thing but what seems to be the most helpful thing under the circumstances. The desire not to eat a salad is overridden by the desire to expand your ego by getting the willpower to eat it.

Ewing writes in Ethics, "To modern psychologists and philosophers it is plain that desire comes on the whole first and pleasure second and that the desire for pleasure as such plays only a small part in life. It is true that I could not desire something that was not in some way pleasant to me (though it might in other respects be very painful), but this does not prove that I only desire anything for the sake of the pleasure it will give" (page 26).

Desire could indeed come first but not in a way that makes it stronger than the drive for pleasure. He tells us that having desires is necessary before having the desire for pleasure. If desire and pleasure are equal in value then we vindicate egoism and can put down the failure to keep the two with us all the time as down to the universe we have. Its the circumstances that make up the problem.

I know from experience I cannot have pleasure all the time. So my powers of desiring are giving me a kind of pleasure even if not grabbing pleasures like sex and food and holidays all the time. It is pleasure to deny myself for that avoids the pain of disappointment. I do this so I can enjoy the pleasures when they come.

What is the truth about hedonism, the idea that I only go after things for whatever pleasure I can find in them? That for hedonism to work you have to get pleasure from denying yourself pleasure.

If you desire something that means you want the pleasure of the desire to be fulfilled. You can desire to leave a party early to help a depressed friend though it will diminish your pleasure. But though you are turning your back on fun, it does not follow that you are renouncing pleasure. It just means you are taking the pleasure of doing what you want and not the pleasure of hedonism. Even hedonistic pleasure ceases to be pleasure if you feel addicted to it. To do what you desire is the greatest and most important pleasure of all in the long run.

Only the individual can know if they are a hedonist. To everybody else they may look like an altruist.

He is confusing in how he can assert we are not hidden pleasure seekers and then says we cannot act unless we have a desire we want to be fulfilled by fulfilling. If you find him confusing then be told that this is a contradiction nobody can expect you not to notice but it is one you are not allowed to say exists. He talks as if the pleasure doesn't necessarily have anything to do with you choosing the action and then he says it does for you don't choose anything unless you see something pleasant in it. If you do something because it pleases you then that is something selfish. Ewing cannot accept hedonism for he is biased towards the delusions about self-sacrifice and altruism that society is ridden with.

Like everybody else he tries to confuse for that stops you noticing the contradiction. The fact is if you do something because it pleases you then that is self-centred. Ewing is biased towards the delusions about self-sacrifice that society is ridden with.

We conclude that philosophers are accurate with the psychology but can at times distort the truth, we are creatures that put our desires above each other and when we do not it is really some kind of collective ego at play. A group can be selfish not just a person.