HOW TO THINK LIKE A PHILOSOPHER

An ideal guide to philosophical thinking - engaging in a thoughtful and witty way. Peter Cave is the perfect companion for a bright but leisurely walk through the labyrinths of philosophers, their lives and thinking.’

Derek Matravers, Fellow of Churchill College, Cambridge, Professor of Philosophy, Open University

‘...if you learn to think like Peter Cave – with freshness, humour, objectivity and penetration – you will have been amply rewarded.’

Prof. Felipe Fernandez-Armesto, University of Notre Dame

Chapter Titles
1 Lao Tzu: The Way to Tao
2 Sappho: Lover
3 Zeno of Elea: Tortoise Backer, Parmenidean Helper
4 Gadfly: aka ‘Socrates’
5 Plato: Chariteer, Magnificent Footnote Inspirer – ‘Nobody Does It Better’
6 Aristotle: Earth-Bound, Walking
7 Epicurus: Gardener, Curing the Soul, Ably Assisted by Lucretius
8 Avicenna: Flying Man, Unifier
9 Descartes: With Princess, With Queen
10 Spinoza: God-Intoxicated Atheist
11 Leibniz: Monad Man
12 Bishop Berkeley, ‘That Paradoxical Irishman’: Immaterialist, Tar-Water Advocate
13 David Hume: The Great Infidel or Le Bon David
14 Kant: Duty Calls, Categorically
15 Schopenhauer: Pessimism With Flute
16 John Stuart Mill: Utility Man, With Harriet, Soul-Mate
17 Søren Kierkegaard: Who?
18 Karl Marx: Hegelian, Freedom-Fighter
19 Lewis Carroll: Curiouser and Curiouser
20 Nietzsche: God-Slaying Jester, Trans-Valuer
21 Bertrand Russell: Radical, Aristocrat
22 G. E. Moore: Common-Sense Defender, Bloomsbury’s Sage
23 Heidegger: Hyphenater
24 Jean-Paul Sartre: Existentialist, Novelist, French
25 Simone Weil: Refuser and Would Be Rescuer
26 Simone de Beauvoir: Situated, Protester, Feminist
27 Ludwig Wittgenstein: Therapist
28 Hannah Arendt: Controversialist, Journalist?
29 Iris Murdoch: Attender
30 Samuel Beckett: Not I

Extracts:
To use an example derived from Plato: if pleasurable satisfactions are all that are ultimately valuable, buy some itching powder, apply the powder and then scratch — and delight in those scratching pleases. Repeat, repeat...

In the 1960s, Samuel Beckett was crossing Regent’s Park, London, off to Lord’s Cricket. He noted the beautiful blue sky, the greens of the trees, the company of his friends. One remarked, ‘Yes, on a day like this, it’s good to be alive.’ Beckett’s reply: ‘Well, I wouldn’t go as far as that.’

Simone de Beauvoir reported how Simone Weil wanted to feed the world. When she (Beauvoir) replied that the goal is for people to find meaning in their existence, Weil replied, ‘It is easy to see that you have never gone hungry.’