

Creating Free Will

Homework

This is a huge philosophical topic. The goal is not to become an expert or learned but to be aware of some of the dimensions and controversies that surround the topic. If we feel we don't have much free will, the readings can challenge that belief. They can also challenge an over-reaching belief that we have more free will than we actually do.

Rev. Trumbore's sermon on free will:

<http://www.uumin.org/sam/sermons/Creating-Free-Will.pdf>

The basic free will arguments can be found in Wikipedia here: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Free_will

A deeper historical analysis can be found here:

<http://www.informationphilosopher.com/freedom/history/>

A good reference to Free Will in Christian thought is here (Catholic & Protestant):

<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/06259a.htm>

Exercise:

The goal of looking at this topic is reviewing our sense of freedom and whether or not we might be able to increase it. Rev. Trumbore asserts in his sermon that we can develop and increase our capacity for free will. Pick one or more to assist you in reflecting and going deeper with this topic.

1. Write a page, less than 500 words, about an experience of exercising free will and/or an experience of feeling as if you didn't have freedom. Reflect on what enabled your free will or what limited it in that situation.
2. Examine a situation in your life that feels devoid of freedom *but* has the potential for free will. What would need to change in you to claim that potential? What would need to change in the situation to allow for more freedom? Write a few paragraphs describing the situation and the options to bring more clarity to your perceptions.
3. Select a day and from beginning to end take note of each time you must make a significant free choice, times when there are no free choices, and times when you are conflicted about the choices you must make. Make a list of several of each to bring in to the Soul Matters group.
4. Make up your own free will exercise!