

The Hard Questions

Is there an ultimate truth? A final answer to all questions? A magic formula to end all our suffering in life? A simple equation like $E = mc^2$ that can actually solve our problems permanently and make us happy?

What if all knowledge—everything that is knowable—could be boiled down to a single, powerful formula? Anyone who knew this formula, and understood how to use it, could then access the knowledge required to solve any problem, no matter how difficult. There would be no need to learn anything else, because the formula would supply whatever knowledge one might need.

The great engine of human thought, now turbocharged by computers, is churning out information at an ever-increasing rate. But do we ever get to the end of this information? Is there any final answer? Or does our knowledge just keep on increasing without limit? Does all this so-called knowledge really do us any good? Are we really any closer to understanding life, or the soul? Do we understand why we are born, or why we have to die? Is there any hope of science finding a solution for the ultimate problem of death?

Science has made great strides in theory and technology, but has it produced anything resembling a unified field theory of life? We may have more tools and gadgets than people centuries ago, but are we any happier? Even if we know how the universe came into being, are we any closer to understanding why?

Could it be that a certain class of questions—the ones that actually affect the quality of our life—require a different quality of knowledge for their answers? And that simply collecting observations about the physical world can never deliver that quality of knowledge?

Has all our scientific so-called progress brought us any closer to understanding the mystery of our own consciousness and feelings? And what about the timeless, universal human striving for freedom

and transcendence? Have science and technology—or art, religion and philosophy, for that matter—really brought us any closer to understanding God, the purpose of the universe, or the mysteries of life, love, death, eternity and spirituality?

It's easy to deny the importance of such questions or dismiss them as impossible. It's easy to doubt the people who ask such questions and expect reasonable, practical, intelligent answers, and label them impracticable dreamers.

But just a minute: What if these ideas are true? What if there really is an answer to all questions, a solution to all problems? What if there really is an end to birth and death in the material world? What if there really is an Ultimate Truth Formula? Something so simple that anyone can learn it in five minutes, and provides satisfying answers to all the greatest questions, and practical solutions to the greatest problems of life?

It's natural to be skeptical when presented with such an outrageous, revolutionary concept. But this is the way of progress. Many intelligent people were doubtful when Einstein published his famous equation, $E = mc^2$. Why? The formula was simple enough, but the ideas behind it contradicted their beliefs. But when later experiments, including the successful detonation of the atom bomb, proved that the formula works, everyone accepted the idea and adapted their beliefs accordingly.

Now every schoolchild can recite this formula, and knows that it's true and it works. But can they explain how it works and why it's true? Can you? The Einstein formula is powerful in its application because it is such a high-level description of the structure of the physical universe. There is tremendous significance compressed into each term of this extremely powerful formula. But how many years of specialized study and training are required to see the potential for nuclear energy in this simple expression?

Similarly, if there is an Ultimate Truth Formula, and even if it is simple to learn and easy to use, it might be very, very difficult to understand exactly how and why it works. In fact, at first glance the theory might appear totally counterintuitive. Such a high-level description of ultimate truth would be even more powerful in application than Einstein's mass-energy equation. Its terms would contain even more significance. Therefore what kind of intelligence would be required to understand how and why it works?

So what? Does everyone who drives a car need to understand how and why an internal-combustion engine works? Does everyone who flies in a jet plane have to understand how and why jet engines, or air traffic control radar work? No, you just get in and go.

So, just for the sake of discussion, let's say we actually have the Ultimate Truth Formula, and can give it to you and show you how to use it in about five minutes. If you use it regularly according to the instructions, gradually over the course of several years, you will come to know everything you need to solve all the problems of life. Guaranteed.

Would you use it according to the instructions long enough to find out if it really works?

Would you use it, even if you don't understand how it works? Would you use it, even if you don't believe the theory of how it works? Would you use it, even if you had to change your lifestyle or your eating habits to make it work better? Would you use it, even if the theory of operation contradicted your beliefs?

Remember how people reacted to Einstein's little formula. They didn't want to believe it. Their beliefs didn't stop the atomic bomb from working, did they?

How much effort is it worth to you to solve all your problems? How much effort is it worth to you to stop your suffering? How much is it

worth to you to be happy? How much is it worth to you to solve all the really big problems of life?

In this life, people work very hard to get a good education. Then they work very hard to make money, to get a nice wife or husband, to lose weight, to get a nice house or car or whatever else they really want.

What if applying the Ultimate Truth Formula requires much less work than any of these? Would you be willing to try it?

What if there is a state of consciousness in which the solution to all problems is self-evident? What if the method to attain that consciousness could be learned in a few minutes, and its theory of operation in a few days? Even if the application of the method took several years, would it be worthwhile to you to learn it? To use it?