

Lesson 2

Discussion Questions

Directions: You need to answer 2 questions from numbers 1-4 below and answer the Case Study Questions. Please number your answers on your submission with the same number from below

1. Fill in the blank: “Life is _____.” Explain why. (You cannot say, “a highway”) (You cannot use one of the ones from the reading.)
2. Suppose an angel was sitting on a cloud, watching the parade of human activities below—the way we would watch a colony of ants hurrying along on their daily business. What might the angel say about the flurry of activity? What would it amount to in the angel’s eyes?
3. The philosopher Albert Camus suggested that life is like the task of the Greek mythological hero **Sisyphus**, who was condemned to roll a rock up a mountain, only to have it fall back again, and he had to do this over and over, forever. Is life indeed like this? If so, how?
4. Pick 5 of the metaphors and explain how you would rate the various metaphors of the meaning of life that Lesson 2 presents. Rate them on a scale from 1 to 5, with 5 indicating that you wholeheartedly agree and 1 indicating near-total disagreement.

Case Study: Altruism and “Good Samaritan” Laws

Alexandra Van Horn was in the front passenger seat of a car that slammed into a light pole at 45 mph on November 1, 2004, according to the negligence lawsuit filed against Lisa Torti. Torti, who was traveling as a passenger in a car that was following behind Van Horn’s vehicle, stopped after the crash. When Torti stopped, she noticed that Van Horn required urgent medical treatment, so she moved her out of her disabled vehicle. Torti testified that she placed one arm under Van Horn's legs and the other behind her neck as support when she lifted Van Horn from the car. Van Horn blamed her injuries (including a lacerated liver and broken vertebrae) on Torti. Van Horn claimed that Torti grabbed her by the arm and pulled her from the car “like a rag doll.” Court documents said that the question of whether Van Horn was paralyzed during the crash or when she was pulled out of the car has been disputed.

The Second District Court of Appeal wrote in a decision that the “Good Samaritan” law only protects people from liability if they are administering emergency medical care. The court ruled, however, that Torti should not have perceived Van Horn’s danger of remaining in the wrecked car as an “emergency.” Attorney Robert Hutchinson, who represented plaintiff Alexandra Van Horn, said that, though the state’s Samaritan law did not require bystanders to render aid, if they

choose to render aid, they must act reasonably. The end legal result was that Van Horn was permitted to sue Torti for rendering aid.

Questions:

1. Do you think that Torti performed an altruistic act?
2. Use this case and Lesson 2 to provide three potential criticisms of the view that altruistic acts are possible.
3. Using this case, imagine that you are a legislator writing an amendment to your state's current Good Samaritan law. Write a persuasive argument that Good Samaritan laws should be extended to protect those who also render non-emergency aid.