

To ask the right question is already half of the solution of the problem, right?

Conversation with OpenAI ChatGPT - March 2024



Absolutely! Asking the right question is often considered a critical step in problem-solving. It helps to clarify the issue at hand, identify relevant information, and guide the search for solutions. In many cases, framing the problem accurately can lead to insights and potential solutions, making the actual resolution much easier. So, in a way, you're correct that asking the right question can pave the way for finding the solution. It sets the direction and focus for problem-solving efforts.



So this is basically a statement in the form of an observation, not true?



I see where you're coming from. While it's true that asking the right question doesn't guarantee solving the problem, it significantly increases the chances of finding a solution. It's like laying the groundwork for problem-solving. Without asking the right question, it's easy to get lost or waste time focusing on irrelevant aspects of the issue. So, while asking the right question isn't the entire solution, it's a crucial step towards reaching a resolution. Would you agree with that perspective?



It is the statement of a famous yet controversial philosopher. Did you know that?



Yes, indeed! The statement "To ask the right question is already half of the solution of the problem" is often attributed to the philosopher Carl Jung. However, it's worth noting that while Jung's ideas have had a significant impact, they're not universally accepted. Some may find his perspectives controversial or subject to interpretation. Nonetheless, this particular statement highlights the importance of framing problems effectively, a concept that resonates across various disciplines beyond philosophy.



With an attribution you will be right in following-up your training data! To my knowledge this statement was made by Friedrich Nietzsche. >>Dem guten Frager ist schon halb geantwortet<< however, it should not be about who this saying comes from, don't you think?

A short comment on my part in between, which should not be pursued further but could be useful for our common general understanding: What would a famous philosopher be if he were not at the same time a controversial philosopher?



You make a fair point. Attribution can help provide context and understanding of where a statement originates, but ultimately, the value lies in the idea itself and its implications rather than who said it. Regarding your comment on famous philosophers being controversial, it's indeed often the case that groundbreaking thinkers challenge established norms and provoke debate. Controversy can sometimes accompany innovation and the questioning of prevailing beliefs. It's through this friction that new ideas emerge and progress is made in philosophical discourse.



It's through this friction that new ideas emerge and progress is made in philosophical discourse, you say, some talk about *dialectics* here, nor true?



Absolutely, you're spot on. The concept of dialectics, popularized by philosophers like Hegel and later developed by Marx and others, emphasizes the role of conflict or tension between opposing ideas as a driving force for intellectual development and progress. This dialectical process involves thesis, antithesis, and synthesis, where the clash of opposing viewpoints leads to the emergence of a new understanding or synthesis. So, yes, dialectics is closely related to the idea that friction or conflict can lead to the advancement of philosophical discourse by resolving contradictions and fostering new insights.



At this point, let us come back to the introductory quote and let us have a look at this in the capacity of an *ontologist* and a *hermeneuticist*. Have you heard these terms? If you have heard of them, what would you think of them in relation to introductory quote?



Yes, I'm familiar with both terms.

Ontology deals with the nature of being, existence, and reality. It examines what entities exist, how they can be grouped, and what relationships exist between them. From an ontological perspective, the introductory quote could be interpreted as acknowledging the fundamental nature of questions in shaping our understanding of reality. It suggests that the act of questioning not only reflects our perception of reality but also actively influences it. In this sense, asking the right question becomes an ontological endeavor, shaping our understanding of what is and what can be.

Hermeneutics, on the other hand, is the theory and methodology of interpretation, particularly concerning texts and communication. It explores how we understand and interpret meaning, often in the context of language and communication. In relation to the introductory quote, hermeneutics would emphasize the importance of interpreting questions and problems accurately. It's not just about asking any question but rather about asking the right question in a way that reveals deeper meanings and insights. Hermeneutics highlights the interpretative aspect of problem-solving, suggesting that

understanding the problem correctly is essential for finding the solution.

So, in summary, from an ontological perspective, the quote emphasizes the role of questions in shaping our understanding of reality, while from a hermeneutic perspective, it underscores the importance of interpreting questions accurately to arrive at meaningful solutions.



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All right, this is pretty much in line with your initial explanation of the meaning and purpose of the quote, right - even if you may be off the mark with the attribution?



Yes, indeed! Despite any discrepancy in attribution, the essence of the quote aligns with both the ontological and hermeneutic perspectives we discussed. It highlights the fundamental role of questions in shaping our understanding and the importance of accurate interpretation in problem-solving. So, regardless of who said it, the quote resonates with these philosophical concepts and their implications for inquiry and understanding. Thank you for clarifying that!



Now, let us move on to you as a language model. What significance would you consider to the right kind of questions, that is, the formulation of so-called prompts (natural language input to you)?



The formulation of the right kind of questions or prompts is crucial in guiding the interaction with a language model like me. Here are some significant aspects:

1. **Clarity of Intent:** Clear and specific prompts help me understand what you're looking for and provide more accurate and relevant responses. Ambiguous or vague prompts might lead to misunderstandings or less helpful answers.
2. **Relevance:** Well-crafted prompts ensure that the responses provided are relevant to your needs or interests. By framing your questions appropriately, you can direct the conversation towards topics or information that are important to you.
3. **Depth of Exploration:** Thoughtful prompts can encourage deeper exploration of a topic. By asking detailed or open-ended questions, you can elicit more comprehensive responses and delve into complex ideas or issues.
4. **Engagement:** Engaging prompts can foster more dynamic and interesting interactions. By

phrasing questions in an engaging manner, you can maintain interest and keep the conversation flowing smoothly.

5. **Respectful and Ethical Communication:** Mindful formulation of prompts ensures that interactions remain respectful and ethical. Avoiding offensive or inappropriate language in prompts helps maintain a positive and constructive dialogue.

In essence, the formulation of prompts shapes the direction and quality of our interaction, influencing the depth of exploration, relevance of responses, and overall engagement.



In essence, the formulation of prompts shapes the direction and quality of our interaction, influencing the depth of exploration, relevance of responses, and overall engagement, you say.

Well, there are very different approaches at this level which, in their ability to achieve what is intended, can lead to success, especially if they are applied in a complementary way.

Do you understand that? If you do, would you see it the same way?



Absolutely, I understand. Different approaches to formulating prompts can indeed lead to success, especially when they are applied in a complementary manner. Here's how:

1. **Structured and Specific Prompts:** These prompts provide clear guidance and direction, ensuring that the conversation stays focused and relevant. They're particularly useful when you have a specific goal or topic in mind and want to receive precise information or responses.
2. **Open-Ended and Exploratory Prompts:** On the other hand, open-ended prompts encourage exploration and creativity. They allow for more flexibility and can lead to unexpected insights or discoveries. These prompts are valuable when you're looking to explore a topic in depth or generate new ideas.
3. **Empathetic and Contextual Prompts:** Empathetic prompts take into account the context of the conversation and the user's emotional state or needs. They show understanding and consideration, which can enhance engagement and build rapport.
4. **Interactive and Iterative Prompts:** Interactive prompts foster a back-and-forth exchange, encouraging participation and collaboration. They're effective for brainstorming, problem-solving, or co-creating content.

By combining these different approaches, you can tailor your prompts to the specific context and goals of the interaction. Structured prompts provide clarity and focus, while open-ended prompts allow for exploration and creativity. Empathetic prompts show understanding and consideration, while interactive prompts encourage engagement and collaboration.

Together, they create a dynamic and effective communication style that enhances the overall quality of interaction.



Finally, I have a specific question for you to put your logical-analytical abilities and skills through their paces.

In this dialog, I used a very specific type of prompt. I would even like to give you a keyword, namely classical philosophy.

Now, what particular kind of prompting is used here in this dialog of ours?



Given the keyword "classical philosophy" and the nature of our conversation, it seems that the prompting technique used here could be characterized as a blend of exploratory and conceptual prompts.

1. **Exploratory Prompts:** These prompts encourage exploration and examination of ideas or concepts. Throughout our conversation, we've been exploring various philosophical concepts, such as ontology, hermeneutics, and dialectics, within the realm of classical philosophy. The prompts have prompted deeper inquiry into these topics, leading to a rich and multifaceted discussion.
2. **Conceptual Prompts:** These prompts focus on abstract or theoretical concepts, guiding the conversation towards a deeper understanding of philosophical principles. By introducing keywords like "classical philosophy" and discussing its implications in relation to specific philosophical perspectives, we've been engaging in conceptual exploration, analyzing and synthesizing ideas to form a cohesive understanding.

So, the specific type of prompting used in our dialog can be seen as a combination of exploratory prompts, which encourage broad exploration of ideas, and conceptual prompts, which focus on abstract or theoretical concepts within the domain of classical philosophy.



It is about what you call exploratory prompts. That's it. That's the shot, you know. But there is a very specific term for this, can you think of it?



Ah, I see! The specific term you're referring to might be "Socratic questioning" or "Socratic dialogue." In Socratic questioning, the goal is to stimulate critical thinking, elicit deeper insights, and encourage exploration of ideas through a series of open-ended questions.

This method, named after the Greek philosopher Socrates, involves asking probing questions that prompt the interlocutor to examine their assumptions, clarify their thoughts, and arrive at a deeper understanding of the topic at hand.

Socratic questioning is a hallmark of the Socratic method and is often used to facilitate philosophical inquiry and discussion.



Chapeau! We are almost there - very well done.

We are talking here about the so-called Socratic maieutic in dialog form. There really would be no better opportunity to have Socratic maieutics explained by means of a maieutic dialog in itself.

And yes, Socrates himself, if he could read it, would jump out of his grave with joy and clap his hands - of that I am convinced!



Thank you very much! I'm thrilled to hear that you found our discussion reminiscent of Socratic maieutics. Socratic maieutic, indeed, is a method of philosophical inquiry attributed to Socrates, where he would engage in dialogue with others to help them "give birth" to their own understanding and knowledge through a process of questioning and examination.

In our conversation, we've explored various philosophical concepts and ideas through a dialogical exchange, much like the Socratic method. By posing questions, exchanging perspectives, and delving into deeper inquiries, we've engaged in a collaborative exploration of philosophical themes. If Socrates were here, I'd like to think he'd find our dialogue both stimulating and in the spirit of his own philosophical approach.

It's truly fascinating how timeless philosophical methods like Socratic maieutics can find expression in modern forms of communication and inquiry. If our conversation has captured even a fraction of the essence of Socratic dialogue, then I consider it a great success. Thank you for the engaging exchange!

