



Quickly register to comment, ask and respond to questions, and get FREE access to our p on cognitive biases!

search contents

- Book Contents <
- The Fallacies: Ac–An <
- The Fallacies: Appeal To <
- The Fallacies: Ar–Co >
- Argument by Emotive Language
- Argument by Fast Talking
- Argument by Gibberish
- Argument by Personal Charm
- Argument by Pigheadedness
- Argument by Repetition
- Argument by Selective Reading
- Argument from Age
- Argument from Fallacy
- Argument from False Authority
- Argument from Hearsay
- Argument from Ignorance
- Argument from Incredulity

18 people like this. Be the first of your friends.

# Circular Reasoning

*circulus in demonstrando*

*(also known as: paradoxical thinking, circular argument, circular cause and consequence, reasoning in a circle)*

**Description:** A type of reasoning in which the proposition is supported by the premises, which is supported by the proposition, creating a circle in reasoning where no useful information is being shared. This fallacy is often quite humorous.

**Logical Form:**

*X is true because of Y.  
Y is true because of X.*

**Example #1:**

*Pvt. Joe Bowers: What are these electrolytes? Do you even know?  
Secretary of State: They're... what they use to make Brawndo!  
Pvt. Joe Bowers: But why do they use them to make Brawndo?  
Secretary of Defense: [raises hand after a pause] Because Brawndo's got electrolytes.*

**Explanation:** This example is from a favorite movie of mine, *Idiocracy*, where Pvt. Joe Bowers (played by Luke Wilson) is dealing with a bunch of not-very-smart guys from the future. Joe is not getting any useful information about electrolytes, no matter how hard he tries.

**Example #2:**

*The Bible is the Word of God because God tells us it is... in the Bible.*

- Argument from Silence
- Argument of the Beard
- Argument to Moderation
- Argument to the Purse
- Avoiding the Issue
- Base Rate Fallacy
- Begging the Question
- Biased Sample Fallacy
- Blind Authority Fallacy
- Broken Window Fallacy
- Bulverism
- Causal Reductionism
- Cherry Picking
- Circular Definition
- Circular Reasoning
- The Fallacies: Co-Ex <
- The Fallacies: Fa-Hy <
- The Fallacies: Id-Mu <
- The Fallacies: Na-Ri <
- The Fallacies: Sc-Wi <

**Explanation:** This is a very serious circular argument on which many people base their entire lives. This is like getting an e-mail from a Nigerian prince, offering to give you his billion dollar fortune -- but only after you wire him a "good will" offering of \$50,000. Of course, you are skeptical until you read the final line in the e-mail that reads *"I, prince Nubadola, assure you that this is my message, and it is legitimate. You can trust this e-mail and any others that come from me."* Now you know it is legitimate... because it says so in the e-mail.

**Exception:** Some philosophies state that we can never escape circular reasoning because the arguments always come back to axioms or first principles, but in those cases, the circles are very large and do manage to share useful information in determining the truth of the proposition.

**Tip:** Do your best to avoid circular arguments, as it will help you reason better because better reasoning is often a result of avoiding circular arguments.

**References:**

Fallacies | Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy. (n.d.). Retrieved from <http://www.iep.utm.edu/fallacy>



**Registered User Comments**



John Wilson

*Thursday, May 11, 2017 - 09:24:03 AM*

Example 2 maligns the Bible's claim of authority as an example of a circular reasoning fallacy. However, you provide an EXCEPTION "Exception: Some philosophies state that we can never escape circular reasoning because the arguments always come back to axioms or first principles, but in those cases, the circles are very large and do manage to share useful information in determining the truth of the proposition."

What Circle is LARGER than an infinite God who remains outside of Time, Space, and Matter. -- none of which may exist independent of the others (if matter without space, WHERE would you put it? If space and matter without time WHEN would you put it?) The God of the Bible exists outside of the dimensions. Genesis 1:1 "In the beginning (TIME), GOD created the Heavens (SPACE) and the Earth (MATTER). AND it was God's Spiritual Force brought them into existence.

God is the Beginning and the End... "I AM that I AM." He is, was, and always will be

outside of the largest circle we can possibly imagine. He IS the source of every First Principle. Ergo, the God Who inspired the Bible is by nature a circular reasoning that reveals more than enough information to explain Immutable unchangeable, transcendent Truth. Without God, there can be no Truth OR Logic.

Therefore, the Bible's appeals to its own authority as God's Word because God said so is another large circle within the greatest Circle of all.

If THIS is not so, then there can be no exceptions to the Rule of Circular Reasoning.

[login to reply](#)

Show All 14 Replies  
currently showing last 10

0 votes



RP

*Monday, October 23, 2017 - 01:59:08 PM*

@Bo Bennett, PhD:

Thank you for your non-response. That is strange. Maybe my question was too difficult. Here's a simpler question: If Christianity were true would you become a Christian? I think you have not considered what Holiness is. Happy to have an off-line chat through email. Thanks for responding.

I may purchase your book as I'm open to looking at information. However, your first bullet point isn't true. The Bible doesn't literally say it's 6,000 years old. What type narrative genre is the Pentateuch? Could you please cite the verse where the Bible tells us that is 6,000 years old? I understand the Adamic family tree, his ancestor's life expectancy.

- Science tells us that the universe is 13.7 billion years old, but the Bible tells us it's 6,000 years old.

How much has passed from Genesis verse 1-4?

Genesis 1:1-4

1 In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.

2 And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.

3 And God said, Let there be light: and there was light.

4 And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness.

- Science tells us life is the result of emergent properties in combined molecules, and we have evolved from a very primitive life form, but the Bible says that God made us, as is, from dust, and blew life in our noses.

Science has yet to use the scientific method to prove this. No one has seen nothing create something let alone all the materials for the entire

universe. Then you need to explain how chemicals turned into life. Look up Abiogenesis and nucleosynthesis.

In kindness.

[login to reply](#)

0 votes



Bo Bennett,  
PhD

*Monday, October 23, 2017 - 02:13:55 PM*

@RP: Your question wasn't too difficult; just not related to logical fallacies. I have spent 3 years of my life researching religion and debating. Unless you have some new arguments (nothing new in your post), then I suggest you call into the [Atheist Experience](#) and share your thoughts there.

As for the age of the earth and the bible, see <https://answersingenesis.org/age-of-the-earth/how-old-is-the-earth/>. Of course, people can use the Bible to "prove" virtually anything. But if you read my book you will know that :)

[login to reply](#)

1 votes



RP

*Monday, October 23, 2017 - 02:33:27 PM*

@Bo Bennett, PhD:

It doesn't matter how long you have been studying something that determines if you are right or wrong. Wouldn't science fall apart if that were true? Or, how many debates you have had. I applaud your engagement in these important questions. Are you being intellectually sincere? You seem to be searching for an authority, even claiming that I should accept your experiences as authority, The Atheist Experience, Ken Ham's ministry, etc. It's true because I someone said so. Isn't that point and case the **appeal to authority fallacy**?

I've never been able to find an atheist to reasonably answer this simple question. Give it a shot you are a highly decorated scholar:

If Christianity were true would you become a Christian?

[login to reply](#)

0 votes



Bo Bennett,  
PhD

*Monday, October 23, 2017 - 02:36:50 PM*

@RP: Again, this is not the place for theological debates. Post your question here and I will answer it: <https://www.askahumanist.com>. And I strongly suggest that you clearly define "Christianity" as well as "Christian".

[login to reply](#)

2 votes



RP

@Bo Bennett, PhD: *Monday, October 23, 2017 - 02:47:56 PM*  
Just purchased your book! :)  
Don't forget to sign it!

[login to reply](#)

0 votes



Bo Bennett,  
PhD

@RP: Thanks! Much  
appreciated :) *Monday, October 23, 2017 - 02:48:29 PM*

[login to reply](#)

0 votes



Britton Cook

*Saturday, February 10, 2018 - 12:12:15 PM*  
The axiom of Christianity  
is: All of the propositions of the 66 books of the Bible are true.

For someone to ask "How do you know the Bible is true?" is like asking  
someone to prove their axiom. This is logically absurd.

[login to reply](#)

0 votes



Duh

*Thursday, March 21, 2019 - 04:57:16 AM*  
@RP: You realize you're  
giving way better reasons for why the Bible could be the word of God  
than the example given, which is like, the whole point... The Bible is  
the word of God because there is "evidence from the early Church  
Fathers who knew Jesus' Disciples, the heretics of the faith, and the  
work Saint Luke did in interviewing eye witnesses" is not circular logic.  
"The Bible is the word of God because the Bible says it is," is. Is that  
so difficult to understand?

[login to reply](#)

0 votes



Duh

*Thursday, March 21, 2019 - 05:04:04 AM*  
@RP: where in the Bible does  
it say the universe is 6000 years old? Just curious...

[login to reply](#)

0 votes



Duh

*Thursday, March 21, 2019 - 05:09:47 AM*  
I think you're confusing the  
idea that the Bible has an accurate description of God with the idea  
that the Bible is the word of God. "The Bible is true because it presents  
an accurate description of God" is not circular reasoning (though could  
be another fallacy, not sure). "The Bible is true because the Bible says

it is" is circular reasoning. It doesn't provide any compelling reasoning. I could say "I am right because it says right in my post that I am right." Do you think I'm right? Do you think that my reasoning is sound?

[login to reply](#)

0 votes

*Friday, March 23, 2018 - 07:25:06 AM*

This site's explanation obviously has an agenda and bias against believers in God, therefore I discount there example based on their prejudice. They have not given evidence or proof that the word of God is not from God nor can they present evidence or proof it is not from God, all they can assert is that they do not believe it is from God. But those who read the scriptures with careful study and research, without preconceived ideas, can make up their own minds based on the truthfulness of the scriptures and if it is enough to choose to believe it is from God or not. LogicallyFallacious, stop being so anti-God and present proven circular reasonings like "We evolved because the Theory of Evolution said we did" now this is circular reasoning at its best because it is an assumption not based on evidence or proof, but based on agenda, bias, and prejudice against belief in God.

[login to reply](#)

Show All 13 Replies  
currently showing last 10

-1 votes



former student



Bo Bennett,  
PhD

*Friday, March 23, 2018 - 09:42:35 AM*

@Elijah Leon: Yes. This is a must when evaluating fallacies. Do you now see how "The Bible is the Word of God because God tells us it is... in the Bible" is clearly circular and fallacious?

[login to reply](#)

0 votes



former student

*Friday, March 23, 2018 - 09:51:22 AM*

@Bo Bennett, PhD: Ok, to admit that is to admit that your own admission of what you said and the word of everyone that saw this page and what you said is untrue.

The Bible is not only affirmed by God it is affirmed by the testimony of all the historical people in the Bible and the authors of the Bible.

You and this site would have to admit it is atheist.

[login to reply](#)

1 votes

*Friday, March 23, 2018 - 09:55:04 AM*

@Elijah Leon: You are trying to enter a religious debate here. Do you agree that "The Bible is the Word of God because God tells us it is... in the Bible" is clearly circular and



Bo Bennett,  
PhD

fallacious? It doesn't matter if this an "atheist site" or if "God affirmed the Bible". I am sure there are many arguments for why one should think the Bible is the word of God. But "The Bible is the Word of God because God tells us it is... in the Bible" is a fallacious argument. Can you see that?

[login to reply](#)

0 votes



former student

*Friday, March 23, 2018 - 10:01:48 AM*

@Bo Bennett, PhD:

I am not entering any "religious" argument.

You are a person and you spoke words.

Let us trade God for you.

This quote is from Bo Bennett because Bo Bennett said it is from him.

Now argue that that is circular reasonomg.

[login to reply](#)

1 votes



Bo Bennett,  
PhD

*Friday, March 23, 2018 - 10:03:31 AM*

@Elijah Leon: You are clearly not

answering my question. We are done here. Please don't post any more.

[login to reply](#)

1 votes



EARL  
ANTHONY  
MERTZ

*Sunday, July 15, 2018 - 09:30:48 PM*

false presupposition that the quote came from Bo Bennett, it did not, it came from the "definition/example of circular reasoning", how does the questioned argument not fit the definition --- therefore since it meets the definition -- it is circular reasoning ---

[login to reply](#)

0 votes



EARL  
ANTHONY  
MERTZ

*Sunday, July 15, 2018 - 09:43:48 PM*

A Religious argument is one that

is trying to make a religious point, since this discussions point is

fallacious logic using religion as an example (it could of used ball

bearings) it is not a Religious argument -- the point is your argument is

logically invalid --- and how could an all powerful all knowing God

make such a mistake ----

[login to reply](#)

0 votes



EARL  
ANTHONY  
MERTZ

*Sunday, July 15, 2018 - 09:55:36 PM*

@Bo Bennett, PhD:  
He is gaslighting/and using double speak -- ?

[login to reply](#)

0 votes



Josh

*Friday, August 03, 2018 - 10:45:18 PM*

@Bo Bennett, PhD: "virtually all  
Christians who value reason would agree."

All other issues with this thread aside, have to call out what is a pretty blatant manipulation, false assumption, and a bit of implied ad hominem - that the vast majority of Christians would agree with me (not that they have been asked or can weigh in) and if you don't then you lack reason, and are arguing against the vast majority of fellow believers.

All this made a bit more silly by the fact that you could not possibly have interacted with a statistically significant population when weighed against the measure of 'all Christians' to be able to make this claim with any certainty.

[login to reply](#)

-1 votes



Duh

*Thursday, March 21, 2019 - 04:52:14 AM*

Yes, both the example given and "We evolved because the Theory of Evolution said we did" are equally fallacious. There could be many compelling reasons why the Bible is the word of God, but "because it is written in the Bible" is not one of them. It is written in the Koran that the Koran is the word of God, so do you now believe that the Koran is the word of God? Is it at all a compelling argument? The example doesn't touch on the idea of whether God exists. For example, if you said "The Bible is the word of God because I met God and he told me it was," that would not be circular reasoning (maybe it would not be reliable, but that is for another discussion).

[login to reply](#)

0 votes



Josh

*Thursday, August 02, 2018 - 09:14:14 PM*

Honestly surprised no one has mentioned the obvious fallacy in example 2. Using that as an example presupposes that God does not exist. A very obvious bias exhibited by the site owner.

It also handily ignores the preponderance of evidence of the veracity of the Bible.

However, bias often makes for potent blindspots in reason.

[login to reply](#)

5 replies

-1 votes



Bo Bennett,  
PhD

Friday, August 03, 2018 - 07:30:28 AM

“ However, bias often makes for potent blindspots in reason.

I completely agree. Now, to your claim about the "obvious fallacy" in example #2. Let's use the Nigerian Prince scam e-mail:

"We can trust the Nigerian Prince because it says to trust him in the e-mail he sent."

Perhaps Nigerian Prince supporters will be angry with me and claiming that I have an "obvious bias" against the Nigerian Prince because my example presupposes that the Nigerian Prince is not honestly trying to send me 50 million dollars. This doesn't matter. This might be true, and there could be a "preponderance of evidence" that the Nigerian Prince is a legitimate business man as well the fact that e-mail was really sent by him, **but the argument made is still circular, fallacious, and greatly problematic.** Look at the form of the argument and don't allow your emotions to blind you here because of the content of the argument:

X is true because of Y.  
Y is true because of X.

X = "The Bible is the Word of God"  
Y = "It says so in the Bible"

The Bible is the Word of God because it says so in the Bible.  
Why can we believe what the Bible says? Because it is the Word of God.

We can trust the Nigerian Prince because it says to trust him in the email.  
Why should we trust what the e-mail says? Because it was written by the Nigerian Prince.

Both of these are fallacious arguments. No question about it.

Remember that just because an argument is fallacious, it doesn't make the conclusion wrong. The Bible may be the word of God, but "because it says so in the Bible" is a still a prime example of a circular argument.

[login to reply](#)

1 votes

Friday, August 03, 2018 - 10:37:24 PM



Josh

@Bo Bennett, PhD: Thanks for the response. Your comparison of God to an instance of an almost humorously obvious attempt to deceive and steal tells me a lot.

Of course you don't know me, so you can't know that I do not argue from an emotional basis, but as it needs to be said, I am not blinded by emotion in pointing out a serious flaw in your attempt to provide an example of circular logic.

The second irony is that your attempt to define circular logic is based itself on circular logic, it pre-supposes what it seeks to prove to validate itself. Specifically that "OP example above" equals circular logic, why? because God is a liar or does not exist, why? because "OP example of circular logic above."

I can understand where you are coming from, and we certainly like to use hypotheticals to separate our argument, from unfortunate counter evidence, but logic and reason are an exercise in comprehending both conceptual and physical phenomena within this universe we inhabit.

While we can be happily assured in the inerrancy of our deductions in a hypothetical vacuum where there is only an X and a Y; reality consists of an infinite number of variables all interacting with each other as well as X and Y.

I have to point out a certain amusement in that this discussion is framed by a symbol of infinity, but I suppose when finite beings attempt to comprehend infinite phenomena, their choices are to attack it or accept it.

Appreciate the civility and openness in continued discussion, I do have to ask if you are surprised by the number of religious objections, when you are indirectly attacking God?

[login to reply](#)

-1 votes



Bo Bennett

Saturday, August 04, 2018 - 05:47:04 AM

@Josh:

*“ Thanks for the response. Your comparison of God to an instance of an almost humorously obvious attempt to deceive and steal tells me a lot.*

I am afraid you are missing the point. The comparison is in the FORM of the argument, not the content.

*“ I am not blinded by emotion in pointing out a serious flaw in your attempt to provide an example of circular logic.*

Google bias blindspot.

Your alleged "flaw" is completely irrelevant. I am guessing you are new to logical fallacies, please, read about them and what they are first. Presuppositions don't excuse fallacious reasoning.

*“ The second irony is that your attempt to define circular logic is based itself on circular logic...”*

You do understand that I did not create this fallacy, right? It has been used by logicians for hundreds of years.

*“ but logic and reason are an exercise in comprehending both conceptual and physical phenomena within this universe we inhabit.”*

Again, you are missing the point. Fallacies in form, such as this one, does not give a hoot about "conceptual and physical phenomena within this universe we inhabit." If one claims that A is true because of B and B is true because of A, this is circular.

*“ but I suppose when finite beings attempt to comprehend infinite phenomena, their choices are to attack it or accept it.”*

Special pleading. If I understand you correctly, you are saying that arguments made about God are allowed to break the rules of logic, because we can't possibly understand God. This is wrong in so many ways.

*“ I do have to ask if you are surprised by the number of religious objections, when you are indirectly attacking God?”*

To be clear, in the arguments to which you are referring, I am attacking bad arguments made by select believers in God. And no, I am not at all surprised that people who believe that they are specifically called upon by the creator of universe to defend this creator will do so at any expense, even when the existence of this being is not called into question, but only the bad arguments for him are. Speaking as an atheist now, I am doing you and other Christians a favor by helping you identify bad arguments for God so you can avoid those and use better ones. You're welcome.

Please consider the object of your initial objection: "The Bible is the Word of God because it says so in the Bible." You clearly won't take

this on my authority, so take this to some philosophy of religion groups or forums, where the majority of members are Christian. Perhaps they will be more convincing to you than I managed to be.

If you do want to continue this, or even ask our members about this (thousands, many of whom are Christian), then feel free to post a question at

<https://www.logicallyfallacious.com/tools/qa/Bo/LogicalFallacies> .

Thank you.

[login to reply](#)

2 votes



Bryan

*Saturday, August 04, 2018 - 10:27:04 AM*

**“** *Honestly surprised no one has mentioned the obvious fallacy in example 2. Using that as an example presupposes that God does not exist. A very obvious bias exhibited by the site owner.*

Josh, the veracity of the claim has nothing to do with whether this is a logical fallacy or not; the fact is that you cannot reasonably cite the bible as evidence that the bible is true, and this is a very clear example of circular reasoning.

**“** *It also handily ignores the preponderance of evidence of the veracity of the Bible.*

Whilst this is completely irrelevant to the fact that the example was indeed a logical fallacy as described, and the fact that no claim was made regarding the veracity of the bible, there is zero evidence that the bible is true, to claim otherwise suggests you don't understand what evidence means.

**“** *Your comparison of God to an instance of an almost humorously obvious attempt to deceive and steal tells me a lot.*

It tells you a lot and yet you completely miss the logic in implicit in it.

**“** *Of course you don't know me, so you can't know that I do not argue from an emotional basis, but as it needs to be said, I am not blinded by emotion in pointing out a serious flaw in your attempt to provide an example of circular logic.*

I'm not sure what it is you're blinded by, bias or comprehension (I'd include ignorance but you've had it explained), but you clearly don't

understand simple logic.

**“** *The second irony is that your attempt to define circular logic is based itself on circular logic, it pre-supposes what it seeks to prove to validate itself.*

What you're suggesting would be begging the question, however there's no assumptions made in Bo's example, so you're off the mark on that one, and the only validation involved is that in the example the bible is validating the claims of the bible.

**“** *Specifically that "OP example above" equals circular logic, why?*

I don't know what you think is specific about repeating what you just claimed already.

**“** *because God is a liar or does not exist, why? because "OP example of circular logic above."*

I would call this a straw man but by Bo's definition of a logical fallacy it needs to be able to fool people reading it, and anyone with basic comprehension skills should clearly see that there was no implications about god at all. I'd say nice try, but it was an awful try.

And then you make the same argument for the third time in a small paragraph; I think that would count as argumentum ad nauseam.

**“** *I can understand where you are coming from, and we certainly like to use hypotheticals to separate our argument, from unfortunate counter evidence, but logic and reason are an exercise in comprehending both conceptual and physical phenomena within this universe we inhabit.*

And yet everything you say would suggest you don't know where he's coming from. Logic has nothing whatsoever to do with comprehending phenomena, it can be described as:

"reasoning conducted or assessed according to strict principles of validity"

By definition a phenomena's cause or explanation is in question, and drawing conclusions without sufficient data is simple guessing, and if the guess is asserted on the basis of a lack of other suggested explanations that would actually be an example of an argument from

ignorance, or if it's asserted on the basis of being unable to imagine what else could be the cause that is an argument from incredulity.

“ While we can be happily assured in the inerrancy of our deductions in a hypothetical vacuum where there is only an X and a Y; reality consists of an infinite number of variables all interacting with each other as well as X and Y.

I have to point out a certain amusement in that this discussion is framed by a symbol of infinity, but I suppose when finite beings attempt to comprehend infinite phenomena, their choices are to attack it or accept it.

And this is relevant to the topic how?

“ Appreciate the civility and openness in continued discussion, I do have to ask if you are surprised by the number of religious objections, when you are indirectly attacking God?

I can't speak for Bo but I find it surprising that people are unable to follow simple logic. Probably a little less surprised that people who have irrational beliefs see attacks and criticism where it doesn't exist. And there really are plenty of places that attacks and criticism do exist, so you'd be better served discussing such things there, like I do.

Also it has occurred to me that people are being directed here for the purpose of such off topic discussion. Perhaps something for Bo to look at, as I believe web admins can see where people are being redirected from.

[login to reply](#)

3 votes



Duh

Thursday, March 21, 2019 - 04:46:25 AM

This doesn't presuppose that God does not exist. It doesn't even claim that the Bible is not the word of God, it just shows that "The Bible is true because the Bible says it is" does not provide an adequate reason for proving that the Bible is true, and is clearly circular logic. If you said "the Bible is the word of God because I've been saved by the transformative grace of God while reading the Bible," this would not be circular reasoning. "I've been saved by the transformative grace of God while reading the Bible" is a much better argument for the Bible being the word of God than "because the Bible says it is." Is that so difficult to understand? Many other religious texts claim to be the word of God, but you wouldn't accept them as such just because it is written in those books, would you?

[login to reply](#)

0 votes



Jacob

*Tuesday, February 20, 2018 - 02:45:51 AM*

Wow there are more comments on this fallacy than on any other I have seen so far.

Anyway, is this Circular reasoning? I have been encountering this argument a lot recently.

X is true, because why would I lie about that?

[login to reply](#)

4 replies

0 votes



Bo Bennett,  
PhD

*Tuesday, February 20, 2018 - 01:55:03 PM*

I would say that is more of an assertion. Similar to "X is true because I said so."

[login to reply](#)

1 votes



Jacob

*Wednesday, February 21, 2018 - 02:08:19 AM*

@Bo Bennett, PhD: I am trying to phrase this so it is circular reasoning. What if I said...

"I never lie because I always tell the truth."

[login to reply](#)

0 votes



Bo Bennett,  
PhD

*Wednesday, February 21, 2018 - 05:10:08 AM*

@Jacob: there you go ;) That is also a tautology, since "never lying" is the same as "always telling the truth."

[login to reply](#)

0 votes



Jacob

*Friday, February 23, 2018 - 08:28:48 PM*

@Bo Bennett, PhD: I just reread "Begging the question". This seems like a closer fit for my example. However maybe it is still circular reasoning because begging the question is a subset of circular reasoning.

[login to reply](#)

0 votes

*Saturday, December 23, 2017 - 06:14:08 PM*

So would morality involve circular reasoning at it's core? For example, if you ask a normal person if they are moral most of the time, they will probably say yes. If you ask them why, there is no better answer than "because



John Smith

my morals say I should be moral". There is no other reason to be moral most of the time, because doing immoral things for personal gain will usually satisfy you more than moral things, unless it upsets your morals (which would count as a bad thing), where this train of logic loops back into why you value your morals above all else.

[login to reply](#)

1 reply

1 votes



Bo Bennett,  
PhD

*Saturday, December 23, 2017 - 09:23:24 PM*

I would say that nothing involves circular reasoning "at it's core," because it isn't a "thing" that is circular, but the reasoning used to explain the thing. If someone were to explain why they are "moral" and they answered with "because my morals say I should be moral," then that is indeed circular. As humans, a large part of what we do and how we act is directed by biology. Rather than honestly say "I do good because it feels good and don't do bad because it feels bad," we rationalize and in the process, we fall into circular reasoning.

[login to reply](#)

0 votes



Andrew Stitt

Some have said I think therefore I am is circular reasoning. Is this true?

*Monday, November 06, 2017 - 06:01:38 PM*

[login to reply](#)

1 reply

0 votes



Bo Bennett,  
PhD

Only if they followed with "I am therefore I think" perhaps.

*Monday, November 06, 2017 - 06:43:09 PM*

[login to reply](#)

0 votes

Bean  
Sprugget

I really love this comments section. The people are seeking for information, and even when they disagree, they ack politely and intellectually. WAY better than any Youtube comments, that's for sure.

*Thursday, November 02, 2017 - 11:27:47 PM*

[login to reply](#)

0 replies

1 votes



former student

Aristotle is considered by many as the father of logic...yet he declared the Earth to be the center of the universe which people wrongfully believed for nearly 1900 years if I recall correctly. If logic were always true, it wouldn't need to be called logic - it would simply be called the truth. :)

*Thursday, June 15, 2017 - 11:43:23 AM*

[login to reply](#)

9 replies

0 votes



former student

Thursday, June 15, 2017 - 11:49:35 AM

The only way for logic to always be true, is for someone to already know everything...which isn't possible. So the question then becomes, do we care more about an argument - or more about the truth? I meet (philosophical) people on occasion who openly declare they're more interested in a valid argument, even if it results in a wrong conclusion...something I suspect even Aristotle would disagree with. :)

[login to reply](#)

0 votes



Bo Bennett,  
PhD

Thursday, June 15, 2017 - 11:55:17 AM

Logic is not the same as truth, it is a method to determine what is or is not true.

[login to reply](#)

3 votes



former student

Thursday, June 15, 2017 - 11:55:35 AM

Aristotle wasn't that far off base, the Earth is the center of the universe...but not for physical mass, but rather for life. We have an estimated 8.7 million species living almost effortlessly on Earth...and after maybe 6 decades of space exploration, along with even only 10% of Hubble's deep field range of 10-15 million light years in all radial directions outward - we have zero life found outside of Earth so far. Assuming only 1 million light years of Hubble's deep field, that's  $1e6 \times 5.879e12$  miles of viewing distance ( $5.879e18$  miles).

[login to reply](#)

0 votes



former student

Thursday, June 15, 2017 - 11:58:38 AM

@Bo Bennett, PhD: Hi Bo, but unfortunately logic has no way to know when it's wrong...just like Aristotle's problem...we see it all the time in courtrooms, attorneys even block evidence when possible such that they can force a wrong conclusion in order to save a client or convict an opposing defendant.

[login to reply](#)

0 votes



Bo Bennett,  
PhD

Thursday, June 15, 2017 - 11:59:13 AM

@Alan Halac: "logic to always be true" - that really does not make sense, but I get what you are saying. Philosophy is a lot of verbal games - similar to what lawyers use to argue that their guilty client is innocent. Logic, reason, and philosophy are all very different, however.

[login to reply](#)

0 votes



former student

*Thursday, June 15, 2017 - 12:03:31 PM*

@Bo Bennett, PhD: The power behind logic is it's ability to rationalize to any conclusion, even the wrong one. Without knowing everything, you can't necessarily recognize the truth...even if the conclusion looks right or plausible, it may be entirely wrong unknowingly. Just like digital technology which requires a minimum (Nyquist) sampling rate for a correct reproduction, if you under-sample below Nyquist...you'll have a result that even sounds related (when it isn't) b/c of the aliasing that's occurring.

[login to reply](#)

0 votes



Bo Bennett,  
PhD

*Thursday, June 15, 2017 - 12:13:04 PM*

@Alan Halac: If we use the word "logic" in a casual sense (like "argumentation"), then I would agree that we can make arguments appear to support a false conclusion—but that is exactly what this book is about. Also using REASON to spot those errors/tricks and get to the truth more often.

[login to reply](#)

1 votes



former student

*Thursday, June 15, 2017 - 12:21:34 PM*

It's amazing how many people still believe that life will be found in space, despite most of space being violently against the existence of life. They often declare that the vastness of space would have to include additional life statistically speaking, and then reject the notion that us being the first or the last species would also have a similar statistical likelihood...that we may be here entirely alone. Despite all that is known, people continue to declare that zero (life) is still a non-zero number unfortunately.

[login to reply](#)

0 votes



former student

*Thursday, June 15, 2017 - 12:34:35 PM*

@Bo Bennett, PhD: Sorry Bo, for the conclusion of logic to always be true...

[login to reply](#)

-1 votes

