

QUOTE OF THE WEEK

Existentialism



Clockwise from top left: [Søren Kierkegaard](#), [Simone de Beauvoir](#), [Jean-Paul Sartre](#), [Friedrich Nietzsche](#)

Existentialism is a family of [philosophical](#) views and inquiry that prioritize the [existence](#) of the human individual, study existence from the individual's perspective, and conclude that, despite the [absurdity](#) or incomprehensibility of the universe, individuals must still embrace responsibility for their actions and strive to lead [authentic lives](#).^{[a][2][3]} In examining [meaning](#), purpose, and [value](#), existentialist thought often includes concepts such as [existential crises](#), [angst](#), [courage](#), and [freedom](#).^[4] Existentialism is associated with several 19th- and 20th-century European philosophers who shared an emphasis on the human subject, despite often profound differences in thought.^{[5][6][7]} Among the 19th-century figures now associated with existentialism are philosophers [Søren Kierkegaard](#) and [Friedrich Nietzsche](#), as well as novelist [Fyodor Dostoevsky](#), all of whom critiqued [rationalism](#) and concerned themselves with the problem of [meaning](#). The word *existentialism*, however, was not coined until the mid-20th century, during which it became most associated with contemporaneous philosophers [Jean-Paul Sartre](#), [Martin Heidegger](#), [Simone de Beauvoir](#), [Karl Jaspers](#), [Gabriel Marcel](#), [Paul Tillich](#), and more controversially [Albert Camus](#).

Many existentialists considered traditional systematic or academic philosophies, in style and content, to be too abstract and removed from concrete human experience.^{[8][9]} A primary virtue in existentialist thought is [authenticity](#).^[10]

Existentialism would influence many disciplines outside of philosophy, including [theology](#), drama, art, literature, and psychology.^[11]

Existentialist philosophy encompasses a range of perspectives, but it shares certain underlying concepts. Among these, a central tenet of existentialism is that personal freedom, individual responsibility, and deliberate choice are essential to the pursuit of self-discovery and the determination of life's meaning.^[12]

Existentialism. (2024, November 19). In *Wikipedia*.

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Existentialism>