

REALITY 3. There exist eight billion and one realities in our world. Every human mind has constructed its own reality, which is formed with the help of one's perceptions and experiences - all of which are filtered through our religions, sense of nationalism, social mores etc. And these realities are all different, subjective and self-serving. **J**ust look at a stone - a rock in a riverbed. To most it's no more than a piece of nature. But to someone - as he flings it to bounce along the water - it is a toy. Somebody else picks it up as a weapon and throws it to hurt or kill an adversary. Others use it as a doorstop, a paperweight, a decorative ornament. But all along it is just a simple stone. **R**eality exists in a similar fashion: We can view the same facts and circumstances, the same situations and occurrences as entirely different realities. This is due to our ego, which provides us with our point of view, our beliefs, our sense of self-importance and functions such as judgement, intolerance, prejudice, control, delusion, fanaticism etc. **B**ut there is another reality. This is the true nature of everything, as realised by those devoid of ego. They don't suffer the limitations the rest of us are burdened with - by way of religion, patriotism, tradition. They rise above what separates us, what causes violence and war. We revere these individuals and call them gurus, saints or teachers. **A**t any given time there are many such enlightened ones in the world. It is our duty to seek out and find them, to sit at their feet and listen to their discourses, to query them, to learn from them, to heed their teaching of the one true, all-important reality: All of humanity is one, all humans are equal and we shall love and respect one another. **I**n that sense reality equals The Truth ... the one unalterable, eternal, sacred Truth.

*However, the Buddha has crucial advice for the seeker:
Students shall never follow their teacher unquestioningly.*

*And Krishnamurti - the greatest teacher of all - advises us
we must follow our path all on our own, without a teacher.*

*see also KRISHNAMURTI, THEORY OF EVERYTHING
and pages a15 - 17 in the appendix, J. Krishnamurti*

*"Reality is merely an illusion, albeit a very persistent one."
Albert Einstein*

*Trying to define what we mean by 'reality'
is fraught with difficulty*

*What do we actually mean by 'reality'? A straightforward
answer is that it means everything that appears to our five
senses ... anything we can see, hear, taste, smell and touch.*

*Yet, this answer ignores some problematic entities, such as
electrons, the recession and the number 5, which we cannot
sense but which are very real. It also ignores phantom limbs.*

*All real; but we could well say these are not part of 'reality'.
The science fiction writer Philip K. Dick put it this way:
'reality is what, if you stop believing in it, doesn't go away'.*

*after Jan Westerhoff, Reality: The Definition
www.newscientist.com/round-up/reality*

go also to page a100: What is Reality?

REALITY 4. The Stoic Epictetus said: *"If you love a decorative vase, say it is an earthen vessel you love; for when it breaks, you will not be disturbed. If you kiss your child, say it is a human being you are kissing; for when he dies, you will not be disturbed."* **T**his reality - say the Stoics - we can't escape: loss and death are natural, it sooner or later affects all of us. Seneca said: *"I have lived, the course which fortune set for me is finished."* In Stoicism reality is best dealt with in the spirit of acceptance, detachment and letting go.

see also STOICISM and my essays on DEATH