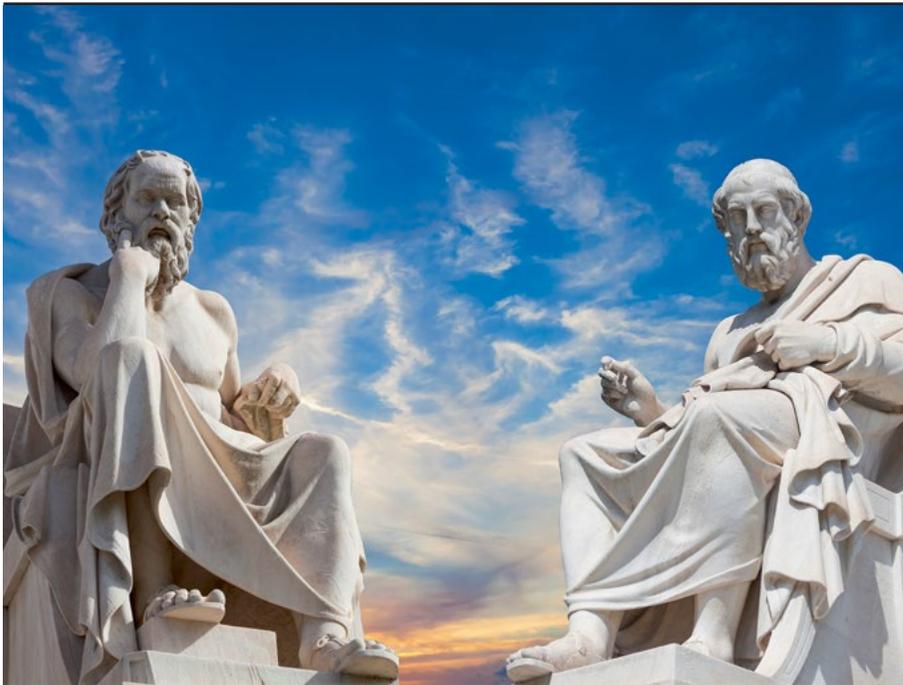


# Do We Know Any Better?

There always comes a moment in life where we have to make a choice, follow a path, change our life forever. In that moment we are faced with a dilemma—a dilemma of the mind and of the heart. The more difficult the decision, the more complicated our choice. But sometimes, despite thinking we chose righteously, we end up making the wrong decision. Does this happen because we don't know better or because we choose to do so?



SOCRATES AND PLATO

**T**he action of making a wrong choice despite knowing what the right choice is has a name, and it's called *akrasia*. Philosophers have attempted to define, dissect, formulate and even reject it for centuries.

We first encounter the idea of *akrasia* in Plato's *Protagoras*, where Socrates appears to reject the existence of such a concept. Socrates did not believe a person educated

in the idea of virtue could be able to perform an immoral act. If they did so, it would be because they hadn't been educated on what good is. This presumes that the *physis*, or nature, of a human being is virtuous.

But then, Plato in *The Republic* presents a multidimensional definition of what a human is and what they desire. This makes

it possible for someone to follow an internal passion despite knowing the result will not be the optimum. That

passion may surpass morality boundaries and result in *akrasia*.

Aristotle disagreed. In his *Nicomachean Ethics*, he criticizes the akratic person, saying that someone who performs a bad deed is fully aware of their actions and sometimes consequences, but they are driven by a moral weakness they cannot overcome.

All these definitions attempted to define *akrasia* through the limit of human knowl-

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edge and drive. However, American philosopher Donald Davidson (1917-2003) decided to not limit its definition. He believed *akrasia* happens every time a person decides to perform an action but has not considered all possible outcomes, thus resulting in an undesirable outcome. People end up making bad judgments despite their need to fulfill their goals.

Think of human desire as a piece of music. It is meant to satisfy, but if the musician doesn't choose to play the correct notes, it never will. Sometimes, one will play the wrong notes, and it will be the wrong path to follow. We can spend hours trying to analyze the human mind, but we will never be able to analyze the human heart. In the end, it is always our own decision. What path will we follow? And will it matter if we know any better? 🐾

— BY —  
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