

#### Summary

- What is reason?
- Standard definition
- Aristotelian idea of reason
- Hypatia on the importance of using reason
- Developing reason in speech and discussion
- Plato and Socrates
- Four aspects of Socratic dialogue

#### Course Outline

##### SESSIONS 1 & 2

##### THE LIGHT OF REASON

What is reason and how may it help us to live wisely?

##### SESSIONS 3 & 4

##### THE THREEFOLD ENERGY

Three different types of energy. How may they be recognised? How may we make the best use of our own energies and not waste them?

##### SESSIONS 5 & 6

##### THE POWER OF BEAUTY

What is beauty and what part does it play in helping us to live wisely?

##### SESSIONS 7 & 8

##### UNITY IN DIVERSITY

What is unity? Why is it so important? How do we go about finding unity in diversity?

##### SESSIONS 9 & 10

##### THE DESIRE FOR TRUTH

What is truth? The nature of truth and the desire for truth.

#### Diagram

1. Truth is the goal
2. Be willing to be refuted
3. Listen
4. Question

#### Practice

1. Practise the awareness exercise twice a day.
2. Use the question 'What would a wise person do here?'
3. Try to put into practice any of the four aspects of Socratic dialogue.

#### Quotations

##### Skeat Etymological Dictionary

Reason: That faculty of mind by which one draws conclusions as to right and truth, motive, cause, justice.

##### Attributed to Hypatia of Alexandria

Reserve the right to think, for even to think wrongly is better than not to think at all.

##### Plato

##### *Gorgias 458a*

I am one of those who are very willing to be refuted if I say anything which is not true, and very willing to refute any one else who says what is not true, and quite as ready to be refuted as to refute ...

#### Notes

1. Aristotle lived between 384-322 BCE. He was originally a student of Plato and later became the teacher of Alexander the Great. His arguments for the primacy of reason can be found in *Nicomachean Ethics* (1.13) and *De Anima* (3.11). Hypatia was in the same tradition or line as Plato and Aristotle. She was born about 360 CE and died in 415 CE. She was a philosopher and mathematician.
2. Socratic dialogues were conversations on such subjects as the nature of wisdom, courage and justice, and the immortality of the soul.