

Philosophical Counseling for Nurturing “Philosophical Quotient (PhilQ)”

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Abstract

Philosophical Counseling (PhilC) strives to attain a higher state of the wisdom of an ordinary ‘sane’ person through reflection upon life using rigorous conceptual inquiry, and is primarily not meant for curing mental disorders. It may deal with problem-solving of routine life but through developing existential insights about the nature of self, life, mind, other minds, and thus developing resilience against hostile conditions of life, which can help one attain “authenticity” in their existence. In this vein, the metaphysical framework of Heideggerian phenomenology and its implications for practicing PhilC are especially relevant and are discussed in this paper. The paper coins new concepts “philosophical quotient” (PhilQ) & “authenticity quotient” (AQ) and connects them. From Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty, we can identify four elements of an Existential Structure of human existence. However, this paper proposes that this structure should be identified as Default Existential Structure (DES) and is valid only for an unreflecting ‘inauthentic’ being having low PhilQ. This structure can be transformed into a Transformed Existential Structure (TES) through conscious philosophical practice or counseling which may raise the PhilQ of the practitioners. The paper also discusses a few possible methods to meet this goal and the implications of developing higher PhilQ for individuals and society.

Keywords: *Heideggerian phenomenology, authenticity, existential-structure, philosophical depth, philosophical quotient, authenticity quotient, etc.*

Philosophical Counseling (PhilC) involves the practice of active philosophizing, usually through a Socratic dialogue, with ordinary people willing to attain a higher perspective on life, live a rich and meaningful life, make judicious choices, increase happiness, joy, fulfillment in life, and attain a higher degree of consciousness or “depth” in their being. It is concerned primarily with the counseling of the “sane”, i.e. ordinary people who can discriminate, reason, judge and want to understand deeper layers of reality, life and self to attain better wisdom, and thus helped for solving problems in life through philosophical or existential insights (Marinoff, 2004). However, other practitioners believe that PhilC can be helpful for those facing emotional disturbances and struggling to maintain rationality. This approach assumes the counselee may hold unrealistic assumptions about self and others, inappropriate values, or a distorted “worldview” regarding life’s nature and purpose

as a source of emotional turbulence and correcting the former set of cognitive beliefs or attitudes through philosophical discussions may help in the latter. This is a more rigorous and deeper exercise than merely going for a psychological behavioural therapy where focus is on the change of behavioral patterns through techniques like conditioning or deconditioning, sensitization or desensitization which are effective, but doesn't go to the core of one's being, and doesn't add depth of one's being - an existential aspect of one's being I dub as "Philosophical Depth" (PhilD, henceforth). By PhilD, this paper means - *the state of one's existence when one is oriented or sensitized towards the fundamental philosophical and existential questions regarding the origin and nature of the world, self, and life in a conscious reflective mode. Someone having a higher value of PhilD may not be worldly-smart for pragmatic affairs, but for their philosophical orientation, they dwell in a significant "existential depth" of the 'ocean' of existence.* Under this approach, one may strive to go deeper and deeper to unravel the mystical existential questions, thereby deepening his reach to the unfathomable and infinite existence. Sometimes such a search is driven by "existential anxiety" in the face of the inevitability of death, or by the *stillness* of the mind when one is away from routine life problems and ponders upon the deeper existential questions. Sometimes it is initiated by some practical life problems or crises, though such existential concerns usually hit only the persons who are already equipped with a somewhat deeper philosophical orientation. Philosophical counseling is primarily committed to *nurture* such a potential, and thus, it strives to raise one's "philosophical quotient" (PhilQ) score. **PhilQ**, thus, is defined in this paper as *the ability of a person to be filled with wonder or awe about the existence of oneself one is equipped with, and of the world one is immersed in, especially with questions like what is its fundamental nature, what is its purpose, how it came into existence; what are the epistemic grounds of validity of some view or belief since simple social normativity can't be the valid ground of them as many of them are often found to be outdated or incoherent; what is a good life and how it can be accomplished, etc.*

Authenticity, in colloquial terms, means being genuine, sincere, and true to oneself, aligning with personal values rather than societal expectations. It involves honesty, integrity and transparency. Authentic individuals express their true

thoughts without distortion and fear, forming deep connections despite occasional offense to the people around them. However, in Heideggerian phenomenology (1962), authenticity extends further. It signifies openness to possibilities or expanding one's "horizons" of what is possible beyond the ones dictated by one's facticity, thrownness, and dominant cultural norms. Authenticity in this sense involves breaking free from the inauthentic existence shaped by societal otherness, often catalyzed by the existential awareness of dread or death-anxiety. This paper argues that authenticity, or "Authenticity Quotient" (AQ), correlates with PhilQ, since honesty, objectivity, and fairness enable unbiased perception of reality. Philosophical depth enables this by reducing ego-defense, socio-cultural biases, and personal interests, allowing clearer insight.

Ran Lahav (2013) views philosophical counseling as a path to wisdom rather than problem-solving, emphasizing deep self-knowledge and worldview transformation. He uses Plato's Cave allegory to support his view of the need for transformation through a change of worldview. Marinoff (1998) argues mental illness is largely a myth, attributing harmful behavior to impaired judgment or emotionality (while recognizing true cerebral disorders needing psychiatric treatment). In my view, PhilC needs to explore existential concerns like suffering, anxiety, and meaning or purpose of life, etc. within broader existential concerns rather than focusing solely on personal problem-solving. Expecting philosophical counseling to be a quick fix or relief or coping mechanism is mistaken. It involves deeper questioning for a genuine existential transformation, and often involves discomfort, doubt, and struggle, which contradicts the naive expectation that every philosophical encounter should lead to emotional resolution or clarity. In modern society, happiness is also commodified, under which it is "sold" through quick remedies like positive thinking, productivity hacks, and lifestyle choices, and some people think of PhilC as a form of *life coaching* rather than a space for existential reflection and struggle. For Frankl, man's deepest aspiration is not pleasure, not power, not even happiness but seeking meaning (Frankl, 1946/1984). As a radical view endorsed by this paper, PhilC particularly within the phenomenological-existential framework, is not for everyone! It is meant for a select few—those who experience existential crises or anxiety, or those with a deep longing to explore the

mysteries of existence. It is not primarily about happiness, success, or psychological well-being. Probably life coaches are better suited for self-improvement and achievement, while psychologists and psychiatrists specialize in mental health concerns. Rather, PhilC is a path for those seeking deeper existential understanding. Philosophical depth or evolution is inseparable from suffering and existential anxiety. Happiness can arise from natural gifts of having good genes for good health, good looks and intelligence, parental support, fortunate circumstances, etc., but a genuine philosophical evolution is more like a surgical operation that might be painful in the process, but yields deeper understanding and fulfillment later. PhilC when practiced in such circumstances, it facilitates a transition from crisis to insight, and finally, to a sense of direction and satisfaction, and this process can bring even joy and happiness. However, without experiencing existential anxiety or deep inner turmoil, one is unlikely to be drawn toward profound philosophical questions—for such a person, these questions simply do not exist. The aim of PhilC is not simply to solve problems but often to dissolve them by reshaping one's understanding of existence. While happiness or relief may emerge as a byproduct, the primary concern of PhilC is the relentless engagement with existential questions, whether driven by personal suffering, existential crisis, or intellectual curiosity about existence itself.

But if someone is struggling with existential anxiety, what are some healthy ways to engage with it rather than suppress it? The key is not to suppress it but to engage with it consciously and constructively. One effective approach is meditation. It is not an escape, but a means of directly observing the anxiety within a meditative state of calm, stillness. When one attains awareness and inner quiet, the very nature of anxiety begins to shift. One accepts the pain and it gets milder, and eventually one transcends it. With sustained awareness, existential anxiety can transform, revealing deeper insights rather than remaining a source of distress.

Further, since PhilC seeks to elevate the philosophical wisdom of the counselee rather than simply subjecting them to unreflective adherence to psychological techniques or therapies, an essential aspect of the process is the counselor's own development of "philosophical depth." One significant way to achieve this is by engaging deeply with phenomenological-existential

understandings of the human mind and suffering, particularly in relation to suffering conditions like depression, anxiety, loss of meaning, etc. Since philosophical counseling aims to cultivate philosophical wisdom rather than merely applying psychological techniques or therapeutic interventions, the counselor's own depth of understanding is crucial. One way to achieve this is through a deeper engagement with phenomenological-existential perspectives on the human mind and suffering, particularly in relation to conditions such as depression, anxiety, and loss of meaning. Additionally, epistemic virtues such as curiosity, skepticism, logical consistency, and logical coherence are also integral to PhilC. The *care of self*, emphasized by thinkers like Michel Foucault (2005), R.D. Laing (1960), Dan Zahavi (2014), and Socrates (Irwin, 1995, 1977), is also central to PhilC.

The Worldview:

A class of suffering situations, I believe, can be grouped as "collective insanity" which limits the optimal functioning of human life and drags people unnecessarily to some 'collective miseries', and being collective no one doubts them to be 'abnormal'! All such phenomena, I believe, can be interpreted in the background of a "worldview" one lives with. Ran Lahav also focuses on worldview through his version of philosophical counseling or practice. The notion of "worldview" of Lahav (1992) includes one's knowledge of 'unarticulated attitudes towards the world' which gets expressed implicitly in one's behaviour, emotional reactions, plans, preferences, hopes, fears, and how one relates in general with others. Elsewhere, Lahav (2001) talks about the need for transformation of self by expanding his/her 'worldview' and gaining wisdom. By worldview, he means the 'perimeter' of one's habitual patterns of behaviours, emotions, and thoughts, one's attitudes towards self, others and the world through which one understands or interprets life and basic life issues like self-worth through productivity, dominance, self as an object for other's gaze and appreciation, love, authenticity, etc. using a kind of "inner-logic". But this knowledge, attitudes, and inner-logic are not possessed by people at a conscious, verbal level and might even contradict what one thinks consciously. They define one's understanding of life and world, and work as an implicit, unarticulated 'philosophy of life' but the one which might not have gone really deep or even justified. He says – "*We might say that a worldview*

is the person's implicit "philosophy of life," although it is rarely expressed in words. And of course, it need not be deep or even tenable. In short, a perimeter is the person's habitual patterns, as well as the worldview (or "philosophy of life") which these patterns express."

Lahav (2001) believes that through "self-reflection and contemplation of selected experiences, it is possible to step out of one's perimeter and in this way to liberate, broaden and deepen one's life." He admits that such inner transformation is not easy but with sincere reflections and contemplations it is possible. I expand the notion of worldview as a collection of tacitly held beliefs (especially by the 'inauthentic' masses) about the world, causation, mind, social life, ethics, and aesthetics. There are two kinds: the 'collective' or 'communal worldview,' unconsciously inherited through language and culture, akin to Husserl's pre-reflectively lived *Lifeworld (Lebenswelt)*; and the 'individual worldview,' formed through deliberate philosophical inquiry into reality, knowledge, and values. Both shape perception and experience. Radical thinkers, developing a markedly different 'individual worldview,' may perceive the world in ways that alienate them from society—though not to the extent of dysfunction. They still navigate basic social norms but struggle with broader adaptation due to their divergence from the communal worldview. Yet, their deeper reflections foster authenticity, freeing them from collective miseries and social insanities. A worldview, thus, serves as a fundamental framework for making sense of the world, its objects, and events. One can be helped to meet this goal through Philosophical Counseling as being characterized in this paper.

Heideggerian Worldview: Existential Structure and its Transformation:

Since PhilC involves practicing philosophy with a "sane" client in an active *reflective* manner through an inquisitive mind who dares to go beyond the "obvious" (norms, practices, values of the culture), it makes its counselee ask the fundamental meaning of objects, practices, norms, and the existence of self and the world. This exercise is aligned with Heideggerian *ontological* inquiry which asks

'What does it mean to be?' Despite the denial of Heidegger¹ many scholars (and I agree with them) read the inquiry as "existential" and the one having the potential to move a person towards 'authenticity'.

Let's have a look into Heideggerian ontological philosophy. In Heidegger's views, the objects of the world are not passive and independent entities which can be analysed in a cold, disinterested, objective manner by the human consciousness, as scientism prescribes. This attitude hides the essential antecedent involvement and the primary pragmatic-instrumental relation of human beings with the objects: the objects as the tools and instruments to be acted upon by human beings for their routine practical purposes. Human beings, thus, are not passive observers but are active participants while living in the world. This *embodied, engaged, enactive* human agency work under some transcendental 'background conditions' (Taylor, 1993) of historicity, cultural values and norms, forms of life, the fact of embodiment of the agent and its capacities owing to the nature of its embodiment, and the agent's *mode* of being, etc. It is this background which constitutes the 'conditions of intelligibility' (Taylor, 1993) of the objects and events.

BEFINDLICHKEIT or Affective Situatedness:

I approach the Situatedness from the Heideggerian notion of *Befindlichkeit*, which means that one always finds oneself in a particular situation, not existing neutrally, the situation under which one finds oneself 'attuned to' the world in a certain mood, or oriented towards the world in a particular attitude or stance which makes the world appear meaningful accordingly. It is to be noted that Heideggerian "moods" are not fleeting states of mind, nor side effects but are something which in advance determines our being as its general orientation or stance towards life. And the most significant mood for Heidegger is that of Dread or Death-Anxiety. They are kind of *already there* like an atmosphere immersing us, attuning us. Attunement as *Befindlichkeit* is one's fundamental state of being. Whether one

¹ Heidegger believed that some versions of existentialism disregarded the importance of tradition and history in shaping human existence. He argued that human beings are not isolated individuals making choices in a vacuum but are embedded in a historical and cultural context. Existentialism of Sartre, in his view, failed to adequately address this aspect of human existence for his faith in 'absolute freedom'.

resonates with his/her environment or not shapes well-being. For example, certain situational demands, like an examination or presentation pressure, may drive good performance (in a short term), but this often leads to anxiety, sleeplessness, and volatility, disrupting natural rhythm and deeper thoughts on the ideas and connections between them. On the other hand, work done in a relaxed Zen manner generates a serene, alpha-wave state (often cultivated by Zen monks or Ninja fighters) which yields peak performance but without anxiety. It reflects ideal mental health with optimal functioning. Significant physical inactivity, e.g. after retirement, alike distorts *Befindlichkeit* for being *non-attuned* to the life, and thus feeling life to be ‘dragging’ in utter meaninglessness, and soon manifests in the form of loss of physical and mental health. All of such instances emphasize a relational, rather than individual, basis of well-being.

Further, following Heidegger (1927) and Merleau-Ponty (1962) we can delineate an Existential Structure with the following elements – *Embodiment, Spatiality, Temporality, and Relationship with others*. Here Existential Structure means the fundamental a priori², transcendental structures of human existence which enable the constitution of human experience. I, however, characterize the meaning of these notions in the following manner.

Embodiment – The fact of our embodied existence inform that our experiences of the world are intertwined with the physical mode of being, i.e. peculiarities of our physical body, and grounding of our *concepts* with which we think in the sensory-motor-affective regions of the brain (Barsalou, 1999, 2008), and the physical interactions or how we engage with the world, encounter it, and establish an understanding of our own existence. Even our emotions and feelings, e.g. joy, fear, exhaustion, anxiety, etc are bodily felt under the physiological arousal of the body (James, 1884). Our anatomical features like having eyes in front and limit of our bodily reach to the objects around us contribute in the intelligibility of terms like “front”, “back”, “within reach”, “out of reach”, “near”, “far away”, “to the

² But not in the Kantian sense of being *formal, pure, fixed and necessary* for all, but as *existentially a priori*, as a precondition for experience but in a situated manner. They are disclosed through lived experience rather than imposed by a Kantian or Husserlian transcendental subject, making Heideggerian a priori as concrete, existential, historical and dynamic rather than formal and static.

left/right”, etc. in a prior transcendental manner (and not in a contingent, causal manner). Merleau-Ponty rather examines the fundamental role of body in perception of other through an embodied experience. *"In perceiving the other, my body and his are coupled, resulting in a shared world."* (Merleau-Ponty, 1962)

Relationship with Others/Otherness - Heidegger observes that one's being actualizes its Mit-sein (Being-With(-others)) under the dictatorship of Das-Man (The They) as part of his *ontological* analysis of human existence [which he dubs as Dasein (being-there) or being-in-the-world and not an isolated subject]. The world is always the one that a being shares with another being thus, being-with is a priori transcendental condition that makes it possible for a being to find purpose in otherness³. Otherness discloses to us who we are through the reactions or responses it offers to us for our actions or attitudes, and thus, it existentially determines the nature of our usual (though inauthentic) existence. In relation with others, the Dasein is for the sake of others and these others are disclosed in our primordial being-with. Our knowing ourselves is grounded in this situatedness of our being-in-the-world and being-with-others.

Spatiality - This can include the action possibilities and opportunities in a spatial region or configuration which decides its "action horizons" and makes the spatiality of that region be rich- or dull-experience. For example, the action-horizons of a big city like Delhi would be far richer than that of a small town by offering a wider range of choices and opportunities for professional and vocational activities, for expanding one's skills and getting wider exposure to aesthetic, cultural, artistic experiences, with an easy and efficient way in the form of Metro to have a "reach" to the remotest regions from one's home place.

Temporality - For Heidegger past, present, and future (the three “ecstasies” of time) are not isolated moments but integrally related in a unified experience of temporality. This is what Heidegger terms authentic time (*eigentliche Zeitlichkeit*).

"The unity of the three dimensions of temporality is grounded in the way in which the future (Zukunft) makes the present (Gegenwart) possible on the basis of the having-been (Gewesenheit)" (Heidegger, 1962).

³ Though it as a ‘forfeiture’ or an ‘inauthentic’ mode of being

As a being is always a possibility, it is always becoming. Thus, living in the past and the baggage of it in the present, and fearing the anticipated dangers of the future in the present leads to anxiety. Heidegger talks about ‘resoluteness’ for not carrying past baggage and for not taking it over to make free decisions in an attempt to be authentic.

Existential Values:

We humans possess the agency to choose “existential values” and can shape our destiny or path through conscious reflections. Rather, attaining *authenticity* is not something innate but *earned*. Existential Values like reflection, freedom, choice, autonomy, etc. help one to attain it, and it manifests in several manners - be it a patriot's sacrifice, a philosopher's defiance, or opting for passion over security. Heidegger's dread reveals true being, urging one to transcend the "They-self." Philosophical reflection enables this by challenging societal norms, expanding horizons, and nurturing authenticity. In my reading, Aho's “Default Existential Structure” (DES) signifies inauthenticity, while a “Transformed Existential Structure” (TES) grants agency, authenticity, and liberation from collective conformity.

Transformed Existential Structure (TES):

1. **Conscious reflection** on life, life-situations and events and the values one has been moving with to new ones. This might involve choosing higher Stoic values and attitudes, e.g. living with toughness and not merely life of sensory pleasures and easy life as ‘good’ life; being flexible not rigid but also not being flickering minded; etc.
2. **Meaningfulness or “ikigai” in life:** In contrast to merely focusing on IQ and EQ, one may need to work on enhancing one's AQ (Authenticity-Quotient) and PQ (Philosophical Quotient). This may involve choice of career offering meaning to the life for its own intrinsic value or “music” for the person (or, work for the sake of work as prescribed under the philosophy of Karma-Yoga), rather than offering merely abundant money, fame and power – the usual goals of ordinary people, often alienating them from their ‘true’ self and purpose or meaning in life.

3. **Changed pragmatic relation with the world:** For our embodied being and structural features of our embodiment, we engage with the world in unique pragmatic-instrumental manners and that contributes in our sense-making or meaning of the objects and world around us. For example, the meaning of hammer is in hammering, and not merely in objective features like weight, color, length, etc. Similarly, we make differential meanings of a door and a table for different actions they afford to us, but it is not so for a woodpecker! So instead of looking for some universal, static, objective meanings of entities or states, we may need to look at the dynamic meaning patterns that just emerge, not pre-exist, out of the interactive pragmatic relations of the Dasein with the world. Thereby, changing the patterns of such pragmatic interactions may change the meaning of the objects and world for us, like, indulging in rigorous physical exercises, which involves change in one's mode of interaction with the world, or an increased use of bicycle than automobiles may bring the relevant changes for one's state of unwellness to wellness.
4. **Attaining Zen-state:** Zen state is characterized by silence of mind's endless chatter and a general stillness of being, with a total awareness of one's being, intention and one's actions without any self-deception.

I believe, such a transformation is possible for moving from the DES to TES through certain practices as suggested in this paper in coming sections. In words of Ran Lahav (2013) -

"Friedrich Nietzsche declares that the average person lives a small life of conformity and petty needs, clinging to comfort and security, but that a process of transformation is possible towards a bigger, more noble and intense life, or what he calls the "overman." In one of his metaphors he likens this process to a camel carrying socially accepted values first becoming a lion who rejects those values, and eventually becoming a child who creates his life anew."

Suggested Solutions:

The solution again I see in the light of the Situated Cognition paradigm by altering the Existential Structure of the concerned persons. This involves a change

in the Existential Structure (otherness, embodiment, spatiality, temporality, existential values). For example, for bringing change in the Otherness aspect for someone suffering with depression for being *invalidated* in his environment. For such a person, it might be useful to introduce a gap between culture and self by living for a significant period at an isolated or alien space like living in a village for an urbanite or vice-versa, or to South India for a North Indian, if one can afford so. Also, an insight into one's 'vulnerability of invalidation' through reflection aided with the following might be helpful.

Methods for Nurturing Authenticity:

This paper also prescribes a four-step method to nurture one's authenticity (or to increase one's AQ). Following are the details of these four steps.

1. Formal meditation – Although doing simple physical activities like gardening, walking, and watering can also be a way of meditation as ‘meditation in action’ under the *Zen way* by totally being with the action alone (and not engaging in any other thoughts or worries), the formal meditations usually involve formally sitting still and focus on some object, e.g. *Open Monitoring* (observing thoughts and emotions without judgment); *Focus on Breath* (concentrating on natural breathing for present-moment awareness); *Vipassana* (integrating focus and mindfulness to observe sensations and reactions); *Trataka* (fixing the gaze on a candle flame to enhance concentration, reduce stray thoughts); *Osho’s Dynamic Meditation* (features five stages: hard chaotic breathing, shouting “hoo” with jumping on feet, explosive catharsis by crying or shouting, laughing, followed by complete stillness, and then dancing with joy. They are designed to release tension stored in body for regular suppression and repressions, break psychological conditioning, and then to find a deep inner silence and self-awareness).

2. Engaging in an intense activity like archery, sculptor-making, painting, philosophizing or engaging in physical activities like jogging, swimming, gardening, climbing up the stairs in a slow, rhythmic manner not in a competitive spirit.

3. Living alone for a significant time alone, e.g. in the woods or in the mountains may help one to engage more deeply with oneself and less engagement with the

other, which can be helpful in establishing a deeper connection with self and hence with one's authenticity.

4. Mirror-Avoidance - Mirror facilitates the infiltration of the gaze of others into one's being. By looking into it we think about how others perceive us, esp. our appearance from a third-person perspective. The persistent questioning and others' judgemental gaze may lead to low self-esteem and lack of confidence in some individuals for not passing such a 'social litmus test'. Hence, not looking at the mirror images for a sufficient period can make a change.⁴

Conclusions and Implications of higher PhilQ:

As claimed by Marinoff, Philosophical Practice or Counseling is primarily not concerned with providing psychotherapy for serious cerebral psychiatric problems which is usually the domain of psychiatrists and clinical psychologists, then what can be the relevance of philosophical counseling for the public life and problems of ordinary people? And what kind of people need it? This paper makes a bold claim that *everyone* needs it, regardless of his/her profession or field of activity. On the other hand, the paper also claims, paradoxically, that only people with certain deep existential anxieties or crises can be attuned to PhilC! The paradox, however, resolves if we see philosophical reflection as useful for all, while deeper existential inquiry suits those who are already grappling with meaning or crisis in life since they can be significantly attuned towards them, while someone struggling to make a livelihood, in general, is lesser oriented towards such concerns.

PhilC, unlike psychotherapy, focuses on the *transformation of being*, addressing how individuals lose their authentic selves under societal pressures. This paper introduces the *Philosophical Quotient* (PhilQ) alongside IQ and EQ, emphasizing its role in nurturing authenticity. Humans exist in a *Default Existential Structure* (DES), which unconsciously shapes their notion of self, worldview, values and goals of life. However, through conscious philosophical reflection, one can transition to a *Transformed Existential Structure* (TES), achieving genuine selfhood. PhilC is particularly relevant for countering *collective insanity*, where

⁴ This may sound strange to many, but the explanation is not straightforward. I refer the interested readers to my paper - Mirror Phenomenology in Empathy for details.

societal norms compel individuals into dysfunctional or limited behaviors causing significant distress to humanity. This includes academic pressure leading to student suicides (e.g., *Kota Factory* cases), financial burdens from extravagant weddings or consumerism, migration-related psycho-social struggles, caste discrimination, and career choices dictated by external validation rather than personal fulfillment. Many urban middle-class individuals pursue high-paying careers without having hearts in them, buy expensive goods on loans, and live under financial burdens—trapped in an *inauthentic being* dictated by social expectations rather than authentic aspirations. PhilC can help in developing resistance against indulging in such collective inauthentic practices by helping to transform and nurture one's authenticity. Through developing higher *PhilQ*, individuals can cultivate philosophical depth, resilience, and meaningful existence, making PhilC essential for anyone seeking a fulfilled life beyond collective pressures.

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