

Three Guides to the Philosophy of Orientation

A.

Successful Modes of Orientation

**15 Conclusions from the
Philosophy of Orientation
for Your Everyday Life**

**By Werner Stegmaier
and
Reinhard G. Mueller**



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Nashville, Tennessee**

**The Hodges
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Successful Modes of Orientation

15 Conclusions from the Philosophy of Orientation for Your Everyday Life

1. Orientation

Observation: We need orientation in every situation. Orientation is not a religious doctrine, scientific theory or political worldview. Instead, it's a way for any person to apply their own beliefs to most effectively navigate their way through a complex and constantly changing world. This orientation precedes all thinking and acting of a person.

Conclusion: Clarify the conditions of your orientation.

2. Uncertainties

Observation: We cannot rely on absolute truths and values. There aren't any. Truths are successively renewed, values are continuously revalued.

Conclusion: Accept the uncertainties in the current world and use them creatively.

3. Ideals and Realities

Observation: Norms and values, principles and ideals are important guidelines for our everyday life and how we live in society. But they may also conceal what is actually going on around us. And all of them are controversial.

Conclusion: In your orientation decisions, go ahead by respecting ideals, but carefully observe how they work in reality.

4. Footholds, Leeways, and Decisions

Observation: Instead of any ultimate knowledge, we have only hints, clues, leads, or footholds for our orientation, all of which leave room for different interpretations, new decisions, and innovations, including in the sciences.

Conclusion: Have the courage to rely on footholds and to decide if they are trustworthy in your situation.

5. Considering Other Standpoints and Perspectives

Observation: Others observe and assess the same situation from different standpoints.

Conclusion: Consider other orientations in order to enrich your perspectives.

6. The Unsurveyability of the World and Our Abbreviations

Observation: The world and, in fact, every situation is unsurveyable. In order to reduce their complexities, we use abbreviations and simplifications everywhere in our orientation.

Conclusion: Take shortcuts in your orientation, but never forget that they are shortcuts.

7. Routines

Observation: In our orientation, our everyday routines provide a sense of hold and therefore create confidence, which is reassuring in a natural world full of chaos. Routines indicate that orientation works.

Conclusion: Trust in routines. If they fail, new ones usually develop.

8. Virtues

Observation: There aren't sufficient footholds to believe in a common reason equally shared by everyone. But we expect reasonableness from one another; reasonableness encompasses virtues of orientation such as overview, circumspection, consideration, forbearance, and confidence.

Conclusion: Heed the virtues of reasonableness without expecting a common reason equally shared by everyone.

9. Identities

Observation: Identities, of any kind, do not exist per se but are rather ascribed to something or someone to make communication easier and faster. Ascribing an identity to someone may be pleasing or hurtful.

Conclusion: Don't believe in the existence of identities as being given per se, such as those of 'class' or 'race.' You may identify with or reject identities ascribed to you.

10. Societal Orders

Observation: In modern societies, we encounter functionally differentiated social systems such as education, economics, politics, media, law, science, art, and religion. They professionalize our everyday orientation in specific respects.

Conclusion: The more you engage in professionalized societal systems, the more you can expand and refine your own individual orientation. But you also may become more dependent on those systems.

11. Power

Observation: In principle, power flows from the superiority of an orientation in emergency situations. It becomes evil when those in power abuse it for their own advantage.

Conclusion: Do not mistrust power per se, but control who uses it in which position for which purposes.

12. Ethical Orientation

Observation: We feel morally coerced to help others when they are in an emergency. But there are different moralities of groups, societies, and cultures prescribing what to do in specific situations.

Conclusion: In an ethical orientation, you cope with different moralities.

13. Globalization and Digitization

Observation: The current globalization and digitization of our life create greater wealth and security, but also more inequality and uncertainty.

Conclusion: Consider globalization and digitization as new challenges to your orientation skills.

14. Death

Observation: When one dies, one's orientation dies. Others will newly orient themselves in new situations, and they will successfully do so in their own way.

Conclusion: Be confident in good orientations after your death.

15. Philosophies

Observation: Other philosophies teach different things. But they all start from specific standpoints. The philosophy of orientation makes them comparable.

Conclusion: To find your standpoint in philosophy, begin with the philosophy of orientation.

Werner Stegmaier and Reinhard G. Mueller

This is one of the three guides to
Werner Stegmaier's
What is Orientation? A Philosophical Investigation
translated by Reinhard G. Mueller (Berlin/Boston: De Gruyter, 2019)

A. Successful Modes of Orientation: 15 Conclusions from the Philosophy of Orientation for Your Everyday Life (Hodges Foundation for Philosophical Orientation, Nashville, Tennessee, 2019).

B. Fearless Findings: 25 Footholds for the Philosophy of Orientation (Hodges Foundation for Philosophical Orientation, Nashville, Tennessee, 2019).

C. Courageous Beginnings: 25 Situations of New Orientations in the History of Philosophy (Hodges Foundation for Philosophical Orientation, Nashville, Tennessee, 2019).

The very first thing one does in all situations of life is orient oneself. Decisions of orientation, which are mostly made under uncertainty and the pressure of time, largely determine subsequent decisions. But what is orientation? The problems of orientation are as old as humankind, the word is used everywhere, but the concept has never been thoroughly investigated. The philosopher Werner Stegmaier comprehensively clarifies for the first time the conditions and structures of orientation, including those of our sexual, economic, media, political, legal, scientific, artistic, religious, moral, and ethical orientations. He thereby establishes a new philosophical language and offers a philosophy for our time.

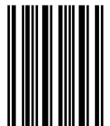
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