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The Socratic Library for Everybody

How to Make Pals and Impress Important People with your own Universal Ignorance

**Just follow our “Philosopher-Maker”
program in FIVE easy steps:**

1. Buttonhole important people and show off—by explaining that a) they are really stupid but b) you aren't so stupid because c) you *already* knew you were stupid but they didn't! See *My Apology for Everybody*, with full horse-hide-like binding [Simulahide @].
2. Show up late and uninvited to parties for important

people. Taunt some of the guests, especially the tough-guy types. When they are just about ready to beat you up, it's time to impress them with a real zinger: "If you try and beat me up, guess what, I won't do anything about it! *So there, fool!*"

You can't afford to miss Everybody's *Gorgias*, in a new edition with genuine red-gold piping. **GREAT** Book! Do you know that they actually *killed* a guy for making up this technique? Wow-wee, it's just that powerful.

Practice the passages on how to be so snotty and rude that somebody will be rude right back to you: That's your *big* opportunity! Now you can show that this somebody is definitely being low-class and rotten. By holding up your own lofty principles against this backdrop of vulgarity and violence, see how shrewdly you have wrenched the admiration of everybody? You'll need more than one hand to count the kinds of pals, and the many lasting impressions, made by using this technique. What a gorgeous addition to your already great works.

3. Learn how to talk important young people out of going to law school—all behind their parents' backs! The young people are sure to thank you for this some day, but then they won't be important enough for you to bother impressing anymore. So, snuggle up with Everybody's *Republic*:¹

¹ Interpretive Note: Socrates understands himself perfectly here as always, but in a profoundly ironical way. Hidden between the lines is a secret message that mere mortals could never hope to understand, except for our Everybody editor, Professor Jean-Jacques Plato. Now he has given the ancient secret a modern and easily available bent—so that you too can join with the geniuses. Speak like the elite in bureaucratic tongues: great for insulation, mutual reinforcement, and scapegoating. Learn how to use goody-goody campaigns to preclude all criticism. And, finally, learn **THE SECRET**: Eunuchs Rule! Everybody else is a superstitious sap-sucker, but don't let THE SECRET out or the jig is up.

Once you learn to read between the lines *exactly*, you'll soon see that Old Socrates is deeply committed to global democracy, and an incredible jokester at that, what with his "aristocratic virtue" and all that. Hilarious stuff, but don't be surprised if the *hoi pollois* out there just don't get it.²

4. If you don't know your fractions, don't even bother reading the *Theaetetus* for Everybody. Just keep it for show. Beautifully bound and encrusted, this volume subtly proclaims to the world, "Hey! My family has ogled important paradoxes off and on for centuries now." With the *Theaetetus* on your hearth, fractions will never heckle you again. So stand up and be counted!

VIP TIP: If you **DO** remember fractions, then you can easily tangle yourself up with important people. After all, aren't these the very luminaries who are most impressed by ancient numerological mind-benders? Yes, fractions are of perennial importance and so are the people who worry about them. They may not show it, but VIPs are forever wondering how those Greek philosophers ever figured out the really important things by using fractions. So keep acting like you've got the answer to that very question. Only you know the secret.

Yes, you have what people want and that fact is bound to get around. It's a very slippery thing, but you'll begin to notice that *even* publicly admired personages seem to be groveling a lot.

² The proper understanding of this book requires unspeakable degrees of knowledge concerning the UNWRITTEN DOCTRINE, i.e., an obscure but very popular 'Reality Removal' principle which we would love to tell you all about—if only it could be explained without it demolishing itself. Thank God, Dr. Plato *did* remember to write it down for everybody else: "Because his mystical noesis engenders epiphanic transcendence, leaping beyond our butt-ugly cosmos of immanentized ignorance, Socrates is *not* a gnostic and—you know what—he never really was!"

That's because they simply don't know the secret of fractions. The VIPs are out there practically begging for your secret (but without ever mentioning it directly). Here's what you do: Maybe you're at a party. Maybe you sidle up to some VIP and drop a suggestive hint about fractions. She slaps you.

You try again. This time a VIP feigns disinterest. But notice, he does say something to keep you talking. Secretly he must be hoping that you'll spill your guts, along with the fractions secret. And when a VIP tries this? That's when you lower the boom: Change the subject entirely! Yes, all of a sudden you shift over to talking about the weather or the meaning of life, or any old nonsense you can come up with right there on the spot. Just like Socrates does in the *Theaetetus*!³

Once you have your listeners, talkers, and other such interlopers⁴ completely off the whole subject, it is very impressive to come right back to it. You insinuate the same fractional notions yet **AGAIN!** You can bet that the important people will pretend to have forgotten all about fractions by now. But you just keep bringing up kernels and tid-bits of *more* fractions; keep enticing those VIPs. Yes, their blandish expressions are telling you something: They are resigned to the fact that you won't reveal the true secret of fractions. And they are mighty impressed by that.

5. Get some of the most important old people in the world to go for a noontime stroll. Keep promising that you have something really impressive to tell them, but keep them walking. When they are all worn out and you are God knows where out under

³ In the exact middle of this longish quest into the Dewey decimal system we are witness to a dramatic 'digression,' because that whole subject has been largely or entirely digressed.

⁴ Also, "interlocutors."

the hot sun, tell them the impressive thing: How great it feels to guzzle ice cold piña-coladas on a hot day like this, but—guess what—you don't have any! With the *Laws* for Everybody you will have at your fingertips all sorts of allusions to weird old customs and demons, things that are sure to keep important old people walking.

This is your big chance to use the same tricks as real smart people. In fact, the Everybody Library is modeled after Thomas Jefferson's very own collection and marginal comments! So isn't it time to 'dialogue' and 'critique' with the heavy-hitters? Leave your everyday annoyances behind and take on perennial problems instead! How? By subscribing your way into our Everybody book-of-the-month family!

EXTRA SPECIAL OFFER

If you don't have time for reading books that are just plain too hard, take a look at our completely abridged edition, *Everybody's Sketch of the Whole Socratic Library, With Pictures* [Now available on video, or visit our Web site: soc.it.to.me.] They say that a picture's worth a thousand words, just lay back and soak it all in. Another volume of the Everybody Socratic Library will come to you each month. You do absolutely nothing. There's just no beating **DEEEEP** reading! Here's a random excerpt from Socrates' *The Sketch*:

Soc. "Listen pal, you're a lot stupider than me because you didn't even know I was stupid until I finally had to go right ahead and tell you so."

Bob. “I’m not so sure about that.”

Soc. “Well, look at it this way. Do you know your fractions?”

Bob. “Of course.”

Soc. “Then let’s go for a long walk and talk about law school.”

Bob. “But what does that have to do with fractions?”

Soc. “Less than nothing, like the weather: Holy Cow, it sure was a hot one out there today! So, what’s it all about anyway?”

Bob. “Actually, it rained all morning.”

Soc. “Yes. And they say it rains best when we invoke a celestial demon to release the moisture from its fly-like wings. In the good old days, this was accomplished through communal chanting of simple paeons led by a lyre.⁵

Bob. “I don’t get it.”

Soc. “If I almost agree with you, silly, it’s because you are exactly fifty-fifths as dull as a neutered gnat.”⁶

Bob. “Now, hold on there buddy.”

Soc. “As a more moral citizen I should point out that you are definitely getting rude, and in front of so many classy people, *fat-head!*⁷

Bob. “That does it!”

Soc. “Oh. I suppose now you’re going to lose your head alto-

⁵ See, *The Manual of Moralisms*, author unknown.

⁶ When seen from underwater, when painted by number: as when anybody says anything on cue about “the economy,” “the government,” or “celebrities”; a moralistic monotone.

⁷ Ironic usage. This is the philosopher’s own nick-name among his childhoodplaymates, i.e., “pla-to! . . . pla-to! . . . PLAĀ-to!” A term of endearment, friendship, mockery—of the sincere and intensely fun-loving sort.

gether (as did **Orpheus**⁸, or so they say) and start to beat me up?”

Bob. “Maybe.”

Soc. “Well, if you were to try something like that, guess what? I wouldn’t do anything about it! So what can you possibly do about *that? Fool!*”

Bob.

[Editor’s Note: We figure that part of this manuscript must be missing. “Dammit, Bill, we really gotta stick somethin’ in here.”]

Joe. “Last round fellas.”

Soc. “Tell me, Bob, when earlier you answered, ‘maybe,’ did you mean fifty percent ‘yes’ and fifty percent ‘no’?”

Bob. “No, I meant Yes.”

Soc. “As if a leaky jar when filled were less than half. Or do you say something otherwise?”

Bob. “I don’t know what you’re talking about.”

Soc. “*Precisely!* Nor do I. Yet this much *I* knew *already!*”

⁸ A mighty rhapsode and spelunker, archaic. Transposed into the modern vernacular: one who sings overmuch in the shower. The Socratic pun on “Orpheus” resonates with meaning. Transliterated exactly: “You seem to have a hole in your head, a head like a hole, especially when singing.” This close reading could be rendered more loosely: “You are particularly difficult, de/constructive, arrogant and ignorant, especially when voicing your esoteric expertise. So could you please shut all that up? Thanks.” Scholarly consensus holds that the Orphean reference probably evokes a TOP SECRET ‘binary code,’ a nursery rhyme that was pretty darn familiar to anybody who could carry a proper tune:

“Follow the rules exactly, don’t make waves.
The global gods prey upon those who behave.
You keep on moving, insecure in your place:
A pecking-order feeding on all it degrades
And inflates.”

Bob. “I agree, one-hundred percent.”

Soc. “Un huh. Holy Cow, what a world: Did you watch the news? How ’bout another round?”

Bob. “Nope, the bar is closing. I’ll just finish up my drink, or at least the seven-sixteenths that remain. Or, perhaps, I will gulp the exact inverse of that.”

Soc. “Huh? . . . Yeah, well sure, I know *exactly* what you mean. So, tell me about this whole ‘*inverse*’ thing?”

Bob. “Holy Cow, am I dry, dry as day. Our global economy and the Chicago Bulls are so terrific. What’s it all about anyway?”

Editor’s Note: Perhaps you are experiencing that empty, frustrated, post-pretentious philosophy feeling, like you’ve really been through the wringer and for no good reason. This will pass. And remember, it usually takes grinding practice to make that great impression—just like the important people. To get the identical result you could spend a fortune on advanced degrees or long hours in front of TV news programs. Try the Everybody alternative. So far, you’ve only experienced a pinch of the full cleansing powers of abstract rationalization, an absent *something* about your whole personality. Now, join us. Turn yourself into an expert and professional, another intimidated intimidator, but do it the easy way: Order the Everybody Library NOW!