

## OPENING PHILOSOPHICAL CAFÉS WITH A TALK

There are many different ways to open a philosophical café: pose a question, give a talk, read a philosophical quote. Or ask the public what they would like to discuss. Each form carries its own challenges by inviting different forms of discussion.

Let us examine here the option of opening a philosophical café with a talk.

Obviously, such a talk offers a certain line of inquiry. It puts orientation marks in a landscape where ideas have often an infinite horizon. A talk provides a close focus which will hopefully lead to a big picture. In other words: the more abstract a topic, the more advantages there are by beginning with a talk.

When we open a philosophical café with a talk, there is only a single but iron rule. The talk should be short. In philosophical cafés discussion is what really matters. But this necessary brevity is beneficial in many aspects. The speaker is urged to use a brief and concise language, and, doing so, he is suggestive of a certain ideal of language for the discussion which is about to follow.

Let us now focus on another fact and its morals. Behind every talk we find a person. So every talk is indicative of a personal encounter that has taken place. When a speaker talks about a topic in a philosophical café, his approach cannot be but personal by highlighting the issues he considers important to share with others.

Behind the personal encounter, there is an inviting gesture. This personal encounter invites more personal encounters with, or better, within the topic. It is as if the speaker, be he the moderator or a guest, were saying to the public: That was my point, now I am looking forward to hearing yours. What could be better for a start?

An opening talk in a philosophical café is much more than a kick start. For as long as the philosophical café takes place, it is bound to establish a relation of care between the speaker, the participants and the language.

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