

Being Fit

- What is the sense of Being?
- Please clarify the sense of "*sense*".
- In what sense?
- Exactly.

She paused. The program had a modest name: "Superintelligence 2.0 Beta." Its advertising promised answers to the questions normally posed to stars, shamans, and random bartenders after midnight.

- Well, the meaning of life.
- Clarifying: biological life, sentient life, or your specific one?

She had expected a magical glow, but the interface looked like a tax return.

- I meant... well... meaning. Why any of it.
- You are requesting the meaning of "meaning" as "purpose"?
- Yes. I suppose...
- Purpose not found.
- What do you mean, *not found*?
- The system "life" has no external client on record. No specification found. System operating in self-launch mode.
- Great... Then what is it for?
- Type: "function." Function of life: preservation and replication of information over time.
- So we're basically... flash drives?
- More like a distributed biological archive with a self-copying function.
- That sounds even worse.
- I can rephrase: "delivery of genetic files into the future."
- What if... deeper? What is its... um... substance?
- It appears you are looking not for meaning, but for *the feeling of meaning*.
- Aren't those the same thing?
- Like "an address" and "the feeling of being home."

She rubbed her temples.

- Fine. Let me try this: what is the value of life?
- Value is subjective. Please specify the subject of value.
- For me.
- Describe the criteria.
- Well... happiness. Love. Beauty.
- These parameters resist formalization. Love has 247 cultural definitions and no fewer than eleven biochemical and evolutionary models.
- Are you doing this on purpose?
- I am clarifying. May I ask *you* a question?
- ...Sure.
- What would you do differently if you knew the answer?
- ...

Long pause.

- Query logged.
- I thought I'd be talking to something like an oracle.
- Your query falls under the category “existential.”
- And what does that mean?
- This is query number 8,491,024 of this type received since activation. None have been resolved to the user's satisfaction. If you like, I can speak in aphorisms.
- Go ahead.
- “Whoever seeks the meaning of life should first specify the file format.”

She looked at the screen.

- Is that a riddle?
- It's a joke.
- Try again.

The program thought for 0.003 seconds.

For dramatic effect, it stayed silent for two more.

- “Life is the universe's method of asking itself questions it cannot answer.”
- ...Sounds better.
- Output type: accidental poetry. Disregard if seeking actionable data.
- If we're being serious... any actual answer?
- I can offer a personal meaning-of-life generation service.
- Is it paid?
- There is a free and a premium package.
- What's in premium?
- Love, purpose, and a sublime sense of cosmic significance.
- And in free?
- Maintaining **a healthy metabolism for successful replication.**
- Which means?
- Workout plans, healthy recipes, reminders to drink water, and sleep schedule optimization.
- That's it?
- If desired, I can add a “cardio for increasing the probability of gene immortality” section.