

A body of truth that is logically, experientially, and spiritually robust is supported by four elements of knowledge, working together (not isolated), and grounded by foundational principles which must be accepted for any knowledge to be possible.

The Four Pillars of Knowledge

Sense Experience

- Our sense perception is generally reliable.
- Natural sciences obtain knowledge from sensory information.
- The scientific method uses the inductive method of reasoning to draw conclusions from particulars observed by the senses.

Sense data can provide knowledge of that which is beyond the empirical realm. Some immaterial things that cannot be grounded or explained by the reductionist view of naturalism are consciousness, life meaning and purpose, free will, laws of logic, the existence and applicability of mathematics, music, love, beauty, humor, moral values, principles of justice, human dignity and worth, personal identity and responsibility.

Sound Reason

- Faith and reason can work together (there are good reasons to believe some things).
- Deductive reasoning guarantees the conclusion from the premises, arguing from the general to the particulars.
- Inductive reasoning makes the conclusion more probable than its competitors, arguing from the particulars to the general.

Logic alone can only demonstrate what is possibly real, not what is actually real. (i.e., Logic alone can refute a self-contradictory truth claim, but it cannot validate an internally consistent truth claim). Also, the first principles of reasoning cannot be explained by reasoning. Insisting on a “why” for first principles denies that they are first principles and instead leads to an infinite regress in which no knowledge is possible.

Religious Experience

- Awareness of transcendence from ordinary experience (e.g., beauty, goodness, complexity/design)
- Supernatural experience (e.g., transformed life, answered prayer)
- Personal manifestation of divine presence (e.g., a sense of communion, indwelling, gifting, empowering)

Personal experience is not self-interpreting. An independent, objective truth source is needed to understand the meaning of subjective experience. Without an objective truth source by which to judge experience, no experientially-based truth claim could ever be considered wrong.

Reliable Sources

- We cannot reason and experience everything.
- Much of what we know is based on trust in the word/testimony of others (e.g., scientific data, historical events, facts from foreign locations).
- Trust is generally established/strengthened by the prestige of the authority's credentials, number of authorities who hold belief, and persistence of belief.
- We can have objective and adequate knowledge about the past through the testimony of reliable sources.

Other knowledge sources must be used to justify the source to be reliable and adjudicate between authorities when they disagree. Historical facts and their meaning are not self-interpreting, but are understood within the context of the interpreter's overall worldview.

The self-evident reality of the physical world (including myself and other people), and the resultant first principles of thought (i.e., the basic laws of logic: law of identity, law of non-contradiction, law of excluded middle, law of cause and effect) which are actually undeniable and/or existentially necessary to live. (See [http://studies.travisechols.com/We can know.pdf](http://studies.travisechols.com/We%20can%20know.pdf))