



## Soren Kierkegaard

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In the world according to this great Dane, reality is subjective. Therefore, each student must co-create meaning. That is why, in Kierkegaard's classroom, there would be no daily drill of rules, but instead the parables of a wise man. The wise man gives the student two great gifts: the utterance and choice. Students must choose to pay strict attention or to ignore. They must choose to consider the material true or false, worthless or valuable. They must decide which are the most fruitful lines for further inquiry. Kierkegaard would teach us to prepare ourselves to navigate the gap between the understanding and the willing—that is, between our limited knowledge (the understanding) and the need for action (the willing). Our knowledge will always be incomplete. Therefore, only if we have a high comfort level with ambiguity and paradox, can we move forward with decisive action in an uncertain world.

*How often do we mislead students with a false impression of how much we know versus what we believe?  
Are you training students in the art of making judgments under uncertainty?*

### Suggested Readings:

1. Kierkegaard S. Philosophical fragments. Swenson DF, translator. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press; 1962.
2. Oden TC. Parables of Kierkegaard. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press; 1978.

### Learn More about Kierkegaard:

<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/kierkegaard>