

**Step 3: But how do I know that the whole of my existence is not merely a dream or a fantasy?**

I know it by *reasoning*. If all that I experienced was a dream world, then *that* world would be my real world; in fact, the only real world I would know. That is, since dreaming is an altered state of consciousness (by definition); and if an altered state of consciousness is altered from the normal state of consciousness; then if the whole of my existence was a dream, then dreaming would be my normal state of consciousness. And in that state (which would then be defined as my normal waking state) I would exist, and I would know that I must exist for the same reasons as those given in step 1, above.

But suppose in my dream world I only *dreamed* that I existed. But that would be the same as saying that in that world I only *thought* that I existed. But once again this would demonstrate that I exist!

Underlying all of this reasoning, of course, is the postulate: *Of that which does not exist (in some realm) nothing can be predicated*. That is, you cannot meaningfully say something about that which does not exist (in some realm). To put it another way, without a subject, there can be no meaningful predicate. Of a non-entity, nothing can be said!

**Step 4: Other human beings exist.**

How do I know this?

(1) I know it *empirically*, via sensory experience of other persons. I know it by means of my ability to interact with them -- to be able to communicate with them, to reason with them, to exchange ideas with them, to be affected by their ideas and emotions and to affect them by my ideas and emotions.

(2) I know it by reasoning, via the dictum, *Interaction with other beings like myself is possible, therefore other human beings exist*.

**Step 5: The physical world around me exists.**

How do I know this?