BRUCE LICHT

FOUNDER OF *MY ELEVATOR PITCH FOR GOD*, ENTREPRENEUR, AND AUTHOR

Bruce grew up in Lafayette, California and received a BA in Political Science from UCLA as well as a Graduate Gemologist degree from the Gemological Institute of America. After graduating, Bruce operated his family's 100 year-old retail fine jewelry business for twenty-two years. Bruce had a passion for computers and graphic arts, so he changed careers and joined his best friend at a national technical publishing company for seventeen-years as the company's Publisher, where they invented the modern labor law poster industry, including the first "*All- On-One* Labor Law Poster" and "Labor Law Poster Compliance Plan."

Aside from being the Founder of this website, *My Elevator Pitch for God*, Bruce was the co-editor of the book titled, *Elevator Pitches For God: Volume 1*, and author of the cookbook titled, *Immediate Chef: No Previous Experience Required*.

Bruce's goals for this website are: To introduce more people all around the world to God and strengthen the faith of those who already believe in a non-political and non-religious way, to bring people together, find common ground between different faiths, create meaning in people's lives, and start to move the world in a better direction.

You can help by sending this website to friends and family and posting it on social media!

You can also connect with the website project's LinkedIn page by clicking below:
https://www.linkedin.com/in/bruce-licht

Pascal's Famous Wager

BRUCE LICHT

"Pascal's Wager" is the name given to a famous pragmatic argument posed by 17th-century French philosopher and mathematician, Blaise Pascal, from his work *Pensées,* published in 1670.[1] In actuality, Pascal's Wager (or bet) is a strategic argument, rather than a logical proof of God's existence. Its purpose is to present rational justification, based on an individual's self-interest, for why a skeptic should consider and pursue a life of faith, given the monumental potential stakes.

The Wager argues that since we cannot conclusively prove or disprove God's existence through reason alone, a person's life is basically a gamble in which they must bet on one outcome as opposed to another, and concludes that it's in one's best interest to wager on the likelihood that God does exist. This rational argument uses the likely outcomes of belief and non-belief to demonstrate that believing in God is the most logical choice.

The wager is built around a decision matrix with four possible scenarios and their consequences:

Option #1 - You believe in God, and ultimately come to find that God exists: This option allows for infinite gain, such as eternal life in heaven. The reward is incalculably large.
Option #2 - You believe in God, and God doesn't exist: This option's loss is finite. You may give up some earthly pleasures, but eventually, these sacrifices are insignificant and temporary in the scheme of things.
Option #3 - You don't believe in God, and ultimately come to find that God exists: This option allows for infinite loss, such as the possibility of eternal damnation. This outcome is incalculably negative.
Option #4 - You don't believe in God, and God doesn't exist: This option allows for a finite gain, such as experiencing some earthly pleasures and the ability to live without religious constrictions. However, in the end, you face the same fate as everyone else—nothing matters at all.

For Pascal, the logic is clear: when one compares these four potential outcomes, the decision to believe has an infinitely higher ultimate value or gain than the atheist's path of non-belief, where the infinite loss makes that decision immeasurably riskier and an illogical choice. Therefore, since a rational person should always choose the alternative with the greatest prospective payoff, the option to believe is the most sensible choice.

Pascal acknowledges that one cannot force oneself to believe. For people who intellectually find themselves unable to believe, his suggestion is to adopt a "believing lifestyle" (time dedicated to worship, attending religious services and following religious practices). Pascal proposes that by living as if one actually believed, it's possible to ultimately develop sincere faith.

Even though Pascal's Wager is not without criticism,[2] it nonetheless remains a watershed landmark in the philosophy of religion for its early use of *decision theory* used here for almost the first time in history,[3] and its lasting challenge to disbelievers. Although it may not serve as a theological proof, it forces skeptics to face the weighty existential rewards and consequences of their beliefs.

Footnotes:

1) The name, "Pascal's Wager," could be considered a bit misleading, because in one section of *Pensées*, Pascal presents *four* arguments, each of which could be classified as a "wager," however, it is only the third example that is commonly discussed as being "Pascal's Wager."

2) According to Alex Novack: Pascal's Wager has faced substantial criticism over time. A principal objection is the 'many gods' problem, which highlights that Pascal's argument assumes a solitary, monotheistic God; if multiple deities exist, wagering on the wrong one could result in an infinite loss. Another objection is that an omniscient God would see through an inauthentic belief motivated purely by self-interest. Strong counterarguments have also been formulated. To the 'many gods' objection, Richard Swinburne has argued that other arguments for God's existence restrict the epistemic field to one or two serious contenders. Jeff Jordan and Alan Hájek maintain that, from a decision-theoretic perspective, theism still dominates atheism in terms of payoff structure. To the insincerity objection, Pascal and contemporary defenders reply that adopting religious practices and living as if God exists can cultivate genuine belief over time, and in any case is still the most rational course of action.

3) Decision theory is the formal study of decision-making, involving the selection of the best choice from a set of alternatives under conditions of uncertainty, often by using probability and utility theory to guide rational choices.