

# Can we ever have nothing?

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Nothing: what is nothingness? What does it mean to have nothing? The Oxford dictionary defines nothingness as “the absence or cessation of life or existence”. Nothing is explained as not anything, having no single thing. Can we ever have nothing? It is impossible to have nothing. You can never truly have nothing but you can believe you have nothing. Even if we believe we have nothing, that is something. Ostensibly, we have everything; we have reality, thoughts and we have knowledge, so we can never have nothing.

This is an equivocal question; the idea of nothing being something has raised in-depth answers amongst well known philosophers and scientists. Famous philosopher Heidegger described this as the fundamental question of metaphysics. He states “There is something because there is literally no such thing as nothing”. He goes further by stating “Spinoza and Einstein, among many other great thinkers, subscribed to this view that it is impossible for there to be nothing. What we think of as empty space in our universe is not actually nothing; it contains energy, radiation and particles that flit in and out of existence. Even attempting to picture nothingness is impossible for the human mind. Humans tend to picture a blank abyss as nothingness but that is only what we feel nothingness is, we do not know what actual nothing is because it has never existed. Our society has created a fake image of nothing which now exists as something instead of nothing. A Buddhist monk might claim to be able to clear their mind of thought during meditation, but a blank slate is still something. Even a void has perimeters around it to contain the ‘nothing’ within it”. Consequently, nothing can never just be nothing because the very term nothing conveys something. Philosophers believe that pure nothingness does not exist and something arises from nothing. Going deeper into the question, if there was a state of nothingness that was to actually exist it would be deemed as something because something had arisen from nothing; hence, nothing is something.

The physics of nothing is an additional way to look into this question. Physicists believe that the nothing we have come to know is merely an illusion we have made up. Pure nothingness will never exist when there is something. Everything has to be gone, and when everything is gone we will not realize that the true nothing exists because we (something) would be absent to make room for the nothing. Philosophers believe the big bang was nothing before it became something and for it to go back to being nothing, everything that came from it ‘nothing’ will have to be destroyed. Therefore something will never be nothing and everything which is something has to be destroyed for nothing to exist.

In spite of everything, the answer to this question depends on who is being asked. If you asked a person who has lost everything important to them, they would give you a straightforward reply and likely not believe in the concept of nothing. People have been so horribly deprived of basic human necessities and have been stripped of their livelihood to the extent whereby they feel as though they have nothing, they have created a false feeling

of nothing just to portray their pain. People who have lost everything they considered important might believe they truly have nothing while a person who truly understands this question would enlighten you to the true perception of nothing. So, there might be people who believe they have nothing because they feel they do, and so to them they can have nothing.

Forbye, Aristotle states that there are two types of nothingness; ontological nothing and logical nothing. Ontological nothing is simply the absence of being and is normally the nothing we speak of, i.e. 'non-existence'. Logical nothing, on the other hand, is the concept we form as nothing. In other words, ontological nothing is not real but logical nothing is real. Ontological nothing exists outside the mind. These types of nothing can be linked to the portrayals of nothing at the top. The nothing we know now isn't the true form of nothingness, and is something. In our existence, pure nothing will never be real, therefore we can never have nothing. We will never understand nothing because it is void of anything and we are something, so the question is, will there ever be nothing or will there always be something?

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