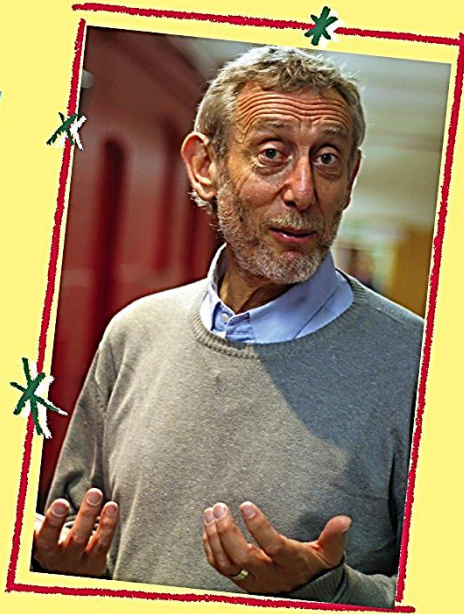


## MY HUMANISM

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Michael Rosen is Jewish in origin. He's a writer for adults and children, a broadcaster and Professor of Children's Literature at Goldsmiths, University of London.



### My personal philosophy

Everyone has a 'personal philosophy'. It's made up of your thoughts about things like 'What is right?', 'What is wrong?' and 'What is the best way to live your life, or the best way for people to treat each other?'

It can also be about thoughts like 'What is beautiful?', 'What is funny?', 'What is sad?'. Or 'Why do human beings exist?', 'Are human beings alone in the universe or is there a god or some gods who know what we are doing?', 'What happens when we die?'

I start from the idea that everything we human beings do and think comes from us; there isn't anything apart from human beings, no god or gods to organise or run things for us.



So all those questions about right and wrong and the rest are all things that I have to figure out through listening, reading and talking with other people.

### Then what?

Most of us try to do things that are good for ourselves and our loved ones. I do this but then I see that millions of people who try to do things that are good for themselves and their loved ones also struggle to earn enough, to stay well enough to look after their children and grandparents. So perhaps it's not enough to do things that are just good for us and our loved ones. I can see that when we look at all the things that humans make (thanks to the

minds and muscles of all the human beings), some people get much more out of it than others. What comes out of all that work is not fairly shared out. I think this is wrong.

So, this leads me to think, what can we do to make it fair? It's pointless to think I can do this on my own. I'd just end up being a big boss ordering people about. I think we have to try to work with people in ways that are fair for all – never thinking that this or that person is worse or better than me because of what they look like or because of where they were born.

### My favourite quote

My favourite quote is from the play *Hamlet* by Shakespeare. Hamlet is wondering what to do, so he asks if it's worth existing ('to be or not to be') and then wonders if it's worth fighting against the difficult things ('the sea of troubles'), and if you do ('by opposing them') will that 'end them'?

*"To be, or not to be, that is the question – Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune, Or to take arms against a sea of troubles, And by opposing, end them?"*

This is one of the great questions facing humanists because we don't appeal to a supernatural being, or a priest, to help us answer it. We do it through thinking, reading, listening, talking, writing and experimenting with the things around us, and through working with others.