

'Belief' (pub. 20.03.13-20:01). Quote in M. Bergman & S. Paavola (Eds.), *The Commens Dictionary: Peirce's Terms in His Own Words. New Edition*. Retrieved from <http://www.commens.org/dictionary/entry/quote-harvard-lectures-pragmatism-lecture-i-0>.

---

**Term:** Belief

**Quote:** What is the *proof* that the possible practical consequences of a concept constitute the sum total of the concept? The argument upon which I rested the maxim in my original paper was that *belief* consists mainly in being deliberately prepared to adopt the formula believed in as the guide to action. If this be in truth the nature of belief, then undoubtedly the proposition believed in can itself be nothing but a maxim of conduct. That I believe is quite evident.

But how do we know that belief is nothing but the deliberate preparedness to act according to the formula believed?

My original article carried this back to a psychological principle. The conception of truth, according to me, was developed out of an original impulse to act consistently, to have a definite intention. But in the first place, this was not very clearly made out, and in the second place, I do not think it satisfactory to reduce such fundamental things to facts of psychology.

**Source:** Peirce, C. S. (1903). *Harvard Lectures on Pragmatism: Lecture I*. MS [R] 301.

**References:** CP 5.27-28

**Date of** 1903

**Quote:**

**URL:** <http://www.commens.org/dictionary/entry/quote-harvard-lectures-pragmatism-lecture-i-0>