

faith a psychological attitude commonly expressed by either of two locutions: ‘faith *that*’, e.g. ‘Shelly has faith that her sons will flourish’; and ‘faith-*in*’, e.g. ‘Mallory has faith in his new ice-ax’. Faith-*in* is always relative to some things and not others; e.g., Mallory has faith in his ice-ax as a rescue tool, not as a kitchen implement. To have faith in x is to entrust one’s well-being to x in some way. One can have faith *that* without faith *in*, as when I have faith that Emily will survive breast cancer, but I do not entrust my well-being to her survival. Nor should we identify faith *that* with hope *that*. Lost at dusk in the North Cascades, you might yet hope for rescue, but faith requires a more positive cognitive stance than hope. Moreover, I can have faith that the mechanic will fix the 1200cc engine of my beloved 1963 Volkswagen Bug, but I cannot hope that he will fix it since I am certain he will succeed; hope requires a less positive cognitive stance than that. Faith that p requires caring (with positive valence) that p, although such care may be weak and conflicted. Faith that p further requires resilience in the face of contrary evidence, as well as being prepared to act as if p is true. But, as argued by Robert Audi and others, faith that p does not require belief that p; other items can stand in for the positive cognitive stance faith requires, e.g. acceptance of p, assent to p, trust that p, and belief-less-ly assuming that p. Since each of these items is compatible with having doubts about whether p and since some are even compatible with being *in* doubt about whether p, faith is compatible with doubt. Indifference, hostility, and faintheartedness are the enemies of faith, not doubt.

When someone is described as a “person of faith” what is usually intended is having religious faith, for instance faith in God and associated instances of faith *that*, say faith that God loves human beings. A different notion is designated by the expression “a faith” or “the faith,” as in St. Jude’s admonition to Christians to “earnestly contend for the faith”; in this case, it is used for something non-psychological: a connected set of tenets such that holding them (especially as objects of propositional faith) implies being *of* that faith.

See also acceptance, hope, philosophy of religion

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