

How the Soul Functions
According to Aristotle

Aristotle theorized that the soul was comprised of different elements, which may or may not be distinct from one another. He described two different ones as “irrational”. Each element of the soul is comprised of divisions of sub-elements or facilities that belong to the respective main element. In the first element that he described in *The Nicomachean Ethics*, is a vegetative facility that is not much consequence to furthering human excellence. In another irrational element described, there is a general “desiring” division, within which exists an appetitive facility. This other irrational element was influenced, unlike the first one, by a person’s rational and irrational principles. Lastly, the whole soul takes part of activities. One of the important activities was the constant movement toward the realization of happiness. The figure on the following page shows the relationship between all of the parts of a soul and principles. Note that the words continent and incontinent do not show up on the diagram, since they describe a particular type of person that is not an integral part of the soul, but a result of how the soul is raised.