

Fellowship of Reason®

May 2000 Newsletter

"Celebrating Being Human"sm

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Mission Statement

The Fellowship of Reason® is an open, benevolent, and vital rational moral community in which we celebrate our lives, our freedoms, and our philosophy of reason.

Friendship

"[I]t is the consciousness of oneself as good that makes existence desirable, and such consciousness is pleasant in itself. Therefore a man ought also to share his friend's consciousness of his existence, and this is attained by their living together and by conversing and communicating their thoughts to each other."

"[A] friend is a second self."

"To be happy a man needs virtuous friends."

Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics.

Aristotle classifies friendships into those based upon pleasure, those based upon utility, and those based upon character. All are morally valid bases for friendship, though a moral hierarchy exists among them. Friendships based upon utility are classified at the lowest moral rank. Friendships based upon pleasure rank higher. Friendships based upon character or virtue are positioned at the highest moral rank.

A friendship with one's boss exemplifies a friendship based upon utility. A friendship based upon the humorous wit of the friend exemplifies a friendship based upon pleasure. A friendship based upon the high moral character of the friend exemplifies a friendship based upon virtue.

Most friendships contain elements of pleasure, utility, and virtue. Usually one element dominates.

I have a young friend whom I tutor in French. I derive pleasure from being admired as a teacher. On the other hand, my student values me for my utility—I improve her performance in French class.

Once my student offered to baby-sit Lindsey for free. Linda and I both recoiled at the suggestion and declined. We insisted upon paying a fair price for her babysitting services. Having learned Aristotle's classification of friendships, I now understand our reaction. Were Linda and I to accept a utilitarian reward for my services as a tutor (free baby-sitting), the moral rank of our friendship with the student would be diminished. One derives more

enjoyment from a friendship based upon pleasure than from a friendship based upon utility.

One enjoys being with her witty friend more than being with her boss.

Marriage is classified as a type of friendship. Marriages are based upon pleasure, utility, and character. In a particular marriage one element usually dominates. The serial husband's marriages, I imagine, are based upon pleasure for him and utility for his serial wives. The wives are serial because once the novelty wears off the young bride, greater pleasure can be found in a new, younger wife. For this reason, many parents encourage their daughters to seek out a mate based upon high moral character, rather than upon utility or pleasure. Obviously, if all the elements can be combined, that would be great.

Friendships based upon high moral character are what we seek in the Fellowship of Reason®. In a friend, we seek a mirror for our souls. In return, we provide a mirror for the soul of our friend. Soul mirrors can reflect virtue and vice. A good friend reflects the truth.

The History of Ideas

"The Law of Non-Contradiction"

Ayn Rand honors Aristotle by naming the three parts of Atlas Shrugged Non-Contradiction, Either-Or, and A is A.

Did you know that the first known statement of the law of non-contradiction is found in Plato's Republic (436b)?

"It's plain that the same thing won't be willing at the same time to do or suffer opposites with respect to the same part and in relation to the same thing."

June's Celebration

Our next regular Celebration is Sunday, June 4, 2000, at 12:30 p.m. Ken will give the oratory—"Morality made Simple."

So far this is the lineup for June 2000:

Welcome
Celebration of Freedom—Martin
Celebration of Visitors
Celebratory Announcements
Celebration of Each Other
Ellen's Corner—Ellen
Celebration of Art
Celebration of Heroes—Martin
Celebration of Talent
Oratory—**Ken**—"Morality made simple"
Celebration of Amateur Talent
Celebration of Personal Mission
Spiritual Exercise
Closing Quotation

Celebration Schedule 2000

We have two more special Celebrations planned in 2000—one in September and one in November. These special Celebrations are intended to make our organization known to other specific groups who are likely to have values in common with us.

- Sunday, June 4—**Ken** will give the oratory during this regular Celebration. We need other performers.
- Sunday, July 9—a regular Celebration (notice that this is the 2nd Sunday because of the TOC summer seminar). We need all performers.
- Sunday, August 6—**Tom** will give the oratory during this regular Celebration. We need other performers.
- Sunday, September 3—a special Celebration. No other performers needed.
- Sunday, October 1—a regular Celebration. We need all performers.
- Sunday, November 5—a special Celebration. No other performers needed.
- Sunday, December 3—a regular Celebration. We need all performers.

Contact information:

Martin L. Cowen III is the director of the Fellowship of Reason®.

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