

## 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.

## Request for Submissions

If you have something to say, please submit your writing for publication in this newsletter. Send your submission as an MS Word attachment to e-mail. Thank you.

## Where's the Beef?

*Or, how I used FOR this month!*

The purpose of philosophy is to teach us how to live well. We study ethics in the Fellowship of Reason® for the same reason—to learn **how** to live well. Individuals who want to make personal moral progress will find value among us. Saints (people who have achieved moral perfection) need not concern themselves with ethics or with moral communities.

Here is a partial list of the values I received from the members of FOR during August.

### • Tom's oratory

Tom entitled his oratory "Life Lessons from Baseball." While all Tom's points (set out in full below) helped me in some way, I particularly benefited from his first point about success happening a minority of the time. Tom illustrated his moral point with baseball batting averages. A batting average in the 300's, it seems, is really good. However, a 300 batting average implies that the batter gets a hit only 3 out of 10 times at bat. In other words, he gets put **out** (fails) more often than he gets on base (succeeds).

For me, membership retention in FOR is a kind of batting average. I have not kept track, but FOR is **not** batting a 1,000. No enterprise does. Tom's oratory reminded me that success happens a minority of the time. Batter up!

Thank you, Tom.

### • Guy's advice

We had a marvelous visitor in August. Dan and Theresa brought their friend, Guy, to Celebration. Guy is a salesman and knows about marketing. During my

conversation with him he passed on some great suggestions for growing the membership of FOR.

- Make the acquaintance of the members of NWUUC, our neighbors. Many of them will share our values.
- Have a FOR T-shirt made up with a log such as PMP, personal moral progress.
- Make myself available in "idea" cafes to talk about FOR.
- Do an interview with Creative Loafing.

Thank you, Guy, for these great marketing ideas.

### • Ellen's conversation

Many of us went out for lunch after Celebration. After lunch, Ellen and I talked about FOR and what exactly it is that *I* want. Why am I creating FOR? Specifically, Ellen questioned my passion for a "building." Our conversation clarified that FOR's purpose from my perspective had everything to do with people and CEFLOR (celebration, entertainment, learning, orientation, and reflection) and nothing (or very little) to do with a "building."

Thank you, Ellen, for this insight.

### • Leanna's movie night

Leanna played "Big Night" at FOR's Saturday night at the movies. Two Italian brothers come to America to find success in the restaurant business. One brother is a great chef, a true artist. The other brother is an impresario, a facilitator. One of the dramatic conflicts is business versus art. The brothers are struggling to make their restaurant a success, but the artist will not sacrifice his art to the uneducated palates of his "philistine" customers.

This movie speaks to every one of us. Among FOR's members we find entrepreneurs (like these Italian brothers) nurturing, variously, a wine store, a sci-fi web site, a gift wrap business, an oral history business, a novel, and a moral community. And each of us is an entrepreneur of his or her own life. Each of us is president of Me, Inc.

The movie illustrates the heroic struggle of these two brothers to create and sell a product that they know to be marvelous. The brothers' struggle is not easy and it is not clear that they will be successful. Yet, on they work.

The rival restaurateur tells one of the brothers that life is not supposed to be easy. "Take a bite out of the ass of life!" he shouts. Or, less eloquently, "Go for it!" Or, continuing in Tom's theme, "Batter up!"

Leanna's movie choice inspired me in own entrepreneurial efforts.

Thank you, Leanna, for this marvelous choice for movie night.

- **Michael's wine.**

I won't mention all the great food and wine I enjoyed during movie night, since at the level of my consumption I passed from gourmet to glutton.

- **How about you?**

What value did you derive this month from socializing with people who care about ethics, who care about how to live life well?

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**Tom's points from "Life Lessons From Baseball:"**

- 1) Success is achieved a minority of the time.
- 2) Only a few can achieve greatness, but many can achieve success within their context.
- 3) Success sometimes comes from an unlikely hero.
- 4) Your best isn't always good enough.
- 5) Some may remember only your failures.
- 6) It's not over 'til it's over.

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**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, September 3—a special Celebration. No other performers needed. Ed Buckner, Vice-President of Communications for the Atlanta Free Thought Society will speak on "Is Morality possible without God?"
- Sunday, October 1—a regular Celebration. We need all performers.
- Sunday, November 5—a special Celebration. No other performers needed. Marsha Enright from the Objectivist Center's speakers bureau will make a special presentation. We will have a dinner for her on Saturday night at Scott's house. [Speaker not yet confirmed, but very likely.]
- Sunday, December 3—a regular Celebration. We need all performers.

**The History of Ideas**

According to Aristotle to know the good is to enact the good, but in this sense:

- Knowledge versus opinion.

A universal principle of human action, an ethical rule, must be firmly established in the individual's mind in order to compel him to act. For this reason, rigorous ethical analysis is necessary.

- Universal versus specific.

The universal principle must be clearly seen to apply in the particular circumstances of the individual.

- Actual versus potential.

The knowledge and its application must be present in the mind's eye and not repressed by will, madness, drunkenness, sleep, or passion.

Personal example:

**Hey, fat boy!**

In my opinion, I need to lose about 30 pounds. In order to enact this opinion, I should (turn opinion into knowledge) research the matter of obesity. I should look at the studies that show obesity reduces life expectancy, increases risk of disease, reduces my attractiveness to the opposite sex, reduces sexual interest and capacity. I should (make the universal a particular) have a physical examination to determine the actual effects obesity is having in my life now. If I could get a photo of my clogged arteries, I should. I should (keep the knowledge in the forefront of my mind) take a photograph in profile of my fat stomach and drooping body parts and place these photos on the pantry and the refrigerator. Having done these things, *ipso facto*, I will lose thirty pounds in 4 months.

**Now that's practical philosophy!**

**Contact information:**

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