

Fellowship of Reason®

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"Promoting Personal Excellence and Virtue"

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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.

The Tiger and the Strawberry

Sophie, a member of the Fellowship of Reason®, was walking through the forest one day. Suddenly, a tiger rushed out of the bush after her. She ran and ran to escape the deadly teeth and claws of the wild beast. Sophie came to a cliff and scurried over the edge, hanging on for dear life just out of the reach of the tiger above. Then she noticed five more tigers below her at the bottom of the cliff. Sophie looked around for some way of escape and she spied a strawberry growing out of the side of the cliff. It was the most perfect strawberry she had ever seen—ripe, red, full, perfectly formed, juicy, sweet, and delicious. Holding onto the cliff by one hand, Sophie reached over, picked the strawberry, and she ate it.

The Objectivist Center Sponsors Speaker

The Objectivist Center will be sending one of their finest speakers, Marsha Enright of Chicago, to talk to the Fellowship of Reason® on Sunday, November 5, 2000, at 12:30: p.m. TOC is paying her airfare and part of her honorarium. FOR will be requesting a \$5 voluntary donation from attendees as an additional honorarium.

The title of Marsha's talk is "The Habit of Hope: Getting It, Keeping It, Living It."

Scott Orbach will be hosting a dinner for Marsha at his house on Saturday night. Members of FOR are invited. Attendees will be asked to contribute to the effort.

Please plan to attend Marsha's talk. We want to give her a warm welcome. Why don't you bring a friend to this wonderful talk?

The Trouble with Farsightedness

While I did not care for *Star Wars: Episode I—The Phantom Menace*, the film contains at least one great scene. Jedi Knight Qui-Gon Jinn is in a battle for his life with Sith Lord Darth Maul (the bad guy in case the name isn't clue enough). During the battle, the combatants are momentarily separated by a clear, but impenetrable force field. Qui-Gon Jinn kneels down and bows his head in meditation during the lull in the fight. His ally, the young Jedi apprentice Obi-Wan Kenobi, is trapped a short distance behind anxiously waiting for the force fields to come down. The enemy is anticipating with evil glee the resumption of the struggle to death.

How can Qui-Gon Jinn meditate at a time like this? How can Sophie in the story *The Tiger and the Strawberry* take time to enjoy a delicious strawberry while hanging on for dear life to a cliff just out of reach of six hungry tigers?

These two stories illustrate the extraordinary personal power of masters of spiritual discipline.

Spirituality is the management of the faculties of memory, actuality, and imagination toward the goal of happiness. A master of spiritual discipline can control his imagination and live happily in the present, even in the face of the worst possible outcomes.

The truth is that we all face our imminent destruction in 30 minutes, 30 hours, 30 days, 30 months, 30 years, or 30 decades (assuming some spectacular scientific advances in our lifetimes). We can choose to die a thousands deaths by imagining our eventual end, or, we can savor our sacred existence during its term. Masters of spiritual discipline can, even in the face of death 30 seconds hence, make the most of their lives while they still live.

But death is not our only fear and perhaps not even our greatest since it is so apparently removed. We (especially me) spend enormous energy dealing with fears of many lesser evils. We allow our imaginations to run wild. Many of us have no capacity to discipline ourselves, specifically our

imaginations, and we die a thousand deaths or suffer a thousand bad outcomes before anything actually happens. And, in fact for most of us in America, nothing bad happens.

But for undisciplined imaginations (that's me in spades), we all could live much happier lives.

I do not suggest that thoughts of the future be chronically ignored or suppressed—that's another serious problem. Part of the successful management of the faculties of mind includes anticipating the future and acting to secure future values and fond memories. All the faculties of consciousness—memory, actuality, and imagination—have survival value.

I do suggest that attention to the future be *well managed*. There is a time for planning and acting for the future. When that time is passed, exercise mental discipline to enjoy your sacred present.

Please call me to share any reactions you may have to this essay.

Celebration Schedule 2000

- Sunday, November 5—a special Celebration. No other performers needed. Marsha Enright from the Objectivist Center's speaker's bureau will make a special presentation. We will have a dinner for her on Saturday night at Scott's house.
- Sunday, December 3—a regular Celebration. We need all performers.

Ellen's Corner:

Ellen shares some of her favorite limericks with us this month.

Contact information:

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

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Pain Avoidance or Goal Seeking

Avoiding pain:

- Hunger—related vice is gluttony
- Thirst—related vice is drunkenness
- Sexual desire—related vice is promiscuity
- Fatigue—related vice is lethargy

Eating in order to relieve the pain of hunger

Drinking to relieve the pain of thirst

Copulating in order to avoid the pain of sexual desire

Resting in order to avoid fatigue

Another example is living out other people's expectations.

Goal seeking:

- Celebrating a birthday
- Remembering an anniversary
- Jogging with a friend
- Telephoning a friend to chat

Am I guided by my reason or by my desires?

Acting contrary to one's desires in order to achieve a higher goal [a spirited or rational goal]

Dieting/fasting.