

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 Ideal Human Being

The ideal human being is a common feature of religions. Jesus, Mohammed, the Buddha, Confucius, Moses, Abraham, David, and Noah are all examples. Philosophical systems sometimes have depictions of the ideal human being. John Galt and Howard Roark are examples. Nietzsche regarded Socrates and Goethe as ideal human beings. They were models for Nietzsche's overman. Leonidas, the Spartan king who died at Thermopylae in 480 BCE attempting to hold the narrow pass against the invading Persians, is a political hero regarded as a Spartan ideal.

What are the characteristics of the ideal man according to our philosophy of reason?

Given our recent discussions of heroic engagement, no one will be surprised to learn the entrepreneur (the person who takes responsibility for the creation of his own life and values) is the public face of our ideal human being. But what about the private nature of our ideal man? What is his soul like?

A root of our philosophy is the axiom *existence exists*. Some regard this phrase as a relatively useless tautology. Perhaps a better way to express the idea is to say that our philosophy of reason has enormous **respect for facts**. There are two types of facts of reality—facts external to our own minds (the sun rose this morning) and internal states within our own minds (I felt happy at the sight). Eudaimonists respect both types of facts, but the facts in the world have priority. For example, while we may *wish* for eternal life, we recognize that there is no competent evidence that eternal life is possible. I wish I owned ten million dollars, but I don't and I am unlikely to. We recognize the difference between wanting things

and having them, especially when that which is desired is not merely improbable, but impossible.

Our philosophy of reason does not reject or despise emotions. On the contrary, our philosophy of reason explicitly recognizes that our desires are the raw materials of a happy life. (That's why we advocate, "Follow your bliss.") We stand philosophically alone though in our relationship to our inner mental states.

We can regard our emotional states as data rather than as unalterably and unquestionably "me." For example, the feelings "I'm mad at my kid" or "I'm mad at my wife" or "I'm afraid I offended my friend" are important *data*. Before I explain this, let me give a physical example.

Say your dishwasher stops working. You don't simply accept that fact, remove the dishes from the machine and wash them by hand. No. You look at the indicators to see what the problem is. If the washer arm is blocked you move the fork that has fallen in the way.

Eudaimonists regard our own internal states in the same way as external events—we can choose to act on the event or not, we can examine the event, and we can change the circumstances giving rise to the event, and we can react appropriately given the understood reality.

Take the emotion "I'm mad at my kid." 99 out of 100 parents would yell at or whack the kid. A eudaimonist would ask himself "Why am I mad at my kid? Is my emotion justified? Is my anger to be found in my unique circumstances or is my child's behavior objectively bad? What is the proper way as a good parent to respond to my *child's behavior* as opposed to responding to my *reaction* to it?" In other words, emotions are data to be analyzed before you play the fool!

I had a recent experience with a religious person. I gave her a book to read. My motive was to show her how to help her children survive her divorce. The religious person complained that reading the book made her feel uncomfortable. Duh! A eudaimonist has respect for the facts and that includes *a great interest in the facts*. The religious person's reaction to feeling uncomfortable might be to avoid the

source of discomfort. I am afraid my friend stopped reading the book. A eudaimonist, as a matter of philosophical choice, would take up her discomfort and examine it, for God's sake! She might then get the message of the book and see how it applies to her life. She might become a better parent.

Repression, evasion, and disinterest in one's inner states is the greatest problem among human beings today. Just ask Freud.

The ideal human being according to our philosophy of reason does not repress or evade knowledge of his inner states. He takes an enormous interest in them as the raw material of his potentially happy life.

Our ideal human being is a passionate man who is a master of his passions. (I think Goethe said it first.)

What you should know:

Religions, philosophies, and cultures have heroes.

Heroes are role models to believers, philosophers, and members.

Our ideal human being is an entrepreneur (a creator of his own life and values) on the outside.

Our ideal human being has respect for his emotions and desires as the raw material of happiness, but he regards it as crucial that he examine and evaluate them before acting.

Be a passionate person who is master of his passions!

January 2002 Celebration:

Welcome

Celebration of Freedom—?

Celebration of Visitors

Celebration of Each Other

Celebratory Announcements

Celebration of Personal Mission—Randy

Celebration of Heroes—?

Celebration of Literature—Ellen

Celebration of Art—?

Celebration of Talent

Oratory—"Felix the Cat is My God" by Martin

Closing Quotation

Bring your Personal Mission Notebook to Celebration.

FOR's Pot Luck

FOR's pot luck is scheduled for Saturday, December 8, 2001, at 4 p.m. at Steve's house.

FOR's Café Conversation

Saturday, December 15, 2001, at 11 a.m. at Après Diem. We plan to discuss among other things, our 2002 children's program.

FOR's Philosophy Tapes

FOR's free philosophy tapes are played on Thursdays at 7:30 p.m. Nietzsche is the subject of this series of tapes. The location, within the perimeter, is John's studio.

Celebration Schedule 2002

- Sunday, January 6, 2002
 - Sunday, February 3, 2002
 - Sunday, March 3, 2002
 - Sunday, April 7, 2002
 - Sunday, May 5, 2002
 - Sunday, June 2, 2002
 - Sunday, July 7, 2002
 - Sunday, August 4, 2002
 - Sunday, September 1, 2002
 - Sunday, October 6, 2002
 - Sunday, November 3, 2002
 - Sunday, December 1, 2002
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2002 Membership Information:

- Charter membership: \$35 if paid prior to March 31, 2002
- Regular membership: \$35 per year if paid prior to October 31, 2002
- Contributing membership: \$70 per year if paid prior to October 31, 2002
- Lifetime membership: \$350 if paid prior to March 31, 2002; \$700 per year if paid prior to October 31, 2002

Contact information:

To receive e-mail notice of FOR's activities send your e-mail address to mlcowen@mindspring.com

To receive this newsletter free for 3 months in the U.S. mail send your U.S. Mail address to mlcowen@mindspring.com

To participate in unmoderated e-mail chat, please subscribe to our Yahoo! Group by sending an e-mail to reason-subscribe@yahogroups.com

A subscription for 12 monthly issues of this newsletter is \$15 per year.

Bylaws and other corporate documents may be view online at www.kindreason.com

Fellowship of Reason, Inc. is a Georgia nonprofit corporation.
