

## 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.

## Spiritual Values

"As man is a being of self-made wealth, so he is a being of self-made soul." Ayn Rand.

Values can be divided into four categories—spiritual, material, physical, and social. Families, friends, and communities are among the social values. (A value is that which one acts to gain and keep.) Bodily health and fitness are physical values. Food, shelter, and clothing are material values. What, though, are spiritual values?

"Spiritual" means of or pertaining to consciousness. A "spiritual value" then is a sought-after mental characteristic.

(1) A good character is a spiritual value. A good character is a human consciousness possessed of virtues. Rationality, productivity, pride, honesty, integrity, independence, justice, and benevolence are among the virtues. Cleanliness, punctuality, honesty, and benevolence are the minimum virtues required to get a job.

(2) The ability to examine your mental contents objectively is a spiritual value. One is objective about his mental contents when he is aware of his own biases, his personal myths, and the cultural myths he has learned. An extremely concrete example of bias is my desire that the construction of landfills not be hazardous to the environment. I hold the opinion that landfills are not environmental hazards, but I have not acquired sufficient factual data to make a scientific claim that landfills are not environmental hazards. Before I'm called to testify before Congress on the subject, I will have to do some research. (I'm being facetious.) Another example of bias is my desire for eternal life, ultimate justice, and everlasting joy. I do not allow this desire

for a particular outcome to affect my judgment about the facts of reality. (Compare a religious person.) An example of a personal myth is my belief that I am a good father. I do have sufficient data to make the psychological claim that I am a good father. In other words, this particular personal myth is true. A myth may be true or false. I enjoy a personal myth or "belief cluster" under the title "I am a good father." Other people share this personal myth or belief cluster, but are sadly (for their children) mistaken. An example of a cultural myth is my belief that the United States is the greatest country on earth. Again, I have sufficient data to make the political claim that America is the greatest country on earth.

(3) Another spiritual value is the ability to refrain from acting upon one's emotions long enough to evaluate them.

(4) Goethe said something like, "Be a passionate man who is master of his passions." Having this capacity is a spiritual value.

(5) All knowledge is a spiritual value. A subcategory of knowledge is the knowledge of the source of ideas. For example, some people know that Kant invented the idea that having an interest in the outcome of an action renders the action, in so far as the action is dependent upon that interest, non-moral. Examples of this idea in our culture are plentiful. For example, if a businessman might profit from his philanthropy by getting a tax deduction, our culture is inclined to deny the philanthropist the gratitude he is due. The idea is ridiculous. What did Kant know anyway and why should we believe him? There are many foolish ideas in our culture that have their source in one individual. Knowing the individual source of ideas allows one to examine the idea in its original form, to study the arguments, and to judge the idea and arguments.

(6) The ability to manage the faculties of imagination, memory, and actuality is a spiritual value. We live between birth and death. Therefore, death awaits us. Imagination, uncontrolled, can lead us to suffer a thousand deaths and deny us happiness in the present. Memory can be a source of guilt or pride. Atoning for guilt and enjoying well-earned pride will lead to a happier now. Enjoying your sacred present, when that time comes, is a crucial

spiritual value. (This idea is elaborated in my essay *The Tiger and the Strawberry* online and in the October 2000 newsletter also available online.)

In summary, among the spiritual values are good character, objective awareness of mental contents, the ability to evaluate your emotions before acting upon them, emotional expression, knowledge, and the ability to manage the faculties of imagination, memory, and actuality.

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**What you should know:**

Spiritual values include:

- Good character
- Objective awareness of mental contents
- The ability to evaluate your emotions before acting upon them
- The ability to be a passionate person who is master of his passion (Goethe)
- Knowledge
- The ability to manage imagination, memory, and actuality

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**February 2002 Celebration:**

Welcome  
Welcoming Ceremony—Scott  
Induction of New Members—Martin  
Celebration of Freedom—?  
Celebration of Visitors—  
Celebration of Each Other—  
Celebratory Announcements—  
Celebration of Heroes—Kaitlin  
Celebration of Literature—Tom  
Celebration of Art/Personal Mission—Chris  
Oratory—"Your Sacred Present" by Martin  
Closing Quotation—

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**FOR's Potluck**

FOR's potluck is scheduled for Saturday, January 19, 2002 at 7 p.m. at Martin's house.

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**FOR's Youth Group Ice Breaker**

FOR's youth group is meeting for the first time on Saturday, January 26, 2002 at 11 a.m. at IceForum, 2300 Satellite Boulevard NW, Duluth, GA. Adults and kids invited.

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**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.

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**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
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**Contact information:**

To receive e-mail notice of FOR's activities send your e-mail address to [mlcowen@mindspring.com](mailto: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](mailto:mlcowen@mindspring.com)

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