

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.

Reason and Emotion

Man the rational animal evolved from a non-rational prehuman animal. The process of evolution of man goes back 7 million years—the age of the earliest fossil evidence of hominids. The accretion of reason to the non-rational prehuman animal required millions of years of evolution. The process continues. Most of the prerational systems by which early humanoids survived exist today in man. (All life, other than human beings, survives by employing nonrational systems—photosynthesis or the fright-flight response, for example.) The rational faculty might be conceived as "the tip of the iceberg" of human survival systems. Emotions are a part of the subsurface of the iceberg of which reason is the supersurface tip.

A rational person should have an awareness of and respect, if not reverence, for his nonrational subsystems.

Rationality must include the successful management of those subsystems. Success is defined as health and happiness, i.e. human flourishing.

Human beings have been aware of their rational faculty for less than 3,000 years—only about 100 generations. The science of psychology—as a science separate from philosophy—has existed for only 100 years.

The great struggles in the history of ideas have been between enthusiasts of two different survival systems—reason and emotion.

The Enlightenment was the age of reason. Romanticism with its emphasis on emotion was a reaction to the age of reason.

The battle between science and religion—raging even today—is a struggle between reason and emotion. This claim requires some explanation. Religion arises because people want eternal life, ultimate justice, and bliss (pure happiness). Religions invent stories that promise these three values. Science undermines religions' stories by looking at the facts of reality and finding no evidence to support them.

A new type of human being shall become dominant in the 21st century and I don't mean dominant in the sense of ruling, but in the sense of being more numerous, favored, a preferred type. The *new human being* will be aware that there is no legitimate war between reason and emotion. Both are human survival systems and both are required for human survival.

The *new human being* will have an eye for his inner states. The intentionally self-aware individual is a new phenomenon. People, mostly, never examine their mental contents. Most people do not regard the contents of consciousness as material to be identified, understood, judged, and manipulated by their rational faculty. The *new human being* will.

The *new human being* will come into existence simply by choice of the individual. Anyone can become aware of this issue and choose to regard his mental contents as data to be analyzed to a purpose. That purpose is human health and happiness.

How does one regard his emotions as data? Some examples:

Opera—I have always had the sense that something important was going on with opera. After all, thousands of people love this art form. I have felt left out since I do not enjoy opera. I now think that the purpose of opera is to elicit powerful emotions in a socially acceptable forum. Adultery, rape, incest, betrayal, murder, and tragedy are some of the themes of opera. In order to enjoy opera I must open myself to the experience. I must allow the artists (the creators of the opera from composer to performer) to cause in me the intended experiences. I must not resist the pathos.

In the preceding paragraph I perform the act of regarding my emotions (those emotions intended to be elicited by opera) as data. By going to an opera, I am intentionally manipulating my emotions by allowing the opera to elicit certain intense emotions.

Protestants—WASPs¹ are an unemotional bunch of people. They are opposed as a matter of taste to displays of emotion. Psychologically, relative lack of emotional affect is undesirable. WASPs would be a happier group of people if they were more expressive of emotions. Latin peoples—Italians and Hispanics—are probably healthier in this respect.

When a Protestant becomes aware of his unemotionalism and acts to overcome his youthful training he is regarding his emotions as data subject to manipulation to a purpose—greater happiness.

These are two examples. There are thousands, perhaps millions. Every conscious (as opposed to unconscious) content of consciousness is subject to this kind of scrutiny.

The desire to live, the desire for justice, and the desire for bliss (perfect happiness) are THE fundamental drivers of human life. Without them an individual would cease to be; he would commit suicide. Each of these drivers is a DESIRE, that is, an emotion. Reason serves these desires. Reason is therefore in service of emotions².

While we are a fellowship of REASON, reason is not our ultimate goal or an end in itself. An emotion is our ultimate goal and reason serves that emotion. That emotion—our reason to be—is happiness.

"Be a passionate man who is master of his passions."
Goethe.

¹ White Anglo-Saxon Protestants. This is my own gene pool. I speak from unemotional experience.

² That reason serves emotions should not be taken to mean that emotions rule. Not so. Emotions guide and motivate. Reason rules. Health and happiness are the goals of reason.

What you should know:

- The rational faculty is unique to mankind.
- The rational faculty is a recent accretion to human beings.
- Man's awareness of his possession of this faculty is only 3,000 years old.
- Reason is only one of man's survival systems.
- Man possesses many other survival systems from his prerational days that remain functional and vital.
- The emotions are a survival subsystem in human beings.
- In the short (only 100 generations) history of ideas, primary battles have been fought between enthusiasts of one survival system—reason—and another—emotions.
- The Enlightenment represented reason. Romanticism represented emotions.
- The battle between science and religion is a battle between reason and emotions.
- Religions exist because human beings want three things: 1) eternal life; 2) ultimate justice; and 3) eternal bliss (perfect joy).
- The new human being will realize there is no proper war between reason and emotions and will come to attend to his mental contents as data to be identified, understood, judged, and manipulated.
- A purpose of art, including opera, is to elicit emotional responses in a controlled, socially acceptable setting.
- Protestants might become aware of their unemotionalism and modify themselves.
- The goal of reason is health and happiness.
- Reason's means of achieving health and happiness is the identification, understanding, judging, and manipulation of both internal (contents of consciousness) and external (facts of reality) data.

Special Reminder

March 31, 2002 is the last day to become a charter member of the Fellowship of Reason, Inc. There are a few holdouts out there—longtime friends of FOR who should join us!

April 2002 Celebration:

Welcome—
Celebration of Freedom—?
Induction of New Members—Martin
Celebration of Visitors—
Celebration of Each Other—
Celebratory Announcements—
Celebration of Personal Mission—Theresa
Celebration of Heroes—?
Celebration of Literature—Randy (video)
Celebration of Art—?
Celebration of Talent—?
Oratory—?
Closing Quotation—

FOR's Potluck

FOR's potluck is scheduled for Saturday, March 16, 2002 at 7 p.m. at Chris' house. Go to the Reason Yahoo! Group for directions.

FOR's Café Conversation

FOR's café conversation takes place this month on Saturday, March 23, 2002, at 11 a.m. at Après Diem.

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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FOR's First Election for Board of Trustees

After Celebration on Sunday, April 7, 2002, at 2:15 p.m. Members of FOR, Inc. as of February 1, 2002, will elect four new members of the Board of Trustees from among five nominees.

2002 Membership Information:

29 members as of 3-14-02 and 1 newsletter-only subscriber and 1 substantial donor

- 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 viewed online at www.kindreason.com

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