

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. We study ethics.

I was Wrong! Work is not the Meaning of Your Life.

Human beings face two fundamental problems: the problem of survival and the problem of meaning. Objectivism claims that Work¹ can and should simultaneously solve both problems. I have taken this position. I was wrong.

Three solutions exist: (1) One can solve the problem of survival and leave the problem of meaning unsolved. (2) One can solve the problems of survival and meaning simultaneously with Work. (3) One can solve the problem of survival with work or wealth or family support or alms and the problem of meaning with non-work related action.

(1) One can solve the problem of survival and leave the problem of meaning unsolved.

Some people spend their lives working hard at an unsatisfying job, make a lot of money, and buy consumer goods as compensation for their misery. The movie *Fight Club* illustrates such a person. The protagonist works for an insurance company. His job is shown to be ignoble and therefore without meaning. He spends his time looking at ads for consumer goods in magazines. He buys the goods. His life is bereft of meaning.

To leave the problem of meaning unsolved is the greatest tragedy of life.

(2) One can solve the problems of survival and meaning simultaneously with Work.

¹ Objectivism's use of the word Work is not conventional. Work, as commonly used, signifies an activity engaged in for pay not necessarily and often not pleasurable. I capitalize Work to emphasize its extreme importance in Objectivist theory and to indicate that particular type of work that happily solves the problems of survival and meaning simultaneously.

The heroes of *The Fountainhead* and *Atlas Shrugged* have no problem identifying their missions in life. Howard Roark knows from a young age that he wants to be an architect. Dagny Taggart knows she wants to run the railroad. Ayn Rand's heroes have no problem discovering their personal life missions and they are ultimately successful in making a commercial success of their missions. In the real world not everyone experiences this outcome.

Many people don't know what their personal life mission should be. Those who know are sometimes unable to make a commercial success of their mission. While the failure to make a commercial success of one's life mission may be a deficiency of performance by the actor, the failure may also be the result of the absence of a market for one's dream. The unrecognized artist is a good example. Only after his death was Van Gogh recognized as a great artist.

A reason many people don't know their life mission is cultural. Modern American culture assigns enormous value to solving the problem of survival *well*. Thus, many parents want their children to become doctors or lawyers because these professions are well paid and otherwise held in high esteem, even if their children have no interest in these professions. No cultural institutions exist, other than the Fellowship of Reason®, that encourage or assist young people to find and pursue their dreams. Everyone is taught skills for *work*, skills that will enable them to become "productive members of society." People are *not* taught how to find and actualize their proper destiny.

(3) One can solve the problem of survival with work or wealth or family support (being a housewife, for example) or alms² and the problem of meaning with non-work related action.

This solution is perhaps the most practical. A would-be novelist cannot on the first day he puts pen to

² The Fellowship of Reason®, in the case of able-bodied adults, does not endorse solving the problem of survival with alms, i.e. welfare, whether familial, private, or governmental. An able-bodied human being cannot fully realize himself while living on welfare.

paper earn money as a writer. He will have to be a waiter at night and write during the day.

The housewife (or househusband) is another example. Many people choose to make human beings as the meaning of their life. A housewife can perform her personal mission in life and need not work outside the home if she has a husband who supports her at home while she raises the children³.

The claim that one's work is the meaning of life is false and misleading. The claim leads one who must merely "work" in order to survive to feel guilty that he has been unable to find his "Work." One *might* be able to solve the problems of survival and meaning with the same activity, but many people do not and one need not. It is perfectly legitimate and eminently practical to solve the problem of survival and the problem of meaning through different activities. Both problems, though, must be solved!

What you should know:

- There are two fundamental problems human beings face: the problems of survival and meaning.
- One can solve the problem of survival and leave the problem of meaning unsolved—life's greatest tragedy.
- One can solve the problems of survival and meaning simultaneously with one activity that I call Work with a capital "W."
- One can solve the problem of survival with work or otherwise and the problem of meaning by non-work related action. This solution is common, practical, and moral.

FOR's 2nd Annual River Rafting Adventure

Members and friends of FOR, Inc. will descend the Ocoee River on Saturday, July 13, 2002. We are renting two houses on Friday and Saturday night.

³ Raising children is not "work" as commonly understood, though political correctness mandates the application of that word to this activity. Being a parent is a noble *vocation*, not an *occupation*.

August 4, 2002 Celebration:

- Welcome—
- Celebration of Freedom—
- Celebration of Visitors—
- Celebration of Each Other—
- Celebratory Announcements—
- Celebration of Art—
- Celebration of Heroes—Chris Snider
- Celebration of Literature—
- Celebration of Personal Mission—
- Celebration of Talent—
- Oratory—
- Non-celebratory announcements—
- Closing Quotation—

Invisible College

Dr. Glenn Magee is lecturing on Modernity every Wednesday night at 7:30 p.m. at Vera's Intellectual Salon. Price: \$60 per month. Call Vera at 404-577-7968 for more information. In August this event will move to Thursday nights.

FOR's Pub Night

Members and friends of FOR, Inc. meet on the 4th Tuesday of every month at Manuel's Tavern at 8 p.m. for adult beverages and adult conversation. FOR's next pub night is Tuesday, July 23, 2002, at 8 p.m.

Philosophy Tapes

Philosophy tapes are played to a small private audience of ten or less people in the living room of a volunteer on the 1st and 3rd Tuesdays of each month. The next playing is at Sally's house on Tuesday, August July 16, 2002, at 7:30 p.m. Free.

Philosophy Café

Attend Steve Stoke's Philosophy Café at Border's in Buckhead on the second Wednesday of every month at 8 p.m. and at the Barnes and Noble Bookstore in Duluth on the third Wednesday of every month at 8 p.m.

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

Contact information:

To talk to somebody about FOR call Vera at 404-577-7968 or Martin at 770-471-9800 or Dan at 770-831-3010.

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@yahoogroups.com

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

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

How can you help support the Fellowship of Reason, Inc., the world's first and only reason-based moral community?

If you would like to support our activities, including our building fund, please consider these opportunities:

1. Attend our activities
2. Perform at Celebration
3. Recruit a person of like-mind and values
4. Bring donuts
5. Volunteer your home for a pot luck or other activity
6. Donate cash or property
7. Make a testamentary gift
8. Subscribe to our monthly newsletter
9. Become a regular member
10. Become a contributing member
11. Become a lifetime member
12. Locate and help us apply for a public or private grant

Please make money donations by check payable to Fellowship of Reason, Inc. and mail them to 8188 Pembroke Terrace, Jonesboro, GA 30236-4179.

To make a Last Will and Testament with a gift to FOR, Inc. contact your attorney. If you live in Georgia, Martin L. Cowen III, Attorney at Law, without charge, will prepare and supervise the execution (inside the perimeter or within 10 miles outside of I-285) of a simple will with a minimum unrestricted testamentary gift to FOR, Inc. of \$1,000. Call 770-471-9800 for more information. This offer may be withdrawn at anytime without notice. Mr. Cowen, a license Georgia attorney, and not FOR, Inc., is solely responsible for any legal services rendered by him with or without charge.
