

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.

The Shape of Life

When we reach the age of 30, 40, 50, 60, 70, or 80 our life can be seen to have had distinct periods or shapes. For example, the periods of childhood, adolescence, and young adulthood might stand out. Certainly, most of us recognize the "college phase" of our lives as a distinct and wonderful time. For those of us who have had multiple significant romantic relationships, each of those periods can be mentally isolated and considered. Periods of employment by X Corporation or in Y profession can be examined in the abstract.

These shapes or periods of life are not accidental. The period called childhood is necessitated by our natures and features strong parental guidance and control. The "college phase" is culturally determined. The married life has a model set by culture, but has roots in human nature, mainly the requirements of parenthood.

Some periods of life are determined by tastes. For example, Linda and I had a boating phase in our life. Some people have a football stage or an opera period or a theater phase. Some people have the mountain cabin phase.

Parents of adult children will recognize that phase of their lives during which they raised their offspring.

It is customary to consider shape of life after the fact. It is *not* customary to consider the shape of life in advance of undertaking one of life's adventures.

Some might argue that it is more fun just to plunge into these adventures without reflection. Without taking up that argument, I assume for the sake of this essay that it is better to live consciously.

I propose that we consider the shape of our lifetime adventures before the fact.

Among the considerations about any of the periods or shapes of life are these:

1. **What is the duration?** Lifetime, 20 years, 10 years? Some readers of this newsletter are between 50 and 85 years of age. We have fewer years ahead than behind. We can establish for ourselves an end game of 10 or 20 years. My end game is to raise my two young children to self-sufficient adulthood; to see FOR to 1,000 members; and to establish a Reason Academy under the auspices of FOR, Inc. for children K-12.
2. **Is it a pastime or a project?** Some people may be planning to live with someone. When I was in my 20s I did this for about 7 years. For me it was an unprofitable pastime. Call me old fashioned—I've been married for 20 years—but marriage is preferable to living together. Marriage or lifetime commitment is most people's ultimate goal. Living together interferes with that goal. The primary value of marriage when you are young is to provide a safe, legally protected environment for children. After the age of children, marriage provides a legal commitment to a life partnership. A married couple can, literally, survive more effectively than can an aging single.
3. **The period will have a beginning, middle, and an end.** The beginning of parenting is total shock to find that your life has changed forever. Adolescent children who think you are an idiot define the middle. The end is a period of depression called the empty nest syndrome. Parenting is not for sissies.
4. **The adventure can be well done or not.** Some of the readers of this newsletter are looking for new careers as a result of the effects of the Great Depression of the 21st century. The period of unemployment will be looked back upon as a distinct life experience. Establishing criteria for success in the effort of finding a job in this new environment is difficult. We have been living for

the last 60 years in an economy that provided full employment for anyone who wanted to work. Our generation—anybody less than 70 years old—has no experience with an economy that may not have a job for everyone! In a depression survival is an issue and any job is a success. In a boom economy one can afford the luxury of looking for a job that is or closely matches one's personal mission in life. Defining success today involves one's assumptions about the current down turn.

5. **The project or pastime can have a right time.** The time to study philosophy seriously is after we are 30 years old. Before that age we have insufficient life experience to understand the issues. The time to have children arrives when we can support and nurture them properly—certainly post high school!
6. **Does the project involve moral responsibilities?** Friendship is a project that involves moral responsibilities, among them loyalty. Like marriage, communities of friends are a survival unit. Moral communities of friends, again literally, survive more effectively than do individual units or isolated couples.
7. **Is it something about which we can learn in advance?** Most of life's adventures are well-traveled paths. Studying the experiences of those who have gone before us is valuable and fun. Bookstores in fact are organized around providing instruction for life's adventures: the child care section, the self-improvement section, the astronomy section, the philosophy section, the French language section, and the boating section.
8. **Can it be taught?** Some of us have continuing adult education as a lifetime project. We have hired a Ph.D. to teach us in the Invisible College.

All of us are engaged in a period of life that features the Fellowship of Reason®. What is the length of our involvement? What are the beginning, the middle, and the end to look like? Is it a pastime or a project? What is the measure of our success? Is the time right for FOR? Do we have any moral responsibilities to our friends? Is there someone from whom we can learn? Can anyone teach us anything?

All of the shapes or periods of life can take an overall shape and that shape is the shape of our life as a whole. Some people have lives that are a mess. Others' lives are works of art—that is, works of human effort and intention, rather than of chance. It is only the life as art of which we can be proud.

February Birthdays

Michael—February 5

Tom Hall—February 6

Ellen—February 23

March Birthdays

Larry—March 3

Scott—March 4

Peter—March 22

Celebration, March 2, 2003

Welcome—**David Z.**
Celebration of Freedom—
Celebration of Visitors—
Celebration of Each Other—
Celebratory Announcements—
Celebration of Personal Mission—
Celebration of Performance Art (skit)—
Celebration of Heroes—**Nick**
Celebration of Literature—**Randy**
Celebration of Art—**Michael**
Celebration of Talent—**Ellen**
Oratory—**David Z.**
Announcements—
Closing Quotation—**David Z.**

Philosophy Tapes

Philosophy tapes are played to a small private audience 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, March 4, 2003, at 7:30 p.m. Free.

Invisible College

Dr. Glenn Magee is lecturing every Thursday night at 7:30 p.m. at Vera's Intellectual Salon. Price: \$60 per month. Call Vera at 404-577-7968 for more information.

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.

FOR's Film Night

Members and friends of FOR, Inc. enjoy a monthly movie night at John's studio using his extraordinary equipment. FOR's next movie night is Saturday, March 1, 2003. Arrive at 6:30 p.m. Doors will be locked for safety! Movie starts at 7:15 p.m. Free.

FOR's Pub Night

Members and friends of FOR, Inc. meet on the 4th Wednesday of every month at Manuel's Tavern at 8 p.m. for adult beverages and adult conversation. FOR's next pub night is Wednesday, February 27, 2003, at 8 p.m.

FOR's Potluck dinner

Our next monthly potluck is Saturday, March 15, 2003, at 7 p.m. at Vera and Michael's house. Please remember to bring something good to eat or drink.

Celebration Schedule

- **Sunday, March 2, 2003**
- Sunday, April 6, 2003
- Sunday, May 4, 2003
- Sunday, June 1, 2003
- Sunday, July 6, 2003
- Sunday, August 3, 2003
- Sunday, September 7, 2003
- Sunday, October 5, 2003
- Sunday, November 2, 2003
- Sunday, December 7, 2003
- Sunday, January 4, 2004
- Sunday, February 1, 2004

Membership Information:

FOR, Inc. has 42 members.

- Regular membership: \$35 per year if paid prior to October 31, 2003
- Contributing membership: \$70 per year if paid prior to October 31, 2003
- Lifetime membership: \$700 if paid prior to October 31, 2003

Contact information:

Visit us on the web at www.fellowshipofreason.com

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

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

Make checks payable to Fellowship of Reason, Inc. and mail them to 8188 Pembroke Terrace, Jonesboro, GA 30236-4179. Use PayPal on the web at www.fellowshipofreason.com

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 any time without notice. Mr. Cowen, a licensed Georgia attorney, and not FOR, Inc., is solely responsible for any legal services rendered by him with or without charge.

Sponsors

Members of FOR, Inc. are entitled to a 10% labor discount at AutoStop.

Thanks, Dan, from FOR, Inc.!
