
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.

Homily

"The tragedy of life does not lie in not reaching your goal. The tragedy of life lies in having no goal to reach."
Benjamin E. Mays

The Ego Trip

Years ago we ordered pizza to be delivered to the house. The doorbell rang and I was disturbed to see a Sheriff's deputy of my acquaintance standing there. I wondered what business the Sheriff's Department had with us that evening. Were we making too much noise? Was a neighborhood crime being investigated? Did he have a warrant for my arrest? Then I realized that he had a pizza in his hand and the shirt of a delivery boy. The Sheriff's deputy was moonlighting as a pizza delivery boy to earn extra money at Christmas!

I felt shame for this hard working man. My emotional reaction was that he suffered a significant diminishment in status from Sheriff's deputy by working part-time as a pizza delivery boy.

On the other hand, I recall that architect Howard Roark, the hero of Ayn Rand's *The Fountainhead*, worked at hard labor in a quarry. I recall that John Galt, the genius inventor of *Atlas Shrugged*, worked as an engine wiper.

I knew then, as I know now, that the shame I felt for the Sheriff's deputy was inappropriate. I should have felt *admiration* for his courage, integrity, productivity, and independence.

In this case I behaved like a social metaphysician. (That's a bad thing!) I cared more about what other people think than about the reality of this man's

economic circumstances and his willingness to address those circumstances with action.

We judge ourselves (esteem ourselves) by a variety of standards:

- The size of our bank accounts
- The size of our houses
- The size of our motorhomes (Nascar fans)
- The size of our boats
- The number of gadgets we own
- The size of our golf scores (the smaller the better in this case)
- The labels in our clothes
- The quantity and quality of jewelry we own and display
- The size of our vocabularies
- The size of our IQs
- The quality of our education
- The beauty of our appearance
- The prestige of our jobs
- Our moral characters
- The clarity of our thinking

Within specific contexts and in appropriate hierarchies all of these categories of judgment are fine. Here is an example of a specific context: if our hobby is golf and we strive to improve our game over time, we ought to experience pride (self-esteem) upon improvement.

The position of the category of judgment (e.g. hobbies) in a hierarchy of values ought to be remembered, as well. The category of judgment, hobbies, is not as important as the category of judgment, character.

Some of the categories of judgment listed above will be included in everyone's categories. We all judge our own moral characters. Only the golfers among us care about golf scores.

Social metaphysics is the practice of holding the opinions of other people higher in importance than our own judgments. Other people actually care little or nothing about us. My interest in the "diminished status" of the Sheriff's deputy is only memorable to me because I feel personal shame for having had that reaction to an admirable man.

Social metaphysics is a block to starting a new career. This is a widespread problem because starting a new career is very common these days. I am already on my second career as house husband and stay-at-home dad. I fully expect to have third and fourth careers after my children are grown.

Were I to order the list of possible self-judgments above (*and we must all order them for ourselves*), I would arrange them like this (most important to least):

1. My moral character
2. The clarity of my thinking
3. The quality of my education
4. The prestige of my job
5. My vocabulary
6. My appearance
7. The size of my bank account
8. The size of my IQ
9. My stuff (houses, motorhomes, boats, gadgets, clothes, jewelry)
10. My golf score

I emphasize that this is my personal hierarchy. I am not arguing that this is the right hierarchy for everyone, except for 1 and 2. I do argue that moral character and clarity of thinking ought to be numbers 1 and 2 for everyone. Why? Moral character and clear thinking are necessary for everyone in order to flourish.

As indicated above, moral character and clarity of thinking are more important than the prestige of one's job.

My current job is that of house husband and stay-at-home dad. When those jobs are completed, I hope to start a new career. Perforce, I will start that career at the bottom. The bottom of any new career has no prestige. If the career is something I want to do, I hope I will derive much pleasure from embarking on that path. Eventually, I would hope to attain some prestige in that career.

I hope that my lingering social metaphysical tendencies will not impede my efforts to start a new career.

The transition into a new career is always an ego trip. We must move from a top in knowledge, income, and prestige, to the bottom in knowledge, income, and prestige. We must be prepared to start over, often times at a place reminiscent of our teenage or early twenty years. If we think clearly about our context and the hierarchy of our values,

we will remember that the moral virtues of productivity, rationality, pride, independence, integrity, justice, honesty, and courage, are more important than "prestige." We will remember that our context is beginner. We cannot reasonably expect the perks associated with a career top. If we think clearly about these issues, then we are more likely to do what needs doing.

August Birthdays

August 1	Beth Holley
August 18	Carlos Franco
August 18	Dunham McAllister
August 24	Edward Culver
August 28	Tom Welch
August 31	Nicholas Wittgen

September Birthdays

September 16	Steve Lewis
September 25	Mark Barr

Celebration, September 7, 2003

Special program: George Sossenکو

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, August 19, 2003, at 7:30 p.m. Free.

Invisible College

The Invisible College meets every Thursday beginning on Thursday, September 4, 2003, 7:30 p.m. at Vera's Intellectual Salon. Price: \$60 per month. Call Vera at 404-577-7968 for more information. September's subject will be American philosopher William James.

The 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 Pub Night

Members and friends of FOR, Inc. meet on the 4th Thursday of every month at Manuel's Tavern at 8 p.m. for adult beverages and adult conversation. FOR's next pub night is Thursday, August 28, 2003, at 8 p.m.

Second Annual Bozart Festival

Our next monthly potluck is Saturday, September 20, 2003, at 7 p.m. at Scott Carper's clubhouse. Please remember to bring something good to eat or drink.

Please contribute your own artistic creation. See our web site for exciting details!

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, August 23, 2003. Arrive at 6:30 p.m. Doors will be locked for safety! Movie starts at 7:15 p.m. Free.

A Philosophy Café

Attend Steve Lewis's philosophy café at Border's in Duluth on the first Wednesday of every month at 7 p.m.

Celebration Schedule

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

Membership Information:

FOR, Inc. has 50 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 and a tax-exempt 501(c)(3) 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 (FOR, Inc. is a tax-exempt 501(c)(3) corporation and donations are tax deductible.)
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.!
