

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 ART OF BEING HUMAN:

The Five G's

Art, Ayn Rand said, is the selective re-creation of reality according to the artist's metaphysical value judgments. Our lives, I say, are the selective re-creation of ourselves according to our metaphysical value judgments.

Since our lives are artifacts—creations of ourselves—it is sensible to ask what might be the components of the work. In painting the artist must choose among various kinds of paint (oil or watercolor for instance), colors, textures, and a subject. In sculpture the sculptor must choose a material and shape. In music the composer must choose instruments and arrangements of sounds. In composing our lives, we may choose from among the following elements. This list is not exhaustive.

Gratitude: A mental posture of gratitude is a character trait that we might choose. The opposite of gratitude is ingratitude or envy or resentment. Notice that the habit of gratitude (or the habit of resentment and envy) is not mandated by reality, but a true human choice. Anybody alive in America today has a lot for which to be grateful: freedom, prosperity, great medical care, and more opportunities than can be experienced in a lifetime. On the other hand, we, the artists of our lives, need not choose this attitude. We can choose envy and resentment. We can elect to resent Bill Gates' 46 billion dollars. We can choose to envy anyone and everyone who has achieved more than we have.

There are plenty of people of both types—the grateful, the resentful, and the envious—all around us. The choice is entirely up to us.

Grace: Refinement of action and speech can be chosen. Or we may prefer to be habitually crude. Again, it is entirely optional. Reality does not dictate the choice. Whether we are gracious or crude, there will be many people of both types with whom we can associate and trade.

Generosity: The fundamental human need beyond food and shelter is to manifest ourselves in reality, to objectify our inner selves, to reify our imaginings. "To become who you are" is its own reward. Being *ourselves* is an end in itself. Since a crucial part of self-manifestation is the recognition by others of ourselves in our external creations, our manifestations will almost always be public. One does not write the great American novel to be read by the author alone. One does not create a symphony for one's private enjoyment. One does not prepare a sumptuous feast to dine alone. Most self-manifestations are designed to please others. Often such acts are called "generosity." Generosity is the act of giving value (a person's time, effort, work, or property) to an individual or organization without legal right to or expectation of specific immediate return, as an expression of the giver's values.

The opposite behavior is to avoid having one's self-manifestations benefit others—miserliness. The psychological visibility of a miser is dramatically reduced and decidedly negative.

A traditional example of generosity is the giving of money to a "save the children foundation." Such a gift is an expression of the giver's value that there be no or reduced suffering in the world.

A volunteer who performs a valuable function within the organization of the Fellowship of Reason is expressing the giver's value that a reason-based moral community exist on earth in the volunteer's lifetime.

Goodwill: Goodwill (benevolence) is the recognition that other people are we. Goodwill manifests in action by treating others as we would like to be treated by another in similar circumstances.

The opposite disposition is malevolence—regarding and acting towards others in manner that does not fully respect their humanness.

Growth: As adults we can grow in knowledge, in refinement, in experience, in taste, in character, in ability. An option is to choose to grow in one or all of these ways. The opposite of growth is decay. We are free to choose not to grow, to dry up, to diminish, to decay, to decline unto death.

These five Gs—gratitude, grace, generosity, goodwill, and growth—are among the colors on the palate from which we will create our lives. We can use these colors, others, or their opposites.

So will we be a grateful, gracious, generous, growing, and benevolent person or will we be a resentful, crude, miserly, declining, and malevolent one? Hum? I wonder. The choice is entirely up to us.

December Birthdays

December 21	Bill Greene
December 22	George Sossenko
December 25	Marianna Long
December 27	Leanna Ampola
December 29	Andrew Stallard
December 30	Mike Brady

January Birthdays

January 18	Vera Norman
January 30	Mark Sulkowski
January 31	Sally Hull

FORUM Schedule

- **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
 - Sunday, October 3, 2004
 - Sunday, November 5, 2004
 - Sunday, December 5, 2004
-

FORUM, January 4, 2004: 1st Sunday

Remember: Time limits will be vigorously enforced!

Welcome—**Martin**

Celebration of Freedom—

Celebration of Visitors—

Celebration of Each Other—

Celebratory Announcements—

Welcoming Ceremony—**Ellen Lewit** for John Brady

Celebration of Heroes—

Celebration of Personal Mission—

Celebration of Talent—**Jerry Pease**

Oratory—**Martin Cowen**

Forum—Dan (moderated discussion)

Announcements—

Closing Quotation—

Philosophy Tapes: 1st/3rd Tuesdays

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, January 6, 2004, at 7:30 p.m. Free.

Invisible College: Every Monday

The Invisible College meets every Monday at 7:30 p.m. at Vera's Intellectual Salon. Price: \$60 per 4 weeks payable to Professor Kipton Jensen. Call Vera at 404-577-7968 for more information.

The Philosophy Café: 2nd/3rd Wednesdays

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: 4th Wednesday

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, January 28, 2004, at 8 p.m.

FOR's January Potluck: 3rd Saturday

Members and friends of FOR, Inc. meet on the 3rd Saturday of every month for a potluck supper. Bring something good to eat or drink to share. Our next potluck is on Saturday, January 17, 2004, at 7 p.m. at John and Beth's house.

FOR's Book Club: 2nd Tuesday

Members and friends of FOR, Inc. meet on the 2nd Tuesday of every month at John and Beth's house to discuss a marvelous book. Beth Holley is the coordinator of book club. 404-754-7519.

FOR's Film Night: 5th Saturday

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, January 31, 2004. Arrive at 6:30 p.m. Doors will be locked for safety! Movie starts at 7:15 p.m. Free.

Dan Barber's Self-Esteem Course

“Self-esteem is easily lost, and it does not return on its own accord. We must first understand what it is and how it works in order to build it back up. The Pillars of Self-Esteem course is a very important opportunity to facilitate changes in the basic patterns of the behavior that whittles the important self-esteem down to nothing. If you understand the importance, or are just curious, you will find this interesting and relevant information. This is a free

interactive course that only requires your participation and commitment.”

Second and third Monday night throughout 2003. (1st and 3rd Monday starting in January) at 7:30 in Borders bookstore cafe Buford. Across from the Mall of Georgia.

For more info contact Dan at 770-831-3010

A Philosophy Café: 1st Wednesday

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

Membership Information:

FOR, Inc. has 50 members.

- Regular membership: \$35 per year if paid prior to October 31, 2004
- Contributing membership: \$70 per year if paid prior to October 31, 2004
- Lifetime membership: \$700 if paid prior to October 31, 2004

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 Forum
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.

Visit www.paypal.com and make a payment to "pay@fellowshipofreson.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.!
