



The official newsletter of
Fellowship of Reason, Inc.

Five Questions with... Nathaniel Branden

Psychotherapist, Author of The Six Pillars of Self-Esteem

Interview by Chris Snider

Nathaniel Branden is a psychotherapist and a pioneering expert in the psychology of self-esteem. He's also one of the founders of Objectivism, the philosophy originated by the late novelist Ayn Rand (*The Fountainhead*, *Atlas Shrugged*).

As a young man, Branden became a disciple and colleague of Rand; in fact, they had a long-running romantic affair (both were married at the time and had informed their spouses at the start of the relationship). Both Branden and his first wife Barbara have published riveting accounts of those years: he in *Judgment Day* (republished as *My Years with Ayn Rand*); she in *The Passion of Ayn Rand* (which was adapted as a film-for-cable starring Eric Stoltz as Branden, Julie Delpy as Barbara and Helen Mirren as Rand).

Branden's association with Rand ended messily in 1968, and in the aftermath he became persona non grata to much of the Objectivist community. Undeterred, Branden continued in his already successful career as a psychotherapist, and emerged as a force to be reckoned with in the then-burgeoning self-esteem movement, publishing several books and lecturing all around the world.

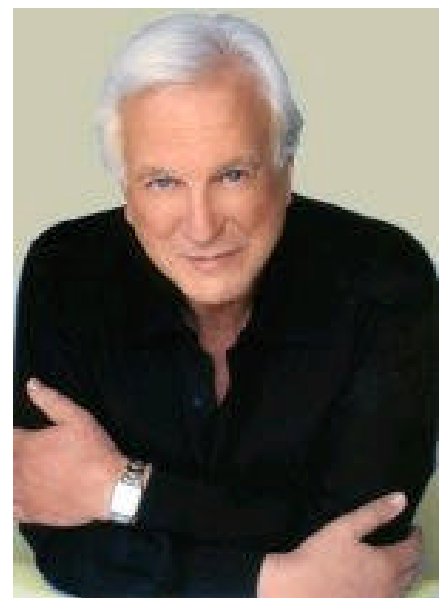
Dr. Branden, now 75, lives and works in Beverly Hills, California. For a more in-depth exploration of his views on self-esteem, read his landmark book *The Six Pillars of Self-Esteem*. Visit his official website at <http://www.nathanielbranden.net>.

Q: Can you define very quickly what you mean by "self-esteem"?

Nathaniel Branden: I define self-esteem as: the disposition to experience oneself as competent to cope with the basic challenges of life and as being worthy of happiness.

Q: Do you think that most of the social problems in the world today are self-esteem issues?

Nathaniel Branden: I think self-esteem problems are prevalent throughout the world today, but I would not want to say that "most of the social problems in the world today are self-esteem issues." Life is too complex for generalities of that kind.



Nathaniel Branden

Q: How well do your concepts on self-esteem translate into other cultures? For example, could *The Six Pillars* be published in the Arab world, or in Asia, and be used just as easily by individuals in those societies?

Nathaniel Branden: In my chapter on self-esteem and culture, in *The Six Pillars of Self-Esteem*, I argue that the six pillars are universals, applicable to humans in any cultures, and I spell out my reasons in detail. Of course there are cultures in which the ideas in *The Six Pillars* of

Individual Highlights

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Toastmasters: \$148 Member Benefit

Special Offer to FOR Members Only

The Fellowship of Reason, Inc. will refund your Toastmaster® membership dues up to \$148 on the following conditions:

- (1) you must be a member of the Fellowship of Reason, Inc. and remain a member until all conditions are completed;
- (2) you must join a Toastmaster® club after this offer and achieve Competent Toastmaster status;
- (3) you must give an Oratory at Forum; and,
- (4) you must keep and deliver to FOR, Inc. your receipts for dues.

If you comply with these conditions, FOR, Inc. will reimburse you for your actual Toastmaster® dues up to \$148.

Question? Call Martin: 770-471-9800

Nathaniel Branden (cont. from Page 1)

Self-Esteem are so unfamiliar, so "Western," that there would be enormous resistance to be overcome. It would take a mind of unusual independence, in Arab countries, or in China, Japan, North Korea, and so forth. To grasp the importance of the six pillars is to grasp the importance of the ways in which they could make one's life immeasurably better.

Q: What's your assessment of the Objectivist movement at the dawn of the 21st century?

Nathaniel Branden: The Objectivist Movement is splintered. There is no "general Objectivist Movement." To be a movement, it would have to have very specific goals by which to measure success or failure, progress or stasis.

Q: The market seems overstocked with books on self-help, self-improvement, etc. How can those who are shopping for books on this subject figure out which ones are just predatory infomercials from sham artists and which are legitimate, useful tools?

Nathaniel Branden: All one can do is look through a book in the bookstore, read a few pages, see if what the author says makes sense, resonates to anything in you, and looks like it might be helpful. There is no formula I can offer that would make unnecessary the need for independent judgment.

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About the interviewer: *Chris Snider (a.k.a. John C. Snider) is the President of the Fellowship of Reason. He's also the editor of the online science fiction magazine scifidimensions (<http://www.scifidimensions.com>), published monthly since February 2000.*

About the name "The Eudaimonist"

A eudaimonist (pronounced "yoo-DIE-mon-ist") is one who believes that the highest ethical goal is individual happiness and personal well-being. The term is derived from the ancient Greek word eudaimonia, which means, roughly, "well-being."

"Five Questions with..." is an occasional series featuring interviews with notable personalities in the worlds of philosophy, science, history, business, art and literature.

Fellowship of Reason, Inc.**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.

Fellowship of Reason, Inc. is a Georgia nonprofit corporation and a tax-exempt 501(c)(3) corporation

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Subscription Information

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

You Want this. Trust us.

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FOR coffee. FOR tea.

FOR a friend.

\$6 each or 2 for \$10, Contact us at any FOR function (see page 9)

Questions? info@fellowshipofreason.com.



Eudaimonist Ethics By Martin Cowen

This essay is not a vicious attack on secular humanism..., but you ought to read it anyway. Within the next 1,130 words, you will understand what morality is, why philosophy is important to defining a morality, why you ought to be moral, and why the Fellowship of Reason® is the world's first and, at present only, reason-based moral community.

A morality is a list or system of rules for human behavior to achieve a specific goal.

Ethics is the science that defines a reason-based morality.

To be moral is to adhere to a particular morality.

Secular humanists are soul mates of Eudaimonists

There are at least three types of moralities or moral systems: (1) a list of moral rules derived from heavenly pronouncements to earthly prophets recorded in holy books; (2) a list of moral rules randomly picked from the cultural smorgasbord of moralities; and (3) moralities based upon philosophical systems. The morality defined by the Ten Commandments and assorted rules from the Bible is an example of the first. The statement of principles of secular humanism is an example of the second. Eudaimonist ethics is an example of the third.

All three of the mentioned systems have some good rules. "Thou shall not kill" is a good rule from the Ten Commandments. "Help the handicap and save the environment" are nice rules from secular humanism. Eudaimonist ethics

is, well, right.

The goal of the Christian morality is to get the individual Christian into Heaven for union with God where he will enjoy eternal bliss. The goal of secular humanism is "fullest realization of the best and noblest that we are capable of as human beings". The goal of Eudaimonist ethics is "individual human flourishing".

Secular humanists are soul mates of Eudaimonists and so the criticism implicit in the following comments should be understood as friendly prodding to provoke rational debate on important issues of mutual interest.

Secular humanism is a list of moral rules randomly picked from various moralities and, therefore, is not a morality based upon a philosophical system.

Consider three rules from the Affirmations of Humanism: help the handicapped, avoid needless suffering of species, and altruism. These certainly are nice rules. As the parent of a handicapped child, I am all in favor of helping the handicapped; in fact, it's my life's work. As a compassionate person I am all in favor of not pulling wings off of flies. As a major contributor to a non-profit, volunteer organization, I am all in favor of altruism.

However, as nice as these rules are for me (at my age, family income, and in my unique personal circumstances), they are not applicable to all people. For instance, a young, working, low income husband supporting his stay-at-home wife and two small children will have priorities other than helping me raise my autistic son. Likewise, not everyone is interested in supporting the Fellowship of Reason, or any other moral community. And finally, about torturing flies..., well I guess the Humanists are right, nobody should torture flies. But the non-

Eudaimonist Ethics (Cont. from Page 3)

torture-of-flies rule is not fundamental in any philosophical sense.

These humanist rules are randomly chosen on the basis of niceness and because they feel good. The rules are not a part of a philosophical system. Philosophy went out of favor in the 20th century.

Eudaimonist ethics, on the other hand, is based upon a philosophical system. (Philosophy is in favor with Eudaimonists in the 21st century.)

Philosophy is divided into six branches: metaphysics, epistemology, the nature of man, ethics, politics, and aesthetics. Philosophical conclusions in metaphysics, epistemology, and about the nature of man are the basis of crucial conclusions for human beings in the areas of ethics, politics, and aesthetics. In other words, the main purpose of philosophy is to define a morality for human beings.

In metaphysics, Eudaimonism holds that there is only one reality. This implies (fairly obviously) that there are not two realities. There is no Creator who is different from His Creation. There is no transcendent Heaven apart from the Universe. There is no transcendent God, a Being outside of time and space as we know it. Also, Eudaimonist metaphysics recognizes the existence of human consciousness and the physical world, both are aspects of the one reality. The alternatives to the Eudaimonist position are at least two: only consciousness exists and only the physical world exists.

In epistemology, Eudaimonism holds that human consciousness is capable of learning about reality by use of the individual's capacity to reason (to observe, to categorize, to draw conclusions, to test conclusions, to modify conclusions in the face of new observations).

Concerning the nature of man, Eudaimonism holds that human reason exists in individual human minds and that the fundamental method of survival of the individual adult human being is the independent use of his reasoning mind.

In ethics, Eudaimonism holds that "the good" is a relationship between a goal and an object or behavior. For example, sunshine is good for plants that produce food by photosynthesis. We agree with Aristotle that the ultimate human good is individual human flourishing. All other human "goods" are means to this human end.

Eudaimonist ethics therefore concludes that man ought to be free to use his rational faculty to pursue his personal flourishing. An adult human being's personal flourishing includes all of his personal interests and values: his health and physical well-being, his happiness, his spouse, his children, his friends, his communities, his hobbies and career, and his property.

So saving the environment (another humanist rule) is good, not in itself, but because I need clean air and water to survive and because I enjoy camping in a pristine environment.

So supporting FOR is good (altruism as softly and commonly defined) not because serving others is of value, but because FOR helps me to flourish by providing fellowship, educational, and inspirational opportunities.

So sparing flies from torture is good because a healthy human being manifests himself in reality, not by destroying values, but by creating values.

Only a morality that has articulable and rational reasons for being is a "reason-based" morality.

Disagree? Send your letter to the editor!

The answers to my four opening questions have thus been given. A reason-based morality is a system of rules of human behavior designed to achieve the goal of individual human flourishing. Only philosophy can create a rational ethical system. All other moralities are arbitrary collections of rules based upon feeling or fiat, not reason. One ought to be moral in order to live well and flourish on earth. And, the Fellowship of Reason® is the world's first and only reason-based moral community because we use philosophy to define our moral system.

Disagree? Send your letter to the editor! Remember what was said above: Reason includes the capacity and willingness "to modify conclusions in the face of new observations". Present your evidence in opposition.

Regular membership:
\$35 per year

Contributing membership:
\$70 per Year

Lifetime membership:
\$700

Contact Information

To talk to somebody about Fellowship of Reason call:

Chris at 678-585-0406
Vera at 404-577-7968
Martin at 770-471-9800
Dan at 770-831-3010

Meaning of Membership

In order to enjoy the benefits of the Fellowship of Reason, Inc. you need not be a member. All of our activities are free and open to the public. A number of non-members regularly participate with us and are most heartily welcome.

Why then become a member of the Fellowship of Reason, Inc.?

The Fellowship of Reason, Inc. exists by virtue of the generosity of its members and friends. People you know contribute money, property, services, and time in order that the value we all enjoy continues to exist. The services by performers at FORum, by executive committee members, by hosts and hostesses, and by planners of events are vital to the existence of FOR. Those volunteer services are, in fact, FOR.

Membership is, simply, a clear statement that you wish the Fellowship of Reason, Inc. to continue to exist. Membership is not the only way to make this statement. Some non-members are generous contributors of money, property, and services. In fact, we all benefit by the mere attendance of non-members at FOR events.

If you want FOR to continue to exist, won't you clearly say so by becoming a member today?

Get Ready for the Yard Sale – June 18

You can help yourself and help your Fellowship of Reason.

Help yourself to live better by reducing clutter – donate your useful items to the Annual Yard sale.

You can help your Fellowship of Reason financially – our past yard sales have brought in hundreds of dollars to make our community stronger.

The Annual FOR Yardsale Fundraiser is Saturday, June 18th, hosted by David and Janet Ziebell. In East Cobb county.

Books, Records, (remember them?) CD's, videos. Clothing, furniture, sporting goods. Electronics, software. Kitchenware, garden tools. Use your imagination!

Donated items will be accepted on Saturday June 4th and Saturday June 11th between 8:30 AM and 5:00 PM (or otherwise by appointment only).

Donors are responsible for delivery. Contact David at 770-509-5379.

Items not sold at the yard sale will be donated to local charity.

Volunteers for the day of the sale are also welcome. – Come by and help a little or a lot. There will be fun conversation and lawn chairs to sit in. Afterwards, we will have our June potluck nearby

Birthdays

April Birthdays

April 3	Theresa Barber
April 5	Christopher Sulentic
April 9	Kate Miller
April 20	Don Schiff
April 24	Toni Brookner
April 28	Lois Curry

May Birthdays

May 2	Frank Vickers
May 21	Dan Barber
May 29	Carla Bauer

Special FORum Event in August, 2005

On August 6, 2005 **John Enright** will talk about his novel, *Unholy Quest*. He will read a few passages, including some of the poetry. John will share the real-life facts that inspired him to write the story, how the book, in defiance of his original intentions, took on a life of its own, how he published the book at minimal expense but a lot of work, and finally, he will answer any and all questions!

The plot: Thor Johnson makes a profession of fighting in other people's wars. So his new assignment, training guard dogs on a Caribbean island, sounds downright relaxing. But it's not relaxing for long.

The island is in the grip of a religious cult that aims to sweep the world. The cult's prophet upholds a very old-fashioned family ideal: one husband, many wives. But instead of being one

big happy family, the cult is a web of jealous intrigue which soon entangles Thor. Even more entangling is a mysterious dancer. She follows Thor to the island, and soon men are fighting over who will possess her. Thor must go to war once again, battling for his life, and struggling to understand what is happening to his own soul.

John Enright is the author of a novel, *Unholy Quest*, and a book of poetry, *Starbound And Other Poems*. He frequently speaks at the Objectivist Center summer seminar on aspects of poetry. He has contributed articles to Objectivist-oriented journals, including the *Journal of Ayn Rand Studies* and *The Navigator*. He has performed with an improv troupe, is the proud father of two, and makes his living as a computer consultant.

Letters to the Editor

(Your missive here)

Write us at:
Fellowship of Reason
P.O. Box 5564
Atlanta, Georgia 31107

Or, E-mail us at info@fellowshipofreason.com.

All letters must be signed to be considered for publication.

April 2005

April 2005							May 2005						
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Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Sat/Sun
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					Theresa Barber bd
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4	5	6	7	8	9
12:00pm Deadline for FOR newsletter submissions	Christopher Sulentic bd 7:30pm Philosophy Club (Sally's house)		6:00pm FOR Symphony		Kate Miller bd 11:00am Nonfiction book club
					10
					8:00am Reason Runners
11	12	13	14	15	16
	7:30pm Fiction Book Club (Beth's house)		7:30pm Invisible College (Vera/Michael's house)		6:30pm Movie Night (John's Studio)
					17
					8:00am Reason Runners
18	19	20	21	22	23
	7:30pm Philosophy Club (Sally's house)	Don Schiff bd			7:30pm Potluck (Dan & Theresa's)
					24
					Toni Brookner bd
					8:00am Reason Runners
25	26	27	28	29	30
8:00pm BoT meeting		8:00pm Pub Night (Manuel's Tavern)	Lois Curry bd 7:30pm Invisible College (Vera/Michael's house)		

May 2005

May 2005							June 2005						
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Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Sat/Sun
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Frank Vickers bd 12:00pm Deadline for FOR newsletter submissions	7:30pm Philosophy Club (Sally's house)				8
					8:00am Reason Runners
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	7:30pm Fiction Book Club (Beth's house)		7:00pm FOR Symphony		11:00am Nonfiction book club
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8:00pm BoT meeting		8:00pm Pub Night (Manuel's Tavern)	7:30pm Invisible College (Vera/Michael's house)		6:30pm Movie night (John's
					29
					More Items...
30	31				

Events

For detailed info on all upcoming events, visit
<http://www.fellowshipofreason.com/calendar.htm>

Reason Runners: Sunday 8 a.m.

We meet every Sunday morning at 8 a.m., except FORum Sundays, at the southwestern entrance to Piedmont Park on 10th Street. Breakfast at Flying Biscuit follows at 9 a.m. Walkers and joggers welcome!
 Martin Cowen coordinator: 770-471-9800.

Invisible College: 2nd/4th Thursdays 7:30 p.m.
 History DVD will be shown.
 Vera Norman coordinator: 404-577-7968

Philosophy Club: 1st/3rd Tuesdays 7:30 p.m.
 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 Free.
 Sall Hull coordinator: 404-257-0454

Fiction Book Club: 2nd Tuesday 7:30 p.m.
 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 coordinator: 404-754-7519.

Non-Fiction Book Club: 2nd Saturday 11 a.m.
 Members and friends of FOR, Inc meet 11 a.m. on the 2nd Saturday of every month at Chris and Allison's house to discuss a marvelous non-fiction. Allison Byrd coordinator: 678-585-0406 or Allibyrd@charter.net

FOR Symphony: Thursday, May 12, 2005. at 7 p.m. in Symphony Hall. This is our final concert of six in the 2004-5 ASO Concert Season
 Martin Cowen coordinator: 770-471-9800.

Potluck: Saturday, April 23.

(Note change from usual night and time)
 Members and friends of FOR, Inc. meet monthly for a potluck supper. Bring something good to eat or drink to share. Our next potluck is Saturday, April 23, 2005 at Dan and Theresa's house on Lake Lanier. An all day event.
 Dan Barber: 770-831-3010

Movie Night: Saturday, April 16, 2005

(Note change from usual 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, April 16, 2005. Arrive at 6:30 p.m. Doors will be locked for safety! Movie starts at 7:15 p.m. Free.
 John Grover coordinator: 404-754-7519

Pub Night: 4th Wednesday 8 p.m.

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, April 27, 2004, at 8 p.m.
 Scott Carper coordinator: 404-964-6697

FOR Garage Sale: June 18, 2005, All Day

Help FOR by donating your unused stuff to FOR's annual garage sale. Start collecting your donations now. Your donations to FOR, a 501(c)(3) corporation, may be take deductible.
 Chris Snider coordinator: 770-509-5379

Join us at FORum:

1st Sunday at 1 p.m.

May 1, 2005

"Universism"

Ford Vox,
Guest Speaker

"Universism is a progressive natural religious philosophy celebrating the mystery surrounding us. Universists don't pretend we have the answers. As Universists we do our best to seek answers, and the first step in our process of discovery is recognizing what we do not know."

Join us at Adult Education

1st Sunday at Noon

David Ziebell
Facilitator

Celebratory Announcements

Do yourself a favor and remember a good thing that happened to you this month:

Please, write it down: _____

Now do the membership of FOR, Inc. a favor by relating this fact during FORum next month!

Fellowship of Reason

P.O. Box 5564
Atlanta, Georgia 31107

E-mail

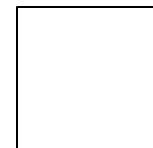
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