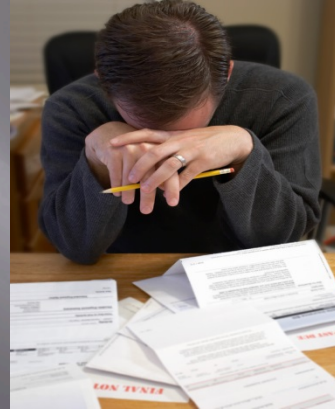
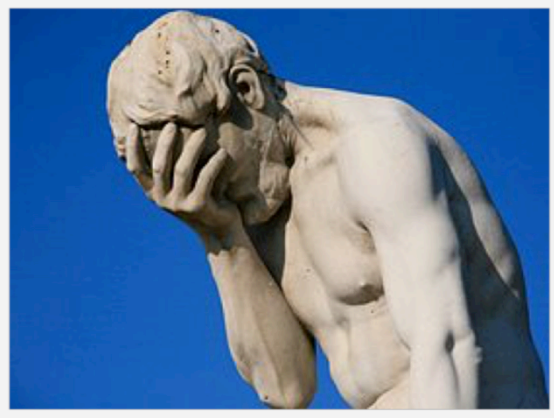


OBJECTIVISM FOR EVERYDAY LIVING

Vinay Kolhatkar

WHAT DO I WANT FROM LIFE?

How do I get it?



The Holy Grail of Objectivism

- ▣ It is possible, even probable, for your life on earth to be a completely guilt-free adventure
- ▣ **Adventure** means having your share of ups and downs, joys and sorrows, extreme trials, people letting you down, lots of hard work, the pleasures of achievement, frustration, uncertain success, doubts, **but no guilt, and lots of fun along the way**
- ▣ Not drudgery, not a party, but an adventure
- ▣ Life never gets boring, dull, or insipid
- ▣ Everlasting youth (in spirit)
- ▣ Get ready for some serious introspection

Who stopped your adventure?

- ▣ Religious beliefs of others around me/ myself
- ▣ Society--cultural bias against what I wanted
- ▣ Parents (they can be both positive as well as negative influences/ “blockers”)
- ▣ Having children—then life becomes a duty
- ▣ The wrong marriage/ relationship
- ▣ My boss at work is an absolute bastard/ bitch
- ▣ Wrong career choice...now I’m doomed
- ▣ Lack of a dream to follow

How do you restart?

“I” deserve an adventure.
There is but one life, this one,
on earth. It is not over yet.

Do you believe in God, Andrei? No. Neither do I. But that's a favourite question of mine. An upside-down question, you know. What do you mean? Well, if I asked people whether they believed in life, they'd never understand what I meant. It's a bad question. It can mean so much that it really means nothing. So I ask them if they believe in God. And if they say they do — then, I know they don't believe in life. Why? Because, you see, God — whatever anyone chooses to call God — is one's highest conception of the highest possible. And whoever places his highest conception above his own possibility thinks very little of himself and his life. It's a rare gift, you know, to feel reverence for your own life and to want the best, the greatest, the highest possible, here, now, for your very own. To imagine a heaven and then not to dream of it, but to demand it.

- Source: *We The Living* Part One Chapter 9 (Kira)

Founder: Ayn Rand

Non-fiction

- ▣ The Voice of Reason
- ▣ Capitalism: The Unknown Ideal
- ▣ The Virtue of Selfishness
- ▣ For the New Intellectual
- ▣ The Ayn Rand Lexicon
- ▣ Introduction to Objectivist Epistemology
- ▣ The New Left: The Anti-Industrial Revolution

Fiction

- ▣ Atlas Shrugged
 - 645,000 words
 - A "normal" novel is 100,000 words and occupies 350 pages*
 - Equivalent to 2,257 pages
 - War & Peace 587,287 words*
- ▣ The Fountainhead
 - 311,596 words*
- ▣ We the Living

The Foundations

- ▣ Existence exists, independent of wishes, perceptions, and opinions. A is A.
- ▣ Reason, the faculty that identifies and integrates material provided by the senses, is the *only* source of knowledge. Faith is useless, irrelevant, and irrational.
- ▣ A rational code of ethics is possible. It is possible to derive such a code from the quintessential nature of human beings.
- ▣ A human being is an end in himself/ herself.
- ▣ No individual, and no group, has the right to initiate force against other human beings.
- ▣ Force is permissible in self-defence, and appropriate in a retaliatory context — provided retaliation is placed under objective rules (laws)

“And that's the sin that can't be forgiven -- **that I hadn't done what I wanted**. It feels so dirty and pointless and monstrous, as one feels about insanity, because there's no sense to it, no dignity, nothing but pain -- and wasted pain...Katie, why do they always teach us that it's easy and evil to do what we want and that we need discipline to restrain ourselves? It's the hardest thing in the world -- to do what we want. And it takes the greatest kind of courage. I mean, **what we really want**. As I wanted to marry you. Not as I want to sleep with some woman or get drunk or get my name in the papers. Those things -- they're not even desires -- they're things people do to escape from desires -- because **it's such a big responsibility, to really want something**.”

Peter Keating, when realisation hits (*The Fountainhead*)

Human Life

- ▣ The world is, in-principle, comprehensible and intelligible at every level.
- ▣ Animals adapt to nature. Humans can, and do manipulate nature to suit their requirements.
- ▣ The concrete vision of the novels is — characters who are of this earth, of this time, and of this world — who chase goals, make things happen, pursue values, fall in love, make mistakes, struggle hard, and often win. They live adventurous, exciting lives.

A Secular Basis for Ethics

- Deriving the *ought* from the *is*

THE IS  THE OUGHT (TO BE)

- No automatic code of survival, dependency on reason (concept-formation, and integration)
- Consciousness (to think or not) is volitional; it's not instinctive, and not infallible. An unfocussed mind is operating at a sub-human level
- A framework is needed for the pursuit of the correct choices (therein lies the need for ethics, for morality)
- Pleasure is an affirmative signal, pain is a negative one. The ultimate value is life itself – no life, no values
- *Man qua man* (essential attributes of survival) – the essence of objectivist ethics is drawn from this principle
- Man's life, meaning the life of homo sapiens with their quintessential attributes, is the *standard* for ethics
- Man's life, meaning **one** individual's life and pursuit of happiness, becomes the *purpose* of his/ her set of values
- "*Eudaimonia*", the Aristotelian state of flourishing, is reached by the achievement of values

Living authentically

- ▣ Do you know people who are capable of lying through their teeth with a straight face?
- ▣ Does not mean *compulsive* truth-telling
- ▣ How do you seek more responsibility (at work), or shared responsibility (at home)?
- ▣ How would you deal with a subordinate that wanted to join a rival department/ company?
- ▣ What happens when you are hurt, angry, or upset?
- ▣ Do you go to parties you would rather not go to?
- ▣ Do you give false praise to “*friends*”?

Living purposefully

- ▣ What's your mission in life?
- ▣ How often is it re-examined?
- ▣ Do you have long-term and short-term career goals? How often do they change?
- ▣ How hard do you work at this?
- ▣ Do you have relationship goals? Finding or keeping a partner, friends, stronger relationships with siblings, parents, children
- ▣ Happiness is hard work, the payoff uncertain

Living fully

- ▣ Taking calculated risks
- ▣ Understanding and exploiting context
- ▣ *Quid pro quo* relationships in the context of a value-ladder *(never sacrificing higher values to lower values)*
- ▣ Developing empathy for loved ones *(What do you want? Why do you want it? Can I help you? Offer help (the joy of benevolence), but don't forget your value-ladder)*
- ▣ Establishing your perspective explicitly – *with spouses, bosses, subordinates, peers, parents, colleagues, teachers, students, children, siblings, friends*

Objectivist aesthetics

- ▣ Belief in a benevolent universe (*nature as tamed by man*) versus the “intrinsic” angst of existentialism
- ▣ Story as the most pervasive art form
- ▣ Classical plots, anti-plots, or minimised values
- ▣ Romanticism (*as it could be and should be*) versus naturalism (*as is*) versus classicism (*as it must be*)
- ▣ Art as a selective re-creation of reality according to an artist's metaphysical value judgments

The Benefits and The Hazards

Caveat: My interpretation only

THE BENEFITS

- ▣ A tremendous framework for personal growth, and for *recognising blockers* to your happiness/ *eudaimonia*
- ▣ Insight into human psychology (this is contestable, and has been contested by the critics)
- ▣ A complete and integrated philosophy of ethics, politics, economics, art, and a theory of knowledge (epistemology)

THE HAZARDS

- ▣ A soul on fire, “acting out” Howard Roark
- ▣ The hazards of unfiltered subliminal absorption, missing the forest for the trees. The theory is immersed in concretes
- ▣ No emphasis on how to get to A from B (on *negotiating the blockers*). Not a formal theory of self-development, but a rally cry to young souls

The pursuit of adventure


- ▣ Guiltless pursuit
- ▣ Soul-search to define your mission
- ▣ Introspection — a whole lot of it
- ▣ Pursue a career, pursue excellence
- ▣ Search and find satisfying relationships
- ▣ Authenticity, benevolence, purpose
- ▣ Internal contradictions will manifest externally
- ▣ The elusive goal of *eudaimonia* is reachable, here on earth, in this life, for there is no other

Playing Detective

Caveat: My words, my interpretation

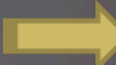
THE SOUL OF AN INDIVIDUALIST

- ▣ Internal motivation
- ▣ Respect for truthfulness, and facts
- ▣ Self-esteem, high self-concept
- ▣ Independent judgment
- ▣ Authenticity
- ▣ Purposeful life
- ▣ Intensity
- ▣ Respectful of the rights of others
- ▣ Respectful of *given* word
- ▣ Carriage relaxed, neither boastful nor unduly humble

 Set up for guilt-free adventure

THE SOUL OF A COLLECTIVIST

- ▣ Climbing, or highly mindful of, the social/ corporate ladder
- ▣ Truth hurts when it is inimical to position, willingness to hide it (if not risking getting found out)
- ▣ Manipulative of others
- ▣ Professes to care, using emotions as a tool of manipulation
- ▣ Swagger, or reverse -- head held low
- ▣ Given to bluster, or the reverse (extreme lack of confidence)
- ▣ Failure to acknowledge mistakes
- ▣ Regarded with fear, or pity

 Set up for fear, and anxiety attacks

In Closing

Do not let your fire go out, spark by irreplaceable spark, in the hopeless swamps of the approximate, the not-quite, the not-yet, the not-at-all. **Do not let the hero in your soul perish**, in lonely frustration for the life you deserved, but have never been able to reach. **Check your road and the nature of your battle.** The world you desired can be won, it exists, it is real, it is possible, it's yours.

Atlas Shrugged, Part Three / Chapter 7 This is John Galt Speaking

About Me



For questions on this presentation, contact via
vk2@optusnet.com.au/ Facebook/ LinkedIn

Writer and finance professional

- ▣ Investment, and infrastructure finance

As a writer:

- ▣ Initially took up screenwriting
- ▣ First novel debuted on Amazon last year
- ▣ To be sold in bookstores in SE Asia later this year
- ▣ Published non-fiction
 - Who caused the Global Financial Crisis?
 - Technical articles on derivatives
 - Other: on politics, media, and economics

A Senator awakens to a web of deceit, and
viciously turns an election upside-down ➡

They are playing her
She knows
She has a plan



"Fantastic read. Could not put it down"

— Indus Age

THE FRANKENSTEIN CANDIDATE

VINAY KOLHATKAR