



# Beingism: Rational Means to Emotional Ends, for the Benefit of All

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## Beingist Philosophy

Mon, 11/03/2008 - 17:56 >> Beingism

These are the basic premises intended to define Beingism. Beyond the content of the text here, Beingists may come to a variety of different conclusions. Other texts on this site, such as the [essays](#), [blog posts](#), and [message board postings](#), may contain ideas widely shared among Beingists, though this cannot necessarily be assumed.



Beingism

(Beingism Founder)

## Beingism in a Nutshell Rationality

...because [reasoning](#) based on experience is our most accurate means of understanding ourselves and our world, and our most effective way of influencing these things.

## Emotion

...because emotions provide us with the goals that create meaning for us, make us [happy](#), and ultimately make our lives fulfilling.

## For the Benefit of All

...because all are equally worthy of having a life, regardless of nature or circumstance, and because generally we are all more fulfilled when others are as well.

## As a Philosophy, Beingism Maintains:

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**Self Compassion**

**Universal Compassion**

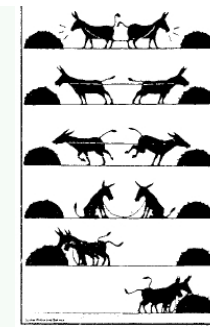
1. that **reason** based in experience is our most accurate method of understanding reality and our most consistent means of accomplishing goals;
2. that being reasonable implies open-mindedness, determination, and flexibility, as well as the importance of research and an evidence-based approach to problem-solving;
3. that everyone wants to improve their emotional state or maintain a state of fulfillment;
4. that **compassionate** behavior often leads to **fulfillment**, and can lead to increased **fulfillment** in a society designed to encourage it;
5. that systems that favor the **fulfillment** of some individuals over others create less overall **fulfillment** than other potential systems.

### People Engaged in Beingist Activism:

1. define justice around the principle of equality of outcome, and
2. act to bring about a more just world and a sustainable, poverty-free society which **values** the individual liberty of all beings.

### Beingism in a Somewhat Bigger Nutshell Reason

1. "**Reason**" as understood here is "thinking in a manner consistent with the relationship between elements and between elements and the whole in a given system." [\[more\]](#)
2. While other methods of understanding the world are often useful, **reason** is our ultimate arbiter of what is true and false.[\[more\]](#)
3. **Reason** has various limitations, but it is our most accurate method of understanding reality and our most consistent method of accomplishing goals.[\[more\]](#)
4. Using **reason** (i.e., being rational) often involves being imaginative, experimental, nondogmatic, flexible, and open to different ways of thinking,



we are an online community of passionate, thoughtful people who believe that the consistent application of

**reason** leads to a secular, progressive, naturalistic, and **compassionate** philosophy of life. We hold that all beings share an interest in their own **happiness**, and that **compassion** for others is often instrumental in attaining **happiness**. We also hold that incorporating **compassion** into our social, cultural, governmental, and political systems is the key to creating a society that is maximally free and fair to all beings. Though we reject the idea that there is any utopian cure for our world's ills, we believe that better solutions to complex problems can be found by using science and research in an effort to understand causes and consequences. [\[more\]](#)




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chant: "What do we want?  
Evidence Based, Gradual  
Change! When do we want it?  
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feeling, doing, and being.

- It is **rational** to work to achieve one's goals, even against opposition.
- Reason** implies a number of things about our world:

Reality is shaped by a variety of different elements and forces interacting reciprocally, creating all the complexity and nuance that shape our experience.

Reality is objective (that is, it exists independently of the perceptions of observers). Facts are those mental constructs that reflect objective truths, and as such there are many valid models for understanding what is true.

All **values**, including moral **values**, are subjective to individuals and groups of individuals and not a part of the fundamental structure of the universe (i.e., there are no objective moral **values**).

Everything in the universe is, by definition, natural. There are no supernatural events or beings, and within our universe all phenomena can be, in principle, understood in terms of the interactions between units of matter/energy.

Beings make choices, do what they want, and have a sense of **free will**. However, it is also true that all behavior must be motivated by some combination of causal and/or random factors, from which the will cannot be "free." [\[more\]](#)

No actions are motivated exclusively by the desire to benefit others. The definition of "motivated" assumes that some desire for direct benefit to oneself, and/or for positive feelings as a result of helping others, is always involved.

## Fulfillment

- All conscious beings have a subjective experience of mental states, which we call emotions (joy, amusement, fear) and sensations (feeling physical pain, feeling cold, or simply being aware of an aspect of consciousness).
- Some emotions and sensations are interpreted as negative, while others are interpreted as positive. Our concept of "**good**" and "**bad**" is derived from these interpretations. When one experiences an emotion or sensation positively, she or he calls it "**good**," and when one experiences an emotion or sensation



We also recognize that for most people, including ourselves, conflicts between **compassion** and self-interest exist, and that living ethically can be difficult. As a partial remedy, we join together as members of a supportive community to pursue not only the **happiness** of others, but also our own.

While Beingism's most fundamental premises as described above are unlikely to change, our philosophy is organic, evolving as its adherents and debaters discuss it. We welcome new ideas, just as we welcome new members to our community. Join us for **discussion** and **debate**, **activism** and aid.

negatively, she or he calls it "bad."

3. By definition negative emotions and sensations are **bad** in and of themselves, for the being experiencing them. Similarly, by definition, positive emotions and sensations are **good** in and of themselves, for the being experiencing them.
4. Sometimes negative emotions and sensations result in positive ones. For example, one may feel hurt by hearing a criticism of one's behavior, but from it one may learn to function more effectively. To this extent, negative emotions and sensations can be somewhat **good** (we may call such an emotion a "necessary **bad**").
5. Similarly, sometimes positive emotions and sensations can result in negative ones. For example, one may be distracted by the feeling of joy produced by a beautiful sunrise and fall into an open sewer drain. To this extent positive emotions and sensations can be somewhat **bad**.
6. Sensations and emotions have many functions, one of which is to supply us motivation for action. A being without any emotions or sensations, if it could exist, would have no motives and no goals, and therefore would not be motivated to think about or do anything.
7. **Fulfillment** is a simple word for the complex experience of a constantly evolving but overall positive mental state made up of some combination of experiences, including sensations, feelings, and found meanings. Many different combinations of states may constitute **fulfillment** in a given individual, and the sorts of states that tend to make up **fulfillment** vary from individual to individual.
8. Because we all necessarily desire whatever mental states we find positive, by definition we all want to be fulfilled.
9. Considering that the best way to accomplish goals is with **reason**, it makes sense for us to seek **fulfillment** in the most **rational** way possible.

## Compassion

1. "**Compassion**," defined broadly, is consideration for the **fulfillment** and welfare of beings. To feel **compassion** for someone is to care genuinely about their well-being, often on the basis of a sense of empathy or identification with their situation. To behave compassionately is to act in a manner consistent with the promotion of another's **fulfillment**, and may be motivated by feelings of **compassion**, other considerations, or some of each.

## Are You a Beingist?

Beingism is a philosophy of life based on rationality and **compassion** for oneself and others. It is nondogmatic, progressive, and atheistic.

You might be a Beingist if you believe:

- **Reason** and science are our best means of understanding the universe.
- Everything that exists is natural -- nothing is supernatural.
- Ethical **values** are subjective, but nevertheless very important to people.
- There's no such thing as **free will**, and **causality** appears to play a significant role in the way our world operates.

Other premises include:

- Everyone wants to be **happy** and have a fulfilling life.
- A belief in **free will** as it is commonly understood is a major barrier to **compassion** and
- Although suffering is sometimes unavoidable, no

2. Because all actions are self-interested, everything that beings do is a result of some perceived potential for gain, either in terms of direct benefits or the positive emotions that can result from behaving in a manner that they regard positively. In order to do something, a being must believe (consciously or unconsciously) that the advantages she or he gains from taking the action will outweigh any drawbacks.
3. Although it follows from the above that all beings inevitably **value** improvements in their own emotional states more than they **value** improvements in the emotional states of others (even if a large part of how they achieve **fulfillment** is by helping others to be fulfilled), it is also true that no being is any more or less deserving of **fulfillment** than any other.
4. Recognizing this fact, a **rational** person who feels **compassion** might choose to work for the creation of a society in which everyone's **happiness** is given equal consideration, even though such a society might sometimes interfere with the pursuit of some of his or her own interests. In other words, such a person might choose to consistently engage in **compassionate** behavior for the common **good**.
5. **Compassionate** behavior, besides benefitting others, also serves one's own interests in several ways. This is most directly true in that most people really do feel at least some **compassion** and thus often gain pleasure from the helping of others. **Compassionate** behavior has other potential benefits as well:

It gives people a vested interest in helping us in return, both in direct and in indirect ways. It does this most directly in that when we are kind to others, it encourages them to be kind to us in return. In addition, when people's physical and emotional needs are met consistently (especially while they are growing up), they will tend to develop their own sense of **compassion**, and thus begin to gain **fulfillment** by helping others.

When fulfilled people tend to produce more **resources** for everyone.

"**Resources**" is used here as a broad term that includes everything that people have, potentially including (but not limited to) genetic, emotional, intellectual, social, and material things.

6. In some situations, of course, the costs of **compassionate** behavior will outweigh the benefits, and therefore people will most likely choose not to behave compassionately. In addition, people often fail to act compassionately

sometimes unavoidable, no one deserves to feel pain.  
- People are generally more likely to be **happy** in a culture where power and control are shared together rather than held by elites.

- We all benefit to some extent from the success of others, and with effort and patience, society can be structured such that this is even more the case.

If you agree with these ideas and you wish to call yourself a Beingist, then you are one. Please join us! If, on the other hand, you're not sure about some of it -- or if you just flat out disagree -- let's communicate.

## Beingism's Purpose

Our mission is to establish a coherent vision of ethical behavior and social activism for people disinclined to accept religious and faith-based

because although it would be in their best interests to behave compassionately, they don't realize this. [\[more\]](#)

7. It is at least somewhat in the interests of every member of society to reduce such situations, in order to promote [compassionate](#) behavior and thus create more [fulfillment](#) for everyone. Working to reduce conflicts of interest (both perceived and real) in society is also consistent with the goals of anyone who actively feels [compassion](#) for others and wishes to create a more just society.
8. In order for conflicts of interest to be reduced in a consistent manner that benefits everyone, it is necessary to create and maintain social systems that:
  - encourage people to go about fulfilling themselves to a substantial degree by striving to help others find fulfillment;
  - arbitrate conflict in a manner that is respectful to everyone;
  - distribute [resources](#) in a way that maximizes the amount of [value](#), and thus the amount of [fulfillment](#), those [resources](#) can create;
  - prevent individuals or groups from accumulating excesses of power that can be used to expand their own interests at the cost of others.

## To Sum Up:

1. It follows from [reason](#) that everyone desires a fulfilling life, and no one deserves it more than anyone else.
2. [Compassionate](#) behavior, and the creation of social systems that institutionalize it, are the keys to creating a society of people capable of successfully finding [fulfillment](#), which would:
  - be more fair than our current one,
  - probably benefit you directly, and
  - contribute additionally to your own [happiness](#) to the extent you feel [good](#) about helping others.
3. Therefore, as Beingists, we understand that [rational](#) efforts toward the creation of a just and sustainable society based on equality of outcome and personal liberty, in which everyone's interests have equal consideration, would increase the overall [fulfillment](#) of individuals within such a society.

religious and faith-based philosophies of life, and to further it by creating community and developing new and enjoyable ways of changing the world for the better.

It may be that nonreligious individuals are less likely to form communities than their religious counterparts. Certainly, the lack of a preexisting community (such as an established church) is a relative hindrance to community-building. No doubt also willingness to question pervasive societal norms, particularly when they are part of belief systems from which most people derive emotional, social, and/or financial support, probably tends to accompany an individualistic (rather than community-oriented) approach to life. In addition, social stigma reduces the community [resources](#) available to nonreligious people, both financially (e.g. nonreligious institutions are not given the same financial benefits as faith-based organizations) and socially (e.g., fear of discrimination leads to increased difficulty in



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## Comments

### social security benefits

Thu, 11/27/2008 - 12:04 >> corey wiley (not verified)

Hey there, I like these videos and support these views. I appreciate how well articulated and organized they are, If I could keep all this stuff in my I would be happy so I would have quick persuasive arguments against the other side. So many people always take a callous stance on social issues, they say the poor are lazy, they support the conservative, authoritarian, views. Im a person who gets social security benefits for depression, and ive lived in poverty for many years...now I live with my mother but there are so many complex aspects to life that can only be dealt with by compassion and understanding. I see so much dishonesty and ignorance all around in all forms. Since what Im trying to communicate involves so many levels and fascett..and Im not good at articulating, I will just list some observations and thoughts that I recognize.

1. Middle class people complain about how some of their hard earned money goes to social programs to help the poor, but they are slow to realize or recognize the fact that there is a huge wealth disparity, that they probably arent being paid enough in the first place, that there are mechanisms in social conventions that prevent them from reaching a true potential, also they themselves are overworked and play a part in their habits in reinforcing oppressive attitudes also they play a part in exalting the rich maintaining sytems that bring wealth disparity and hierarchy
2. They have stereotypes about people in less fortunate citrcumstances, they make assumptions about people who are poor or have more difficult state of affairs, they hold things against poorer people that they themselves can be just as guilty of..like they will point out how a poor person may drink, but there are plenty of middle and upper class people who abuse alcohol and through luck, or through



corey wiley

(anonymous user)

reaching out to find others with similar [values](#)). Unfortunately, these factors have fractured communities of nonreligious people, making it extremely difficult for them to agree upon or articulate a positive vision for the future, or to create social change. This lack of community also leads religious communities to conclude that nonreligious people are without ethics.

When we say that we're "nonreligious," "agnostic," "atheist," or "unbelieving," we're really only saying what we aren't. These words certainly reflect an aspect of our identity, but we can be (and we are) much more than this: We are a community of people with many shared ideas and [values](#), including [reason](#), [happiness](#), and [compassion](#).

Creating the social change these [values](#) ask of us isn't always easy. Powerful forces oppose it, and devoting effort to creating change may mean hard work helping others or engaging in activism. It may mean giving up the time to do other fun activities. Sometimes

dishonesty, they maintain their habits, while the poor person is defined poor because of their drinking (their drinking could be inconsequential, though I believe that drinking isn't good for anyone, but whether it is good or bad their drinking isn't the main reason for their social position, it is something that will be pointed out before pointing out deeper reasons, like class oppression, and there are a lot of ways that people oppress...I have a hard time with just dealing with family members, I don't get along with them I disagree with them, I think they are ignorant and dishonest in a lot of ways, right now I'm very upset with my mother and feel I have a right to be, but I would rather be here than out there in the jungle, and if you are a person who doesn't fit in well you see how much of a jungle it is out there. People who can exist within society don't realize what it is like to be an outsider, and it isn't the simple matter of choice and responsibility that they shallowly and irresponsibly make it out to be.. The world is competitive, and people are dishonest, and there is scapegoating and cruelty and exclusion all around, there are elements like peer pressure and there is mobbing and all sorts of forces weighed against individuals, I believe we need to have a government that recognizes this and finds ways to bring resources and energy to people in ways that allow the maximum happiness, protection from innate destructive elements of civilization, society. Many times the circumstances that surround me drive me to wish I was dead, I get so frustrated because I can't be understood, and things have been all screwed up in important ways in my life, but I can't even describe how before I'm told I'm whining. Self-reliance? You need to have stability and autonomy from peer pressure, people need to have resources available to self-cultivate, they need space and quality environments, they need to be free of fear or oppression from above or within their own class, you need health care, good nutrition and reliable transportation, and poor people don't have this, and even middle class people have to work too hard for it. A lot of problems associated with poverty are totally embedded and caused by the very state of being poor. Also people have different temperaments and characteristics and won't fit in and they need patience and self-determination and inclusion. As opposed to punishment, or banishment for being different. I belong to MindFreedom International and activist group that works for people who are oppressed by the mental health system. For a long time I was being strongly pressured to take antipsychotic medication, that has terrible adverse side effects. I've had a terrible time growing up and come from a background of dysfunction and confusion, but this isn't acknowledged they just want to give you a poisonous spirit-killing drug and ignore or dismiss the individual's grievances, label them mentally ill,

it means being stigmatized by ideological enemies as unpatriotic, weak, contrary, or worse. And even if we don't fear wasting our efforts or being criticized, we may simply not know how to go about it by ourselves.

By working together, we can avoid many of these problems. By doing so, we not only get closer to creating the kind of society we want to live in, we also find ways to enjoy the process. By unleashing our creativity and passion in the common pursuit of a well-chosen goal, and by finding whatever connections between us as we may, we make it exciting and enjoyable. The point is that we can be ourselves -- and change the world.



or irresponsible or say you lack character. I urge anyone who reads this to join up or check out this organization's work. That's all for now, I'm being rushed to get off the computer now but I really support these views and hope to communicate with others and learn more about ways to get these ideals out.

thanks

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### Mental vs. physical

Thu, 11/27/2008 - 18:33 >> ineptsegue

I think these exact problems stem from difficulty our society has understanding that mental difficulties are as real as physical ones. It may be just as impossible for someone with crippling depression to get up out of bed in the morning as it is for someone in a wheelchair. I'm sure this is partly because mental health problems are somewhat harder to recognize than most physical ailments.



[ineptsegue](#)  
(Moderator)

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### I'm love this great website.

Sun, 12/14/2008 - 18:52 >> Sergey (not verified)

I'm love this great website. Many thanks guy



[Sergey](#)  
(anonymous user)

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### Too much to take in all at

Mon, 11/24/2008 - 09:05 >> Anonymous

Too much to take in all at once right now, but I'll return. very interesting. I like it!!! If ya get a chance, check out my UNBOXING GOD, and UNTANGLING GOD,PT 1. Would appreciate your thoughts. I shall return. Lonnie Fowler, lrf1951



(anonymous user)

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## Unboxing god

Thu, 11/27/2008 - 00:04 >> ineptsegue

Thanks! Where might we find these articles (if indeed they are articles)?



ineptsegue

(Moderator)

Now I'm thinking about the concept of boxing with god. In one corner, The Almighty Ruler of All Creation. In the other, me.

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## Here it is...

Thu, 11/27/2008 - 00:07 >> CausalCrunch

<http://lrf1951.wordpress.com/category/uncategorized/>



CausalCrunch

(Beingism Founder)

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## Unboxing god

Fri, 11/28/2008 - 18:45 >> ineptsegue

I think the concepts that you're criticizing are pretty out of vogue among educated Christians. Of course, there are many, many people who still believe in a very literal and intolerant version of Christianity, so I think it's really good that you're out there trying to communicate with them.



ineptsegue

(Moderator)

Your words may well help someone to come from a place of literalism to a more sophisticated understanding of their religious views.

I would venture to add, though, that from a Beingist perspective, the entire debate is proceeding from an assumption that is (at best) without evidence and (at worst) self-contradictory. There isn't any evidence for the existence of anything like a god, much less for what characteristics it would possess if it did, so how can we even really have a real conversation about it?

**Beingism=GOD** Fri, 06/04/2010 - 16:14 >> Anonymous (not verified)

Just like some people have a need to believe in some "supernatural power" and call it God to have a way of life that is "compassionate and thoughtful", since Beingism is defined as just that, in this context, Beingism to Beingists (if I can call it that) is the same as what God is to people who are part of faith based systems/communities. It seems that some could interpret followers of faith-based systems as those that do not use reason because "faith" implies there is no evidence for ones beliefs. However, this could be just a limitation of usage of any language or not having the correct words to communicate a thought or feeling. It could also be that we use our physical senses (touch, smell, sight, hearing and taste) to get input from our fellow beings (living or non-living, and cosmos as a whole) that limit us to the extent of our senses and react based on the input we receive/perceive. I personally believe that all religious teachings try to help their followers to be what Beingism is to Beingists and since this is a fairly recent community (cornologically), if Beingism is followed by it followers and propogated and attains a critical mass in a few/several decades it will become yet another religion just like Christianity, Buddhism, Judaism, Islam etc. I have not studied religion, but from my limited knowledge, here is what I think : Jesus was a Jew and he exhibited the true compassion and love of his fellow human beings for the greater good. Siddhartha Gautama (Buddha) was a Hindu by birth and he did the same and I can state several such examples from the religions that I know. However, I believe that unfortunately what happens when people are born, they inherit the religion(s) of their parents and some people don't think about what religion/faith means and get caught up in meaningless rituals of a particular religion rather than see how it applies to their present daily life. If every single human digs deep into our core, we will realize that we are all connected as one - it



**Anonymous**  
(anonymous user)

does not matter which path we take on that on-going journey - Beingism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism or anything else I have missed in this list. I personally believe there should be no borders on land or oceans or air that separates us from one another as different countries. This also means there is really no need to have different currencies between people. Only one currency defined in our limited vocabulary as goodwill, compassion, fairness etc. towards our fellow beings/non-beings, living (or not) to exist in harmony and peace.

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