

Community of Life

A supportive community
dedicated to self integration
for a better life and a better world.

www.community-of-life.org

Who and Why?

We are a broad, inter-generational community made of individuals, families, and partnerships.

We are organized

- to help each other survive, equilibrate, and thrive; to find, maintain, and evolve our personal “great life”;
- to create a sense of community and connectedness among people who share our values; and
- to have fun, celebrate, and deepen or revive our appreciation for life.

We are unified

- by a commitment to rational self integration, and
- by our shared experiences and support for each other.

Elaboration

By survive we mean just that – staying alive. That is the first basic level of life and success. By equilibrate we mean getting better at meeting the demands of life, finding emotional stability, over time coping with personal damage and overcoming personal obstacles, becoming comfortable with yourself, and coming to a place where you can find some clarity and the ability to reason about your life without being controlled by erratic emotions. By thrive and by finding your personal great life, we mean over time becoming: more healthy and fit; more aware, conscious, and present; more personally authentic, integrating your desires, emotions, and values into your activities; better able to achieve your goals and pursue your aims; more vibrant and imaginative; and more happy, successful, and satisfied.

Self integration means learning and feeling more about yourself and getting better at integrating your desires, emotions, and values into your life in a consistent, principled, and satisfying way. The focus on the self is fundamental because, although you may not believe it now, you have significant albeit subtle control over yourself, and your behavior is what you must change – your actions, your thinking, and slowly, over time, your emotions – to find better experiences and interactions with the world. You must be the change you want to see in the world.

So self integration is not just about your own internal world and how you direct and interact with your self. Your self is reflected in how you interact with the world around you and, partially, in what gets reflected back to you. Since you value your interactions and relationships with other people and their influence on your life, self integration includes incorporation of your social, economic, and political values into your life. This makes a person more principled in their interactions and potentially more ethical, active, and connected to their world.

The focus on the self should not be too myopic and attachment to self-change or self improvement should not be too intense, since this can lead to disconnection from the world, from opportunities, and from relationships; dissatisfaction for never reaching your greatest potential; and a loss of awareness or thankfulness for the pleasures and achievements already present and attained. Self integration implies that there must be a balance between making efforts toward integration and being content with your current state. You should also not be so focused on improving your life that you forget to go out and live it!

In the name, Community of Life, the word *life* is meant to include all that comes with life, including the highs, middles, lows, and its end, death. Death, like illness, is something that we should work to eliminate from life, using science and medicine. But it probably can never be eliminated completely, only postponed, so we must come to some realization of our mortality and make some peace with our eventual death. Too much fear of death can impair our ability to reason about our life, and that makes death even more tragic. In the Community of Life, we focus on the positive, but we do not turn our heads from the negative; we must confront our fears to become more aware and present within ourselves.

How?

We get together

- for fun and socializing;
- to learn about and practice self integration through conversation, story-telling, lectures, lessons, workshops, group sessions, and other kinds activities;
- for major life events, including weddings and funerals; and
- to have celebrations based on cultural, seasonal, and metaphorical themes.

We provide resources (online and in-house)

- for learning and practicing self integration, and
- for finding and networking with other groups that fit your interests and abilities.

As the community grows, we may take on internal projects such as

- specialty and support sub-groups,
- day care, private school,
- family programs and children's programs (like Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts), and
- elderly care and housing;

as well as external projects such as

- projects targeted to help the aged/needy/homeless/suicidal/addicted/orphaned/etc. and
- a principled alternative for people (especially young men) who would otherwise join an army or gang.

If possible, the programs should be economically self-sustaining or profit-making, with strict guidelines and structure to prevent corruption of the mission.

Elaboration

Some major topics and themes for the community are: Mind, Body, Relationships, Networks, Possessions, Wealth, Skills, Rationality, Emotionality, and Behavior Modification. Although the focus is on the practical questions of life, we also provide a rational foundation to explore the more philosophical and metaphysical questions of life. More specific topics and activities include: personal productivity, health/diet/sleep/exercise, mental exercise, meditation, behavior/mood regulation, schedule design, habit experimentation, incentive management, how to network & find the right friends & social groups, how to win friends & influence people, building your sense of humor, personal psychology, group psychology & dynamics, self-expression & reception to others' expression, non-verbal & body language, hygiene & appearance, sexuality, finding a partner, parenting, family dynamics, social & business entrepreneurship, financial solvency & growth, how to manage your material possessions, emergency preparedness, growth despite disability & disorder, accepting mortality, emotional lessons & exercises (emotional yoga), rational lessons & exercises (rationality dojo), states of mind, balancing inward focus & outward focus, the value of losing yourself & finding yourself, the self in the selfless, the paradox of hedonism, opportunity awareness, stoking creativity, life-long learning, finding your passions, life hacking, personal aesthetics, evidence-based belief construction & deconstruction, and consistent principle development.

Some fun activities include dinner parties and potlucks, games, concerts, sing-alongs, dancing, talent shows, arts, crafts, and outings, such as going on hikes and camping.

To help each other, we firstly provide a refuge and a place to heal and recharge, then we help people to come to an understanding of their own situation and start the journey of self discovery, then we help people to advance in their journey and find personal happiness and success.

When and Where?

We meet every other weekend. We encourage you to use the off-weekends for your own projects and activities. We try not to take too much of your time, and we make the meetings value-packed, because we want you to learn a lot and then spend a lot of time applying that knowledge and living life well!

Where would you like to meet? We may network with other groups and have multi-sponsored meetings.