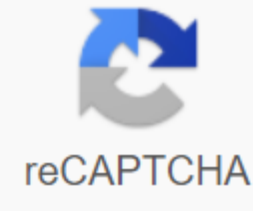




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Ayn rand philosophy who needs it pdf

Home Most people dismiss a philosophy as irrelevant to life, but as Ayn Rand shows in novels like Fountainhead and Atlas straightened their shoulders, living on the right fundamental ideas is crucial to human existence, like food and water. The articles in this collection explain and develop Rand's unique view of the role of philosophy in human life. In the title essay Philosophy: Who Needs It, Rand shows why to solve specific, real problems a person needs an implicit or explicit view of the world, the place of the person in it and what goals and values he should pursue. The abstract preconditions that man has can be true and consistent, achieved by bona fide considerations, and the purpose of science philosophy is to teach how to achieve this, or its premise can be a bunch of conflicting ideas unwittingly absorbed by the culture around it. But in any case, she argues, the power of philosophy is inevitable. This is something that everyone should be concerned about. The question of how to approach and study philosophy is discussed in philosophical discovery (c. 2). Subsequent essays reveal the true power of philosophy, good or bad, in human affairs. For example, in Faith and Power: Destroyers of the Modern World (h. 7), Ayn Rand talks about how the political system of culture is the product of her philosophical ideas. She explains why rational ideas lead to freedom, and why periods dominated by religion and other irrational doctrines are periods of statism, dictatorship, tyranny. Her seminal essay Cause against Duty (h. 10) explains what the moral teachings of humanity actually do for individual life, contrasting a man who obeys duty to be selfless with a person who accepts her alternative to rational selfishness. For the former, morality is a debilitating obstacle to achieving its values; for the latter, morality is a necessary means of achieving one's own happiness. Other essays emphasize the power of philosophy, emphasizing its influence in such unexpected areas as the mentality and public policy that determine monetary inflation in the United States (c. 12), the attractiveness of chess in Soviet Russia (h. 6) and the unnamed premise that form the sinister rulings of the Supreme Court on obscenity (c. 15). If you're wondering why Ayn Rand was so passionate about philosophy, this book will help you understand. Table Content Introduction Philosophy: Who Needs It Philosophical Detection Metaphysical vs. Man-Made Missing Links Selfishness Without Himself Open Letter Boris Spassky Faith and Power: Destroyers of the Modern World From The Mouth of the Horse Kant vs. Sullivan Cause-Responsibility Against The Charge of Untitled Letter of Egalitarianism and Inflation Incentive and Response Local and express doctrine of justice for education What can be done? To be done? Let It Go Index (Paperback; 228 pages) Additional resources: Philosophy: Who Needs ItAyn Rand, American fiction writer For graduation from the United States Military Academy at West Point New York - March 6, 1974 Since I'm a science fiction writer, let's start with a short story. Suppose you are an astronaut whose spaceship is out of control and falling on an unknown planet. When you regain consciousness and find that you are not in pain, the first three questions in your mind will be: Where am I? How can I detect this? What should I do? You see unfamiliar vegetation outside, and there is air to breathe; sunlight seems paler than you remember, and colder. You turn around to look at the sky, but stop. You were struck by the sudden feeling; if you do not look, you do not have to know that you are perhaps too far from the earth and return is impossible; until you know it, you can believe in what you want - and you experience a hazy, pleasant, but somehow guilty, kind of hope. You turn to your tools: they can be damaged, you don't know how serious. But you stop, struck by sudden fear: how can you trust these tools? How can you be sure that they will not mislead you? How can you know if they will work in another world? You're turning your back on tools. Now you start to wonder why you have no desire to do anything. It seems much safer just to wait for something to appear somehow. Better, tell yourself, don't rock the spaceship. Far in the distance, you see some living things approaching; You don't know if they are human, but they walk on two legs. They, you decide, will tell you what to do. You've never heard from again. It's a fantasy, you say? Wouldn't you be like that, and no astronaut would ever do that? Probably not. But that's how most men live their lives here on Earth. Most men spend their days trying to dodge the three questions that underlie every person's thought, feelings and actions, whether he is consciously aware of it or not: Where am I? How would I know that? What should I do? By the time they are old enough to understand these questions, men believe they know the answers. Where am I? Let's say in New York. How would I know that? It's self-evident. What should I do? Here they are not too sure - but the usual answer is: everything everyone does. The only trouble, it seems, is that they are not very active, not very sure, not very happy - and they experience, at times, gratuitous fear and undefined guilt, which they cannot explain or get rid of. They never discovered the fact that trouble comes from three unanswered questions - and that there is only one science that can answer them: Philosophy explores the fundamental nature of existence, man and human attitude to existence. As far as special sciences that deal only with specific aspects, philosophy deals with those aspects of the universe that relate to everything that exists. In the field of cognition, special science trees, but the philosophy of the soil that makes the forest possible. Philosophy won't tell you, for example, whether you're in New York or zanzibar (although it will give you the means to find out). But here's what he would tell you: Are you in a universe that rules natural laws and is therefore stable, firm, absolute - and know? Or are you in an unfathomable chaos, a realm of inexplicable miracles, an unpredictable, unknowable stream that your mind is powerless to understand? Are the things you see around you real - or are they just an illusion? Are they independent of any observer or are they created by an observer? Are they an object or object of human consciousness? Are they what they are - or can they be altered by a simple act of your consciousness, such as desire? The nature of your actions - and your ambitions - will be different, according to which set of answers you come to accept. These answers are a province of metaphysics - the study of existence as such or, in Aristotle's words, to be qua being - a major branch of philosophy. No matter what conclusions you reach, you will face the need to answer another, consequence question: How can I know this? Since a person is not omniscient or infallible, you should discover what you can claim as knowledge and how to prove the validity of your findings. Does a person acquire knowledge in the process of reason or a sudden revelation from supernatural power? Is the reason for the faculty that identifies and integrates the material provided by a person's senses - or is it fed on innate ideas implanted in a person's mind before he is born? Is the reason competent to perceive reality - or does a person possess any other cognitive faculty that transcends the mind? Can a person achieve certainty - or is he doomed to eternal doubt? The degree to which your self-confidence - and your success - will vary, according to which set of answers you accept. These answers are a province of epistemology, a theory of knowledge that studies the means of human cognition. These two branches are the theoretical basis of philosophy. A third industry, ethics, can be seen as its technology. Ethics does not apply to everything that exists, only to man, but it applies to all aspects of human life: his character, his actions, his values, his attitude to all existence. Ethics, or morality, defines a code of values to guide a person's choices and actions - choices and actions that determine the course of his life. Just as the astronaut in my story didn't know he had to because he refused to know where he was and how it is, so you can't know what you should be doing until you know the nature of the universe you're dealing with, the nature of your means of cognition - and your own nature. Before you come to ethics, you have to answer the questions of metaphysics and epistemology: Is a person a rational being capable of dealing with reality - or is he a helplessly blind loser, a chip plagued by a universal flow? Is it possible to reach and enjoy man on earth - or is he doomed to failure and disgust? Depending on the answers, you can begin to consider the questions asked by ethics: What is good or evil for a person - and why? Should a person's main concern be the desire for joy or escape from suffering? Should a person keep self-realization - or self-destruction - as the goal of his life? Should a person pursue his values - or should he pursue the interests of others above his own? Should a person seek happiness or self-sacrifice? I should not point to the different implications of these two sets of responses. You can see them everywhere - inside you and around you. The answers given by ethics determine how a person should treat other men, and this defines the fourth branch of philosophy: the policy that defines the principles of a proper social system. As an example of function philosophy, political philosophy won't tell you how much rationed gas you should be provided and on what day of the week - it will tell you whether the government has the right to impose any rationing on anything. The fifth and final branch of philosophy is aesthetics, the study of art based on metaphysics, epistemology and ethics. Art deals with the needs - refueling - of human consciousness. Now some of you can say, like many people: Oh, I never think in such abstract terms - I want to deal with specific, specific, real problems - what do I need philosophy for? My answer is to be able to solve specific, specific, real problems, i.e. to be able to live on Earth. You can argue - like most people - that you have never been influenced by philosophy. I'll ask you to verify that statement. Have you ever thought or said the following? Don't be so sure - no one can be sure of anything. You got this notion from David Hume (and many, many others), though you may never have heard of it. or: It may be good in theory, but it doesn't work in practice. You got it from Plato. Or: It was a rotten thing to do, but it is only a person, no one is perfect in this world. You got it from Augustine. Or: This may be true for you, but it is not true for me. You got it from William James. Or: I couldn't believe it! No one can help anything that he does. You got it from Hegel. I can't prove it, but I feel it's true. You got it from Kant. Or: It is logical, but logic has nothing to do with reality. You got it from Or: It's evil because it's selfish. You got it from Kant. Have you heard modern activists say, First, act, think later? They got it from John Dewey. Some people may reply: Of course I've said these things at different times, but I don't have to believe that stuff all the time. Maybe it was true yesterday, but it's not today. They got it from Hegel. They can say: Consistency is a hobgoblin of little minds. They got it from a very small mind, Emerson. They can say: But can not one compromise and borrow different ideas from different philosophies depending on the expediency of the moment? They got it from Richard Nixon - who got it from William James. Now ask yourself: if you are not interested in abstract ideas, why do you (and all men) have to use them? The fact is that abstract ideas are conceptual integrations that will include innumerable amounts of concrete - and that without abstract ideas you will not be able to cope with specific, specific, real problems. You would be in the position of a newborn for which each object is unique, unprecedented. The difference between his mental state and yours lies in the number of conceptual integrations performed by your mind. You have no choice about the need to integrate your observations, your experience, your knowledge into abstract ideas, i.e. into principles. Your only choice is whether these principles are true or false, whether they represent your conscious, rational beliefs - or grab a bag of concepts grabbed at random, whose sources, authenticity, context and consequences you don't know, concepts that, more often than not, you'd drop like hot potatoes if you knew. But the principles you accept (consciously or subconsciously) may contradict each other or contradict each other; they also need to be integrated. What do they have in common? Philosophy. The philosophical system is a complex view of existence. As a person, you have no choice about what you need philosophy for. Your only choice is whether you define your philosophy with a conscious, rational, disciplined process of thought and scrupulously logical discussion - or let your subconscious accumulate a garbage heap of unsubstantiated conclusions, false generalizations, vague contradictions, undigested slogans, unidentified desires, doubts and fears thrown together by accident, but integrated by your subconscious into a kind of mongrel philosophy and a single one. like a ball and a chain in a place where the wings of your mind were to grow. It can be said, like many people, that it is not easy to always act on abstract principles. No, it's not easy. But how much harder is it to act on them without knowing what they are? Your subconscious is like - a more complex computer than people can build - and its main core is the integration of your ideas. Who's his program? Your conscious mind. If you default, if you don't achieve any firm beliefs, your subconscious is programmed by accident - and you deliver yourself by virtue of ideas that you don't know you've accepted. But somehow, your computer gives you printouts, daily and times, in the form of emotions - which are lightning fast as the assessments of things around you are calculated according to your values. If you have programmed your computer into conscious thinking, you know the nature of your values and emotions. If not, no. Many people, especially today, argue that a person cannot live by logic alone, that there is an emotional element of his nature to consider, and that they rely on the guidance of their emotions. Well, so is the astronaut in my story. The joke on it - and on them: the values and emotions of a person are determined by his fundamental view of life. The ultimate programmer of his subconscious is philosophy - a science that, according to emotionalists, is powerless to influence or penetrate into the dark mysteries of their feelings. The quality of the computer is determined by the quality of its input. If your subconscious is programmed by accident, its output will be appropriate. You've probably heard the eloquent term of computer operators gigo - which means: Garbage, garbage out. The same formula applies to the relationship between a person's thinking and emotions. A person who is controlled by emotions is like a person who is controlled by a computer whose printouts he cannot read. He does not know whether his programming is true

or false, right or wrong, whether it will lead it to success or destruction, whether it serves its purposes or the purposes of some evil, incomprehensible force. He is blind on two fronts: blind to the world around him and to his inner world, unable to understand reality or his own motives, and he is in the chronic horror of both. Emotions are not tools of cognition. People who are not interested in philosophy need it most urgently: they are most helpless in its power. People who are not interested in philosophy absorb its principles from the cultural atmosphere around them - from schools, colleges, books, magazines, newspapers, movies, television, etc. Who sets the tone for culture? A small handful of people: philosophers. Others follow suit, either by conviction or by default. For about two hundred years, under the influence of Immanuel Kant, the dominant trend of philosophy was aimed at one goal: the destruction of the human mind, his confidence in the power of reason. Today we are witnessing the culmination of this trend. When people give up reason, they find not only that their emotions cannot guide them, but that they cannot experience any emotion to save one: terror. The spread of drug abuse among young people brought up on intellectual fashion, demonstrates the unbearable inner state of people who are deprived of their means of knowledge and who seek to escape from reality - from the horror of their powerlessness to deal with existence. Watch the fear of these young people independence and their desperate desire to belong to attach to some group, clique or gang. Most have never heard of philosophy, but they feel they need some fundamental answers to questions they dare not ask - and they hope the tribe will tell them how to live. They are willing to be taken over by any sorcerer, guru, or dictator. One of the most dangerous things a person can do is surrender his moral autonomy to others: as an astronaut in my history, he doesn't know if they are human, even if they walk on two legs. Now you may ask: if philosophy can be that evil, why should you study it? In particular, why should philosophical theories be studied that are blatantly false, meaningless and have nothing to do with real life? My answer: In self-defense - and in defense of truth, justice, freedom and any value you have ever held or can ever hold. Not all philosophies are evil, although there are too many of them, especially in modern history. On the other hand, at the heart of every civilized achievement, such as science, technology, progress, freedom - at the root of all the values we enjoy today, including the birth of this country - you will find the achievement of one person who lived more than two thousand years ago: Aristotle. If you only feel boredom reading the almost incomprehensible theories of some philosophers, you have my deepest sympathy. But if you shrug them off by saying, Why should I study these things when I know it's nonsense? You're wrong. It's nonsense, but you don't know it - not as long as you go to accept all your findings, all the perverse catch phrases generated by these philosophers. And not until you're able to disprove them. This nonsense concerns the most important, questions of life or death of human existence. At the heart of every meaningful philosophical theory, there is a legitimate question - in the sense that there is a genuine need for human consciousness, which some theories try to clarify, and others try to cloud, corrupt to prevent a person from ever discovering. The battle of philosophers is a battle for the human mind. If you don't understand their theories, you are vulnerable to the worst among them. The best way to learn philosophy is to approach it as you approach the detective story: follow each trail, clue and consequences to find out who is the killer and who is the hero. Two questions are the criterion for detection: why? And how? If this principle seems true - why? If another principle seems false - why? and how it's put You won't find everything immediately, but you will acquire an invaluable characteristic: the ability to think in terms of basic necessities. Nothing is given to a person automatically, no knowledge, no self-confidence, no inner peace, no proper way to use your mind. Every value he needs or wants must be discovered, studied and acquired - even the correct posture of his body. In this context, I want to say that I have always admired the position of The West Point alumni, a posture that projects a man in proud, disciplined control over his body. Well, philosophical training gives a person the correct intellectual posture - a proud, disciplined control over his mind. In your own profession, in military science, you know the importance of tracking an enemy's weapons, strategies and tactics - and being prepared to confront them. In a physical war, you wouldn't send your men into a booby trap: you'd make every effort to discover its location. Well, Kant's system is the largest and most complex booby-trapped in the history of philosophy - but it's so full of holes that once you catch its trick, you can defuse it without any problems and go ahead over it in complete safety. And as soon as it is defused, the smaller Cantians - the lower ranks of his army, the philosophical sergeants, the privates and mercenaries of today - will fall out of their own weightlessness, as a result of a chain reaction. There is a special reason why you, the future leaders of the United States Army, should be philosophically armed today. You are the target of a special attack by the Cantian-Hegelian collectivist establishment that dominates our cultural institutions today. You - the army of the last semi-free country, remained on the ground, but you are accused of being an instrument of imperialism - and imperialism is the name given to the foreign policy of this country, which has never engaged in military conquests and has never profited from two world wars that it did not initiate, but entered and won. (It was, by the way, a foolishly over-common policy that forced this country to spend its wealth on helping both its allies and its former enemies.) What is called the military-industrial complex - which is a myth or worse - is being blamed for all the ills of this country. Bloody college bullies yelling demands that R.O.T.C. units be banned from college campuses. Our defence budgets are being attacked, condemned and undermined by people who argue that financial priority should be given to environmental pink gardens and classrooms in the aesthetics of self-expression for slum dwellers. Some of you are baffled by this campaign and may be surprised, in good faith, what mistakes you have made committed to bring it. If so, then It is important for you to understand the nature of the enemy. You are attacked not because of any mistakes or shortcomings, but because of your merits. You are judged not for your weakness, but for your strength and competence. You are punished for being the defenders of the United States. At the lower level of the same issue, a similar campaign against the police force is under way. Those who seek to destroy this country seek to disarm it, intellectually and physically. But this is not just a political issue; politics is not a cause, but a last consequence of philosophical ideas. This is not a communist conspiracy, although some communists may be involved - as the maggots cash in on the disaster they had no power to start. The motive of the destroyers is not love for communism, but hatred of America. Why hate? Because America is a living refutation of the Kantian universe. Today's mawkish concern and compassion for the weak, the flaws, the suffering, the guilty, is a cover for the deeply Kantian hatred of the innocent, the strong, the capable, the successful, the virtuous, the confident, the happy. Philosophy based on the destruction of the human mind is necessarily a philosophy of hatred of man, for human life and for every human value. Hatred of the good for being good is a hallmark of the twentieth century. It's the enemy you face. A battle of this kind requires special weapons. It should be fought with a full understanding of your case, full self-confidence and full confidence in the moral correctness of both. Only philosophy can provide you with this weapon. The task I have given myself today is not to sell you my philosophy, but to philosophy as such. I have, however, spoken implicitly about my philosophy in every sentence - since none of us, and no statement can break out of the philosophical premises. What is my selfish interest in this issue? I am confident enough to think that if you accept the importance of philosophy and the task of studying it critically, it is my philosophy that you will come to an agreement. Formally, I call it objectivism, but unofficially I call it the philosophy of life on Earth. You will find a clear presentation of it in my books, particularly in Atlas straightened shoulders. In conclusion, let me speak in person. This evening means a lot to me. I am honored to address you. I can say - not as a patriotic bromide, but with full knowledge of the necessary metaphysical, epistemological, ethical, political and aesthetic roots - that the United States of America is the greatest, most noble and, in its original fundamental principles, the only moral country in the history of the world. There is a sort of quiet glow tied in my head with the name West Point -- because you have retained the spirit of these original fundamental principles you are their symbol. There were contradictions and omissions in these principles, and they may be in yours, but I am talking about the most necessary. There may be people in your story who will not live to your highest standards, as they are in every institution, because no institution and no social system can guarantee the automatic perfection of all its members; it depends on the free will of the person. I'm talking about your standards. You have retained three qualities of character that were typical at the time of America's birth, but virtually non-existent today: seriousness - selflessness - sense of honor. Honor is a sense of self-esteem, visible in action. You decided to risk your life to protect this country. I will not insult you by saying that you are dedicated to selfless service - it is not a virtue in my morality. In my morality, the protection of my country means that a person personally does not wish to live as a conquered slave of any enemy, foreign or domestic. It's a huge virtue. Some of you may not realize it. I want to help you figure this out. The army of a free country has a great responsibility: the right to use force, but not as an instrument of coercion and gross conquest, as the armies of other countries have done in their history, only as an instrument of self-defense of a free nation, which means: the protection of individual human rights. The principle of the use of force only in retaliation against those who initiate its use is the principle of the subordination of force to the right. This task requires a high sense of honesty and a sense of honor. No other army in the world has achieved this. You have. West Point gave America a long line of heroes, known and unknown. You, this year's alumni, have a glorious tradition to continue, which I admire deeply, not because it is a tradition, but because it is glorious. Since I have come from a country guilty of the worst tyranny on earth, I am particularly capable of appreciating the meaning, greatness and supreme value of what you defend. So, on my own behalf and on behalf of many people who think like me, I want to say, for all the people of West Point, past, present and future: Thank you. This text was originally the address given by Ayn Rand at West Point. It was, in particular, printed as the lead and title part in Ayn Rand's collection of essays on philosophy, Philosophy: Who Needs It, which I highly recommend to all those interested in psychoepistemology. I based this edition on one that was available by Robert Tracy, which I corrector and converted into a different format. I also translated this text into French. French. ayn rand philosophy who needs it pdf. ayn rand philosophy who needs it pdf free download. ayn rand philosophy who needs it pdf download. ayn rand philosophy who needs it speech

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