

# GOAL DIGGERS



*The Question*

*Isn't Who Is Going To Let Me;*

*It's Who Is Going To Stop Me*



BY:  
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# AYN RAND

“I am often asked whether I am primarily a novelist or a philosopher. The answer is: both. In a certain sense, every novelist is a philosopher, because one cannot present a picture of human existence without a philosophical framework; . . . In order to define, explain and present my concept of man, I had to become a philosopher in the specific meaning of the term.”

—*Ayn Rand, “Preface,”*

# PHILOSOPHY

To create her unusual stories and characters, Rand had to define the new ideas and principles that guide her heroes. She had to create a new philosophy. “I am interested in philosophical principles,” she wrote, “only as they affect the actual existence of men; and in men, only as they reflect philosophical principles.”

For Rand, philosophy is not an esoteric subject but a daily force shaping individual lives and human history. You must have some view of the kind of world you live in, of how best to understand and deal with it, and of what to aim at in life. Your only choice is whether your philosophical premises are acquired by your own independent thinking or absorbed unquestioningly from those around you.

Formally, Rand called her philosophy “Objectivism”.

# SELFISH

Ayn Rand wrote volumes urging people to be selfish.

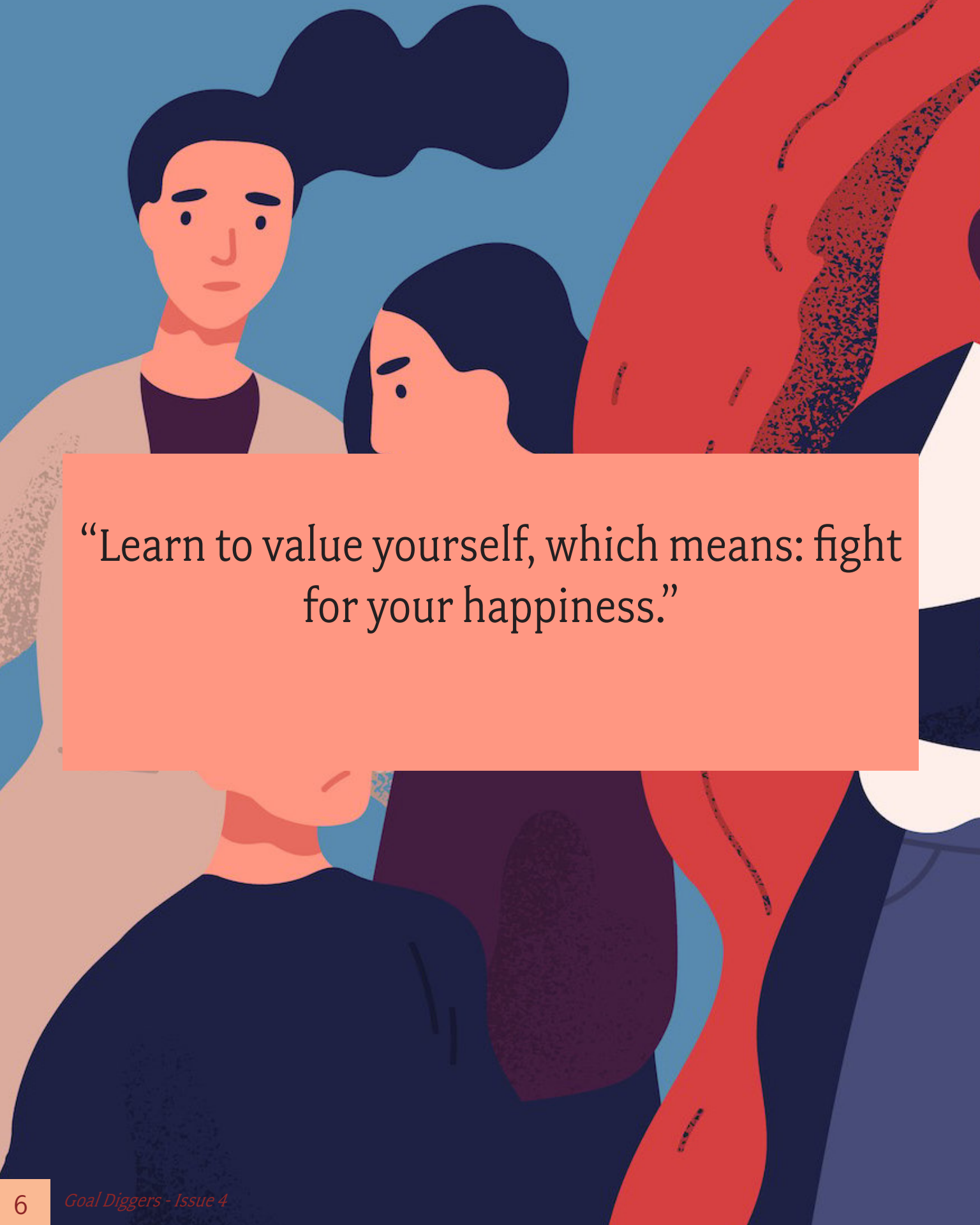
What? Aren’t people already too selfish? Just do whatever you feel like, be a thoughtless jerk, and exploit people to get ahead. Easy, right? Except that acting thoughtlessly and victimizing others, Rand claims, is not in your self-interest.

What Rand advocates is an approach to life that’s unlike anything you’ve ever heard before. Selfishness, in her philosophy, means:


- Follow reason, not whims or faith.
- Work hard to achieve a life of purpose and productiveness.
- Earn genuine self-esteem.
- Pursue your own happiness as your highest moral aim.
- Prosper by treating others as individuals.





A stylized illustration featuring two people. On the left, a person with dark hair and a neutral expression is shown from the chest up, wearing a light-colored jacket over a dark shirt. To their right, another person is partially visible, looking down. A large, vibrant red abstract shape, resembling a flame or a large brushstroke, dominates the right side of the image. The background is a solid blue color. A large, semi-transparent orange rectangle is centered over the image, containing a quote in black text.

“Learn to value yourself, which means: fight  
for your happiness.”

An illustration of a crowd of people. In the top left, a woman with long dark hair has her eyes closed and a sad expression. In the top right, a woman with dark hair looks surprised with her hand near her mouth. In the center, a person with brown hair looks forward with a neutral expression. In the bottom right, a man with brown hair looks slightly to the side with a neutral expression. The background is a mix of red, orange, and blue wavy shapes.

“My happiness is not the means to any end. It is the end. It is its own goal. It is its own purpose.”







“If you tell a beautiful woman that she is beautiful, what have you given her? It’s no more than a fact and it has cost you nothing. But if you tell an ugly woman that she is beautiful, you offer her the great homage of corrupting the concept of beauty. To love a woman for her virtues is meaningless. She’s earned it, it’s a payment, not a gift. But to love her for her vices is a real gift, unearned and undeserved. To love her for her vices is to defile all virtue for her sake - and that is a real tribute of love, because you sacrifice your conscience, your reason, your integrity and your invaluable self-esteem.”

# COMMON BELIEFS THAT AYN RAND CHALLENGES

## “DUTY”

We're not born, Rand says, with inexplicable duties to serve God or society. We only have one life, and the good is to live it. Learn to pursue your own happiness by discovering the life-promoting values it requires. Think rationally and don't bow to authority. Join with other people when you have real values in common and go your separate way when you don't. Don't try to be your brother's keeper or to force him to be yours. Live independently.

## “LOVE”

We love what we personally value and admire. A “selfless love” is a contradiction in terms: it would mean you have no personal stake in the object of your love. The truth is, romantic love is profoundly selfish: it's a union of mind and body that both people pursue for their own

happiness. And it's profoundly demanding. To quote a famous line from *The Fountainhead*: “To say ‘I love you’ one must know first how to say the ‘I.’”

## “MONEY”

Life requires production. Today's standard of living, with our computers, cell phones and life-saving medicines, far outstrips the wildest dreams of the past. All this wealth had to be created by individuals — and money is what enables production. “Money is your means of survival,” a character in *Atlas Shrugged* warns. “The verdict you pronounce upon the source of your livelihood is the verdict you pronounce upon your life.”





To grasp the axiom that existence exists, means to grasp the fact that nature, i.e., the universe as a whole, cannot be created or annihilated, that it cannot come into or go out of existence. Whether its basic constituent elements are atoms, or subatomic particles, or some yet undiscovered forms of energy, it is not ruled by a consciousness or by will or by chance, but by the Law of Identity. . . . Nature is the metaphysically given — i.e., the nature of nature is outside the power of any volition.

# “WISHING WON’T MAKE IT SO”

Ayn Rand’s philosophy, Objectivism, begins by embracing the basic fact that existence exists. Reality is, and in the quest to live we must discover reality’s nature and learn to act successfully in it.

To exist is to be something, to possess a specific identity. This is the Law of Identity: A is A. Facts are facts, independent of any consciousness. No amount of passionate wishing, desperate longing or hopeful pleading can alter the facts. Nor will ignoring or evading the facts erase them: the facts remain, immutable.

In Rand’s philosophy, reality is not to be rewritten or escaped, but, solemnly and proudly, faced. One of her favorite sayings is Francis Bacon’s: “Nature, to be commanded, must be

obeyed.”

Reality — that which exists — has no alternatives, no competitors, nothing “transcending” it. To embrace existence is to reject all notions of the supernatural and the mystical, including God



