



Reason, Individualism, Freedom Institute Newsletter

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Meet RIFI Team Member Tal Ben Shahar



Tal “...had no plans to attend college.”

Our own Tal Ben Shahar has enjoyed some fame these past months in print and on TV; in fact if you google him, his name has two + pages of references on multiple websites, talking about his Harvard course on Positive Psychology, the largest at the University with 850 students. He also teaches the third largest course on The Psychology of Leadership with 550 students. So who is this favorite Harvard Lecturer?

Tal hails from Israel by way of Squash. In his teens he was a world-class squash champion in Israel and had no plans to attend college. He was the Israel Olympic Athlete of the Year for 1988, 1989 and 1992. Instead, he figured on a long athletic career—until Life—in the form of military duty—got in the way. During his tour of duty he sustained an injury that prevented him from competing ever again on the world-class level.

Fortunately for him, he could still play *excellent* Squash, and was recruited by the Harvard coach. While competing regularly as an undergraduate, Tal turned from athletics to deep personal introspection, reflection and growth. Majoring in Philosophy and Psychology with a focus on Ethics and Motivation, he worked closely with Robert Nozick. He received his B.A. with High Honors.

Subsequently, he was the John Eliot Scholar and representative from Harvard at the University of Cambridge in the U.K. There he entered graduate studies in Education, which included re-evaluating the current understanding of self-esteem and exploring the link between self-esteem, moral behavior, and motivation

Tal returned from the University of Cambridge to earn his Ph.D. in Organizational Behavior from Harvard in 2004. As the Edmond J. Safra Graduate Fellow in Ethics, he studied applied philosophy, with a focus on business ethics, working with Professor Warren Bennis and others. He was also a teaching assistant to Professor Bennis in the Harvard Business School. From 1999-2003, Tal received the George W. Goethals Teaching Prize for exceptional instructors in the Psychology Department.

In addition to his role as Lecturer in Psychology at Harvard University, Tal is the Scholar In

Residence and Master Teacher for The David Project, an organization dedicated to promoting a fair and honest understanding of the Middle East conflict. Tal has delivered hundreds of lectures and workshops around the world for this organization.

Tal has developed curricula and workshops for other organizations, too, including Gallup and the Nieman Foundation. Most notably, Tal co-founded Project First Step. This is an educational intervention program for at-risk youth, helping students transform themselves and their communities in South Africa and the U.S

In addition to writing several books and multiple papers on a wide variety of topics, from "The Question of Happiness" to "The Clash of Values" and the struggle for freedom, Tal has served as a business consultant for multi-national organizations around the world.

Tal lives in Cambridge, MA with his wife, Tami, and son, David. In addition to his many other talents, Tal will be a rich resource for curriculum development and teacher training in developing our new college.

IRS Will Expedite 501(c) (3) Approval If You Help!

We at the Reason, Individualism, Freedom Institute have been waiting for tax exempt status approval from the IRS for some months. On a recent call to the service, we were informed that approval can be expedited under the following conditions:

If we receive verbal or written pledges for donations to be given by a specific date, we can write to the IRS, explaining why their approval is necessary in time to receive these contributions.

Therefore, if supporters *such as yourselves* are considering a donation to the Institute upon exempt status, *please write or call me with your pledge and the date on which you wish to donate.*

I plan to fax the letter requesting expedited approval as of May 16th. Please let me know about your pledges as soon as possible.

Thank you.

Marsha Enright

Promoting Education in Silicon Valley

Saturday April 22, 2006, Marsha Enright spoke before an attentive crowd of 30 people at the Silicon Valley Objectivist Salon at the School of Choice. Along with outlining why traditional, factory-style education has failed American students for centuries, she described the need and unique approach of the proposed new college.

In addition to exuding an excited buzz about the project, audience members had many good questions and ideas. Members of the club pledged an *initial* \$7,000, with more to come.

Thanks to Robert Arne for the use of his facility, and to Steve Nahm, Patrick Peterson and ArLyne Diamond for making the event a success.

To remove your name from our mailing list, please contact marsha.enright@collegeunitedstates.org
Pledges, Comments and questions, please write to Marsha or call 773-677-6418.

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