

Aristotle: summum bonum



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Aristotle: Summum Bonum. In line with Aristotle's theory that all human activity is, consciously or unconsciously, directed towards the summum bonum, which is the highest of all realizable goods, I hold that the ultimate goal of my life is the complete realization of my potential. In Aristotelian terms, the summum bonum is undisputedly linked to happiness and is the result of exercising man's rational faculty to the fullest. In this context, happiness, to me, is the result of a job well done, or an activity excellently performed, while fully exploiting my intrinsic skills.

When I consider my function in life, I categorize it into my activity as a professional, as an individual and as a father. My professional life centers on Information Technology and I aim to be the best in my field. I believe myself to possess the skills particularly suited to this specialization and my personal satisfaction and fulfillment here will entail my climbing up the corporate ladder of a blue chip company to reach the top rung. Professional success is essential to my conception of an excellent life. As an individual, I love snowboarding and wakeboarding and derive a deep satisfaction in excelling in these activities. The sense of exhilaration I derive from the exercise of my physical prowess, balance and judgment, definitely contributes towards my summum bonum. However, it is from my role as a father that I derive my greatest fulfillment and satisfaction. It is when I am with my four year old son and experience that melting love and the need to nurture and protect him, that I find myself closest to my own nature. Happiness, to me, is inextricably linked to my ability to provide my son with the best I am capable of. My summum bonum, my idea of a fulfilling, satisfying life, which gives me happiness, is to be the best in my career, in my personal activities and in fatherhood.

I have absolutely no doubt that the achievement of the summum bonum, of excellent living, is dependent on the possession of certain material wealth and goods. No one can deny that poverty is a barrier to the realization of human potential. In order to achieve professional excellence, there are certain essentials, such as the appropriate educational qualification (my Bachelors in Business Information Systems), a computer system with all the necessary accessories and adherence to a dress code, which I require. The distinction I make here is that the money I make is not an end in itself, but the means to the sense of achievement I derive from my professional success, as I make full use of my intellectual and personal strengths. I don't need an Alienware computer or the iphone or every other wizardly gizmo which hits the market, but I need adequate aids to earn a salary which recognizes my worth. As an individual, I would consider the expenses incurred in snowboarding as essential to my well-being, but would not insist on spending a fortnight at a Swiss chalet! As a father, I would definitely require all the material goods – a comfortable house, the best of food (steak: yes; caviar: no!) and clothes, books and toys- as essential. The house need not be a penthouse in Central Park, but one in a good neighborhood, with a yard for a little boy to throw hoops and learn baseball (from his father!). The things I need to live a good and meaningful life are those that will serve as instruments for me to achieve the highest good – the summum bonum of my life as a professional, individual and father. I need no excess, nor will I make do with defect which will take away from my happiness.