Humans need a philosophy to help dictate the course of their lives. Without a philosophy our tendency is to regress to actions that reflect our origins as merely one more animal on this planet. Driven not by understanding but driven by biology. If those drives were enough, civilization would be merely a superfluous encumbrance upon our lives, easily doffed by one and all. We must rationally deal with a society and its rules, it is necessary to formulate a philosophy that supports human ends as well as social ends and gets the individual human through a life allowing him to explore his own human experience, contribute to the group, and allows that he will end his life content in the proposition that living such a life is a worthy course of pursuit.

Antique philosophical methods often fail to address the dynamic freedom and power our present social condition allows. Humanity appears unbound, we are powerful from the tiniest aspects to our humanity (DNA) to the greatest aspects as humanity plans and schemes to populate our solar system. The justification, used in prior eras, that the random acts of gods were the cause, and therefore should be the guides, of our life course has been debunked.

I think the articulation of a “Centrist Philosophy” would better be voiced by addressing previous philosophical methods and finding a happy medium, capitalizing on their strengths and addressing their weakness. Once we understand the balance necessary to define a philosophically sound human, it will be easier to propose a philosophical solution to guiding humans as time and technology marches forward.

The human being has forces that pull it from being the base animal of his biology toward being a social animal yet allowing that social animal certain amounts of individual freedoms. Individual freedom in an era of plenty allows humans to satiate their condition well beyond what temperance would dictate. If we say Hedonism is true, how do we possibly restrain over indulgence? If the ultimate good in a human’s life is satiating their every want need or desire, the opium dens are not large enough to handle the influx, nor can we stifle the well-articulated detriments to society those dens represent.

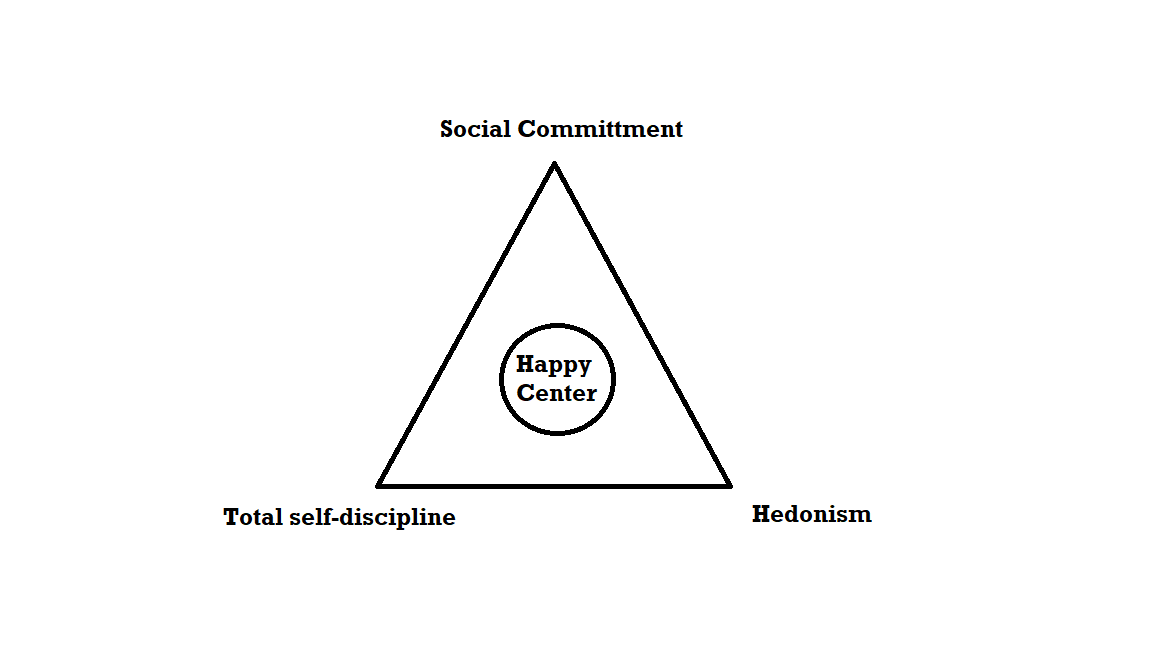
In recent history, human action was handled by dictate. Men assembled books of dictates from a supposed God and “dictated” what a “good human” would do. As society advanced, those rules became archaic. “Thou shalt not eat shrimp” lost in the debate with humans who figured out ways to prepare shrimp that satiated human desires. They are tasty.

Therefore, philosophy based on dictates of rules, whether that is the archaic biblical directives or the even more corpulent collection of legal dictates fails as society discovers methodologies and mechanisms to mollify the negatives associated with those same dictates. There is presently an effort to disarm the American populace and remove those mechanisms that allow individual humans to effect great harm on other humans. Not a bad desire, obviously against the dictates encompassed in the law. Therefore, the debate devolves to, “take away the guns” verses “the constitution dictates that I am allowed to own guns”. Both sides with valid philosophical points, in an era whereby the rule of law overrides, it is easy to see who will win. In even more distant eras, belligerent sons and ‘non-virgins’ were stoned to death at the edge of town. There has been and will continue to be progress.

With the changing nature of society and the effects of technology a set of fixed rules that humans are to be held to fails. Mountains of legal dictates and volumes of president are beyond human capacity. Each human has different thresholds that they should be aware of and maintain for freedom, self-gratification and socially dictated dominance and control.

Hedonism is a poor philosophical proposition in an era where the tools are available to exceed a human’s abilities for self-restraint. Generally, with easy access to plentiful food, the human girth has expanded and the effects of over indulgence are readily apparent. Humans, when given the opportunity, tend to over indulge. This was a critically important aspect to human biology as the human animal survived the longest period of their development. But today there is more chance of dying by overeating than of starvation.

In a modern era of plenty, with easy access to every aspect of human satiation, hedonism, which philosophically says: Satiating human desires is the ultimate good also fails.

On this planet, the most successful animals have been the social animals. Ants and bees being just the most prominent. Cooperative behaviors at the total expense of the individual organism have achieved success for those social networks. Could we develop a system whereby the individual is but a cog in the mechanism, their personal wants subservient to the needs of the state? I believe Communism fills the bill. “To each according to his needs, from each according to his abilities”, the driving mantra that pretty much has proven ineffective. Our human nature of individualism pulls us from the highly coordinated end philosophy of Communism or Socialism. Human desires don’t just disappear because of the introduction of a philosophy that belittles it.

The best human philosophical condition does not appear to lie on a line representing the pull of hedonism away from a self-discipline or self-centered philosophy. It must also take into account the society demands on the individual. A Centrist Philosophy should balance human needs and desires while also addressing social needs for cooperation and desires for individual contribution. None of them to the detriment of human freedom. Such a philosophy would be able to balance the social aspects while allowing freedom to pursue actions that are self-satisfying. Each end of the philosophical triangle would be pulled to a center that represents (individually) the best balance of social action, individual discipline, and individual gratification.

There is a balance that can be achieved from the pulls of total commitment to any of the three extremes of the triangle. Total commitment to hedonism or “self-gratification” lies in the effects, easily seen in social maladies as alcoholism, drug abuse, over eating, youthful indiscretions. The total commitment to the social group at the expense of individualism results in the mind numbed robotic effects of socialism, bereft of freedom and individuality. Total commitment to the individual results in isolation, a mountain man mentality, a Ted Kaczynski paradise. Yet each of these extremes lures the human to give up the demands of the other two for the benefits each offers.

A centrist philosophy maintains a balance. In the center of this triangle a well-balanced, philosophically sound human resides. A centrist philosophy would allow freedom, allow satiating desires and allow social cooperation and contribution in balance and an understanding that the pulls of the extreme ends of this triangle will always be luring them to actions outside their personal capacity for living a good life.