

Are You Really For Freedom?

I know you say you love freedom. Virtually everyone says they love and value freedom. Even such murderous villains as Adolf Hitler and Saddam Hussein claimed to love or advocate freedom.

"The German people are not a warlike nation. It is a soldierly one, which means it does not want a war, but does not fear it. It loves peace but also loves its honor and freedom." Adolf Hitler to Reichstag in Berlin February 1936

"[Saudi Arabian and Kuwaiti] blood will light torches, grow aromatic plants, and water the tree of freedom, resistance and victory." Saddam Hussein, Iraqi Radio, January 26, 1999

It is easy to simply claim to support freedom, but it is much more difficult to accept the sometimes scary implications of such a claim.

Did you ever wonder what it really means to say, "I'm for freedom?" It is difficult for me to express how unimpressed I am by the enthusiasm of a person to strongly support the rights of another person to use their freedoms in exactly the same way they themselves exercise their own freedoms. For example, alcohol users who support the rights of others to use alcohol or marijuana users who support the rights of others to use marijuana does not seem such a principled stance to me.

On the other hand, people who steadfastly and enthusiastically support the rights of other adults to use their freedoms¹ in ways they themselves would never personally engage in is truly inspiring. A real freedom attitude is about accepting the sovereign rights of other adults to peacefully use their bodies and their property in ways you personally disagree with, morally oppose, find degrading, ill advised, harmful or completely foolish.² Indeed, this is the test to determine whether a person honestly supports the concept of freedom.

¹ By using their "freedoms" I mean being in control of your own body, time, money and other property. This does not include using another's body, time, money, or property without their consent. Freedom includes the notion that all voluntary conduct between consenting adults, whether others approve or not, is absolutely legal.

² Don't be confused by the concept that a person could morally oppose an activity yet strongly support its legality. A moral question and a legal question should be two entirely different questions. Some of my friends morally oppose prostitution while supporting its legalization. There is no contradiction. Questions about "right" and "wrong" are also different questions than questions about what should be "legal."

The adult users of the horribly destructive and often addicting drug called “alcohol” who oppose the legalization of marijuana because they personally choose not to use marijuana are, in freedom terms, identical to the adult users of marijuana³ who oppose the legalization of methamphetamine because they personally choose not to use methamphetamine.⁴

A similar example can be found in the area of free speech. Americans rightly take pride in their right to free speech. So long as the speech is “acceptable” there is no controversy. However, when unpopular groups like the Ku Klux Klan or the Neo-Nazis want to peacefully march, many self proclaimed free speech supporters seek to use the law to ban them.^{5 6}

These are the scary implications one must accept and embrace to truly be a person who advocates freedom. To hold otherwise suggests your freedoms actually extend no further than some other person’s personal preference regarding their own freedom. This concept is what I refer to as, “The dark side of freedom.”

I suspect when most people pride themselves about loving freedom, they have in mind wimpy concepts like the rights of others to decide for themselves where to go on vacation or what model of automobile to buy. This wimpy concept of freedom doesn’t generate much controversy because most people personally agree with whatever decision another person makes in these areas.

Simply acknowledging that other adults have a right to run their own lives as they choose doesn’t mean we are obligated to agree with or support whatever they say or do. If we choose, we may seek to peacefully persuade them to act as we believe they should act. Further, acknowledging the rights of others does not mean we are sending a message of approval regarding their choices. Indeed, we are free to peacefully send messages of disapproval if we choose and they are free to ignore our messages entirely if they choose.

In one of my other articles entitled, “Legalize Methamphetamine!” I argue that the war on drugs should be ended. I have been asked many times to modify the title of my article to something like, “End the Drug War” or to some other boring but inoffensive title.⁷ In fairness, the title is somewhat incomplete. I am considering changing it to, “Legalize Methamphetamine and Crack Cocaine!” or to, “Legalize Methamphetamine

³ Or any other substance.

⁴ Yes, I know and agree with you about the awful consequences of methamphetamine use. Yes, I know it will rot the teeth out of your mouth and destroy your skin and possibly your life if you use it. I would strongly discourage anyone from ever trying or using it.

⁵ I agree with nothing said by either group, but I absolutely support their right to peacefully say whatever they want. It is important to note that nobody is required to listen to them. People have a right to peacefully protest against them and even to ridicule them for their deranged views.

⁶ When a Christian pastor in Florida recently threatened to publicly burn a Koran, Fox News presented legal “scholars” who generated creative ideas to use the law in an attempt to stop this constitutionally protected expression. The pastor ultimately backed down.

⁷ I have even been asked to delete the exclamation point in favor of a question mark. I like the exclamation point.

and All Other Horribly Addictive Drugs!” My point here is to emphasize that advocating for freedom is sometimes not as easy and popular as it first may appear to the casual self proclaimed freedom supporter. However, it is necessary if we are to have freedom.

In the end, wimpy freedom advocates are not freedom advocates at all. If we are to again be the land of the free, we desperately need people to strongly advocate for freedom; in all its beauty and in all its ugliness.

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