

An Apology For My Nastiness

As I often mention, I've been an anarchist for over twenty years, and for many years I could count on one hand the number of other anarchists I knew of. To say it felt like an uphill battle back then would be an understatement. It wasn't a hill. It was a cliff. Or a wall. A wall that I bashed my head against day after day, for years, with almost no sign of progress.

As it happens, fighting what feels like a losing battle, year after year, tends to make one defensive, angry and combative. Or at least, it made *me* that way. And no matter how understandable or justifiable those feelings might be, feeling constantly defensive, angry and combative is not very useful or healthy, for the angry one or for the people he is angry at.

And even now, when voluntaryism is growing by leaps and bounds, I still sometimes tend to fall into patterns of getting verbally nasty and insulting when arguing with statist, as a residual effect of feeling attacked, outnumbered and "cornered" for so long. And that doesn't really help. Even when devout authoritarians lash out at me with hostility and insults, that's just them showing their own fears and insecurities, and acting from their own indoctrination. Me getting nasty back at them, or resorting to personal insults (even if the insults are accurate), doesn't accomplish anything positive, for me, or them, or anyone else. (Well, it can sometimes be entertaining for some spectators, but that's not a good enough reason to do it.) I have to keep reminding myself that, yes, I even want the most devout state-worshiper to be free, in mind and body.

I have no intention of backing off the slightest bit when it comes to condemning immoral and irrational *ideas*, and calling people out for advocating them. But I don't need to—and I shouldn't—get personally malicious in my remarks. So, as I continue to try to drag myself out of those old patterns, I want to apologize again for still sometimes getting nastier than I should. Whether I'm dealing with people who have honest, well-intentioned disagreements with me, or with overtly obnoxious statist trolls, it serves no good purpose for me to resort to name-calling and insults. So for that, I apologize.

And I especially want to thank—and apologize to—Amanda, whose influence is continually making me into a better, less angry person. She knows me as something very different from my sometimes caustic and combative public persona, and it's not at all fair to her to put her in the position of wanting to publicly defend me in situations where I don't really deserve defending because I'm being a vindictive asshole at someone. From now on, I will try to imagine her always looking over my shoulder when I'm arguing with people, so maybe I will behave in such a way that I might deserve a tenth of the patience, love and support she shows me.

Okay, enough of this mushiness. I'm gonna go argue with some statisticians—rational, calmly and politely.