Putting Principle above Party, People, and the Past

I prefer to put principle above party, people, and the past.

I'm not only referring to political parties, but to all sorts of groups whose members associate on the basis of a shared ideology.

What I mean is that parties, groups, often shift the principles they espouse, usually as a result of the most outspoken or influential members getting their way more often than not. The party becomes something different over time, away from where it started.

You see this throughout the political landscape today, and yesterday. Liberals aren't what they used to be. Republicans, Democrats, Libertarians, also.

Not only party but also people. People change, constantly. I know I have. I used to be a Democrat, then an anti-war free market conservative, then a Constitutionalist, then an anarcho-capitalist, and now a voluntaryist (with an-cap leanings).

Historical people are even worse, really. So little is truly known about these folks, and as more is learned, they seem to change. Since they aren't around, we take what we know, we judge it as good or bad, then we either make them our heroes or vilify them. Some even become gods, only to inevitably fall when their humanity is revealed.

Same goes with historical events. As much as I don't know about conflicts raging around the world today, how much can I really know about conflicts in the past? And again, new information comes to light all the time, but always from a particular perspective, always somebody-with-an-agenda's version. How trustworthy is it? How accurate is it?

What I'm trying to say is, I think it's foolish to promote parties, people, or the past as someone or something we should follow or praise. These things are fickle, and always will be.

The antidote? Putting principle above party, people, and the past. My current commitment is to the voluntary principle, and every other principle and practice connected to that, ideas like non-aggression, self-ownership, private property, civil disobedience, non-violent resistance, free markets, peaceful parenting, and radical unschooling.

When I put principle first, I'm better able to judge the compatibility of parties, people, and the past with what I believe in. And when my understanding of those things change, it's easier to move on. I'm also less likely to be fooled and subsequently betrayed.

It seems like people are constantly moving from place to place looking for a home, not

realizing that home can only be found in digging for and standing on principles. And often their principles change out of loyalty to their home, rather than out of loyalty to truth and goodness.

I've always shied away from writing anything that's specific to time and place. I prefer timelessness, for the reasons stated above. Parties, people, and the past come and go, but principle is forever.

I don't know if my principles are the best. They sure seem like it, right now. But the beauty of principles is that they don't control me, I control them. When they stop serving my commitment to truth and goodness, I'll get better ones, and my foundation will be all the stronger for it, methinks.