

Standing Alone

It's not easy, or fun, but I think there's actually something positive about having practice being pretty much alone and isolated as far as what you believe in. Basically, if you *figure out* what you believe in, and *stick by* what you believe in, when you have little or no support from others for doing so, it's a good test and exercise of your convictions. If you are certain in your conclusions, and stand by your beliefs, when everyone around you disagrees—or even insults and condemns you for it—then you know that you have the fortitude and principle to not sell out, or be bullied or badgered into betraying what you believe in.

In contrast, those people who will cheer for some cause or idea only as long as lots of other people around them are cheering for the same thing, don't really know yet if they would have the strength of their convictions if they were alone. So many people, in so many ways, will bend to peer pressure, or will either change their mind or just remain silent if their opinions don't receive praise and approval from others. That's just how human psychology works, and it takes a heavy dose of conviction and/or stubbornness (there can be a fine line between those two) to overcome that.

If someone's "beliefs" are the result of fear, or popularity contests, or any other outside influence, instead of the result of personal contemplation and soul-searching, then that person is likely to change his "beliefs" at the drop of a hat, because he has no real principles or convictions. (A prime example of this is the people who formerly claimed to believe in true freedom, but who then ran to the "alt-right" camp.)

The good news about this otherwise annoying phenomenon is that, as the ideas of self-ownership and non-aggression spread, a lot of people who are now statisticians will become voluntaryists, precisely because they don't have any real convictions or principles making them believe in statism to begin with—they only have assumptions and "what everyone else thinks."

To put it another way, when even a significant minority of the population actually understands and advocates voluntaryist principles, the giant herd of conformists is going to move in that direction too, because at that point it will be easy and comfortable to do so. However, what *starts* such a movement is always those stubborn, bull-headed "extremists" who know what they know, and think what they think, whether anyone else agrees with them or not. Be one of those people.