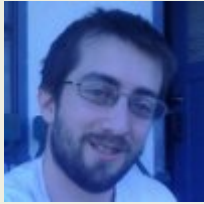


A Line in the Sand



Send him mail.

"Coexisting with Coercion" is an original bi-weekly column appearing every other Wednesday at Everything-Voluntary.com, by qyj0L. qyj0L is a thinker, a writer, an artist, a dreamer, and a believer. Archived columns can be found [here](#). CWC-only RSS feed available [here](#).

Hey there, freedom lovers. By reading this, you have already taken steps to understand yourself, and your situation. You have stood up from the seat that you were assigned, and taken a survey of the landscape. Beyond that, you understand that what we know as "society", or "civilization", is anything but social, or civilized.

We live in a place where thoughts are not only suggested, but thrown at us from all directions, and though we may not realize it, we draw from these thoughts we've been shown; pre-planned thoughts that have very little to do with our own state of being. Take a look at yourself, and consider this:

Have I ever found myself in a situation that I was unfamiliar with?

The likely answer is "yes". We've all met people we haven't seen before, been places we've never been before, and done things we've never done before, right? Now ask yourself another question:

What pool of experience did your mind dive into in order to help you relax and feel more at ease?

Was it a movie? Perhaps a story that you've read, or that someone has told you? Maybe a skit in a TV show that you've watched before briefly touched on the concept you now struggle with? Whatever the case may be, the core is still the same: You drew from an idea that you picked up somewhere along the way, compared it to your other ideas of things you deemed to be similar, then brought these concepts into reality, using them to shape your steps as you moved through this unfamiliar territory.

My real questions, then, are these: How voluntary was the choice made, when all factors are considered? If we did not request instructions, but were given some anyway, is that a form of force?

A name I go by is qyj0L.

Who am I? Well... that's a much more complicated question.

I'm what could be called a "newbie" in the voluntaryism state of mind. My stance is one that was taken out of necessity, so to speak. My life was spiraling out of control; I was making choices that I didn't understand or agree with, going in directions that I didn't want to go in... in short, I was not living the life that I truly wanted to live. When I realized this, I all but panicked. I had to take control and reorient myself; in short, I had to figure out what I was doing.

Through analyzing the self, and those individuals around me, the pieces began to fall into place: my life was not my own. Upon discovery of this, I did what anyone would do... I rebelled. One could say that I was pushed into this position; I lost my place of residence, my employment, and my drivers license, all in rapid succession. I suddenly found myself with a vast amount of time on my hands, and almost nothing of my usual routine to occupy my days with. I resorted to my usual fall-back, and dove into an internet game that I've played off and on for, five years at the time, and began to explore the idea of playing roles. You see, this game centers around the concept of Role-Play, and by that I mean that your character is not just a "character", in the game-world. You are "a citizen of Korea, in a time when three empires lay claim to the same land!" Many parts of the game actually require you to act out your character, and it being a fairly old game... you can't physically "do" very much. The acting is all through your ability to describe what it is that's happening. *-he smirks. his eyes wandering slightly as he pieces together a thought-* Would be an example.

I had moved back in with my mom, and was now spending the majority of my waking hours playing the role of one of four different people: a healer who wished to study Buddha's teachings; a troubled youth who hears voices, found by a Shaman who hopes to cure his spirit-sickness; an aggressive rogue with an urge to leave the cities behind; and a man forged through violence that finds solace in a barbarians cave. Through these individuals, if I wanted to pursue their roles, I needed to study; so study I did. I dove into Buddhism, needing to complete the training assignments I was given by my guide. While I can't say that I'm any sort of master, my studies on the four noble truths and the eight-fold path caused my life to take a turn in a direction that I have never turned back from. Once I was accepted into the Monk path, I began to study Shamanic ways, Korean shamanism most specifically. I read of Brotherhood among the men and women that refused "civilization", and I read of protecting the balance of nature.

My mind has always acted as a bit of a crucible, and this time was no different. The concepts and ideas crept into every portion of my mind - this GAME was changing my entire way of thinking! I started to notice the connections between the conversations that I was having, and the teachings that I was reading. I noticed people talking about Right

Speech, Right Concentration, Right Views, and more, without even realizing how profound of a topic they were discussing! Could it be that I and the people that I knew were living, at least in some small part, a lifestyle that could be called “walking the eight-fold path”? This thought persisted as time went on, and the more I entertained it, the more I noticed the subjects popping up in conversation. Yet, it wasn’t all good. I also noticed myself defending a stance that seemed to be at odds with the way that the culture I live in functions. Again, the more I entertained this thought, the more detailed and specific it became.

It started with the things that I once took for granted. The way that our society essentially pulls parents apart for their children, was one of the biggest blows. A society practically sculpted around the 9-5 job that doesn’t quite pay for the bills, and yet if the parent chooses not to go, the state will take away their dwelling. The way that kids are shown that if they want to impress their parents, if they want to succeed in the world, they need to excel in a school structure they aren’t much interested in, a practical zoo of hormones and immaturity grossly lacking in zookeepers, learning things from complete strangers; while at the same time they get told not to talk to strangers; and if the parents can’t stay home to school the kids, they are forced to corral them with the others under threat of action. It’s car commercials advertising all the strongest and fastest car components, yet only allowing you to go 55-75 miles per hour on the highway, under threat of monetary compensation to the state. It’s in the way that children as they grow older are told that playing games isn’t going to pay the bills, or keep food on their plates, and yet some of the wealthiest citizens of this nation are paid to play games – baseball, basketball, football, hockey, soccer, to name a few off the top of my head; I began to obsess over the innate contradictions of the state. A great many thoughts came to be during this process, several of which have stuck with me to this day.

Perhaps the most prominent thought was, we can do better. We can take steps to remove the sense of entrapment in the state! This thought blew through me with a force that I could not comprehend. We can do better!

So there I stood, or rather, sat, at my desk: A young man, freshly removed from the life he had built around himself, who now realized that the life he had built was not a life that he wanted. I began the treacherous journey of self discovery, with the added benefit of having moved away from nearly everyone that I was in contact with. I was able to work in peace. Ripping and tearing out pieces of my life, I felt that if I were to build anything that I would be satisfied with, that I needed to start at the beginning; it would do me no good to build a house on top of a foundation that was unstable. It was then that I began to understand just how closely I had associated the “I” thought with ideas and labels that I had no real interest in. “I am...” could have been finished in any number of ways, before realizing this. But now? I’m not quite so sure. I now hold a stance where I acknowledge that I am a being capable of reading and using labels that have already been set, if I choose to, while

disliking the labels themselves by their nature.

A label is a curious thing. At its simplest level, a label tells you something; typically a description of the item being labeled. A name, a genre, or whatever other category the item may fall into. If you continue that logic, you will find that a label, while describing what an item may be, also tells you just as much about what an item is not. Knowing this, I can't bring myself to assign any new labels, silly as it may seem. There are far too many things that I don't know, about everything, for me to be able to compile a proper label.

Instead, I find myself falling back on a phrase I learned in my youth, and promptly forgot: It is what it is. To that, I now add "And we can make it better."