

Being An Individual

Written by Charles Curley and Campbell Chandler for The Voluntaryist, December 1988.

In order to truly be an individual, one must claim his or her inherent birthright to be happy and free. It means taking responsibility for one's own condition, as opposed to blaming external forces; be that force a government, an unforgiving deity or a negative childhood. To do otherwise is to relinquish control to other people.

Just a few definitions of individualism:

Being an individual means realizing that the universe is impersonal. We are not 'chosen' by some cosmic force to spread any gospel — not even, could it exist, that of individualism. We make our choices and live by the results.

Being an individual means having the self assurance to give to others without fear of ego loss. It means placing enough value on the self — one's own and others' — to be a positive influence in the lives of others.

Being an individual means not having to be 'right'. It means allowing others the same freedom to believe as they choose. It means judging for yourself, but not requiring that others live by your judgement. Individuals are not leaders, save by example.

Being an individual means not subscribing to a packaged 'philosophy' solely for the validation of selfhood. Individuals are not followers, nor do they become cannon fodder in someone else's jihad.

Being an individual means accepting one's personal limitations. It means evaluating one's goals in the light of that which is possible.

Being an individual means growing beyond any 'need' for approval from others. One's own cautious, thinking approval is both necessary and sufficient before taking an action.

Being an individual means taking charge of your own physical, emotional and mental well-being. It is the knowledge that another can not have power over you without your consent, implicit or explicit.

Being an individual means being open to a variety of ideas without being threatened. I am what I think. If I think only one thing, then I am only one thing.

Being an individual means giving up attempts to control others, whether by initiation of force, the threat thereof, or by manipulation of mind.

Being an individual means not using anger toward external conditions as an excuse to endanger oneself or others.

Being an individual means using creativity and intelligence to solve problems, and allowing others to do the same.

Being an individual means that one accepts that one is alone responsible for one's life, the condition of it, and the defense of it. You alone have the capability and creativity to make your life fulfilling, happy and productive.

Being an individual means valuing the thinking mind, regardless of the color of skin, personal habits, or species in which it may be packaged.

Being an individual means that one serves one's own ends, and that one requires no-one to serve aught but their own ends. When one's own needs are met, then one may give more freely to others.