

Dogma and Win-Win Theory



Send him mail.

“Food for Thought” is an original column appearing every other Tuesday at Everything-Voluntary.com, by Norman Imberman. Norman is a retired podiatrist who loves playing piano, writing music, lawn bowling, bridge, reading, classical music, going to movies, plays, concerts and traveling. He is not a member of any social network, nor does he plan on becoming one. Archived columns can be found here. FFT-only RSS feed available here.

Sometimes even dogma (faith-based), religious or otherwise is correct, but that implies that it can also be incorrect and harmful. How can we distinguish between harmless dogma (faith-based) and harmful dogma (faith-based) when it comes to solving societal problems? The answer involves recognizing the difference between win-win and win-lose solutions.

Since all human action involves the application of chosen methods for the attainment of greater satisfaction or the diminution of dissatisfaction, there are only two general methods from which to choose—voluntary or involuntary. The voluntary involves free choice whereby the use of force or fraud is taboo. The involuntary makes use of force or fraud as its means.

The win-win method is the voluntary. The win-lose method is the involuntary, which is not to imply that all voluntary activities result in a win by both parties. However, when the activity is voluntary both parties realize that one may lose but the transaction was entered into by choice and with good faith that force or fraud will not be utilized in the application of the activities.

The win-lose transaction at the onset, begins with a known win for one and a known lose for the other simply because it was designed that way. When the robber takes something valued from me (without my permission) he wins and I lose. When I sell a product that I know is faulty, I win and the buyer loses.

Those of faith, in order to distinguish between harmless dogma and harmful dogma must restrict the solutions that they sanction and condone solely to the win-win philosophy and eliminate from their solutions all win-lose methods, in spite of the dogmatic teaching of their various gurus. (Dogma refers to any belief based upon faith or upon any *a priori* belief. A belief based upon emotion is an *a priori* belief).

A problem arises at this point. Throughout the ages, most people concocted spurious reasons to fool themselves and others into calling an actual win-lose solution a win-win solution. The most often used reasons are (1) my religion teaches me that way; (2) the Bible or some other authoritative book says so; (3) although some collateral harm will transpire, you've got to break an egg to make an omelet; (4) how else can the problem be solved without force or fraud?

It is most difficult to convince those who believe in reasons number one and two above that their belief system contains some win-lose dogma, since it's a religious belief. They will continuously support win-lose transactions while calling them win-win, not only because it is the teaching of their religion but also because they cannot admit that their win-lose solutions are immoral. They rationalize, "after all, how can what my religion teaches be immoral"? This is not to imply that all dogmatic religious solutions are immoral. Some of those solutions are moral and do no harm and when they do no harm they should be judged that way—as win-win. However it's one of the goals of this article to convince them to examine how they feel about the win-lose activities they support.

It's also the goal of this article to convince those who use reasons number three and four above that they too support win-lose activities and to convince them to change their ways.

As a starting point, in order to analyze a win-win versus a win-lose situation, one must reduce the actions to a one on one interaction. If I tell my neighbor that unless he gives me some of his bank account I will harm him (extortion) it can be seen by most people that it's a win-lose situation. It's easy to see how any Mafia control over an individual or his property would be a win-lose situation, since, through the use or the threat of force the individual has lost control over his own life or property and is therefore harmed. Why is it any different when a government agent uses the same threats of power over any individuals or groups of individuals? Why is it any different when any private or government-backed private organization does it? It's a win-lose situation when laws prevent people from buying and selling at a mutually agreed upon price, as with minimum wage laws and rent control laws. Forced conscription (the draft) is a win-lose situation. Selling an automobile without informing the buyer about a faulty part, selling a can that is supposed to contain one pound of beans but that actually contains three-quarters of a pound, sneaking into a movie theater and quoting one price but charging a higher price are all win-lose situations. As a general rule, all forced interferences with the property of another are examples of win-lose transactions no matter who is doing the coercing and no matter what reason is used to rationalize it. It also makes no difference if the Federal government, or the State government is creating the harm. In all cases, all people who are coerced into either taking a coercive or non-coercive action are being harmed. On the other hand, people who are prevented from taking a non-coercive action are being harmed and therefore are being subjected to a win-lose situation. The moment coercive monopoly

power is granted to any organization the seeds of the win-lose philosophy along with the harm that accompanies it are planted. The organization with the most coercive monopoly power to create win-lose situations is the federal government followed by the various state governments, and they do it with a vengeance. It is their mandate.

It follows as night follows day that win-win solutions lead to abundance, prosperity, peace and harmony, while win-lose solutions, by their very essence, leads to class warfare, scarcity, poverty, war, disharmony and discontent. Today (writing in October 2012), as a result of the presence of the current political administration we are witnessing the greatest amount of class warfare and disharmony that the country has ever faced since the War Between the States. That class warfare and disharmony will continue no matter what administration takes over the reins of government since government (the state) by its very nature is a generator of the win-lose philosophy and its resulting destructive effects.

Think about those social issues for which you believe that force should be used as a means to a solution and realize that you are supporting win-lose (harmful) activities. You are entitled to your faith dogmas but if those dogmas preach win-lose situations perhaps you might give your positions some second thought. If you believe in The Golden Rule, practice it with consistency.

My thanks to Jay Stuart Snelson for originating the importance of Win-Win Theory and how preaching and practicing it can lead to all of the wonders of progress and successes of a free and everlasting society.

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