

Down with Conviction!



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“One Improved Unit” is an original column appearing sporadically on Monday at Everything-Voluntary.com, by the founder and editor Skyler J. Collins. Archived columns can be found [here](#). OIU-only RSS feed available [here](#).

I’ve been convinced of things in the past, but no longer am. I’ve held strong opinions and pronounced beliefs that I was absolutely sure of, but no longer do. What does that say about my current convictions? Will they likewise go the way of the dinosaurs? Quite possibly, in which case I reluctantly (and not fully convinced) say, “Down with conviction!”

The Possibility of Being Wrong

As sure as I am about the opinions I currently hold, personal history bears witness that that is no guarantee that they are correct. Perhaps the most important thing to always keep in mind is the possibility that I could be wrong. However, that’s much easier to say, than to do. I don’t want to be wrong, who does? I want to be right. I want to hold correct opinions and be convinced of the truth. But that’s precisely why it’s so important to accept the possibility of being wrong.

While it can be incredibly uncomfortable to realize an incorrect belief, if my commitment is to the truth, then not being open-minded in this way is self-defeating. Truth would not really be my commitment. I would be deceiving myself and engaging in intellectual dishonesty. Therefore, “conviction,” that is, being convinced of something, would seem to get in the way of a commitment to the truth. Then again, I am convinced that truth is a worthwhile commitment. But perhaps it’s not? Perhaps a commitment to the truth is not as worthwhile as I currently believe? I suppose I must accept that possibility, right?

Final Thoughts

My head is spinning; how about yours? I’m turning 30 this month. I’ll officially be an “old person” to those much younger. I don’t feel old, rather, I don’t feel mature enough to be 30. It seems quite surreal. To imagine what will become of the opinions I hold now, and what sorts of opinions I will hold or have held by 40, by 50, and so on. It’s quite humbling to contemplate what will become of me, my family, society, and the world in that time. So much has happened since I was born. These are very interesting times, indeed.

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