

Freedom's Simple Formula

What does it mean to be “free”? To me, being free or having freedom simply means living one's life free from threats, demands, orders, coercion, or claimed authority emanating from other individuals or entities. It means that no one has the right to stop you from thinking, saying, or doing whatever you want so long as your actions do not constitute aggression against other people.

Freedom means being allowed to take whatever risks are acceptable to you without being subject to violence or force from others. It means you have the right to use your body and property however you see fit.

Freedom means that the individual is not subject to the will of the collective. So long as the individual is not actively aggressing against someone else, he may ignore the wishes of others (no matter how large a majority they may compose) and pursue his own course—even if it is unusual, controversial, or eclectic.

Freedom means that the pursuit of “safety” or “public order” is never sufficient grounds for the use of force or violence. An individual can drive as fast as he chooses, set off fireworks, give an unlicensed massage, carry a fully automatic weapon, gamble, open a strip club, smoke cigarettes, drink liquor, use drugs, or build a skyscraper on his property and—so long as his actions do not cause articulable harm to another person—no one has the right to interfere with his pursuits.

In short, freedom is the condition which results from embracing the concepts of “laissez-faire” or “live and let live” and “no harm, no foul.” Freedom doesn't actually require anyone to do anything, merely to refrain from aggression and imposing their preferences on others. Don't hurt people and don't take their stuff. Beyond that, it's your life, so live it however the hell you choose!