

Let People Opt Out of “Good Ideas”

Would you rather live in a world where it's normal for people to try to convince each other of something, or a world where it's acceptable to just give an order and shoot anyone who doesn't immediately comply?

I'm firmly in the “convince others” camp.

To convince people, you've either got to have reasons or ways to play with their emotions. If you convince them with good reasons, the convincing sticks.

If you use emotions, someone with stronger appeals to emotion will come along and get them to change their minds again.

If you rely on threats, as soon as the threat is out of sight they'll go back to their old path.

This is why I'd rather convince others with reasons and avoid using force. It doesn't matter to me what the issue is.

I prefer everything to be voluntary. Work together, ask for help, or do what you can on your own. Don't try to force anyone to join you. If you need to use threats or force, you probably ought not do it at all. I don't support or need those who use coercion.

In your personal life you probably already avoid force. I'm assuming you aren't a thief or murderer.

You and I don't need to be threatened and forced; it's only “those other people.” Well, they see it the same way. Someone's got to be the first to grow up.

Gandhi is quoted as saying “Be the change you want to see in the world.” It's true enough even if he never said it.

You don't need to wait for anyone else to do the right thing with you. You can start now. You don't have to wait until others join you or until they agree with you. You don't need to wait until the law changes to allow you to do the right thing. Yes, there's danger in stepping out first, but who said life is supposed to be safe? Do the right thing anyway.

Don't violate the rights of others. Liberty is the freedom to do everything you have a right to do; everything that doesn't violate anyone else's equal and identical rights. Anyone who violates your liberty isn't one of the good guys.

Be big enough to let people opt out of your “good ideas” if they can't be convinced. Of course, you'll still need to defend yourself against people who refuse to cooperate. That's a

fact of life nothing can ever change.