

Living with Wild Abandon



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"Living with Wild Abandon" is an original bi-weekly column appearing every other Tuesday at Everything-Voluntary.com, by Breezy V. Stevens. Breezy is a long-time radical unschooler, an advocate for children's rights, a crazy dog lady, a crafter in various mediums, a lover of all things tropical and beachy, and the designer of "EVC in Color". Archived columns can be found [here](#). LWA-only RSS feed available [here](#).

Where to begin? I suppose a bit about who I am might be in order, and to help put my perspective into context.

Among many other things, I am a "radical unschooler." As a *radical* unschooler, I extend the philosophy of allowing my children the freedom to direct their educational ventures outward until it encompasses every aspect of their lives – after all, what is life if not the ultimate education? This is where my journey truly began. I have been on this amazing, wonderful, eye-opening path for about 12 years now, and it was this lifestyle, with its intense emphasis on questioning every aspect of daily life, coupled with my ever-deepening appreciation of the need for human freedom, which eventually led me to the fork known as voluntaryism. I think, though, that there had always been a murmur in the depths of my psyche that hinted that my journey lay in this direction.

I am by nature a troublemaker, and a challenger of the *status quo*. I have a deep need to understand why things around me are the way they are, from the most mundane to the hopelessly complex. I ask questions and seek information ceaselessly. I've often been told that I "think too much." I tend toward the artistic and the creative, and am passionately emotional. I despise being told what to do, and rage against anything that feels restrictive to my freedom. I suppose some people think that I never grew up, that my claustrophobic reaction to external control is unreasonable and childish, an overreaction to the inevitabilities of adulthood. I prefer to think that my spark somehow managed to survive intact, despite all efforts to the contrary, and I heartily credit the unschooling lifestyle with re-awakening my deep passions and encouraging me to truly engage with the world again.

I often look around at my surroundings, and see seemingly limitless potential, frequently squandered, often outright squashed. Sometimes I find myself wanting to scream to the heavens about just how AMAZING things could be, if only people would relinquish the reins

of stifling authoritarianism and suffocating control. Over the years, I have at times found this to be overwhelmingly frustrating and depressing, but I am excited by what seems to be a growing tide of change in recent years, and I am extremely encouraged by the possibilities I see emerging.

Quite naturally, I think, unschooling has come to inform every aspect of my life. It has broadened my perspective and opened my heart and mind. One of the biggest and most truly life-transforming lessons I have learned as I have undertaken this journey is that there is no One Right Way to walk this (or any other) path. There are as many different ways of traveling as there are travelers, and each individual is, and should be, the ultimate author of their own lives.

As a result, I suppose I am not your average voluntaryist. Don't misunderstand – I don't mean to imply some silly superiority, or to manufacture an image of hipper-than-thou edginess. I certainly don't make claim to any special wisdom. It's just that I have noticed a not-so-subtle tendency for folks embracing this philosophy to be the hard-nosed, cold reasoning type. Which is all well and good and useful and important, of course, but I've also observed the frequency with which people who hold differing views on the nature of the world are marginalized and even mocked because they don't toe some imaginary line. Whether I like it or not, I am one of the different people. (Wherever I find myself, I always seem to wind up on the fringe. Call it talent).

I find value in following my heart, listening to my gut, and embracing my intuition. I believe in the importance of compassion and patience, even though I find it a struggle to practice them sometimes. I reject the idea that emotions are necessarily misleading and that logic is the One True Path to a more civilized and peaceful future. I am not a religious person, but I do not feel that voluntaryism precludes religious beliefs or practices, or that those who hold such beliefs are somehow not proper voluntaryists. For my part, it was listening to my heart and following my intuition that brought me to where I stand today. It seems that these are not popular points of view within voluntaryist circles.

I am troubled by the implication that there is a mold one must fit into in order to follow this philosophy, and find it discouraging that so many seem eager to position themselves as gatekeepers. No one owns the philosophy of voluntaryism, and I find it heartbreaking to see people being bullied into falling in line, or belittled and excluded because they see things differently. The world is not a black and white place, nor can any philosophy be that which seeks to encompass or describe it. It is a philosophy that only stands to grow stronger and richer with the contributions of people of many different backgrounds and points of view.

There is a place for everyone who wishes to embrace freedom and reject coercion and aggression within the context of voluntaryism. It is a philosophy that can be embraced by

everyone of every walk of this big, colorful, messy, chaotic thing we call life. Even us misfits. The weirdos, the housewives, the average Joes (if any such creature truly exists), the conspiracy theorists, the alternative health enthusiasts, the monks, the atheists, the adventurers, the dreamers, and those who just want to be left alone to live their lives.

I look forward to a day when this philosophy gains enough momentum that it becomes a force to be reckoned with. In the meantime, I'll be out here experiencing this big, amazing world, embracing the beautiful chaos, and enjoying every damn minute of it.

This is who I am. Nice to meet you.