

My Reasons For Voluntaryism



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“One Voluntaryist’s Perspective” is an original bi-weekly column appearing every other Monday at Everything-Voluntary.com, by the founder and editor Skyley J. Collins. Archived columns can be found [here](#). OVP-only RSS feed available [here](#).

Last week, I discussed my values as a voluntaryist and how they guided my behavior as both a member of society and a member of my family. This week, and more appropriate for this column, I’d like to discuss the reasons for the values I hold as a voluntaryist. They are many and varied, from the ethical and moral to the consequential. One caveat, I want to be careful not to engage in “moralizing.” Though I have moral reasons for some of my values, I recognize that morality is largely subjective in nature. Who’s to say that my morals are superior to yours? Instead, I’ll discuss (what I believe are) the logical consequences of my morals and you can determine how attractive they are.

Societal Values

I value *peace* because I dislike the death and destruction that results from war. Further, I dislike the pain and suffering that results from one person violently controlling another. In their relations, human beings have the choice to engage others either violently or cooperatively. I want to be engaged cooperatively, not violently, and I think most people do, too. They just have a hard time recognizing the inconsistency (and hypocrisy) of their actions. I think that is more due to misunderstanding the consequences of their actions than it is a lack of ethics. For example, I once believed that “the rich” had the power to enslave “the poor,” so I favored giving the state more power over the rich to prevent them from enslaving the poor. I considered it a defensive posture of the poor. I considered it ethical *because* I thought the rich were enslaving the poor. I misunderstood the nature of the relationship between rich and poor, and so misunderstood the consequences of giving the state more power over the rich. I now understand that giving anybody power allows them to enslave others, rich or poor, but I also understand that I lack the license to give one person power over another. Once I understood that the real problem was an inequality *of power*, I was able to see the error in my ethical reasoning for promoting the state (at the expense of society).

I value *integrity* because I dislike people lying or being dishonest with me, particularly

about my well-earned money. I also dislike people stealing from me or using violence against me to benefit at my expense. I want others to approach me on equal terms, utilizing persuasion and argumentation to convince me of their cause.

I value *moral consistency* because I want others to treat and relate to me how I treat and relate to them. And because I value peace and integrity, I want others to be peaceful and have integrity in their relations with me.

I value *peaceful trade* because (along with the above) I understand the mutually beneficial nature of free exchange. People only engage in trade if they expect to benefit, and they usually do. When it seems that they didn't, say their product was not quite what they thought it was, they've still learnt something valuable, thereby benefiting to a degree. When trade is forced, it's no longer trade; it's exploitation. When trade is not forced but one party has secured some sort of benefit or privilege from statist laws, it's both beneficial and exploitative. I dislike exploitation, and so I want to trade with others on equal footing. That can only be accomplished in the absence of statist laws and regulations.

Family Values

I value *peace* for all of the reasons above, but also because I've learned that engaging my wife and children peacefully makes for stronger relationships. With my wife, we are closer and our love deeper because we are equal in power over each other, chiefly, *none*. With my children, they are more likely to approach me as a companion, an ally, and a mentor if our relationship has been peaceful instead of violent. I don't want to create a feeling of resentment in my children for me. They won't come to me seeking guidance in life if they resent me. I must earn and keep their love if I am to be an important part of their lives. I've also learned that children treated peacefully grow up to treat others peacefully. I want a peaceful world, and so I must cultivate a culture of peace within my own home.

I value *love* because it brings me joy and happiness; both in receiving and in giving love. Love begets feelings of excitement, appreciation, and security. I want to feel secure and appreciated as much as I'm sure my children and wife do. But I also want to feel like I have someone who will lift me up when I am down, who will give me my space when I need it, and who will feel joy and happiness with me. My family are in the perfect position to do all of these things and to receive all of these things from me.

I value the idea that *consequences should naturally* instead of arbitrarily follow actions. I dislike being smacked in the face because I dropped my pen, and many other arbitrary and seemingly unjust consequences to action. If I am to learn proper, intelligent behavior, my actions must beget not only natural, but inevitable consequences. Likewise, I feel that everybody, including my children, should also have the privilege of making their own choices about, well, everything. If we are to learn the value in various consequences, we

must be free in our choices because natural consequences vary for each person.

I value *respect* because it makes me feel worthwhile *and* like an individual. My interests are important and have value to me. My interests include a sound mind, healthy body, liberty, and a myriad of other things that help me to become and remain *me*. It follows, then, that I value the same things for my wife and children.

I value *free inquiry* because I want to be able to think and believe what *I choose* to think and believe. I don't want somebody else's knowledge and opinions crammed into my mind. I don't want anybody to threaten me with violence if I don't accept their religious, philosophical, or political beliefs, nor do I want my wife and children threatened with violence to accept another's beliefs.

I value *clarity of thought* because only then are we truly free. With faulty information we are handicapped to make faulty choices, thus our freedom to choose has been compromised as much as if our minds were taken over by psychoactive drugs and the like. Our freedom resides in clarity of thought and control of our faculties.

Final Thoughts

Three things stood out to me as I wrote this column. The first was the compatibility of each value with every other value. It seemed that I was repeating myself again and again. The second is the self-interested nature of my values. Every value I have benefits primarily *me* in some way. That's completely normal and natural, I think. We are self-interested beings and that's nothing to be ashamed of or feel guilty about. Rather, understanding the consequences of our values, through our actions, will help us see whether they benefit not only ourselves, but everyone else too, family and society. And third, the golden rule. I don't want horrible, unfair, and unjust things happening to me, therefore, I won't do them to anyone else. Voluntaryism makes sense for many reasons, but primarily because I believe it's *in my best interest* to be a voluntaryist.