

Remembering My Dad, Spooner Quote #6, Logic Fallacy #13



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"Finding the Challenges" is an original column appearing every other Wednesday at Everything-Voluntary.com, by Verbal Vol. Verbal is a software engineer, college professor, corporate information officer, life long student, farmer, libertarian, literarian, student of computer science and self-ordering phenomena. Archived columns can be found here. FTC-only RSS feed available here.

In this column I have finally gotten around to eulogizing the most important contributor to the self who I am today, my Dad. He lived from December 30, 1920 until July 20, 2014. It has taken me nearly two months to think about what I want to say.

Then I turn to one of my favorite philosophical mentors, Lysander Spooner, to work out what he might think about whatever iteration of the Iraq wars which we are now contemplating.

And I will close with an examination of the logic trap that lies in movable goalposts.

Remembering My Dad

My Dad, Big Kilgore, lived for 93 and a half years. I know of no one who could have wrung more joy out of it. He was my number one influence, barely nudging out my Mother and my two Grandmothers, among those who saw me through childhood. He was the person who made me free. He convinced everybody around me that I should stand on my own feet or fall. Part of it was due to his being away from home (he was doing secret WW II stuff for the TVA), but the main part was to set me free. He instilled in me an unshakable sense of responsibility — and he made it clear that those responsibilities arose from within myself and that I, alone, was the judge to whom I answered.

In practical terms, he gave me a sense of adventure and an alertness to the world. At the age of 5, I was taking solo city bus trips to downtown Lexington, Ky, for movies, and yoyos, and visits to my cousins across town. I also understood it was my decision alone as to what my spiritual and religious attachments would be — he just asked that I wait until I was 18 before making any commitments. He remained privately devout throughout his life, but

steadfastly refused to steer anyone in these matters.

He taught me music — singing to me at night the songs of the Yodeling Brakeman, Jimmie Rodgers, all of them about individual self-reliance. Dad also loved renditions of The Big Rock Candy Mountains, and was thrilled whenever he heard Frankie Laine sing Ghostriders in the Sky. He taught me baseball. He was a semi-pro in Chattanooga, TN, and later we made many trips to see the Reds at Cincinnati's Crosley Field. He taught me football in the old ivy-covered stadium on the University of Kentucky campus. But toward the end he became leery of football because of the concussions. He taught me basketball in the time of Adolph Rupp's fantastic career.

He introduced me to travel. I can still remember nearly every mile of a trip to the Golden West, Colorado, Utah, and Yellowstone. Before that, the family traveled to Boston, Maine, and across Eastern Canada, seeing Quebec City, Montreal, and Toronto. When I was a teenager, my Dad would almost travel at the drop of a hat. He himself had never traveled to a town larger than Danville, KY before he went to college, but he made sure that my horizons would be far wider. Our first two trips to Chicago together were miraculous — and I have never stopped loving that toddling town.

He showed me how to work hard. I developed the belief that work was a lifelong thing. I worked in my Grand Uncle's theater for nothing but pleasure. And I got my first paying job at 16. As an older teen, I worked 6 straight summers on highway survey crews, as I went off to college, where I did numerous jobs like dormitory counselor, neighborhood ice cream man, and cab driver. Until I retired 3 years ago, I had a total of 5 days between jobs — for a honeymoon with my beautiful bride. Now I still teach computers at the local community college, four separate classes this Fall Term. In Casey County, where my Dad grew up, the common greeting was "where're ya at?" This was a colloquialism for "have ya got work?" Neither I nor my Dad ever wanted to answer that question with "nowhere."

He was a civil engineer, but a minimalist. He believed that things should be done well or not at all. He did not suffer fools gladly, and he was the greatest critic of busywork. I learned constructive skepticism at his knee.

He owned and trained thoroughbred racehorses, and although I didn't follow in those steps, I learned copious amounts about risk taking, probability, uncertainty, and creativity from being around him, on and off of the racecourses.

Thanks, Dad. I will miss you, but I will always have so much life because of you.

Spooner Quote #6

Since the sabers of war are rattling once again over Iraq, let's take a look at Lysander Spooner's view of the whys and wherefores of territorial conflicts. These words were

written regarding the American Civil War, but as always seems the case with Spooner, the thoughts are rooted in a deeper examination of principle.

This programme having been fully arranged and systematized, they put their sword into the hands of the chief murderer of the war, and charge him to carry their scheme into effect. And now he, speaking as their organ, says, "LET US HAVE PEACE."

The meaning of this is: Submit quietly to all the robbery and slavery we have arranged for you, and you can have "peace." But in case you resist, the same lenders of blood-money, who furnished the means to subdue the South, will furnish the means again to subdue you.

These are the terms on which alone this government, or, with few exceptions, any other, ever gives "peace" to its people.

Spooner will tell you that, in his opinion, that the oligarchy who makes war is the same oligarchy who makes slavery and servitude. Both events are occasions for the lending of blood money. Spooner did not see a great distinction among manual slavery, debt slavery, and tax slavery, as all were in place to feed the masters.

I am in the midst of watching *12 Years a Slave* at this writing. As if to prove the adage that one learns something new every day, this movie has impressed on me an economic lesson that had previously passed me by; to wit, most southern slaveholders were deeply in debt for the interest they held in their slaves. This was necessary under the exigencies of cotton production. But as the Southern aristocracy began to work its way out of the debt load, the lenders of slave money had to replace this form of parasitism. War was their answer. They could now finance the war profiteer, and as an added bonus, punish the upstart slaveholders.

The problem of course is that lenders of blood money have never found a suitable placebo for their addiction to war money. The tragedy is that there seems no hope of abatement of this lust.

Logic Fallacy #13 — Special Pleading

This is also known as "moving the goalposts." Let's look at Iraq again. No WMD? Simple,

how about Al Qaeda? Al Qaeda is dust in the Iraqi wind? Let's try ISIS/ISIL, and we'll get some useful idiots to say that they are beheading Christian babies.

All ensconced interests **must** constantly fail to finish or constantly move the goalposts.

How about this dodge? — To withdraw now would dishonor all of those who have previously given their lives to the conflict, using the very failure to reach the goal as an excuse for moving the goalposts.

Not only can the goalposts be moved ahead, they can be claimed to have been reached prematurely. Remember "Mission Accomplished?"

In fact, all forms of lying are instances of special pleading — big lie, propaganda, overstatement, understatement, statistics, political promises, and omission, to name a few.

Bureaucrats and politicians have all day every day to polish and re-polish their definitions of goalposts. They don't have anything else to do, because if they ever reached any real goals, they would be done, having to pull up stakes and go home. I have written more about this, as Kilgore, over at the EVC Blog — see "Organized Lying".

There are two kinds of movable goalposts, those that are created with the forethought of forging deception, or those that are used as internal measures in self-direction. The person who is honest and wise will cling to the second, making sure there is no self-deception. The second type of goalposts assure movement and change, and if you are lucky you will have many mentors who will help you define your personal growth. The first kind, of course, lead us to treadmills such as the "War on Terror" where we will labor forever to feed the lying parasites.

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