

Stick and Stones, But Words

This was posted to r/TrueUnpopularOpinion, “words hurt, but calling them violence or oppression is often misused, overused and abused especially on the internet” along with some elaboration. u/Caelus9 then responded with the below and the following conversation ensued. Enjoy.

Caelus9: Words can without a doubt be oppressive. There’s endless situations where they can be used to create a cruel, oppressive environment for others.

Skyler: Words can’t be oppressive, only actions can be oppressive. It’s a mistake to believe otherwise. You don’t have to give other people’s words that kind of power over you.

Caelus9: Well sure they can. Oppression is defined as prolonged cruel or unjust treatment or exercise of authority. If every day, I walk into your office and yell at you that you’re a failure and you disgust me for no reason other than I can, how is that not prolonged cruel and unjust treatment?

Skyler: Consent.

Caelus9: ... who, at any point, said I consent to that?

Skyler: At-will employment. You realize there are jobs where people literally stand around in shit, right? That’s also consensual treatment by the employer. You’re not a slave, so if the job environment is unsuitable, leave. I guarantee you that *words* won’t be enough to stop you if you were really determined to go.

Caelus9: 1) No one said this has to be your employer. It could be some random employee, or indeed, literally anyone who’ll follow me outside of employment. 2) That’s not how consent works. Consent to do X is not consent to all possible consequences of doing X.

Skyler: Then report the asshole to HR. I doubt a profit maximizing business would want the local news to get word that they hire total assholes who use cruel language with other employees. Still just words, not oppression. Grow up.

Caelus9: “You can end the oppression if you do X, Y or Z” doesn’t mean it’s not oppression. That’s a non-sequitur.

We’ve discussed it. We now see that indeed, words can fall into the category of oppression. You’ve admitted this, as you’re aware the language is cruel. Thus, my

point is proven, it fits the definition.

Skyler: I haven't admitted anything. Words aren't violence, aren't oppression (based on violence). Calling hurtful or annoying words "oppression" leads to equivocation in your argument. Try again.

Caelus9: You did, indeed, admit it was cruel language. Thus, as we went through, it fits the definition. You've made my case for me!

Skyler: Bullshit. You're still equivocating that "cruel language" = "oppression". That's your fallacy, not mine.

Caelus9: Check the definition I cited earlier, that's why you're getting confused: oppression is indeed cruel treatment of someone.

Skyler: Now your equivocating on *treatment*. Treatment can be words or treatment can be actions. Pick one.

Caelus9: No, treatment can be both words and actions. If every day, I hit you, I've treated you poorly, but if every day, I insult and berate you, I'm ALSO treating you harshly. Given that, and you've agreed it's cruel, it *must* be oppression.

Skyler: I never said that *cruel* was the qualifier for oppression. Now you're projecting your equivocation on to me. Stop it.

Caelus9: No, you didn't say that, the dictionary definition said that. The one I cited earlier, remember? You said it's *cruel* language. Language is treatment. The dictionary said cruel treatment is oppression. Thus, it's oppression. Quite simple.

Skyler: I never said that cruel language was oppression. Why don't you quote and link me to where I said that. Good luck, because it doesn't exist.

Caelus9: No, no, bud, read what I'm saying carefully, you're getting confused. You said it's cruel language. That's the thing I'm claiming you said. So now, I'm going to tell you some facts, which aren't things you said, but are indeed, facts.

The dictionary said cruel treatment is oppression. Language is treatment. We can also look at a dictionary to double-check these things.

Thus, given we agree about the cruel language thing, the thing you said, the only thing I'm claiming you said, we can apply these facts from our handy dictionary, which tells us what words mean, to learn that that would mean that words CAN indeed be oppression.

Skyler: You are a dirty rotten liar. Quote and link or I never said it. You can't claim that I'm saying something that I'm not saying and then use your own twisted equivocations to prove yourself correct when you're not. Words are not violence, and words are not oppression. End of story.

This guy. He makes up a definition without ever sourcing it, then pretends that I'm the one who came up with, or even agreed to it. Click through the top link and see the source discussion for yourself. It never happened. This is an example of *gaslighting*, everybody.