

The Downside of Guns

I am a fervent supporter of gun rights– of *all* human rights. This doesn't mean I don't know there's a downside to guns. It's just that I know the drawbacks are vastly outweighed by the benefits.

Recently Scott Adams was caught pretending he is the only person with an actual opinion about guns because he pretended no one else ever considers both the benefits and the downsides, and because no one else will say how many “gun deaths” they are willing to accept in order to preserve the right to have guns.

He's wrong about guns... again.

He stated a willingness to accept 20,000 “gun deaths” per year to “keep” the right to own guns. He says this means he's the only person with a real opinion because unless you're willing to put a number on it you're only experiencing half of an opinion. He's being misleading. Intentionally?

Putting a number on it as he did pretends that guns only *kill* innocent people, and ignores all the innocent people saved by guns– most of whom never make the news. Many innocent lives are saved, and many more gross violations which wouldn't necessarily result in death are also prevented. His is a sneaky, dishonest tactic that I've seen used many times in the past; he's not the first. Unless you can say with *certainty* how many lives (and bodies) are saved by guns, saying how many deaths you'll accept is lying, because your numbers are **meaningless**. It's *less than half* of the picture.

But back to the bigger topic. There have been many times I have talked about the costs and benefits of guns, and other people have been doing so since before I was born and it continues to this day. That someone like Scott has managed to avoid this information for 60+ years doesn't mean it's not out there. I can't relate to the arrogance required to imagine no one else has thought of this before.

Everything has costs and benefits. Nothing is immune to this natural law.

But, for the record, here's another list (and analysis) of the downsides to guns.

- Bad guys use guns to intimidate and murder. Bad guys include muggers, cops, rapists, IRS agents, inner-city gangs, the military, bank robbers, kidnappers, evil loser mass-shooters, and other archators.

This drawback is negated by the fact that good guys can use (and often *require*) guns for a real chance at stopping the bad guys without being hurt in the process. To save lives.

Wouldn't you rather have even the *hope* of a chance to fight back and win than no option better than cowering and waiting to die?

- Suicidal people use guns to kill themselves.

This is negated by the fact that suicidal people can- and *do*— use other methods to kill themselves. Look at Japan if you doubt this. If someone wants to kill themselves there's probably nothing you can really do to stop them. Yes, they might be slowed down if there's not a gun available- and some of those might then change their minds about killing themselves. But how many? And will that number exceed the number of lives saved with a gun?

Plus, suicide is a human right, even if you don't like it being exercised.

- Guns scare people.

This is negated by the fact that someone, somewhere is scared of any object you can think of. I knew a kid who screamed in terror every time she saw a balloon, and working in pet stores I was astounded at how many people are deathly afraid of birds.

Plus, the fact that guns scare people is part of their utility. That way you don't usually have to shoot the bad guys; just let them be scared by the sight of a gun so they'll run away or surrender.

- People have accidents with guns- which results in tragic injury and death.

People have *accidents*. No further words are necessary. Education and familiarity are the best way to reduce the rate of accidents with guns and other tools- as has been happening for decades now, even as the number of guns goes up. Education and familiarity are even more important where kids are concerned. It's a bad idea to regulate or ban something just because a certain number of people will always manage to have accidents. *Everything* would be banned if that were a legitimate criterion.

There may be others I'm not thinking of right now, but if so I'd be willing to bet I've considered them in the past, and probably even discussed them. Maybe even on this blog.