

# Tolerance, Approval are Different Things

Few people understand the difference between tolerating a behavior and endorsing or approving of it.

There are things I don't approve of but don't have the right to stop others from doing. I may tolerate these behaviors for my own peace of mind while doing what I can to protect myself; including self-defense when necessary.

Even if I try to stop others from doing things I believe are harmful, my effect on the world is vanishingly tiny. It's probably wasted effort.

I have no right to control what you do as long as you aren't violating anyone's life, liberty, or property. My right to control what you do when you are threatening to violate me — or someone else — is limited to taking defensive actions. I can also cooperate with others for mutual defense.

Cooperation is useful, as long as you don't become an aggressive gang. A gang is more likely to violate rights than to defend them. It's too easy to pretend your collective power — might through superior numbers — makes right. This is mob rule, and is the foundation of democracy. Speaking of democracy ...

I tolerate the act of voting, but I don't support it. It's similar to drug abuse in more ways than one.

Both can make a person feel unrealistically important, yet the high quickly wears off and the consequences stack up.

Drug abuse and voting could be seen as similar victimless acts if they were judged on their actual effects rather than by what you've been taught to believe about them.

In the real world, a drug abuser doesn't always stay on the couch but may get behind the wheel.

Just as a drug abuser can hurt an innocent person in an accident, a voter can accidentally harm the innocent by voting in an election. In the real world, a voter will vote for a politician who will use legislation and taxes to damage liberty a little more and take away more of your property. A politician is like the drug abuser's car — the vehicle becomes a weapon.

I tolerate voting for the same reason I tolerate drug abuse. I know I have no right to stop it, but I must stay alert for anyone whose mind is under the influence of the drug of politics.

Maybe I can help them when they sober up and nurse them through their withdrawal pains. Perhaps, through tolerance, I can even help them find strategies to avoid the pushers the next time.