

Voluntaryism as a System of Values



Send him mail.



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

I will own this interpretation, but I think that all voluntaryism really comes down to is a system of values. Looking over the last few years, I can see that what has been the primary mover in my evolution toward freedom are the change in values that I hold. And each change was preceded by a conscious, free will decision to accept some new idea. That’s very important; to know that I was never coerced into changing my values. Many of the ideas that I discovered held great intellectual weight for me, but the choice to accept them was completely voluntary. Whether or not I would accept the idea had mostly to do with other, more basic values that I hold, such as *truth*, *justice*, and *logical consistency*. As a system of values, here is what voluntaryism is *to me*.

Societal Values

First and foremost, because I value *peace*, I will not initiate an act of aggression against another human being, nor will I hire an agent to do it in my name. But, also, because I value peace, I will consider and attempt to utilize peaceful and nonviolent action *first* in retaliation to the initiation of aggression against me or my family. Force will be my last resort.

Because I value *integrity*, I will not try to defraud another human being, nor will I use political power, which is based on violence, to control or change the behavior of others. Instead, I will use persuasion and example to influence others to adopt my values.

Because I value *moral consistency*, I will only “do unto others” what I would approve of having done to me. I will not steal from (tangible), kidnap, assault, rape, or murder another human being because I do not want anyone else to steal from, kidnap, assault, rape, or murder me. Further, I won’t hire an agent to do any of these in my name, including anybody calling themselves “government.”

Because I value *peaceful trade*, I will never try to regulate or prohibit the free exchange of

any good or service, no matter how illicit I believe they are, among individuals. And more, I will always trade peacefully and with full disclosure, though not always completely lawfully. The principles of free exchange precede government “laws” and their consideration is done only as an exercise in risk management.

Family Values

Once again, because I value *peace*, I will not initiate an act of aggression against anyone in my family, adult or child. I will only use peaceful and nonviolent techniques to raise my children into healthy adults.

Because I value *love*, I will show my children unconditional and unceasing affection in order to maintain connection. I will play with them and do my best to meet all of their needs, physical, emotional, and mental, as developing human beings. When they are sad, I will comfort them; when they are angry, I will give them time, space, and the sure knowledge that I am here for them; and when they are happy, I will laugh and smile with them. Also, I will show my wife unceasing affection and do my best to meet all of her needs.

Because I value *natural consequences*, I will not punish nor reward my children for their behavior. I will help them to understand the natural consequences of their actions, both good and bad. I will encourage finding intrinsic reasons for “good” behavior and against “bad.”

Because I value *respect*, I will show my children and wife respect, meaning, I will not handle, hold, or touch them against their will. I will respect their protestations to my interpersonal actions and seek to remove them by re-gaining their favor with peace and love. Likewise, I will respect their decisions on what to eat, how much to eat, what to wear, when to sleep, how to spend their time, and so forth. This does not mean that I will always finance or encourage their interests, however.

Because I value *free inquiry*, I will not force knowledge into my children’s minds. I will allow them to pursue their own educational and intellectual interests while facilitating and mentoring them in every way that I can. Likewise, I will not force my children to adopt my religious, philosophical, or political beliefs and practices. I will encourage them to thoughtfully discern truth and error in all religious, philosophical, and political claims.

Because I value *clarity of thought* I will not lie to my children or otherwise manipulate their little minds. When they ask me a question, I will give them as honest an answer as I can (speaking to their level of understanding) with full disclosure of any ignorance I am sure to have. As an example, my son, now 7, understands where babies come from, because he asked me and I told him. Further, I will train them on *how* to think, not *what* to think.

Final Thoughts

These are not the total of my values, but they are the values I hold and promote as they relate to voluntaryism. My adherence to the non-aggression principle does not depend on the age, gender, race, sexual orientation, or religious affiliation of those I interact with. My values are *mine*. They govern *my behavior*. Perhaps promoted as a system of values, voluntaryism will have broader appeal. I will have to experiment with that idea in my interactions with others and report on my findings. In any event, voluntaryism is working *for me and my family*.