

What Do You Tolerate?



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"One Improved Unit" is an original column appearing sporadically on 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](#).

Since I wrote my column on intolerance and voluntaryism, I've been thinking a lot about the beliefs, attitudes, practices, and actions that I tolerate on a day to day basis. That's something that's proven painful to think about, because I seem to tolerate more than I'd really like to. Let me explain.

Tolerance and Intolerance

Tolerance and intolerance are a matter of action, not attitude. To tolerate means to *not* interfere, so of course intolerance is the action of interference. If I tolerate something, then I either bite my tongue or stay my place if I disagree with it. If I interfere, either verbally or physically, then I am acting intolerantly. Tolerance and non-interference go hand in hand.

What I am Intolerant Toward?

If my actions betray my intolerance, then one observing me would conclude that first and foremost, I am intolerant toward my own uneasiness. Indeed, every action I perform is an exercise in removing some felt uneasiness; like writing this column or scratching my arm. And that is true for everyone. To get a little more specific, I am also intolerant of the perpetuation of statist myths. My interference takes the form of this website, my writing, my podcast, and in conversation with countless others. I am constantly interfering with the perpetuation of statism. Likewise for the perpetuation of, what I consider to be, bad parenting and childhood education practices. There is much that I am intolerant of along these and other lines.

What I am Tolerant Toward?

And now the more uncomfortable question: what do I tolerate? Considering the previous list of what I'm intolerant toward, my observer would also conclude that my intolerance toward statism, bad parenting, and bad childhood education practices is unfortunately limited. I

speak and write in opposition to these things, which is verbal intolerance, but how often do I physically interfere with them? How often do I stop a parent from smacking his child? How often do I lay down in front of the state's tanks and refuse to tolerate their wars? How often do I try to assassinate the countless murderous tyrants around the world?

The Hard Truth

As much as I like to pat myself on the back for being intolerant toward evil, my intolerance only goes so far. Obviously, I have other considerations to make and values to protect, but that doesn't remove the fact that I have a degree of tolerance toward evil. And that troubles me enough that I find myself thinking about ways to increase my intolerance toward these ills. For example, take spanking. If I am about to witness a parent spank his child, and I want to interfere, I have some options. I could confront the parent and get between him and his child. That's likely to be quite costly. Or, I could take my phone out of my pocket and approach the parent, asking him if he dropped his cell phone, thereby easing tensions and distracting him. Either way (and a number of others), I'm interfering with his intolerable spanking.

Final Thoughts

Like I said, tolerance can be painful to think about when one realizes just how much of something they hate, they tolerate. As important as intolerance toward evil is, just as important is protecting my life and liberty, and the lives and liberties of my wife and children. While I can't be everywhere, all the time, slaying the demons that beset me, I will do the best I can.

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