

What is Voluntaryism?

Finding the challenges ...

I was, in fact, challenged as to “What is a voluntaryist?” I will, from time to time, read a piece, in the SIG for Writers to which I belong, where I will claim to be a “voluntaryist.” Although curiosity will kill the cat, someone decided to query how and why I was using the word, “voluntaryist.”

Let me lead off by declaring what a voluntaryist is not:

- Not someone from Tennessee.
- Not an athlete at the University of Tennessee (Knoxville).
- Not someone who violated the warning, in the army, about never volunteering for anything.
- Not someone who works for free.
- Not someone who puts in two cents regardless of being asked.
- Not a formulation devised by Auberon Herbert.
- Not a label.
- Not a closed-ended class.
- Not a political designation.
- Not a religious designation.

A voluntaryist could do any of those things but is not a voluntaryist thereby. For instance, I was born in Chattanooga, TN. For another instance, the formulation by Auberon Herbert comes close. For a third instance, in seeking brevity, I often label myself a voluntaryist — it is not inaccurate, but it is not complete.

As I identify myself as a voluntaryist, I hold the following principles to be true:

- All interactions between two or more humans should be voluntary.
- Don't hurt people and don't take their stuff. *
- Every action must proceed from principle.
- Principles must have sound premises.
- The art of economics consists in looking not merely at the immediate but at the longer effects of any act or policy; it consists in tracing the consequences of that policy not merely for one group but for all groups. — Henry Hazlitt
- First, do no harm.
- The unexamined life is not worth living.
- Recognize no rulers.
- Be skeptical of authorities. Seek authenticity.

- Keep the Golden Rule. Observe other rules named for precious metals, such as the Silver Rule and the Platinum Rule.
- Natural law deals with facts, legislative laws are fictions.
- The oracle considered Socrates the wisest man in Athens because Socrates understood that he, himself, knew nothing.
- Logic.
- Always reckon on bias, your own and that of others (see the Platinum Rule).
- Do not initiate aggression.
- Justice should be restitutional, not punitive, not vengeful.
- All individuals are unique.
- Occam's Razor.
- Multiplicity introduces complexity.
- Self-ownership is.
- Every freedom has an equal and opposite responsibility.
- Don't label.
- Voluntary thinking should be critical, objective, relatively error-free.
- Emotions are part of critical thinking.
- All humans are born free of any other human dominion.
- Large governments are untenable.
- Small governments become large governments.
- Governments cannot morally do that which they consider crimes for their governed individuals.
- Compulsory public school is immoral.
- Government run schools are a conflict of interest.
- Compulsory military service, conscription, is immoral.
- Trust is irrational. Reasonable expectations based on likelihood are rational.
- Human action should be based on principles, not reactions.
- Phenomena are naturally self-organizing.
- There is no chaos. There is stasis and change.
- All things belong to systems, are systems, have systems
- All animate systems have information systems
- All human information systems are made up of people, data, procedures, communication, hardware, and software
- There may be just war, but I know of no instances.
- The common good is best served by the individual good.
- John Locke, Frédéric Bastiat, David Hume, Thomas Jefferson, and Lysander Spooner are *gurus*.
- Multiple interactions bring complexity, sometimes confusion. Interaction between two actors has 2 communication channels. Interaction among three actors has 16! What could go wrong?
- Practically speaking, all politicians are deficient.

And so forth. Both lists are open-ended.