

Yes, I Do Have An Enemies List

It's a powerful thing to name your enemies. By naming them, you can keep always in front of you what you're up against.

So I figure I ought to take a page from Arya Stark's playbook and start keeping tabs on my list of enemies.

Some of my enemies are emotions: despair, terror, vindictiveness, arrogance, numbness.

Some of my enemies are philosophies: authoritarianism, statism, socialism, fascism, anti-human religiosity, sexism, racism.

Some of my enemies are habits: procrastination, stagnation, indebtedness, dishonesty, lateness, failed promises, conformity.

Some of my enemies are attitudes: contempt, subservience, helplessness, status-seeking.

You'll notice there are no people on this list. That's because all people are capable of change - all people are capable of being my friends, or at least of not being evil.

If I'm going to choose enemies, I also might as well pick ones that I'm never going to fully defeat. A good long battle will make me strong for a good long time, and a big-enough enemy is a good motivation for a struggle which will take a lifetime.

Another grace of my particular enemies list is that it makes my choice of tactics simpler.

With enemies like procrastination, I can know that any action I take toward a creative goal is a victory- and any procrastination is itself a defeat.

With enemies like despair, I can know that giving up would be the only form of failure.

With enemies like authoritarianism and statism, I can remind myself that I can only win by respecting the freedom of others. The way of power isn't open to me.

Finally, I think I'll find that listing out these enemies will make it far harder for me to subconsciously slip into treating them as friends. If I remind myself routinely that vindictiveness is an enemy, it won't find any hospitality in my heart.

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