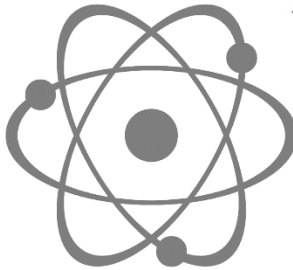




THE POLITICALLY INCORRECT

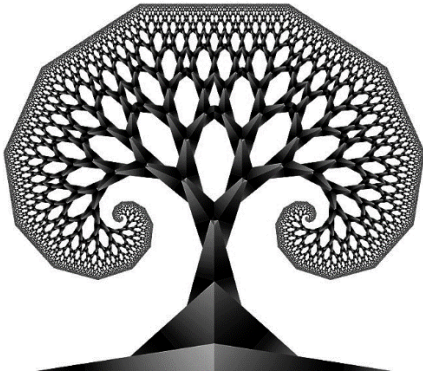
GUIDE TO THINKING CORRECTLY



Richard Benoit Friedman

The contents of this book were originally published as a collection of articles for my website commonatheist.com in 2011. In 2021 I compiled these articles into book form.

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Introduction

What does it mean to “think correctly”? It means to have as few contradictory, hypocritical, and irrational thoughts as possible. It also means being willing to change your point of view when presented with cogent reasons for doing so.

As of 2021, most of the US media’s stance on social issues is that of strict political correctness. This is particularly true of those on the Left. Opinions or statements about any group perceived as “oppressed” must be positive or neutral; anything negative, even if objectively true, is labeled racist, sexist, misogynistic, homophobic, fascist, or some other “hate speech”. Who is seen as oppressed? Everyone except straight white males, who are seen as evil greedy racist oppressors.

When discussing people or issues of so-called oppressed groups, the cardinal rule is that straight white males must never say anything unfavorable or critical; we may only praise. If we state facts, present evidence, or make rational arguments that criticize or conflict with the standard politically-correct narratives of the Left, we will often be accused of hate speech and promptly silenced. This has become a very common evasive maneuver of the Left: when presented with arguments that reason them into a corner, instead of addressing said arguments they simply declare them “hate speech”. This hostile treatment of dissenting ideas has made it next to impossible to have civilized honest discussions about controversial issues.

Those on the Right are not much better. They derive their moral authority from the Christian Bible, an ancient manuscript written by scientifically ignorant immoral nomads and extensively redacted by various self-appointed religious authorities over the centuries. Christians tend to display unquestioning obedience to the moral edicts of their Bible because daring to question or doubt their God is seen as a sin. Essentially, they are not allowed to

think certain thoughts. Much like Leftists, those raised in a Christian Right environment will not learn to think correctly.

When it comes to politically-sensitive controversial subjects like religion, feminism, abortion, drug legalization, animal rights, racism, etc., there is often no objectively correct stance. If there were, those subjects wouldn't be controversial. What then, shapes our thoughts and opinions on such things? Personal experiences, parents, friends, and the media often guide our moral intuition as we grow up. By our early 20s our sense of morality and justice is formulated and becomes intertwined with our emotions; this explains why most people are emotionally invested in their beliefs. These emotions often cloud our judgement and reasoning, causing us to reach irrational or false conclusions.

The purpose of this book is to present a more rational perspective on various subjects. I do not claim that my opinions are "correct" since opinions by their very nature are subjective. However, I do claim that I've made every effort to be as consistent and rational as possible in forming my opinions.

-Richard Benoit Friedman
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1. Atheism

God Defined

To avoid misunderstanding, we should first define the terms. There are many definitions of God but I'll use the most popular one:

God: (*noun*) 1. The omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent creator and ruler of the universe and source of all moral authority.

I'm not going to rehash the standard arguments against God because this has been done by others with far greater intellectual depth and philosophical rigor than I'm capable of. If you're looking for something like that, please read "*Atheism: The Case Against God*" by George H. Smith or "*Atheism: A Philosophical Justification*" by Michael Martin. Instead of presenting the classic rebuttals to theism, I'm going to talk about reasons for not believing in god(s) that are most convincing to me personally.

Faith

Since we're talking about God, I'm going to use the religious definition of "faith":

faith: (*noun*) 1. Belief that is not based on logical proof or physical evidence.

It would be wrong to liken faith to open-mindedness because open-mindedness is about being open to the *possibility* that something is true despite the lack of evidence. Faith is *being certain* that something is true despite the lack of evidence. Faith is believing something when you have no rational reason to believe it, faith is believing something just because it makes you feel better.

As an atheist, I am open-minded but I have absolutely no faith in anyone or anything. For me, having faith is like believing that $2+2=5$. It's not that I don't want to believe, it's that I'm *incapable* of

believing. I can't make myself believe something is true when I know it's false. Similarly, I cannot have faith in anything because that would require me to believe something is true without good evidence or logical proof. My brain is not wired to permit that.

I've often wondered how people with faith decide what to have faith in and what not to have faith in. Why do they have faith that Jesus rose from the dead but lack faith that human souls can be reincarnated in animals? Both have no evidence, and both are supernatural. Why believe one but not the other? How do they decide what parts of the Bible actually happened as written and what parts are just legends and allegory?

Sin

sin: (*noun*) 1. Deliberate disobedience to the known will of God.

Since God doesn't exist, that means there is no "will of God" which means it's impossible to sin. It's like defining sin as "Deliberate disobedience to the will of Santa Claus" or "...the will of the Wizard of Oz". Since God, Santa Claus, and the Wizard of Oz are fictional characters, it is nonsensical to speak of their will. Only a mind that actually exists can have a will.

This means Hitler, Stalin, Mao, Jack The Ripper, and all serial killers and child rapists on Earth are completely sin-free, just like the rest of us. But so what? The non-existence of sin in no way exonerates immoral acts. We don't need an imaginary magic man in the sky to tell us what is ethical and what isn't. We can use our morality for that (covered in section 20: Morals and Rights).

Our Inherent Purpose and Value

We have no inherent purpose. We are just a series of natural electro-chemical reactions that have acquired consciousness and self-awareness. Asking what purpose we have is like asking what purpose a crater on the Moon has. The question incorrectly

assumes that the crater was deliberately created by someone for a specific reason. A crater has no purpose nor is anyone responsible for its creation. Similarly, life was not designed by any intelligent being(s) as far as we know. Therefore, much like rain, wind and other natural phenomena, life has no purpose.

We have no inherent value either. The term "inherent value" is a contradiction. Before something can have value, it must first be evaluated but evaluated by whom? There must be some mind or consciousness that does this evaluating; it judges the worth or value of whatever is being evaluated. This means value is not inherent to anything; it is purely subjective and merely the opinion of whoever is talking about it.

Strong Atheism vs. Weak Atheism

Strong atheism is the explicit denial of the existence of God. A strong atheist claims to know with certainty that God does not exist. Weak atheism is a lack of belief. A weak atheist doesn't deny the existence of God; he simply does not accept other people's claims that a God exists. To the question "Does God exist?" a weak atheist would answer "I don't believe that a god exists but I don't deny it either."

To illustrate the difference between strong and weak atheism, consider the two statements: "All cars are made entirely out of vanilla ice cream" and "There is a coin in my closed hand." If you are sane, then you are a strong atheist on the question of whether your car is made out of ice cream. You know with 100% certainty that it is not. You explicitly deny the claim that your car is made out of ice cream. As far as me having a coin in my closed hand, you're a weak atheist. I might have a coin but at the moment you have no good reason to believe so. You don't deny that I have a coin but you don't believe it either. In every day speech you'd say "I don't know whether you have a coin" but technically it would be

correct for you to say "I lack the belief that you have a coin in your hand." A lack of belief constitutes weak atheism.

The Problem of Evil

The existence of evil acts (morally unjustified malicious harm) is one of the main reasons I don't believe in a caring, compassionate, loving God. Consider the following scenario: Jason, who is 14, is at a playground with his 7-year-old brother Marty. Jason has a sadistic streak so he pins his brother to the ground and shoves his head in the sand. Jason laughs as Marty chokes on the sand and struggles. Then Jason twists Marty's arm backwards until Marty cries in pain. As he's doing this, the parents of other children approach and are shocked to learn that the boys' father is three feet away, watching the whole thing. "Why are you allowing this to happen?" the parents ask angrily. "Why aren't you stopping your son? He's torturing his younger brother!" The father answers: "Yes, I know... it breaks my heart to see Jason abuse Marty this way but I must not interfere because if I were to stop Jason, I'd be violating his free will."

That's the standard excuse Christians give for why God, despite being omnipotent, won't move a finger to stop violent crime and torture. Apparently God values the free will of serial killers and child rapists more than the well-being of children. Apparently God values the free will of Hitler, Stalin, Mao, Caligula, and Vlad the Impaler more than the millions of victims who've suffered excruciating torture and death at the hands of those dictators. So according to God, it's better to allow millions of innocent people to suffer and die than to interfere in the free will of a bloodthirsty, maniacal psychopath. God certainly has interesting priorities.

In the Bible we humans are said to be God's children. Here's a tip for God: Good parents routinely interfere in the free will of their children. In fact, that's one of the jobs of a father: to stop his children from hurting themselves and each other. Imagine a parent

who catches his 7-year-old opening a bottle of Tylenol. Oh look, pretty red pills! Let's eat some. In fact, let's eat the whole bottle. If the parent is anything like God, he'll just sit back and watch his son eat one pill after the other. The child will overdose on acetaminophen, suffer severe liver damage and eventually die. God the parent will quietly watch his own son commit involuntary suicide and he won't interfere out of respect for the child's free will. Yeah, great parenting skills there, God.

Natural Disasters

So God doesn't interfere with free will. Okay, then what about natural disasters like earthquakes? People are often trapped in contorted positions in earthquake debris with their limbs crushed until they die of dehydration, or sometimes they're burned to death in the fires that follow. Pain, misery, suffering, death, and the stench of rotting flesh permeates a typical week-old severe earthquake zone. Is all that absolutely necessary? Was there no way to design an Earth without earthquakes? The all-knowing, all-wise, all-powerful God couldn't figure out a way to create an Earth without tectonic plates? Apparently thousands of innocent people suffering and dying in earthquakes was part of God's plan for us from the very beginning, even before The Fall of Man.

And then there's flooding, hurricanes, tornadoes, tsunamis, volcanic eruptions, droughts, etc. Think of the millions of innocent people who have suffered and died in natural disasters over the centuries. No way around that, eh? And what about pathogenic bacteria and viruses? What purpose do they serve? Do we really need HIV, Ebola, anthrax, and malaria? What was the purpose of creating those pathogens? Why does god allow living beings (both human and animal) to suffer horribly and die slow agonizing deaths from various pathogens and genetic diseases?

Some Christians say that all this death and destruction is the result of man's sin, but then isn't it strange that diseases and natural

disasters don't target the people who sin? Children get paralyzing brain cancers, leukemia, and muscular dystrophy while murderous dictators live in good health and luxury for decades. Is this another one of God's all-wise plans for us?

Religion + Women = Misogyny

Since men are physically stronger than women and since male rulers have been (and continue to be for the most part) a rather unenlightened bunch who rule by fear & force rather than reason, it comes as no surprise that historically men have been the dominant gender on the planet. And since men are in charge, is it any wonder that most religions are patriarchal religions that rush to blame women whenever a scapegoat is needed? Obviously any power figures in such a religion will be male and any screw-ups will be female. The highest power figure, God, will definitely be male. And the simple-minded fool that is easily tricked by a talking snake into disobeying God and is thus responsible for the downfall of all mankind? Yep... female.

Of all cultures & religions, the one where women are the least socially permitted to be sexually provocative is undoubtedly conservative Islam. Women's sex appeal is so prohibited that when in public they are perpetually forced to wear those dark head-to-toe body coverings called burqas, even when its 110°F (43°C) in the shade. Apparently this is done to prevent any possibility of a feminine curve exciting a man's sexual appetite, who at that point will obviously have no choice but to rape the woman. Hey, here's an idea: Instead of forcing women to wear those hot, uncomfortable stupid burqas all the time, how about you tie the rapist to a tree and give his victim a whip or club? Then let her physically "communicate" to him how she feels about being raped. I'm quite certain the rape rate will fall.

One caveat: Please make certain the rape accusation is not a false one.

2. Abortion

I'm pro-choice. I dislike the label "pro-life" that abortion opponents have chosen for themselves because it implies that people like me are "pro-death". No, I am not pro-death, I'm pro whatever the pregnant woman decides and if she chooses life for her fetus, that's perfectly fine.

A more correct label for "pro-life" would be "anti-choice" or "pro-womb-parasite" because essentially, that's what a fetus is: a parasite on the woman's body. What is a parasite? It's an organism that takes nutrients from the host and contributes nothing in return. Women should have every right to remove a parasite from their bodies, regardless of its DNA signature.

At this point, most Christians will think I'm Satan himself because I referred to a helpless and defenseless little baby that's growing in her mommy's womb as a parasite. "What do you expect?" the Christian says, "He's an atheist! Of course he's going to advocate baby killing because there's a dark blob of evil goo where his soul should be."

I agree that I don't have a soul because souls are supernatural and I don't believe in anything supernatural. So why exactly is it wrong to kill an unborn human child? I don't know and I don't see a problem with it. Upon hearing this, the average anti-choice person will say something irrational and predictable like "How would you like it if your mom aborted *you*?" Do I really have to explain why that's an irrational question? I suppose I do.

If I were aborted, I wouldn't exist. If I don't exist, I can neither like nor dislike anything because... I don't exist. You have to be alive and conscious in order to like or dislike something. So the question is asking "How would you like it if you couldn't like or dislike anything?" The answer to the question is in the question itself. Let's say a certain fetus was aborted last year. How does

that non-existent person feel *today* about being aborted a year ago? Do they like or dislike not existing? And what about all those millions of people who don't exist because of condoms and the pill? I bet they really hate the fact that they don't exist. They probably cry themselves to sleep every night because the pain of non-existence is so great. Okay, enough silliness.

Below is a hypothetical conversation between myself and an Anti-Abortion Person (AAP):

AAP: "So you think it's okay to kill babies?"

Me: "We're talking about the abortion of fetuses. There's a difference between a fetus and a baby."

AAP: "What's the difference?"

Me: "A baby can survive outside the womb."

AAP: "Why does that matter? Whether we're talking about a baby or a fetus, it's still a human life."

Me: "Correct."

AAP: "Since there's not much physical difference between a 3rd-trimester fetus and a prematurely born baby, and since you think it's okay to kill a 3rd-trimester fetus, it logically follows that you think it's okay to kill babies."

Me: "Well, sometimes."

AAP: "SOMETIMES? Are you saying there are conditions under which it is moral to kill a living, breathing baby?"

Me: "Yes."

AAP: "Have you gone completely mad? Even most atheists agree that killing babies is immoral!"

Me: "When it comes to euthanizing infants I'm not most atheists. As I explain in section 20 on Morals & Rights, my morals are based on the prevention of suffering, not on saving lives."

AAP: "So when is it moral to kill a baby?"

Me: "When it has an incurable disease such that it cannot have a satisfactory life. I realize that "satisfactory life" is a matter of opinion but in my opinion it is moral to end the life of a baby suffering from harlequin ichthyosis, anencephaly, radiation poisoning or some other mental retardation or physical deformity."

AAP: "So in your perfect world, if both parents agree to kill their Down's syndrome child, it will be legal?"

Me: "As long as it's done humanely, yes."

AAP: "Are you seriously advocating the murder of children?"

Me: "Murder is the *unlawful* killing of another. In my perfect world it will be lawful so it won't be murder, it will be euthanasia. Explain why it is okay to put down a dog at an animal shelter but not a child at a hospital."

AAP: "Because a child is not a dog!"

Me: "Thanks for that predictable answer which also happens to work in reverse. I can claim that it's moral to put down a child but not a dog. Why? Because a child is not a dog! Such an answer does nothing to address my question of why one is moral while the other is not. I'm well aware that a child is not a dog but my question still stands: What rational, logical reason is there that gives moral permission to mercy-kill a sick dog but not a sick child?"

AAP: "I can't believe you're seriously asking this! I'm not going to stoop to your level of moronic morality to answer that."

Me: "So you're evading the question."

AAP: "Okay I'll play your silly game. It's wrong to kill children because humans have rights, human life is precious, it's inherently valuable, it's a sacred God-given gift which is not for YOU to take away!"

Me: "I'm an atheist so life has no inherent value, it's not a God-given gift because there is no God and it's not sacred because the word "sacred" loses all meaning once you get rid of God. As for natural rights or human rights, there's no such thing. All rights are given to us by government or whoever happens to be in charge, which means rights can be taken away. In my perfect world, infants will not have the right to life so it will be legal to end their lives under certain circumstances."

AAP: "I think it should be legal to end YOUR life."

Me: "Well, no I shouldn't be killed because that would cause my friends and relatives to suffer, which is bad."

AAP: "Who cares? As long as your atheistic baby-murdering days are over!"

Me: "Wait a minute, what ever happened to human life being precious and sacred? From your point of view, my life is valuable. Does that no longer apply merely because of the ideas I've expressed? Does human life cease to be precious and sacred merely because the human in question has certain thoughts in his head? I've never killed anything bigger than a spider nor have I encouraged anyone to have an abortion. I'm just expressing my thoughts and you're saying it's okay to kill me because of this?"

AAP: "Okay I get your point. Still, you think it should be legal to murder innocent children!"

Me: "Again, murder is by definition illegal. In my perfect world it will be legal so it won't be murder. It will just be the humane euthanization of a crippled child per the wishes of the parents."

3. Animal Rights

How are we to decide what animals get rights? Do only mammals get rights? What about birds? Or fish and crustaceans? Reptiles and amphibians? Insects and arachnids? I suppose the more pain and suffering an animal is capable of feeling, the more protected it should be. But how can we determine whether a given animal can feel significant amounts of pain? Certainly primates and other mammals like cats and dogs can feel pain, but what about tadpoles or goldfish? Or snails? If we start protecting those animals, other animals higher up the food chain which are kept as pets will be forced to starve. What is a pet boa constrictor snake supposed to eat if mice and rats are protected by animal rights laws?

Ownership of all predatory animals will have to be outlawed since it will be illegal to feed such animals. Some animals need live prey to trigger their feeding instinct. Will such pets be banned in a vegan's ideal world?

On the issue of equality: Will cats get the same rights as mice? They're both mammals that can feel pain. Should they both have the right to life and the right to not be harmed? If so, what are we to do with a cat that catches and kills a mouse? Were the mouse's rights violated? Clearly they were. Does this mean the cat should be punished? The cat merely did what was natural. Cats chase little things that move quickly; this is hard-wired into any cat's behavior as all cat owners know. Punishing an animal merely for acting on its natural instincts seems absurd, but that is exactly what we'll have to do if one animal violates the so-called "rights" of another.

Animal Welfare

While I don't believe in giving legal rights to animals, there should definitely be laws protecting their welfare, specifically laws that prevent the abuse and other cruel treatment of animals that can clearly experience pain and suffering. The conditions in modern slaughterhouses and dairy farms are absolutely appalling and

should be outlawed. If this results in more expensive protein and dairy products, then so be it. Perpetuating animal cruelty merely because it is profitable to do so is inexcusable. The movie "Meet Your Meat" is a good visual depiction of why I believe so.

I think it's okay to raise animals for food as long as they're treated humanely and it's okay to kill them as long as their death is quick, painless and free of emotional trauma. [Dr. Temple Grandin](#) has made great strides in this endeavor.

Vegans

I often hear vegans say "Animals have a *right* to life and freedom, we have no *right* to kill animals or keep them in cages!" It seems impossible for a vegan to build any case against the humane slaughter of animals without talking about "animal rights". So I ask the question: How did animals get their rights? As I've explained in section 20 on Morals and Rights, I don't believe in natural rights, human rights or any other rights except legal rights, which are granted to us by the local authorities. In most of the world, rights have not been granted to animals which means animals have no rights to violate.

Inconsistency of the "Animal Cruelty" charge

Suppose I choke a rabbit to death with my bare hands and throw it away. Is this animal cruelty? Most people would say that it is. What if I feed the dead rabbit to my injured boa constrictor that cannot constrict? I killed the rabbit in much the same way the snake would have killed it before eating it. I simply did the injured snake a service. Am I still guilty of animal cruelty? If yes, that means all owners of constricting snakes are facilitating animal cruelty when they feed their pets. If not, that means whether I treated a living animal in a cruel manner depends on what I do with the dead animal's carcass. That makes no sense.

4. Anti-Discrimination Laws

I oppose the majority of anti-discrimination laws. I'm talking about laws that force business owners and employers to not discriminate. If you own a business, it is your private property. Therefore, much like your home you should have the right to decide who can and cannot enter and how people are to behave there. You can make a rule that says Mexicans must wear green pants and Jews must say "Scooby Doo" every five minutes. You can ban all black people if you want to, or all white people. No matter how discriminatory or absurd your rules are, you should have the right to impose them on anyone in your home. Why? Because it is *your* home, therefore you get to make the rules. If someone doesn't like your rules, they can simply choose to leave or not enter in the first place.

The same logic applies to your place of business, be it a grocery store, a restaurant, or a bar. Much like your home, it belongs to you, therefore you get to make the rules regarding who can and cannot enter, what kinds of things people can do, how people are to be dressed, how they are to behave, etc. You should also have the right to arbitrarily ban people from your place of business for any reason or no reason. If someone doesn't like these rules, they can leave.

If you're renting out a home, you should have every right to discriminate against tenants for any reason. It's your property, why should someone dictate who you must allow to enter your private residence?

You Don't Really Own Real Estate in the US

When you own some object or thing, you should be able to do with it as you please. You should have the right to use it, sell it, destroy it, stop other people from using it, etc. That is the definition of "ownership": the right to do with some object as you wish. If

someone gives you a computer and says "This is now your computer. You own it. However, you're not allowed to let other people use it, you're not allowed to load Photoshop on it, you're not allowed to add a hard drive to it, and you're not allowed to use it after 8pm on weekends." then I will disagree with the idea that I own the computer. I'm merely allowed to use the computer. I certainly don't own it if I have to follow someone else's rules regarding what I may and may not do with it.

This is precisely the case with Real Estate. The government says that you own real estate property but at the same time you're not allowed to do with it as you see fit. If you own a restaurant or grocery store you should be able to make any rules you wish in your place of business, but you cannot. It is illegal for you to post a sign in the window that says "No Whites allowed" or "No Jews or Mexicans" or "Blacks are not welcome here". Sure, that's blatant discrimination but if it's *my* place of business on *my* land, I should have the right to discriminate against anyone for any reason, or no reason. Why? Because it's mine. I worked for it, I paid for it, why should the government tell me how to run it?

Private vs. Public Property

I oppose anti-discrimination laws on private property but I fully support anti-discrimination laws on public property. Private property is paid for by only one person or group of people, therefore only they should have the right to decide how to use it. Public property is paid for with tax dollars which are collected from everyone regardless of race and gender. Therefore, everyone should have equal rights to its use.

Speaking of race and gender, I noticed a double-standard: It's fully legal to discriminate against people by gender at a place of business, but not by race. For example, many gyms are female-only. The reason given is "Some women feel uncomfortable working out in a gym with men, because they don't want men

staring at them or hitting on them." If feelings of discomfort are sufficient to justify gender discrimination in a place of business, why can't feelings of discomfort be used for racial discrimination? Why can't a black-only grocery store exist with the justification: "Some black people don't like shopping in the presence of whites. They feel uncomfortable, so whites are banned from our store." That's just as valid a reason as the female-only gym. Why is it okay to discriminate against customers on the basis of gender but not race?

5. Bad Morality in The Bible

"Do not think that I have come to bring peace on earth; I have not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law...."

-Jesus (Matthew 10:34)

"I will strew your flesh upon the mountains and fill the valleys with your carcass. I will drench the land even to the mountains with your flowing blood..."

-The Loving, Merciful, Compassionate God (Ezekiel 32:5)

"Now therefore, kill every male among the little ones, and kill every woman who has known man by lying with him. But all the young girls who have not known man by lying with him, keep alive for yourselves."

-Moses (Numbers 31:17)

Translation: After murdering a young girl's entire family before her eyes, you may kidnap her and use her as a sex-slave.

"Whoever blasphemes the name of the Lord shall be put to death. The whole community shall stone him."

-Leviticus 24:15 (A bit sensitive, are we?)

"He that believeth not shall be damned." -Jesus damns the atheists.
Mark 16:16

Matthew 5:29 states that if your eye causes you to sin, cut it out and throw it away.

While the Israelites were in the desert, a man was found gathering wood on the Sabbath day. Those who found him gathering wood brought him to Moses and Aaron and the whole assembly, and they kept him in custody, because it was not clear what should be done to him. Then the LORD said to Moses, "The man must die. The whole assembly must stone him outside the camp." So the

assembly took him outside the camp and stoned him to death. This is in Numbers 15:32-36

"Behold the day of the Lord comes, cruel, with wrath and fierce anger...Whoever is found will be thrust through and whoever is caught will fall by the sword. Their infants will be dashed in pieces before their eyes, their houses will be plundered and their wives ravished." Isaiah 13:9, 13:15

That's right, God wants children killed and wives raped. That's how God shows his love.

"Therefore fathers shall eat their sons in the midst of you and sons shall eat their fathers...I will send famine and wild beasts against you and they shall rob you of your children; pestilence and blood shall pass through you; and I will bring a sword upon you. I, the Lord, have spoken." Ezekiel 5:10, 5:17

"If the tokens of virginity were not found in the young woman, then you shall bring out the young woman to the door of her father's house, and the men of her city shall stone her to death with stones..." Deuteronomy 22:20

"For the wife does not rule over her own body, but the husband does..." 1 Corinthians 7:4

"Let a woman learn in silence with all submissiveness. I permit no woman to teach or have authority over men; she is to keep silent. For Adam was formed first, then Eve; and Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor."
Timothy 2:11

Jesus says:

"If any one comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple." Luke 14:26

6. Burning Holy Books & Flags

This is a subject I'm undecided about because there are strong arguments on both sides. Below is a hypothetical conversation I came up with to illustrate my thoughts:

Pro: "Of course burning books and flags should be legal, it's called freedom of expression. If someone is offended by it, too bad. You don't have a right to never be offended. Grow a thicker skin and deal with it."

Con: "Actually I don't mind looking at burning flags or defaced Holy Books because I'm an atheist with no emotional attachment to either. However, other people are not atheists. Other people have a great deal of emotional attachment to those things and they tend to get violent when they see their precious flags or Holy Books burned or defaced."

"So because some religious militant doesn't like it means we have to give up our fundamental right to freedom of expression?"

"Do you remember the case of the Swedish cartoonist [Lars Vilks](#) who drew an insulting picture of Islam's Prophet? That certainly is protected by freedom of expression but many innocent people in Africa died because of that cartoon. It started riots in the Muslim world and some Muslims attacked Christians and set fire to Churches and such. Now that we know how Muslim militants react to this, I think it would be immoral to publish cartoons of a similar nature or to publicly deface the Koran because it will probably lead to more violence and death of innocent people."

"So does this mean we Americans have to surrender our freedoms to Islamic barbarians in Africa? Look, I have the right to express myself. Many people fought wars and died for me to have this right. There's a reason our country is called Land of the Free. We are free to express our opinions however we want, be it by

defacing Holy Books or drawing cartoons of Prophets. I say screw those Muslim savages in Africa, I'll draw any cartoons I want!"

"You want to draw those cartoons just for the heck of it... just to prove a point. Okay, but living, breathing people who have harmed no one will be beaten up and possibly murdered as a result of your actions. If you draw a cartoon of their Prophet and someone takes a picture of it, it will go online where militants in Africa will see it. They'll get very mad and attack any non-Muslims they see to vent their anger. Some Christians have been burned alive in the riots. Are you willing to watch a woman get burned to death just because you drew a cartoon? What if she were right in front of you and you're told "If you draw that cartoon, we'll douse her with gasoline and set her alight." Would you draw it? What if she's a mile away? What if she's 10,000 miles away? Does that make a difference? The point is: although legally we are free to express ourselves anyway we want to, I think it would be immoral to knowingly express ourselves in a way that would result in the death of innocent people. And we do know that if we create doodles of their Prophet, this will incite some of them to commit murder."

"Okay so then what if they start killing people for other reasons? What if they kill a random person whenever an American drinks alcohol? Does that mean we can't drink anymore? What if they start torching houses in Africa because we Americans are not converting to Islam? Does that mean all of us have to convert? How bad does it have to get before you take a stand and say "I'm not going to let those violent lunatics control my life!" Because as it stands right now, you want us to appease religious insanity and militancy."

I remain undecided on this subject.

7. Censorship

What kinds of things should be censored? I suppose that depends on who's doing the censoring and why. Parents routinely censor their children's access to the internet for obvious reasons and I doubt anyone has a problem with that except the children. Below I give my opinions and reasons for what I believe should be censored in the media, and to what extent.

CSI & Police Tactics: Crime scene investigation and police interrogation tactics should always be kept secret. I'm surprised that the average person can turn on their TV and find out how the police solves crimes. Shows like "CSI: Crime Scene Investigation" are how-to manuals for criminals who can learn how to dispose of evidence and get away with crime. Another show called "The First 48" follows actual homicide detectives and explains how they think and how they find & talk to suspects. Future murderers can watch this show and learn to skillfully cover up their crimes and evade capture. And if they're captured, they'll know what kinds of tricks the detectives use to get people to confess. They will build mental defenses during the interrogation and avoid falling into psychological traps the detectives may have set up. In my opinion, all police procedures and methods associated with solving crimes should be kept secret and never be shared with the public. We rightfully keep military information secret when it might be helpful to our enemies. Why don't we employ the same strategy with police information?

How to kill people: Any information on how to commit crimes against people or property should be prohibited. We do have the freedom of speech but it rightfully has limits. We cannot yell "Fire!" in a crowded theater because doing so may result in a stampede where people are injured or killed. Similarly, information on how to be a successful hitman or arsonist, how to be a serial killer and get away with it, or how to poison a city's

water supply has no legitimate use. Distributing such information can only lead to harm and should therefore be illegal.

A counter-argument I recently thought up to legitimize the public distribution of such information is as follows: If the information is presented in an artistic context, it can be rightly claimed that it is for entertainment purposes only. For example, in a James Bond movie, a villain kills a politician in some ingenious way and gets away with it. The method used to carry out the assassination can be complex and clever and thus entertaining. This kind of artistic expression should not be illegal. If information on how to poison people is banned, then a movie featuring a wife who cleverly poisons her husband will be banned as well. In fact, any TV show or movie where police detectives solve a crime would have to be banned and I don't think that's a good idea. There is a line between allowing artistic expression and helping criminals get away with crimes but I don't know where that line is.

Pornography & Violence: I find society's attitude toward pornography and violence to be extremely confusing and irrational. If pornography is censored on the grounds that it might traumatize young children or give teenagers some bad ideas, or it might offend the delicate sensibilities of some adults, then why isn't violence censored for the same reason?

The following are questions for people at cable networks who determine their censorship policy.

Why is it that you do not censor:

- Concentration camp footage from WW2 that shows mountains of corpses being pushed by bulldozers
- Ultimate Fighting Championships where people beat each other viciously and bleed profusely

- Movie scenes where people are tortured, shot, stabbed, ripped apart, etc.
- Corporal punishment videos from the Middle East where people are beaten, seriously hurt, and abused
- Farm slaughterhouse footage where bloody intestines spill out of disemboweled cows
- Accidents where people break their arms or legs, with close-ups of the unnaturally-folded grotesque limb

Yet, you gladly censor:

- A woman's nipple
- Two inches of someone's buttocks
- The word "shit"

Please explain who you are trying to protect with your censorship. What is your definition of offensive or indecent? Does there exist a child or teenager who is more traumatized by the sight of a nipple than bloody corpses and vicious violence? Why is it okay to show death and violence at 2pm on a Saturday when children will likely be watching, yet it's not okay to show a topless woman even at 3AM on a weekday? It seems you are very lax with violence but very strict with even the mildest nudity. Why is that?

8. Corporal Punishment

How can we stop people from committing violent crimes? The modern approach is incarceration but it's not very effective at rehabilitation. When the criminal gets out he often goes back to doing what landed him in prison in the first place. Also, prison is very expensive. The inmate has to be housed, fed, clothed, medically cared for, and guarded. And finally, repeat offenders and career criminals get desensitized to prison after a while so they no longer fear it. They've been to prison so many times that it ceases to be a deterrent.

It is for these reasons that I'm in favor of corporal punishment. First, it doesn't waste tax dollars incarcerating criminals for years. Second, it provides strong negative reinforcement, thus dissuading the individual from repeating the offense. Pain is a much better memory marker than extended confinement. Therefore, the chances of recidivism with corporal punishment are lower than with incarceration. [Source: corrections.com]

The reason some people have been arrested dozens of times is because they literally have nothing to lose by committing crimes. They are typically unemployed, they have little to no property and no significant ties to anyone. Why shouldn't they carjack someone? Why shouldn't they snatch a purse or steal a car or rob a store? What's the worst that can happen? They'll go to prison again? So what, they'll be out soon enough.

If instead of prison we treat the criminal with pain, he'll have a strong incentive to not commit more crimes. The next time he wants to rob or steal or vandalize, the memory of the pain will talk him out of it. The intensity and duration of the pain should be increased if an individual doesn't learn his lesson the first time and winds up re-offending. Eventually, he'll get the message.

Some people see corporal punishment as cruel, primitive, and barbaric, but what's the alternative? If the worst we can do to someone is throw them in jail and he's not afraid of jail because he's been there a dozen times before, then what incentive does he have to not commit crimes? Absolutely none. He will be a perpetual menace to society. This explains why some people have been arrested thirty or forty times. They spend a month in jail for some crime like theft, assault, or vandalism and then they're back on the street, ready to re-offend. I'm certain that with corporal punishment, criminals would learn very quickly that crime leads to intense pain and they'd curtail their criminal activities. It is regretful that some people have to be treated like this but unfortunately they don't respond to reason or polite language. The only other way to deal with them is through violence.

Serious crimes against people or property, like rape, grave injury, vicious beatings, arson, armed robbery, child abuse, stabbings, etc. cannot be treated with corporal punishment alone because the perpetrator is a serious threat to society. A combination of hard labor and incarceration is appropriate in such cases.

All these ideas assume an overhaul of the current justice system which uses the absurd idea of trial by jury to determine guilt. In my opinion, too many innocent people have been convicted on bad testimony and insufficient evidence to make corporal punishment ethically acceptable.

9. Death Penalty

Serial killers, child abductors & murderers, armed robbers who kill their compliant victims, violent gang-members who stab or beat someone to death for trivial reasons - I think such people should be permanently "deleted" from society to make it a safer place for the rest of us. Keeping such people in prison for life is a waste of tax payer dollars. Why feed, house, and care for a serial killer? What is to be gained by this? Nothing as far as I can see.

Having said that, I will say that I support the death penalty in theory but not in practice for the following reasons:

- Jurors are specifically selected for their ability to be swayed by emotion rather than reason and evidence.
- Jurors are forced to be jurors against their will which means they often don't care about the trial and will do anything to end it faster.
- Many people have been wrongly convicted on lousy evidence or the testimony of a criminal who was offered a plea-deal to testify against the defendant. In other words, he was told "Incriminate this person in murder and we'll give you a discount on your sentence." It comes as no surprise that many people have been wrongly convicted on the false testimony of a criminal who had a strong incentive to lie. DNA evidence has exculpated many people on Death Row. Who knows how many innocent people have been executed?
- Executions usually cost more than life in prison

For these reasons I oppose the death penalty in practice. However, if we had a perfect criminal justice system that was efficient and didn't make mistakes, I would be in favor. People who oppose capital punishment even in a theoretically flawless system usually present one of the following arguments:

“It's not a deterrent” Yes, I know. The goal here is not to deter others but to kill the criminal. He can't be let out because he's too dangerous and there's no point in keeping him alive; it's just a waste of tax dollars.

“You're no better than the murderer” There's a world of difference between killing a murderer and killing an innocent person: the murderer did something to deserve it. Using the reasoning "you're no better than the criminal" we can say that we should not imprison kidnappers because when we put someone in prison we are essentially kidnapping them for a period of time. If we imprison a kidnapper are we "no better than the kidnapper"? Of course not. Imprisoning a criminal who was found guilty in a court of law is fair and just, whereas imprisoning a random person off the street (the way kidnappers do) is immoral and illegal. The same reasoning applies to murderers and the death penalty.

“It's just a form of revenge” If revenge was the goal, I'd want to kill the murderer in the same manner that he killed his victim. That doesn't interest me.

“Why not just keep him in prison for life?” Because it's safer and cheaper to kill him. If he's dead there's no chance of him escaping, and there are better ways to spend tax dollars than on housing and feeding murderers.

“It's inhumane” The word "inhumane" means "lacking pity or compassion." I see no reason to pity someone who breaks into a woman's home and rapes and kills her. The only pity I have is for the woman and the fact that she didn't have a revolver loaded with hollow-point bullets. Besides, the execution of a convicted murderer with a bullet to the back of the head is quick, cheap, and painless. It's far more merciful than being forced to spend a lifetime in a cage.

10. Feminism

Feminists vs. Feminazis

Like most causes that start out with good intentions, feminism today has split into two branches: rational feminism and misandric feminism (misandry is the hatred of males). Rational feminism can be defined as "belief in the social, political, and economic equality of the sexes" and going by that definition, I'm a feminist.

Misandric feminism can be defined as "belief that men are misogynistic, chauvinistic, greedy, selfish, nature-destroying assholes who prefer to resolve conflicts with violence and would gladly rape a woman if they could get away with it." Only deranged, bitter women believe in this sort of "feminism" which is closer to feminazism. Rational feminism is about equality, not about demonizing men. Feminazis have crossed the line of equality into misandry. They believe men are a plague upon this Earth and if the planet were ruled by women, we'd be living in Utopia. Some quotes by famous feminazis posing as feminists are below:

"Maleness is a deficiency disease and males are emotional cripples. The male is completely egocentric, trapped inside himself, incapable of empathizing or identifying with others, or love, friendship, affection of tenderness. [...] He is a half-dead, unresponsive lump, incapable of giving or receiving pleasure or happiness" [...] "To call a man an animal is to flatter him; he's a machine, a walking dildo."

-*Valerie Links, S.C.U.M. Manifesto (Society for Cutting Up Men)*

"All men are rapists and that's all they are."

-*Marilyn French, Author and advisor to Al Gore.*

"Men who are unjustly accused of rape can sometimes gain from the experience."

-*Catherine Comin, Vassar College. Assistant Dean of Students.*

"I want to see a man beaten to a bloody pulp with a high-heel shoved in his mouth, like an apple in the mouth of a pig."

-Andrea Dworkin; from her book Ice and Fire .

"I feel that 'man-hating' is an honorable and viable political act"

-Robin Morgan, Ms. Magazine Editor.

True Feminists are a Rare Breed

Since feminism is about equality, a true feminist should protest not only against the unfair treatment of women, but the unfair treatment of men as well. [Christina Hoff Summers](#) is the only intellectually-honest popular feminist I'm aware of; I have yet to hear her say anything I disagree with.

Most feminists are not very honest with themselves when it comes to true equality. If a proposed law will give women more rights than men, I think most feminists would support it. They would justify the unfairness with something like "Yes it's unfair but that's okay because it makes up for all the unfair treatment of women in the past." That type of thinking is wrong because it embraces the irrational and immoral idea of inherited sin. Essentially, those women are saying "Your group treated my group unfairly in the past, therefore it's okay for my group to treat your group unfairly today." You might as well pass a law today that bans white people from sitting at the front of a bus to make up for such discrimination against black people in the past. White men like me had nothing to do with anyone's unfair treatment. Why should we be punished for the moral crimes committed by other white men long ago? I never supported them and I wasn't even alive back then.

Feminists Approve of Sexist Laws that Favor Women

Many feminists remain silent when courts rule in a woman's favor only because she's female. When it comes to awarding child custody, the excuse "Women are naturally better at taking care of kids" is just as unfair as dealing with an interracial couple and

awarding custody to the white parent because "Whites are naturally better at taking care of kids". Since the father was born male, he can't see his kids as often as the mother. He's placed at a legal disadvantage only because of his gender. That's sexism any way you slice it and it's legally enforced. The typical response to this from most feminists is something like this: "Oh quit your whining! You men ruled the world for thousands of years and you've oppressed women for centuries. It's about time we got more rights than you." Again, this reeks of inherited sin. I've never ruled over anyone and I've never oppressed anyone. Why should my rights be trampled just because someone of my gender did bad things to women in the past? That's like punishing a random German man today for the crimes of Hitler.

Why aren't feminists protesting alimony laws? Laws that give an ex-wife \$50,000/month in alimony payments because that's how much she needs to maintain the lifestyle she's "accustomed" to. She was a hairdresser earning \$12.50/hr before she met a wealthy movie actor. After being with him for a couple of years she has grown accustomed to yachts and mansions and Ferraris. But for some reason, even after they divorce he still has to continue to finance her luxurious way of life! The injustice of this law amazes me. Essentially, she is using the courts to legally rob a man of \$50,000/month. How could anyone, male or female, allow such an absurd law to pass? And to borrow from Chris Rock, what about the man's alimony? What if he was "accustomed" to having sex with her every night? Will the court direct her to appear in his bedroom for that? After all, he's accustomed to sex with her and we shouldn't deprive people of what they're accustomed to, right?

11. Free Will

First let's define the term. From Wikipedia:

“Free will is the ability to choose between different possible courses of action unimpeded.” (I am going to assume “unimpeded” means *physically* unimpeded.)

However, Google says:

free will: (noun) 1. the power of acting without the constraint of necessity or fate; the ability to act at one's own discretion.

If an armed mugger demands your wallet and you surrender it, would it be correct to say that you gave it to him of your own free will? According to Wikipedia, yes because no one is physically forcing your hand into your pocket to retrieve the wallet. You are free to refuse the mugger. Of course there will be consequences but the choice of whether to comply or not is yours. However, according to Google if you surrender your wallet you will *not* be doing this of your own free will because you are constrained by the necessity to stay alive.

It's difficult to discuss free will without understanding what it means to *choose* something. Suppose an ordinary mouse is hungry and it finds a piece of cheese next to a piece of soap. Does the mouse choose the cheese over the soap using its free will? How about a bee or ant that has the choice between sugar water and gasoline? Would you say the insects *choose* the sugar water? Do insects have free will? What if it's an amoeba that is doing the choosing? At what point will you say that the organism in question isn't really choosing, it's just acting on its genetic programming? I doubt anyone would claim that single-celled organisms have free will so then at what point does a given organism's free will become nothing more than their instinctual programmed behavior? A more general question is: how can we

determine whether any given being has free will? Is there a test? I don't think there is.

If we think someone is horribly ugly, can we *choose* to find them very beautiful and attractive using only our free will? Can we switch back and forth between being heterosexual and homosexual on a whim? Can we choose to honestly believe that a rotting rat carcass crawling with maggots is delicious and pleasantly aromatic? Chances are you answered "no" to those questions. This means certain parts of our minds are immune to our free will. Certain preferences are hard-wired into our brains and no amount of wanting or wishing will change them.

Not All Free Wills are Equal

This so-called "free will" is actually a very complicated, tangled mess that involves hard-wired unchangeable preferences, years of personal experiences, morality, and opportunity.

Is a heroin addict free to refuse heroin? The addict has to use all his self-control and will power to resist using it while a normal person refuses it easily without a thought. Clearly, the addict's free will is compromised. He doesn't have the same freedom of choice as a normal person because he has to fight and win a fierce internal battle to abstain from heroin whereas a normal person does not.

Mike is in prison for theft and is being lectured by a Christian: "God gave you free will and you chose to steal, so now you're paying the price for your crime. I know a man your age... Victor. He has never stolen anything nor committed any crime in his life. He's a good, hard-working, model citizen. But you... you have a lengthy arrest record and criminal history. You chose this path in life! You chose to be immoral whereas Victor chose to be moral."

Turns out this model citizen Victor was raised in an upper-class neighborhood by two loving parents. He went to a good school and has a well-paying job. Criminal Mike, on the other hand, grew up

in a crime-infested ghetto. His father was killed while robbing a liquor store and his mother is in prison for prostitution and smoking crack. Mike was raised by the local gangs, where thievery, violence, callousness, and hostility were encouraged and rewarded.

So did Victor really choose to be good and did Mike choose to be bad? Or were those paths in life already carved out for them by their childhood circumstances? The point is, not all free wills are created equal. People's moral decisions are greatly influenced by their childhood and adolescent experiences, which means the choices their free will makes can be heavily biased and skewed through no fault of their own.

Freely Choosing to be Moral for the Wrong Reason

"God doesn't want slaves or robots" the Christian says, "God wants us to *choose* to serve Him."

Does God differentiate between a man who obeys Him out of love and respect and a man who obeys Him just to get into Heaven? The second man goes through the motions of praying and going to Church and doing good deeds but he doesn't really care about anyone, including God. Both people spend their entire lives doing good, moral things, helping others, and refraining from sin. One is doing it because he loves God, the other doesn't care about God or morality at all. He just wants the reward of Heaven and he'll do whatever it takes to get there. His motives are purely selfish. Both have freely chosen to obey God. Their physical actions are indistinguishable, only their thoughts differ. Will God let the selfish one into Heaven?

12. Genesis 1:1 / Adam Talks to God

The entire Genesis account of creation is so obviously a myth that it might as well be one of Brothers Grimm's fairy tales. I'm embarrassed to take it seriously enough to analyze. It's like writing a critical analysis of *Little Red Riding Hood* and explaining why a wolf can't eat an old woman in one bite, change into her clothes, and then speak in the old woman's voice. I mean, really? Do I have to stoop that low? Apparently I do. But enough ridicule, let's begin:

1. In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. 2. And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was on the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved on the face of the waters. 3. And God said, Let there be light: and there was light. 4. And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness. 5. And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day. –King James Bible

What was the temperature of these "waters" that the spirit of God moved over? I ask because God hadn't created the sun yet which means there was no source of heat, which means the ambient temperature would have been absolute zero. How can liquid water exist at absolute zero? It can't. Therefore, an unmentioned source of heat must have already been present before the sun was created.

Why did God say "Let there be light"? What was the purpose of uttering those words? Who was he talking to and in what language? What was emitting this light? Was God living in darkness before he created light? He didn't create the sun yet but heat and light are already present. Interesting. So why bother creating the sun later? What good is it? We already have heat and light, so what do we need a sun for?

Yes, I know... the Bible is not a science textbook so I shouldn't take it so literally. The problem is, 31% of Americans *do* take it literally ([2005 Gallup poll](#)). They reject the idea that it's mere allegory or myth. They think Genesis actually happened exactly as the Bible says it did, word for word. And these people are in political office, making important decisions. That's as scary as a politician who seriously believes in Santa Claus. Not only that, but he telepathically talks to his imagined Santa Claus and asks him for advice and favors. We'd think such a politician was afflicted with cretinism or schizophrenia, yet when this same politician believes in a god we're supposed to respect his beliefs. It seems one can believe in the most absurd nonsense imaginable and their beliefs will be respected as long as the nonsense can be called a religion.

More questions: What does it mean to divide light from darkness? Why do they need to be divided in the first place? Were light and darkness all mixed up in the same place before God divided them? How can that be? Dividing light from darkness is as ridiculous as dividing sound from silence. It's the same idea, just a different form of energy. "God heard the sound, that it was good, and God divided the sound from the silence." Doesn't that sound silly? Sure it does, so why is it any less silly with light?

Also, how can there be an evening or morning without a sun? Does God know what causes evenings and mornings? Apparently not.

Why did God create Adam from dust? Why not just make him magically appear out of nothing the way God created everything else except Eve? Apparently, it's to symbolize that man came from dust and to dust he shall return upon his death.

First, for whom is this symbol intended? For Adam? So God created Adam from dust to symbolize to Adam that God created him from dust? Isn't that a bit redundant?

Second, human flesh does not "return to dust" when someone dies. Bacterial putrefaction breaks down the fats and proteins into cadaverine and putrescine which are extremely malodorous syrupy liquids that give off the typical stench of rotting flesh. A decomposing human corpse is arguably one of the most revolting things in nature. Couldn't God come up with a more elegant way to dispose of dead bodies? Couldn't he make them fade away like dead Jedi in Star Wars? It's really quite pathetic that a mere mortal like George Lucas can come up with a more graceful way of dealing with corpses than Almighty God.

Eve was created from Adam's rib. How much did Adam's rib weigh? Maybe a couple of pounds... ten pounds at most? How much did Eve weigh? Obviously more than that. So where did the extra mass come from? Apparently God just made it appear out of nothing, like the rest of the universe. So even if Adam's rib was a heavy 10 lbs, and Eve weighed a tiny 100 lbs., that means 90% of Eve was not made from Adam's rib. So much for Eve being created from Adam's rib!

Did Adam and Eve have teeth and stomachs? Most theologians would say "yes" which means God intended them to eat food on a regular basis. Doesn't that mean they would eventually have to go to the bathroom? Where in Paradise is there room for a bathroom? Who would service and clean it? Why bother with this clumsy, smelly process in the first place? It's not very God-like. Why not simply give Adam and Eve permanent, infinite sources of energy so they'd never have to do any "unclean" things?

Adam's Hypothetical Conversation with God

If I were Adam, the following is a conversation I might have with God in Eden. By the way, what language did Adam and Eve speak? Who taught it to them? Let me guess... they were created knowing that language which is another way of saying "they knew it by magic".

Adam: "God, why did you create me from dust?"

God: "Because you're going to return to dust when you die and so the circle of life will be complete."

Adam: "I'm going to die? What's death? I thought I was going to spend eternity in this Garden of Eden."

God: "Well yeah that was my original plan but you guys are gonna eat the Forbidden Fruit from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil and this will make me so mad that I'll kick the both of you out of Eden forever, along with all your descendants."

Adam: "WHAT? OMG! Are you saying our disobedience will get all of humanity kicked out of Eden forever? Holy crap! I need to have a serious conversation with Eve about this. I need to impress on her just how critically important it is that she NOT eat that Forbidden Fruit! By the way, why can't we eat it?"

God: "Because I forbid it."

Adam: "Why do you forbid it?"

God: "What's with all these questions?"

Adam: "I'm just curious, that's all."

God: "You do know what killed the cat, don't you?"

Adam: "Cat? What's a cat?"

God: "Never mind. Anyway, you're not allowed to eat the Fruit. Just trust me on this."

Adam: "Yes, I understand that but I'm trying to figure out why we're not allowed to eat it."

God: "Because if you eat it, I'm gonna kick you out of Paradise forever! Is that not reason enough?"

Adam: "I'm well aware of the consequences for violating your law. What I'm curious about is your motive for making it a law in the first place. Let me ask the question another way: Why will you be upset if we eat the Forbidden Fruit?"

God: "Because by eating the Fruit, you'll be disobeying me and I can't have that. I demand obedience!"

Adam: "I see. And why would you punish all of our descendants for something the two of us did?"

God: "Don't worry about it. I work in mysterious ways."

Adam: "Okay. So you're saying we'll eat the Fruit even though you told us not to. That's so strange. Why would we disobey you? Do we forget that it's forbidden? Do we accidentally eat it without realizing?"

God: "Well, actually there's something I didn't tell you."

Adam: "Huh? What do you mean?"

God: "There will be a snake in the Tree of Good and Evil. That snake is Satan incarnate, my rebellious fallen angel. He'll convince Eve to eat the Forbidden Fruit."

Adam: "What a sinister, evil being that Satan must be! I wonder how he'll manage to sneak into our Garden and get into the Tree. He must be very clever! We'll have to be on the lookout for that

bastard. Let me know if you see him coming, okay God?

God: "Well actually, I'm the one who put him there."

Adam: "Wait... what?"

God: "I put Satan in the Tree of Good and Evil on purpose, so he could trick Eve into eating the Forbidden Fruit."

Adam: "WHAT? But why? Why would you... oh, I get it! Hehe! Good one, God, good one! For a minute there, I thought you were serious."

God: "I *am* serious. I'm always serious. People in the future will read a collection of my writings called The Bible and they too will see that at no point do I ever say or do anything funny. Basically, I have no sense of humor."

Adam: "You gotta be kidding me!"

God: "I just told you I never do that."

Adam: "Okay, so you created a Garden of Eden for us where we can eat anything except the Fruit of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. Then you're going to put Satan in that Tree so he can trick us into eating that Forbidden Fruit.

Question: Why would you deliberately trick us like that by putting that Satanic serpent in the Tree? Why did you even make that Tree to begin with? What good is it?

God: "Hey it's your fault... you're the ones who are gonna eat the Fruit. I told you not to but you ate it anyways."

Adam: "Yes, I understand, but can you please explain the reason for creating the Tree and serpent?"

God: "To test you guys."

Adam: "But I thought you were All-Knowing. What's the point of testing someone when you already know the outcome of the test ahead of time?"

God: "The test is not for me. It's to show you that you're both rebellious and corrupt and disobedient and unworthy of Paradise."

Adam: "But didn't you make us that way?"

God: "No. I gave you free will and you CHOSE to be bad and disobedient."

Adam: "Bad? What does that word mean? I don't understand how you can accuse us of doing something bad when we don't know the difference between right & wrong. We don't know what it means to be good or evil."

God: "Doesn't matter."

Adam: "What do you mean it doesn't matter? Of course it matters! The fate of all humanity depends on us knowing the difference between right & wrong. How can you fault us for anything when we don't know the difference between right and wrong?"

God: "Don't worry, you'll know soon enough."

Adam: "What do you mean?"

God: "Well... that's how Satan gets Eve to eat the Forbidden Fruit. He tells her that by eating the fruit, you guys will know the difference

between good and evil. So essentially, eating the Forbidden Fruit will give you morality."

Adam: "Is that true?"

God: "Yep"

Adam: "So let me get this right: to know that eating the Forbidden Fruit is wrong, we need morality. However, to get morality we must eat the Forbidden Fruit."

God: "Yep."

Adam: "That doesn't sound very fair to me. It sounds like you're setting us up to fail. Do you see what I mean?"

God: "Of course I do. I'm All-Knowing, remember?"

Adam: "Why would you set us up to fail?"

God: "I have my reasons; they needn't concern you. I work in mysterious ways."

Adam: "You said that already."

God: "I know that!"

Adam: "Okay, so you're going to punish all of humanity forever because Eve and I want to know the difference between Good and Evil. But don't you want us to know the difference between good and evil? Isn't that what being moral is all about? How are we supposed to differentiate between right and wrong if we don't even know what they are? Don't you want us to be moral beings?"

God: "Well, uhhh..."

Adam: "And why the eternal punishment merely because we're curious and want to know things and

be moral? Why did you give us intellectual curiosity if you're going to punish us for acting on it? I mean, do you expect us to be ignorant, immoral, closed-minded fools for all eternity? Is that what you want? What kind of god are you? What kind of god would punish his creations merely for wanting to be moral and knowledgeable? You're inciting idiocy and immorality by terrorizing us into stupidity and ignorance! What the hell is wrong with you?"

God: "You needn't bother eating the Forbidden Fruit because I'm kicking you out right now for your insolence."

Adam: "Well excuse the fuck out of me! I guess I'm supposed to kiss your ass every minute I spend in this so-called "paradise" of yours. If that's what you want, you shouldn't have given me self-respect. But you did. So you know what? Go fuck yourself. I'd rather die on my feet than live on my knees."

Who Should We Blame for the Crimes of a Designed Being?

If you're God and you know in advance that the being you're going to create will malfunction, why create it in the first place?

"God gave humans free will so God is not responsible for our actions!" the Christian says.

Well, isn't that a convenient cop-out! I can easily make the same claim: "I'm not responsible for any deaths my murderous android commits because I gave it free will."

This "free will" defense isn't really an argument at all. It's a cheap evasive trick intended to excuse and cover-up God's piss-poor job of designing Adam and Eve's brains.

13. Hatred of Sexuality is Embedded in Our Vocabulary

It's normal for words to mean more than one thing in a language. However, when meanings are slanted towards a certain point of view, the culture's values become evident. For example, if there is a language in which a word means both "homosexual" and "pedophile", chances are the culture where this double meaning arose is not friendly towards homosexuals.

Below are some words and phrases that show how religious ethics have woven themselves into our language. Specifically, Christianity's negative attitude towards premarital sex and lust. Definitions were taken from the American Heritage Dictionary.

pure - adj. 1. Free of dirt, defilement, or pollution. 2. Chaste; virgin.

chaste - adj. 1. Morally pure in thought or conduct; decent and modest. 2. Not having experienced sexual intercourse.

virtue - n. 1. Moral excellence and righteousness; goodness. 2. Chastity, especially in a girl or woman.

virgin - adj. 1. Not having experienced sexual intercourse. 2. Being in a pure or natural state; unsullied.

unclean - adj. 1. Foul or dirty. 2. Morally defiled; unchaste.

These definitions imply that virgins are clean, good, moral, and decent whereas non-virgins are dirty, immoral, filthy, and polluted.

honor - n. 1. Principled uprightness of character; personal integrity. 2. A woman's chastity or reputation for chastity

Note that the definition is gender-specific: only a woman's chastity is mentioned. So apparently men can be man-whores and their honor and reputation will not suffer.

"losing one's virginity" - This phrase implies that something bad has happened. When we lose something, generally it's not a good thing. Losing a wallet, a purse, a bet, a race, a legal right, etc. is always bad because losing is bad. So apparently it's bad to lose one's virginity. But why is virginity valued in the first place?

obscene - adj. 1. Inciting lustful feelings; lewd. 2. Offensive or repulsive to the senses; loathsome.

Supposedly, sexual desire (lust) is on par with things "offensive or repulsive to the senses". In reality, nothing could be further from the truth. Sexual desire is the exact opposite of being repulsive; it is a naturally pleasurable sensation and it's experienced by all normal healthy adults. It takes a decade of religious brainwashing to turn an otherwise healthy young adult into one who associates immorality, dirtiness, sin, and wrongness with sex or lust.

slut & whore - These are derogatory terms for a woman whose only "crime" is being sexually promiscuous or even dressing in a sexually appealing way. The fact that there's no analogous offensive term for men betrays the words' misogynistic origins. There are a couple of words for sexually promiscuous men but they lack any negative connotations. On the contrary, the words "playboy" and "player" have some prestige and machismo attached to them. Yet when it comes to a woman's respect and honor, sexual promiscuity is seen as one of the worst sins she can commit.

a father giving his daughter away to the groom at a wedding - This comes from a time when women were seen as property, like cattle. The phrase "give away" is not a metaphor for something poetic or romantic. Since daughters were viewed as the personal property of the father, he could literally give his daughter away to the groom, much like one gives away a table or goat or some other personal possession. In return, the father expected money or some other form of compensation for parting with his "property". The bride was not asked whether she wanted to get married and she

was, of course, expected to be a virgin on her wedding day. Not surprisingly, the groom's virginity was not even a subject of interest.

succubus - A female demon that descends upon a man and has sexual intercourse with him in his sleep.

Question: Why does this supernatural being have to be an evil one? Why don't female angels descend upon men and have sex with them? Apparently it's because sex is dirty, evil, sinful, wrong, immoral, impure, wicked, and any other negative adjective you can think of.

The moral judgments embedded in our language keep hammering the same point over and over: Sex and lust are bad, virginity is good. Why is that? It has nothing to do with spreading STDs or having children out of wedlock. If a sexually promiscuous woman is disease free and avoids pregnancy, public opinion of her will still be in the gutter. It's the sex itself that is seen as dishonorable and wicked and sinful. Why are religious authorities and their imagined God so obsessed with the prohibition of sex?

Some Christians will say "God created sex to increase intimacy between a man and his wife." Okay, so then the obvious question is "Why is it wrong for unmarried couples to increase their intimacy via sex?" Well... "Because it's a sin! Because God forbids it! Because they're not married! Because blah blah blah" and thanks to circular reasoning we're back to asking why it's a sin in the first place.

The premise in all this is that God actually exists. If we dispense with God and adopt an atheistic point of view, everything becomes clear: A person with a guilty conscience is easier to control than a person with a clear conscience. A person who is ashamed and thus has low self-esteem is easier to manipulate than one who is confident and has high self-esteem. People with feelings of guilt

and low self-esteem are also more likely to donate generously in Church so as to "wash" their sins away. Religious authorities know this. So what's the easiest way to get people to lower their opinion of themselves? Tell them that their natural healthy sex drive is sinful and dirty and shameful, and that merely thinking about sex is reason enough to hang your head low and walk around in guilt and shame. Is it any wonder then, that the more religiously conservative someone is, the more sexually repressed they are?

14. Inherited Sin / Original Sin

Imagine two police officers knock on your door and tell you that you're going to spend the next 30 years in a maximum security prison with vicious violent rapists and murderers.

"But I didn't do anything wrong!" you protest.

"Yes, we're aware of that," says one of the officers. "You have no criminal record because you've been a model citizen your entire life. However, we've just discovered evidence that 80 years ago your great-grandfather robbed a bank and killed a bank teller during the robbery. You have inherited the sin of his crime so now you must pay for it in much the same way that you've inherited the sin of Adam and Eve. We're just following God's example of proper punishment."

I'm surprised that I have to provide an explanation for why the idea of inherited sin is wrong, bad, immoral, unfair, and irrational. It's like having to explain why stabbing random strangers in a grocery store is immoral. It's so commonsensical to me that I have a hard time believing that it's not commonsensical to others. For the sake of argument, I will assume that the God of the Christian Bible exists. Of course he doesn't, but even if he did, the idea of inherited sin would still be wrong.

According to Christianity, the reason we don't currently live in eternal paradise in the Garden of Eden is because of Original Sin also known as Inherited Sin. Adam and Eve ate a forbidden fruit from the Tree of Knowledge at the coaxing of Satan incarnate and this made God so mad that he decided to kick them out of the Garden forever, along with all their descendants.

Why did God even bother planting that tree in Eden if he didn't want Adam and Eve eating from it? What, just to test them? Why bother testing someone if you're omniscient and you already know the outcome of all tests? The purpose of a test is to find out

something you didn't know before. If you know what the outcome of the test will be, the test is pointless.

Obviously Adam and Eve fail the test because their free will wasn't up to par. So what does God do? Instead of blaming himself for doing a piss-poor job of designing the human mind, God has a temper tantrum and evicts Adam and Eve from the Garden forever. Yeah, that makes perfect sense: "Let me create a living being and when this being malfunctions, I'll punish it." Any idiot with half a brain would blame himself for the screw-up, but not God. Apparently God's ego is so huge that he can't imagine himself screwing up. Talk about having a God complex! He's the apotheosis of conceit and narcissism.

So after all that is over with, for some mysterious reason God decides to punish Adam and Eve's relatives as well. Apparently, sin can be inherited, like hair and skin color. The definition of sin in the religious sense is "the deliberate disobedience to the known will of God." Sin is not a genetically-encoded attribute, it's an action or lack of action. How can this possibly be inherited? It can't. Yet everyone on Earth is still punished for Adam and Eve's disobedience. Why should we be punished for something our distant relatives did thousands of years ago? How is it any different from throwing you in prison because your great-grandpa was a criminal?

The purpose of punishment is twofold: First, it's to provide negative reinforcement so as to discourage the offender from repeating the offense. Second, it's to serve as an example to others so they can learn from the offender's mistake and hopefully refrain from repeating it. Neither of those applies to inherited sin. What offense have new-born infants committed? None. Despite their innocence, they are still punished by this "original sin" nonsense. Did they ever disobey God? No. Did they eat any forbidden fruits?

No. So then why are they are still punished? What crime have they committed to deserve punishment?

Any rational person would think it lunacy to punish the children of a criminal for his crimes but God is infinitely more insane and unjust because he punishes not just the children, but *everyone on the planet, in perpetuity*. Billions of people are punished with a lifetime of work followed by death. Why? Because a magic talking snake convinced a woman to eat a bad fruit. Yeah, that makes perfect sense.

No civilized society* on the planet punishes innocent people for the crimes of their ancestors because everyone's common sense protests against it. Such a punishment would be irrational, immoral, unfair, and just down-right stupid yet God sees nothing wrong with it. What more evidence do we need that the Christian God is a work of fiction invented by primitive unenlightened people who were neither wise nor moral?

*North Korea is known to punish the families of people who manage to escape the country, but it is certainly not a “civilized society”. It’s essentially a giant gulag, a country-sized prison complete with barbed wire and guards who shoot people trying to escape.

15. Jesus & His So-Called "Sacrifice"

For the sake of argument, I will assume that the Bible's account of Jesus is correct.

Christians love to talk about Jesus and how he died on the cross for our sins. He supposedly made the ultimate sacrifice... he gave his life. But is it really a sacrifice when you consider that Jesus was only dead for three days? How is that a sacrifice? Jesus didn't give his life, he gave only three days of his life in exchange for eternal bliss in Paradise as King of Kings. He could have easily had the following thoughts before he chose to die on the cross: "So let me get this right, I'm going to be dead for just three days, after which I'll be resurrected and sent to Heaven, where I'll spend eternity in Paradise and be loved and worshiped by millions of people? Um okay... I'll do it." Heck, who wouldn't sign up for that?

It's very misleading to say that Jesus gave his life or that he died for our sins because when humans think of death, we think of the permanent and irreversible termination of life. That is not what Jesus volunteered for. He only volunteered to be dead for three days. That makes a huge difference regarding what he actually sacrificed.

Imagine you are twenty years old and someone asks you "Would you be willing to sit in a solitary prison cell for the rest of your life in exchange for ten million dollars?" Obviously you would refuse. Now imagine they say "Actually, your confinement will last only three days, after which you'll be released and paid." Suddenly the offer seems a lot more appealing.

This is exactly the case with the so-called "sacrifice" of Jesus. People believe that sacrificing your life for something is a serious, significant thing. The only reason people believe this is because death is understood to be permanent. If death were easily

reversible, it would cease to be a big deal. Death would be seen as a trivial nuisance, and giving your life for some cause wouldn't be a sacrifice at all since you would get your life back in just a few days.

To sum up: it's not much of a sacrifice to give your life for something when you know in advance that you'll get your life back in just three days along with the very generous reward of eternity in Paradise.

16. Killing and Torturing Ethically

Aside from justified self-defense, here are some other valid reasons to hurt and kill people:

When is it ethical to humiliate, hurt, and initiate violence?

Answer: When the so-called "victim" is a consenting adult. Whether it's a movie stuntman being deliberately hit by a car or a masochist who likes being whipped and humiliated, as long as all parties involved are consenting adults, it's okay in my book.

When is it ethical to kill the innocent for money?

Answer: When they are sick and wish to die. If a person has some horrible disease and in a sober state of mind they choose to die, I think it is ethical to mercy kill that person and even charge for this service. I would prefer a waiting period of a few days to make sure the person didn't make a hasty decision in a bout of depression, but I see no reason to make someone suffer needlessly for months or years when they prefer a painless, peaceful death. I fully support euthanasia.

If the person wishing death happens to be healthy, then I am undecided. On the one hand, I think adults should have the right to do anything they want to their bodies, including self-destruction. However, there comes a point where the individual's mental health must be considered. If someone wants to blow their brains out because they lost \$20 in a hand of poker, I would physically stop such an individual if I could and give them time to think it over.

When is it ethical to rob someone at gunpoint and shoot them dead if they resist?

Answer: When they rob me first. Suppose some random hoodlum points a gun at me and demands my wallet, which I surrender immediately. He takes out the money and throws the wallet on the ground and walks away. I immediately go to my car and get a

revolver. Now I am armed and I see the person who just robbed me. In his hands he's holding the cash he took out of my wallet. I have the moral right to point my gun at this person and rob him of that cash. If he draws a weapon in self-defense, I will shoot him dead and wring the wad of cash from his dead hand.

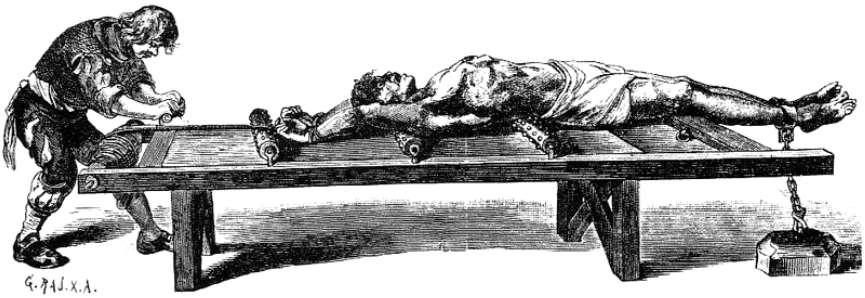
When is it ethical to torture someone?

The following are premises in my hypothetical: It is known with 100% certainty that a person in custody has planted a bomb in some public place and it will explode in a matter of hours. He gladly admits that he planted the bomb, but instead of telling us where it is, he talks about all the blood, flying body parts, and dead people his bomb will produce and the joy this will bring him.

At first I would try reasoning with him. I'd call in expert negotiators and criminal psychologists and do everything possible to get him to reveal the location of the bomb. If that failed, I would recommend drug-assisted interrogation with a military-grade truth agent such as thiopental sodium or MDMA. If those humane methods also failed, the only rational course of action at that point would be physical torture. Even then, I would begin with torture that would not cause permanent damage because the goal here is not to inflict injury but to motivate the individual to cooperate. Water boarding seems to cause great physical discomfort with no permanent damage so I'd begin with that.

More Intense Torture

On a TV show about medieval torture devices used by the Spanish Inquisition, I remember hearing that no matter how principled and courageous a person was and no matter how devoted to his religion or cause he happened to be, absolutely *no one* was able to withstand The Rack. The subject's feet were tied to a fixed location



“The Rack” medieval torture device

and the wrists were tied to a crank shaft. When the torture technician turned the crank, the device stretched every tendon, ligament, and joint in the body, causing unbearable, excruciating agony. Essentially the person was slowly ripped apart. While revising this device, the inventor decided to add a ratchet to the crank, allowing the stretching mechanism to be locked in place. This caused the subject to remain in the stretched position for however long the Inquisitor wanted: minutes, hours, or perhaps even overnight.

Sometimes the soon-to-be victims were in a torture queue. Those who were next saw exactly what was in store for them. Merely watching someone get the treatment and hearing their cries of anguish was enough for some people to confess on the spot. Those who thought themselves strong *always* confessed when it was their turn on The Rack. They confessed to crimes they did not commit, to being witches and servants of Satan, they involved innocent people in plots against The Church, etc. They agreed and confessed to absolutely anything just to stop the torture. In essence, this device was effective at breaking people, both physically and psychologically.

I would approve the use of such a device only if all previous humane methods failed but most importantly, if it is known with *absolute certainty* that the person being interrogated planted a live bomb in some public place so as to kill many innocent people. If

there is even the slightest chance that the wrong person is in custody, then torture of any kind is immoral and not to be used.

The torture is morally justified because it is voluntary. The subject can end the torture at any time by revealing the location of the bomb.

Since it's impossible to be sure that a given individual has the information you want, my approval of torture is largely hypothetical.

In the movie "The Cell" (2000), a serial killer kidnaps a woman and puts her in a device with a timer that will kill her in several hours. If this serial killer were captured and he were conscious and able to communicate, I would approve any and all forms of torture to get him to reveal the location of the victim so that her life could be saved.

Again, the torture is morally justified because it is voluntary. The serial killer can end the torture at any time by revealing the location of the victim.

17. Lying

When is it okay to lie to yourself? Never.

When is it okay to lie to others? That depends on the motive. Is it for personal gain? Is it to protect yourself or someone else from danger? Or to spare someone's feelings? Or to play a practical joke on someone? These things matter which is why "Thou Shalt Not Lie nor Bear False Witness" fails as a moral instruction. It's a one-size-fits-all, all-or-nothing commandment that doesn't take circumstances into account. As I'll show later, in some cases lying is not only socially permitted, but required.

Bearing false witness: Not too many cases come to mind that justify bearing false witness. I suppose if a dangerous criminal were about to exploit a legal loophole and go free, bearing false witness would be morally justified. For example: a rapist & murderer is apprehended but because of a police blunder, the strongest incriminating evidence becomes inadmissible in court because it was obtained without a search warrant. As a result, all criminal charges are dropped against the suspect despite mountains of evidence, including DNA and videos the rapist made himself, that prove beyond a shadow of a doubt that the accused is guilty. So basically, he'll be set free to rape & kill again because of a malfunction in the legal system. At this point I think it would be ethical to lie in court under oath, plant evidence, and forge signatures on legal documents in order to keep the criminal incarcerated. Bear false witness to your heart's content! We shouldn't release a violent murderous psychopath into society merely because a cop screwed up. Ideally, we'd get Dexter to handle the situation :-)

Lying to spare someone's feelings: Generally, I'm opposed to this. The classic example is lying to a female friend or significant other who asks "Does this dress make me look fat?" or "Do I look good in this dress?" I have to assume that she wants me to answer

honestly, because if not, why did she even ask the question? If I think the dress looks ugly or silly, I will tell her so but in a polite, sensitive manner. I would rather she be upset and not wear the dress than proudly walk around in a foolish outfit that people secretly mock behind her back.

A hypothetical case where I think it's ethical to lie for the sake of someone's emotional comfort is as follows: I am visiting an elderly woman who is on her death bed, dying of some incurable disease. The hope of recovery is zero. Death is expected any day but a week at most. I've just learned minutes ago that her adult son was murdered last night while being robbed. The elderly woman is completely unaware and in the course of our conversation casually asks "So how's my little boy doing? Did he get that promotion at work?" Now, what possible good can come of telling this dying woman the truth? If I'm honest, she will die in emotional agony and misery instead of peace. In this particular case, I think it is ethical to lie and say that her son is fine and got the promotion.

Lying for personal gain or profit: This is the realm of psychics, astrologers, televangelists and other swindlers who bilk unsuspecting people out of their hard-earned cash. Obviously that's bad and immoral and wrong and all that, but it is possible to lie for personal gain without doing anything immoral. Almost everyone does it during a job interview or on a resume. For example, you're applying for a dream job and you meet the requirements: You're educated, knowledgeable, responsible, hard-working, and experienced. You're fully qualified except... applicants with less than 5 years of experience will not be considered and you have 4.5 years. I don't see anything wrong with lying in such a case and claiming that you have 5.

Lying to children: A budding young artist labors for hours to paint an abstract picture. He proudly presents it as his greatest artistic achievement and asks me "Do you like it?" It just so happens that I

don't like it. In fact, I think it's hideously repulsive. At this point I have three choices: I can lie, I can tell the truth, or I can evade the question by asking a question in return or by giving an answer like "My opinion shouldn't matter." In this particular case I'm against evasion because I'd be doing the child a disservice by not providing him with honest feedback which he needs to develop as an artist. If I lie and say that I like his art, the child will act on my feedback and produce more of the same hideous crap with subtle variations. If I say that I don't like it (no matter how gently and politely), the child's self-esteem will suffer and his parents will hate me because in our society, we're supposed to praise a child's artistic efforts no matter how little talent they have. So it seems this is a no-win scenario.

What if a 7-year-old girl is thrilled about her new dress and her mother asks me "Doesn't she look pretty?" In my opinion, the dress is not pretty and neither is the girl. What should I do? Chances are, everyone has always lied to this girl about whether she's pretty or not. Most adults consider it cruel to tell a little girl that she's not pretty, even if she really isn't. So her entire life, she's heard nothing but praise about her appearance. Should I participate in the lies? Or should I be the bad guy that ruins her day with honesty? It seems that in certain situations such as this, lying is not only socially permitted, but expected and required. In fact, being honest in a case like this would be a major faux pas. To further complicate things, imagine that it's the girl's birthday and she's surrounded by friends and relatives. I'm put on the spot in front of everyone to give my opinion of her new dress, which she just got from her mother as a birthday present. I pretty much *have* to lie.

When is it okay to lie to your own children? Most parents would say "When it's for their own good" but parents who say this assume that their lies will result in good. Unfortunately, this is not always the case. Real-life example: A number of children go blind during every solar eclipse because of their parents' over-protectiveness.

They lie to their children, hoping to scare them with words like "Don't ever look at the sun no matter what. You can watch the eclipse on TV but it is never safe to look at the sun with your own eyes. If you do, you'll go blind!" The child initially believes this but then sees a group of adults looking at the sun through sunglasses for several minutes. So the child reasons "Dad said it's never safe to look at the sun but those grown-ups are watching the eclipse with their eyes and they're fine. I guess dad didn't know that it's safe as long as you're wearing sunglasses."

The child finds a pair of sunglasses, puts them on and stares at the sun for two minutes. He winds up with permanent retinal burns and near-complete blindness. It turns out the adults he saw were using special sunglasses that were made expressly for the purpose of looking at the sun. Ordinary sunglasses don't block enough infrared light. Since the retina has no pain receptors the child cooked his eyes without even realizing it.

So even well-intentioned lies can backfire and cause the very problem a parent was hoping to avoid. If only the parent had been honest and admitted that there are safe ways of watching an eclipse with your eyes, the child may have opted for one of those safe ways and his eyes would be unharmed.

18. Marijuana Legalization Sociopathy

In my experience advocates of recreational marijuana usually want it legalized for sociopathic reasons. I say this because their arguments often go something like this: "Legalizing marijuana is a good idea because it will generate lots of tax revenue for the State. Also, it will reduce government spending on incarcerating drug offenders, thus saving billions of tax dollars. Marijuana should definitely be legalized and taxed not only to save tax dollars but also to earn tax dollars for the State. I say we regulate and tax marijuana. Marijuana should definitely be legalized and taxed. Also, the State should tax marijuana."

Marijuana advocates are the only people who constantly demand to be taxed. I don't understand why they have this lust for self-taxation. They're obsessed with it. One can hardly read a pro-legalization article without hearing about how much revenue the government will collect via taxation. Hey here's a thought: How about we legalize marijuana and *not* tax it? Prostitution advocates don't demand to be taxed. Gun advocates don't demand to be taxed. Abortion advocates don't demand to be taxed. Gay marriage advocates don't demand to be taxed. Yet pro-marijuana people almost always do. I find this self-tax obsession puzzling.

Saying that marijuana should be legalized because it will generate tax revenue for the State is like saying "Jews shouldn't be gassed and incinerated by the millions because it is more profitable to use those ovens for baking pizza." Oh really? Is *that* why people shouldn't be systematically butchered and shoved into ovens? Because it's more profitable to do otherwise? Or how about this: "Little girls should not be fed to alligators because alligators do better on a diet of beef and chicken." To offer that as a serious argument for why children should not be ripped apart by wild animals is sociopathic. It completely shoves aside the most basic

principle of morality: concern for the welfare of fellow human beings.

The primary reason recreational marijuana should be legalized is to stop the government from destroying the lives and families of non-violent drug offenders. Any reasons for legalization that have to do with tax revenue are sociopathic in motive and trivial by comparison.

Thousands of non-violent people who have hurt no one are currently rotting in prison cages. Their so-called "crime"? Intent to sell or distribute a plant that induces relaxation, pain relief, and mild euphoria. How can this possibly be a punishable crime in a civilized society? If there is any harm in consuming marijuana, that risk is for the consumer to weigh and deal with, not the government. Skydiving is dangerous, rock-climbing without ropes is dangerous, scuba diving is dangerous. Why is the government not banning those things to protect the public? Buying or selling marijuana in quantity will likely earn you years of prison time. Why is a person thrown in prison merely for engaging in a voluntary, peaceful business transaction with another adult? It's not like he's buying or selling explosives, weapons, or something else designed to cause malicious harm.

When someone is thrown in prison, not only is his liberty taken away but he's housed with the worst people of society. A peaceful, honest, non-violent individual essentially has his life ruined by incarceration. He is ripped away from his family and housed with rapists, gang-members, violent felons, and murderers. His children become fatherless and his significant other is suddenly alone. Furthermore, he can't work to pay his bills, and if he can't pay his bills, his finances are ruined and his house gets taken away. The financial and emotional health of the entire family is ruined and permanently damaged. And for what? For the "crime" of wanting

to feel good by getting high. The insanity of marijuana prohibition is appalling.

Cartel and street dealer drug violence associated with marijuana's black market has left a mountain of corpses in its wake. Drug prohibition in general is the modern-day version of witch hunts and slavery. If I could have my way, I would legalize all recreational drugs and let all non-violent drug offenders out of prison. Defund the DEA and use that money to fund rehab clinics to help people hooked on things like heroin, cocaine, and meth.

Recreational Marijuana Prohibition

People who want to keep recreational marijuana illegal necessarily belong to one of two groups:

1. Deluded, confused, or misinformed people. 2. Immoral people. There is no third possibility that I am aware of. Ordinary citizens such as soccer moms, religious folks and the elderly usually fall into category 1 whereas lobbyists, politicians, prison union officials, law-makers, and pharmaceutical company CEOs fall into the other one. If one attempts to reason with an individual from category 2, obviously they won't admit to having immoral motives. They will inevitably pretend to be from category 1 and claim that marijuana is very dangerous, harmful and often leads to harder drugs, but they know otherwise.

19. Legal Marriage

In my ideal world, gay men will not have the legal right to marry. Neither will lesbians, bisexuals, nor transgendered people. That's not discriminatory at all because in my ideal world heterosexuals will not be able to legally marry either. Legal marriages will not exist. I think the idea of a legal marriage is ridiculous. Why is the government sticking its nose in people's private, personal relationships? What's next... a legal friendship? I'll have to register my friends somewhere?

I'm well aware of the origin of marriage. Its roots are not in romance but in conformity to social mores. It tied families together and legitimized the couple's children. Children born out of wedlock were considered bastards who were the shame of the town. Speaking of which... wasn't Jesus born out of wedlock? Why isn't he seen as an illegitimate child, aka a bastard? Did Mary ask to be impregnated? No. That means God raped her, which means baby Jesus was an illegitimate bastard rape baby. Are Christians aware of this? But I digress...

Why should only spouses get benefits?

I don't understand why people want the government's stamp of approval on their relationship. Is it just for the tax breaks? And why is the government meddling in people's romantic relationships in the first place? It's none of the government's business who someone chooses to live with, have kids with, and spend their life with. What if John wants to live in a three-way relationship with Susan and Jenny? And suppose the three of them want to adopt a child, or they want the tax breaks that normal married couples get. Why should they be excluded from this just because their union doesn't conform to someone else's ideal of one man and one woman? To be fair to all, we have to legalize not only gay marriage, but polygamous marriage as well. Why is this unacceptable? A better question is, in whose opinion is this

unacceptable and why does that person get to decide how John, Susan, Jenny, and their adopted children live out their lives? As long as a child is given food, clothing, and shelter in a safe, caring, loving environment, anyone should be able to adopt him/her.

A person should be able to transfer all the legal benefits associated with marriage to anyone he wishes, or to no one at all. The fact that marriage has any legal benefits to begin with is absurd and irrational. The two should have nothing to do with each other. Just as the State should stay out of religion, it should also stay out of the private lives of consenting adults.

Tax breaks for married couples: Why does the State reward someone just because they were lucky enough to find someone they can marry? What about people who cannot find a life partner? Too bad, I guess. The guy who happens to meet his wife via dumb luck (on a bus) gets tax breaks for the rest of this life. But the guy who wasn't lucky enough to meet someone... he doesn't get tax breaks. So whether you get tax breaks or not depends on dumb luck. Is that really how the government should decide such things?

Also, why do State adoption agencies care whether a couple is married or not? Nothing magical happens when they wed. Their ability to care for children or interact with each other does not magically improve just because they sign a piece of paper.

Marriage fails more often than not

Almost half of all first marriages in the United States fail. The divorce rate is currently 41% (Source: divorcerate.org). Of the 59% that stay married, most of them stay together only because of children, finances, religious beliefs, tradition, peer & parental pressure, shame of divorce, or something like that. If the only thing keeping a couple together is the inconvenience of divorce, then romantically-speaking their marriage has already failed. This

means that as far as healthy relationships go, the majority of marriages fail. Why then, do people continue to get married?

It is irrational to promise to spend the rest of your life with someone. Sure you may like them now, but will you like them years later? My girlfriend likes me now, but what if ten years from now I turn into a violent, abusive, cheating, lying alcoholic? I guess she has to spend the rest of her life living with this horror of a human being because she promised to. Right? Wrong! You should only stay with someone because they make you happy and because you want to be with them, not because you repeated some priest's scripted words many years ago.

According to marital vows, a woman has to stay with her husband even if he goes completely insane and kills random strangers for no reason. "Till Death Do Us Part" means only their death can separate them, which means she has to stay married to him even when he's incarcerated. Realistically of course, she'll get a divorce and everyone will support her in that decision, but that means she'll have broken her marital vows. So what good are marital vows if they can be broken with both legal and social approval? And what good is a marriage if you can have the whole thing annulled the next day? What non-legal benefits does marriage give a couple that they didn't have before? A life-long commitment? As I said, making a life-long commitment to someone is irrational, as evidenced by the high divorce rate.

20. Morals & Rights

First, a rant:

It never ceases to amaze me when religious people claim that morals come from God. "How do you know right from wrong if you don't believe in God?" they ask. "What stops you from robbing and murdering people?". I always want to ask in return: "Do you refrain from robbing and murdering innocent people only because God forbids it? If God approved of it, would you do it? God approves of slavery in the Bible (Ephesians 6:5). Do you approve of slavery? God approves of rape (Deuteronomy 22:28-29). Do you approve of rape? No? Why not? Are you saying you disagree with God on the morality of slavery and rape? How dare you contradict God! On your knees, sinner!"

What is morality?

I agree with Google's definition:

morality (*noun*) 1. Principles concerning the distinction between right and wrong or good and bad behavior.

Where do morals come from?

I don't really know but my guess is that morals come from a combination of *reason* and *sympathy*.

Almost everyone on the planet dislikes being the victim of theft, robbery, assault, injury, rape, confinement, humiliation, and deceit. If we do those things to someone, we'll hurt them somehow. The understanding that our actions can cause people to suffer combined with our emotion of sympathy gives us the basis of morality. It's what makes the idea of hurting someone repulsive. Those who have no conscience, such as sociopaths and psychopaths, are immoral to their cores because they are missing a critical component of morality: the ability to feel compassion and guilt.

Why do people knowingly do immoral things?

The short answer is apathy. They don't care if they cause others discomfort, pain, or loss.

The main reason people do immoral things is because the immoral act quickly and efficiently satisfies their needs. It's a lot more efficient to steal other people's stuff than to spend time and energy working for it yourself. It's more efficient to drive off than to call the police and ambulance after you've accidentally hit a pedestrian. And if you want to cheat on your spouse, it's easier to give in to temptation than to go through a lengthy, stressful, costly divorce before pursuing other romantic interests. Dr. Freud's terms of id and superego apply here. The id is selfish, primitive, and utterly immoral. The id has no regard for anyone else and drives behavior that satisfies immediate needs. This is where our impulse to be immoral comes from. Our superego, however, is where our morality and social conditioning resides. The superego censors the id's impulsive nature by permitting only socially-acceptable behavior. Those without a well-developed superego succumb to the id's temptations and wind up committing immoral acts.

Objective Morality vs. Subjective Morality

Despite the near-universality of basic morals, they remain nothing more than a collection of preferences, opinions, and ideas that tell us how we should behave. We believe it's wrong to murder and steal because we wouldn't like it if those things were done to us. We believe it's okay to shake someone's hand when we first meet them because we don't have a problem when someone does it to us. But what if someone takes great offense at any attempt at physical contact? Or... what if someone doesn't mind if you steal from them? Or punch them in the face? Such people do exist... they enjoy being humiliated, violated, and physically abused. In their opinion, it is not immoral to do those things. So although our morality is natural, meaning it evolved over time as a social

lubricant, it is not objective by any means. No one can prove that murder is immoral because morality is based on opinions and preferences which are inherently subjective. Therefore, objective morals not only do not, but *cannot* exist.

Evolution of Morality

For thousands of years, prehistoric humans who perpetrated violence or theft were either driven out of the tribe or killed. The ones who remained were less inclined towards violence and other anti-social behavior. Eventually, after many generations of this selective breeding, the people who remained in the tribe were more suited to living in harmony with their neighbors. It's a classic case of survival of the fittest, only in this case "fittest" refers not to physical fitness but to how well an individual fits into society. The same can be done with dogs or cats to breed out the aggressive ones.

A society where violent crimes are socially permitted will tear itself apart very quickly, which explains why there are no such societies anywhere in the world. If any have existed, they've self-destructed. But chances are, indiscriminately violent people would've never coalesced into a society in the first place. The societies that survive are ones where public opinion says it's wrong to hurt others without a good reason. This is why murder, assault, theft, and robbery are illegal in every long-lived society on the planet. As our understanding of morality became more complex and the number of people in our tribes increased, we started writing our morals down and prescribing punishments for their violations. These became laws. Eventually people invented the idea of rights to describe what people may and may not legally do.

What are rights?

Rights are a set of privileges granted to people by the authorities. A right is a promise by authorities to not harm you in any way if

you do what the right gives you permission to do. For example, in China, you have the right to criticize a dish at a restaurant but you don't have the right to criticize the government. In the US, you have the right to criticize the government but you don't have the right to kill gays or Jews. In Taliban-controlled regions of Afghanistan, you have the right to kill gays and Jews but you don't have the right to criticize Islam. Rights vary from place to place because they are man-made and granted by whoever is in charge.

People often speak of rights-violations by oppressive regimes, but technically there's no such thing. If I'm in Afghanistan and the Taliban executes me for not praying, they will not be violating my rights. If I am imprisoned and beaten in North Korea for not bowing to a statue of Kim Jong Il, North Korean authorities will not be violating my rights. And when the Nazis robbed, tortured, and killed Jews by the millions, they did not violate the rights of a single Jew. How can this be? Because under the Taliban's rule, I have no right to freedom of religion. Under North Korean rule, I have no right to walk past a statue of Kim Jong Il without bowing to it. And under Nazi rule, Jews had no rights at all. How can non-existent rights be violated? They can't. Therefore, governments and dictators generally never violate anyone's rights.

Where do rights come from?

In the United States Declaration of Independence, the Founding Fathers spoke of "unalienable rights" that are given to us by our "Creator". One sentence later, they contradict themselves. They say "to secure these rights, Governments are..." Wait a minute, why would unalienable rights need securing? They're unalienable! That means they cannot be taken away. If something cannot be taken away... why does it need to be secured? Clearly, the Founding Fathers meant rights *should* not be taken away. All rights are alienable. Throughout history plenty of people have had their rights taken away for no good reason.

The Founding Fathers also said those unalienable rights come from our Creator. Obviously I don't believe in a Creator so I don't believe in Creator-given rights. As far as natural rights go... there's no such thing. How can rights be natural when humans invented the very idea of "rights"? It's like saying chess or prison are natural.

Rights are completely artificial because first and foremost, rights are ideas created by the human mind and anything that is a deliberate product of the human mind is, by definition, artificial. If there are no natural human rights, that leaves only legal rights. Therefore, all rights are legal rights, and legal rights come from political authorities. In short, rights are granted to us by whoever happens to be in charge, be it a king, a dictator, a government, or an armed militia of religious militants.

Preventative Law vs. Reactionary Law

A good law is not one that describes how the guilty are to be treated. A good law is one that prevents people from becoming victims in the first place. This is why I'm a strong advocate of preventative law. Rather than solving a problem quickly and efficiently, it's better to not have the problem at all.

Consider the following cases: A father allows his 2-year-old son to play with a loaded handgun. A drunk man drives 90 MPH at night on wet roads in heavy fog. A psychotic sniper decides to have some "harmless" fun by shooting imaginary targets a foot above the heads of children on a playground. Should any of those people be punished? If you're an advocate of reactionary law then you cannot say for sure. You have to ask "Are there any victims?" If not, then those are all victimless crimes because no one was hurt and no one intended to hurt anyone. So if we go by reactionary law, no crimes have been committed and no one should be punished. I disagree. I think we should punish irresponsible behavior that needlessly endangers people's lives.

21. Not All Pedophiles Are Bad People

I decided to write this section after realizing that I'm quite fortunate to be a normal heterosexual male. Just think, what if I were gay? I'd have to worry about discrimination from most Christians, the KKK, neo-Nazis, Muslims, and a bunch of other groups, and I'd have to deal with the high rate of HIV infection in the gay community. Quite bad to be sure, but being gay is nothing compared to being a pedophile.

I don't know any pedophiles nor have I had any conversations with them so the following thoughts are all based on my common sense.

When the average person hears "pedophile" they think of a man who sexually abuses or molests children. This is because the only time we ever hear of pedophiles is when they're mentioned in the media and they've done something horrible to a child. The impression people get is that all pedophiles are unethical, bad people who sexually abuse children. I don't think that's correct and I'll explain why, but first let's define the term:

pedophile: 1. An adult who is sexually attracted to children.

Note that the definition says nothing about actually *doing* anything. This means pedophiles can be divided into two groups: ethical and unethical.

Unethical pedophiles leave little room for debate. They act on their desires and sexually abuse children. They are a parent's worst nightmare. In my opinion, they should be quarantined from society via incarceration or possibly even killed depending on the severity of their crime.

Ethical or virtuous pedophiles are people who understand that sexual contact with a child may emotionally traumatize that child for life. For this reason, they live out their entire lives without ever sexually touching a child. They certainly want to, but because

they're moral people, they don't. If an ethical pedophile were to publicly confess to being what he is, most people would want him locked up even though he did nothing wrong. Most people would say "Eventually he'll molest a child, it's only a matter of time. Let's put him away now while we have the chance!"

I disagree. An ethical heterosexual man will not "eventually" rape a woman no matter how badly he wants to have sex. Why? Because he understands that rape is immoral and no amount of horniness will change that. Similarly, an ethical pedophile will not eventually molest a child because he understands that it is immoral. Such a pedophile is not a bad person. He's no more of a threat to children than an ethical heterosexual man is a threat to women.

The average person condemns all pedophiles, but condemning someone merely for wanting something is not rational because we generally cannot control what we want. Our brains are wired to cause sexual arousal when we see whatever it is that turns us on. We can only choose whether to act or not act on our sexual urges, but we certainly can't choose what sexual urges to have.

Closing Notes: Some people can't imagine why I would defend a group of individuals unless I was part of that group. For example, if I support gay rights, they think it's because I'm gay. If I support drug legalization, they assume it's because I want to do drugs. If I argue in favor of legalizing prostitution, they assume it's because I want a prostitute. The reason they assume these things is because they themselves are selfish, narrow-minded people who only defend things that are appealing to them personally. They cannot imagine defending something on pure principle. The problem is, they assume everyone thinks just as they do. If I say "Not all pedophiles are bad" they immediately assume that I am one: "You wouldn't be defending pedophiles unless you were one yourself!"

I hope that you, the reader, are not one of these people.

22. Policemen's and Soldiers' Morality

At the Nuremberg trials of Nazi war criminals, it was correctly decided that "I was just doing my job" is not a legitimate excuse for committing immoral acts. Yet this is the excuse that soldiers and police officers all over the world use to justify their actions. "Our job is not to make or question the law, our job is to enforce the law!" say cops. True, they are in the business of law-enforcement. Meaning, they are required to abandon their morals so they can blindly, slavishly enforce whatever laws politicians pass, no matter how irrational, immoral, idiotic, or nonsensical those laws happen to be.

If a police officer pulls over a vehicle and discovers a pound of marijuana in the trunk of the car, the officer will probably arrest the driver. The officer knows perfectly well that the person he's arresting will likely spend years in prison with rapists, murderers, gang members, and other violent felons where he'll likely get stabbed, beaten, or raped. The officer makes the arrest anyway and mentally defends it with "I'm just doing my job, I'm following orders. We are a nation of laws and he broke the law. If he doesn't want to go to prison, he shouldn't have broken the law!"

Where does it end? What if politicians pass a law that bans the stimulant drug caffeine? Such a law would ban coffee and chocolate since both contain caffeine. This means M&Ms would be illegal as well as yogurt-covered coffee beans. Would police officers arrest people with bags of M&Ms, knowing full well these people will likely serve years of prison time? "Hey, you broke the law. If you don't want to go to prison, don't break the law!" the police officer says.

Suppose politicians ban cholesterol-laden foods on the grounds that such foods lead to heart disease which causes thousands of deaths annually. Will police officers start arresting people who've bought ice cream and pizza?

At what point will an officer say to himself "This law is irrational so I am not going to enforce it. I am not going to arrest this law-breaker because he did nothing wrong. He broke a ridiculous law that shouldn't even be a law in the first place."

Admittedly, police officers are in a difficult position because when they enlist in the police force they swear to uphold all local and state laws even if they personally disagree with such laws. So when they encounter a conflict between the law and their personal morality, they must choose to break either their oath to uphold the law or their moral principles.

23. Pornography & Prostitution

Emotionally Healthy Porn

There are certain types of pornography that I defend without hesitation and other types that I'm undecided about. The type that I defend easily are films or images that show consenting adults happily doing what they're doing. It's what I like to think of as "emotionally healthy" porn. It's where a couple simply does their thing and both of them enjoy it, the way normal healthy sex should be.

So-called "Sexual Objects"

Some feminists claim that the aforementioned porn portrays women as sexual objects. Meaning, attention is directed only at their physical bodies and nothing else. Yes, this is true and the same goes for male actors who are similarly treated. I'm not sure what feminists expect from a porno movie... an immersive plot and Oscar-worthy acting? That's what normal movies are for. Most consumers of pornography are men and men don't care about plot, acting, or character development when they're watching porn. They only care about sex and they'll fast-forward through any acting or dialogue, which is why it's deliberately kept to a minimum.

Anti-Porn Feminists

Just because you personally don't like something doesn't mean it should be banned. If you're an anti-porn feminist, please quit sticking your nose in other people's business. If consenting adults want to do something, *let them*.

Women Want to Exude Sexuality

Unless they're butch lesbians, extremely introverted, or religiously brainwashed as children, most teen girls will strive to be sexually attractive. They'll do everything in their power to heighten their

sex appeal. They apply makeup, put on sexy dresses and skin-tight pants, douse themselves in perfume, read magazines on how to attract guys, learn sexy dance moves, etc. A 15- or 16-year-old girl will often be very upset and even depressed if she's unable to turn heads and get male attention. Magazines like Cosmo and Vogue exist for this reason: to help girls exude more sex appeal and be more successful with the opposite sex. Every issue talks about places to meet guys, how to turn them on, what men like, or something of that nature.

Unrealistic Goals

Some feminists look down on magazines like Cosmo and Vogue because they supposedly teach girls that their self-worth is directly proportional to how sexy they are and what kind of man they have. These magazines, it is claimed, also distort a young woman's self-image. Every page features an absurdly thin air-brushed model with perfect skin, hair, lips, eyes, and bust. The subtle undertone is that this is how women ought to look. With such digitally-altered unrealistic goals, is it any wonder that some girls end up suffering from depression, anorexia nervosa, and low self-esteem?

The feminists who make such claims don't seem to realize that Vogue and Cosmo will not turn an otherwise emotionally healthy girl into one who cries herself to sleep every night because she doesn't look like a supermodel. The women in the magazine are merely ideals to strive for and nowhere does anyone insinuate that unless you look like a model, you are worthless. Having a perfect ideal to strive for is not a bad thing. If a girl strives to be attractive, let the air-brushed models be her ideal even though she will likely never look that good. Similarly, if a man is striving to be a bodybuilder, let Arnold Schwarzenegger be his ideal even though he will likely never be that good. If a woman is striving to be a talk show host, let Oprah be her ideal even though she will

likely never reach that level of fame and success. There is nothing wrong with having an idealized goal.

Playboy

The magazine Playboy is often attacked by anti-porn feminists. This magazine supposedly trains men to be aroused only by big-busted hot young blondes with absurd hip-to-waist ratios. Nonsense! Such an accusation reverses cause and effect. The reason Playboy features such women is because that is what men want. Playboy doesn't dictate to men what kind of women they should find attractive. The reverse is true: Men's sexual preferences dictate to Playboy what kind of women to photograph. Playboy is merely giving men what they want.

Prostitution

The oldest profession should be legal, provided the participants are consenting adults. If it were legal, all pimps would go out of business, as would all street-walkers. No one sells XXX videos on the street, no one stops cars and offers drivers Playboys or Hustlers. Why? Because these things are legal so they are sold in special establishments. If prostitution were legal, there would be special houses for that sort of thing. Women would be assured safety and payment and men would be assured that the women wouldn't rip them off. It's a win-win.

The Dark Side of Pornography and Prostitution

Violent / Humiliation Porn

The type of porn that I'm undecided about is where the actors are consenting adults but they simulate rape, distress, fear, injury, torture, abuse, humiliation, or some other type of physical or emotional violence. On the one hand, they are consenting adults and are thus entitled to do whatever they wish with their bodies. On the other hand, violent porn feeds the sexual appetites of people

who have a taste for that sort of thing, and who knows whether this will drive them to act out their violent fantasies in real life with unwilling victims? An argument in defense of violent porn is that it satisfies the needs and sexual fantasies of people who like that sort of thing so they don't have to act them out in real life with real victims.

Sex-Trafficking

A sex slave is a person, usually a girl or woman, whose "job" it is to get raped and sodomized against her will. She is a prisoner who cannot escape and she's severely beaten or gang-raped if she refuses to do her "job". Some women are also kept strictly as punching bags for use by men who have pent-up anger and frustration against women. These men are free to rape and beat women as viciously as they want, as long as they don't kill her. In my opinion, people who kidnap, buy, sell, knowingly use, or trade sex slaves should be killed without hesitation. The only exceptions are people who buy sex slaves to liberate them. However, this creates a financial incentive for the trafficker to kidnap and enslave more girls.

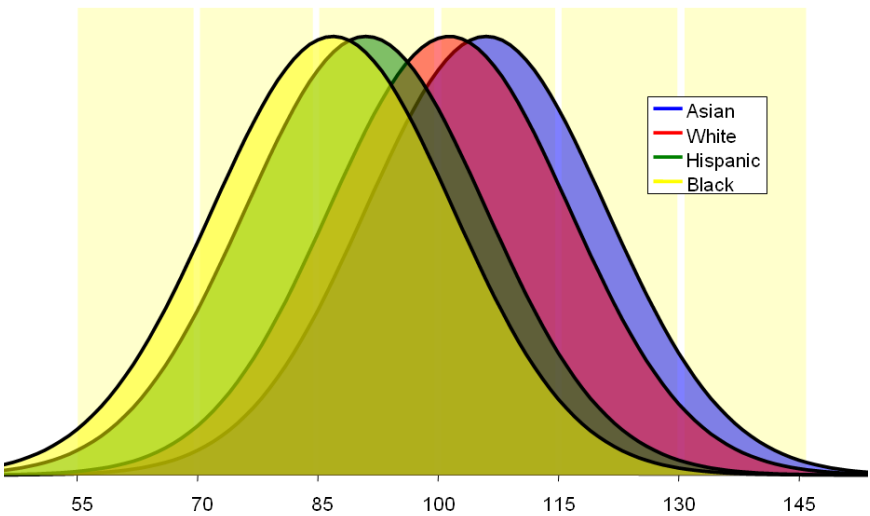
Instead of law enforcement wasting money on stopping prostitution, they should be tracking and killing sex-traffickers and liberating their slaves.

24. Racism

Racist Facts

In our sensitive politically-correct American society, it is improper to say anything that some group may find offensive even if you're merely stating facts. For example: When income and education levels are adjusted for, Asians have the highest IQ, with whites in second place, Hispanics in third, and blacks in last place.

IQ by race



Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Race_IQ_Sketch_OrderFlipped.PNG

Some people will call these statistics "racist" even if the team conducting the IQ study consists of black and Hispanic professional statisticians. If facts of a racial nature are unpleasant to hear, they are automatically labeled "racist" by the people who dislike them. I'm a strong advocate of truth, not political correctness. If certain truths are unpleasant to hear then we must accept them regardless. Silly made-up ideas like souls and heaven continue to exist precisely because some people are unwilling to

deal with the finality and permanence of death. Such people sacrifice truth for the sake of emotional comfort. With some very rare exceptions, I will always value truth more than emotional comfort no matter how painful that truth may be.

Stereotypes

Stereotypes exist for a reason: because more often than not, they're true. Asians are non-confrontational and do well in school but they are not good drivers. Blacks are good at sports and dancing but they tend to be angered more easily than Asians and they're not as successful academically or financially. Jews are successful academically and financially but they're not very cool. Such observations are usually called "racist" despite the fact that they are usually correct. At this point, you might say "I know a black guy who has a Ph.D in physics and makes \$200,000/year and I know an Asian guy who flunked math twice, so your stereotypes are WRONG!" Such an objection would indicate an ignorance of the meaning of the word "stereotype". Stereotypes are not iron-clad laws that apply to every single person. There will always be exceptions to any patterns in human behavior. Stereotypes are broad generalizations that are *usually* true.

Social Justice Warriors and Other So-Called Anti-Racists

It's ironic that the most vocal anti-racists (Liberals, Social Justice Warriors, Progressives, etc.) support privileges for black people on the basis of race only, which is the textbook definition of racism: being granted special rights or privileges on the basis of race. Privileges such as slavery reparations, financial assistance from the United Negro College Fund, Affirmative Action, "diversity" quotas, preferential university admissions, special government programs that help minorities only (apparently poor black people need a helping hand but poor white people do not). If you want to be treated as an equal, if you want there to be racial color blindness, if you want race to not be a factor when people interact

with you, then do not claim that you deserve special treatment just because you're black. There are plenty of white people who were born into life circumstances as bad as (if not worse than) many black people's circumstances and they don't get any special privileges or handouts. Also, **you don't undo the racial injustices of the past by inflicting more racial injustice on people of the present.** If anything, it will cause more bitterness and tension.

Irrational Racism

Irrational racism is the kind that Martin Luther King Jr. fought against. It's the belief that a certain race is inherently undeserving of certain rights. Hitler was irrationally racist as is the KKK, the Black Panthers, Nation of Islam, and anyone else who believes that all members of a certain race are less deserving of legal rights than another race. There's really not much to say on this subject since it's completely indefensible. I only mention it here to condemn it.

Rational Racism

We humans are not immune to the conditioned responses discovered by physiologist Ivan Pavlov. After repeated negative experiences with members of group X it is perfectly natural for a person to be suspicious of all members of group X. Such suspicion is part of our built-in survival instinct that learns from bad experiences and avoids them in the future. When US troops invaded Vietnam, many of the local villagers were afraid of white men because whenever white men appeared, death and destruction followed. Were these Vietnamese villagers racist? Technically yes but their racism is completely normal and understandable because they've been conditioned by many negative experiences to fear white men. Similarly, if a woman's purse is snatched three times in the course of a year, and each time the thief is a young black male wearing a hooded sweatshirt and baggy pants, chances are she will

be suspicious of all young black males in hooded sweatshirts and baggy pants *even if she herself is black.*

It's no secret that taxi drivers in New York City avoid black male passengers. Even black taxi drivers avoid them. Are black cabbies racist against themselves? I don't think so. It's a simple matter of self-preservation. When a cabbie hears story after story of his fellow coworkers being robbed and murdered by black males, it is perfectly natural for him to become suspicious of all black male passengers even though most of them pose no threat. Again, this is just our natural self-defense instinct at work and this kind of racism is natural, understandable, and forgivable.

When the New York City media is saturated by reports of violent crimes such as murders, robberies, home invasions, assaults, and rapes, and the suspects' faces are on every channel and newspaper, and the overwhelming majority of these suspects turn out to be black, one doesn't have to be a bad person to become racist in such an environment. Negative stereotypes about black men don't just appear out of thin air; they arise from repeated negative experiences. A person who is open-minded and unbiased can move to Brooklyn for a number of years and if he lives in certain neighborhoods, he'll emerge very biased as a direct result of his experiences. This person will become racist through no fault of his own.

Martin Luther King, Jr.

I praise MLK for standing up to white authority and tradition at a time when black people had less rights than dogs (in 1955 dogs with white owners could sit at the front of the bus yet Rosa Parks and other Black people couldn't.) MLK advocated non-violence and equality in his *I Have A Dream* speech, which I support. I suspect he had a self-sacrificial spirit because he started a civil rights revolution and it is well known that people who start

revolutions rarely live to see the fruits of their labor. Mohandas Gandhi and Joan of Arc also come to mind.

"African-American"

The construction of the term "African-American" is as follows: *continent of origin* (dash) *continent of residence*. American blacks originated in Africa and currently live in America so they are African-Americans. To be consistent, Egyptians and Libyans who live in Mexico would also have to be called African-Americans. And I'm no longer white, I'm European-American. Aboriginal people in Saudi-Arabia are Australian-Asians and people from India who live in Colombia are Asian-Americans. Is all this continent naming absolutely necessary?

The Blame Game

There's a great book called "Ten Things You Can't Say In America" by black intellectual [Larry Elder](#). It should be required reading for anyone who has anything to say about the plight of Black Americans. I agree with Mr. Elder's opinions and conclusions. He says that today, the problems that plague the Black community are largely of their own making. The biggest problem is the lack of fathers in the home. For some reason, most black men abandon their kids. As a result, most black children are raised by single mothers (77.3% as of 2015, [source: cis.org](#)). Although racism can sometimes be an obstacle for black people, most of the time it's not. Yet many Blacks use racism as a scapegoat for their failures. Those who live in prison or poverty will likely blame their situation on [systemic racism](#). "The white man is keeping us down!" is their mantra. Why? Because it's emotionally comforting to blame someone else for your failures.

Jews and Blacks

Jews were robbed, enslaved, and butchered by the millions by Nazis, but just a few decades after WW2 they became one of the

most successful and affluent people on the planet. Despite being only 2% of the Earth's population, they've won 20% of Nobel Prizes. They win this intellectually-demanding prize at ten times the rate of all other races on the planet combined [[source: Google](#)]. Why is that? They were *slaves* just 75 years ago. It wasn't even one lifetime ago that they were oppressed, persecuted, humiliated, starved, beaten, tortured, hanged, burned, and gassed by the millions. Yet just twenty years later they became a productive, educated, and financially successful people. Why haven't black people done the same here in the US? Why do they continue to be on the bottom rung of American society academically, financially, and criminally? Is it all white people's fault again? Are evil racist whites keeping black people down via [systemic racism](#)?

Crime

Black people comprise 13% of the US population which means black males are half that or 6.5%. Yet black people are responsible for 52% of all murders and 53% of all robberies in the US ([source: FBI crime statistics, 2017](#)). [Side note: this statistic is often labeled a “Republican talking point” or “White supremacist talking point” by those on the Left, but such labels do nothing to address or disprove the statistic. Attaching negative labels to unpleasant facts does not negate the facts.] The majority of those robberies and murders are committed by men 16-35 years of age, who are 20% of all black males ([source: US Census](#)). This means that young black men, despite being less than 1.5% of the US population, are responsible for more than half of all murders and robberies in the nation, *more than all other races combined*. There is no way to explain this with racist cops or racist laws. Young black males really do commit more violent crime than any other demographic. Poverty and lack of opportunities are not valid explanations either because young white and Asian males in similar financial circumstances do not turn to violent crime at anywhere near the same rates that young black males do. So then

what is the explanation? Why do black males commit so much violent crime and disproportionately fill our prisons?

I live in a mostly white neighborhood and black people here are uncommon. When black people show up to a festival, movie theater, beach, park, concert, etc. they are not bothered. They are treated with respect, like any other person. However, if a white person dares show up to a mostly black event in some city like New York, Atlanta or Baltimore, he will most likely be harassed, racially insulted, threatened or attacked somehow. It seems that the average black person in a black neighborhood is far more aggressively racist and prone to racial violence than the average white person in a white neighborhood.

Slavery

Slavery was alive and well all over the world and especially in Africa long before the white man showed up. When African tribes went to war with each other, the winners usually either ate or enslaved the losers. When white men from the American colonies arrived wanting slaves, they didn't have to chase anyone. They simply went to slave markets run by African blacks. White men bought black slaves from black slave masters who were happy to sell their captives into bondage. Why is this fact conveniently omitted from pop history of the slave trade? [African blacks gladly participated in and profited from slavery in the US.](#) Also, Muslims bought and sold far more African slaves than Europeans and Americans ever did. Why are Muslims and Africans not held accountable for slavery? Why are only whites blamed?

Black Men Being "Hunted" by the Police

There are several absurd lies being perpetuated by the race-baiting Leftist media, such as: It's dangerous to be a black man in the US; the police are hunting and murdering black men for sport; it's

“open season” on black men; if you're black your life is in danger from the police; etc. [This is sheer nonsense](#). More unarmed whites are killed by police than unarmed blacks but for some reason when whites are killed by cops, the media is silent. When blacks are killed by cops, it's on every channel, every newspaper, and every news website. This disproportionate coverage of black deaths by the media skews public opinion of police and fans the flames of racial tension.

The biggest threat to black men is not white people or racist cops, the biggest threat to black men is other black men; they kill each other at over 100 times the rate they are killed by cops. Why is the media largely silent on this? Apparently because black lives matter only when the shooter is white.

"Nigger"

For some reason, many young black males incessantly shower each other with a barrage of "yo nigga, wussup ma nigga, wuss wrong witchu nigga?" etc. If it's a hateful word, one wonders why they use it so much. We don't hear Jews greeting each other with "Shalom, you kike!" Why not? Obviously because that term is offensive. However, the black people who routinely call each other "nigger" somehow managed to turn the word into something neutral, except that's not how they pronounce it. Since those black people have a tendency to not articulate the letter "r" at the end of words, the word comes out as "nigga" which has come to mean "buddy" or "homie" in black urban slang. However, "nigger" remains an offensive insult because that's how white people say it. I specifically say "those" black people instead of just "black people" because I do not want to imply that black people are one monolithic population who are all accepting of such language.

Some will say that context is important. How the word is used is more important than the word itself. Observation: Even when a black man calls another black man "nigga" in a hateful manner, no

one seems to mind. Yet no matter how a white man uses this word it's always considered a bad thing by both races so it seems that context is irrelevant. Even if a white person is merely quoting rap lyrics written by a black man, there will be raised eyebrows and accusations of "racism" right around the corner for daring to utter the n-word. As I mentioned in the "Rants" section, telling someone they are not allowed to do something only because of their race is an excellent example of racism. Both black and white people tend to be racist in this regard because they think it's okay for black people to use the word routinely in a casual manner but even one utterance in proper context by a white person is unforgivable.

A certain definition of "nigger" that I agree with was popularized by black comedian Chris Rock. He has a rant called "[Black people vs. Niggaz](#)" where he unapologetically explains the difference between decent, respectable black people and lazy, ignorant, aggressive, criminally-prone hoodlums, whom he calls "niggaz". I agree with Chris Rock completely and I'm glad black people who think like him exist.

After reading this article, many people would label me racist but truth be told, I don't care what race my friends and neighbors are as long as they're friendly, responsible, well-mannered people.

25. Respecting the Beliefs of Others

I do not respect anyone's religious or supernatural beliefs. Why? Well, it's a simple matter of definitions. "Respect" means "high regard" and "esteem". How can I honestly have high regard for something I believe is untrue? I can't. I can certainly respect *people* who have false beliefs, but I can't respect the beliefs themselves for the simple reason that I cannot respect falsehood.

In short:

Whether I respect a person or not depends on how nice they are.

Whether I respect beliefs or not depends on how true they are.

I'm always puzzled by people who claim to respect the beliefs of others. I want to ask such people the following questions:

- What if someone believes that homosexuals should be put to death? Will you respect this belief? Homosexuality is currently punishable by death under Islam's Sharia law in Iran and Saudi Arabia. Those accused are usually hanged. Please do a Google image search for "Iran homosexuality" for evidence.
- What if someone believes that women who wear nail polish should get their fingers cut off? (Taliban interpretation of Sharia law)
- What if someone believes that if a woman is raped, the proper thing to do is kill her? ("Honor" killings, prevalent in many Islamic countries)
- What if someone believes that if a woman is stabbed by her husband, she obviously deserved it*. Therefore, the husband should not be punished in any way and no investigation into what happened is necessary. It's obviously her fault... she drove him to it.

- What if someone believes that it's okay to marry an 11-year-old girl against her will to a 50-year-old man*? The man can have sex with her whenever he wants, even if she's in tears, bleeding, and begging him to stop. In our culture, this is called pedophilia and forcible child rape. In other cultures, it's called "traditional arranged marriage". Will you respect such a marriage?

At what point will you say "Okay, that's going too far. I do NOT respect those beliefs because they are just too sick and wrong."

*Source: "Child Brides", June 2011 National Geographic.

26. Respect for the Dead

I have no respect for the dead because dead people are not really people; they *were* people. I cannot have respect for something that is barely distinguishable from a rotting chimpanzee carcass.

Biologically, there is not much difference. What separates people from animals is their minds. When a person dies their mind is gone and only the physical non-working tissues are left so what exactly is there left to respect?

The purpose of any good law is to prevent unjust suffering.

Therefore, laws that protect the dead are irrational because the dead are incapable of suffering. However, this does not mean it should be legal to openly piss on a grave in a cemetery because living people will be emotionally hurt by such behavior. Respect for the dead is really done out of respect for the living. Living people do not want to see their loved one's bodies or graves treated in a degrading manner, so to ensure these living relatives are not emotionally hurt, laws against corpse and grave desecration are passed.

So I agree with respecting the dead as long as this is done to avoid hurting living friends and relatives. But respecting the dead for their own sake seems irrational and pointless to me.

27. Slave Masters Weren't Necessarily Bad

Human Slaves

While human slavery as a whole is indefensible, it is possible to be a slave master who is a good person.

Imagine that you are a decent, moral white person living in the early 1600's in English North America. You just got word that your rich uncle died and you inherited his estate. When you arrive at the estate, you see a mansion, cotton fields, and a dozen black slaves hard at work. The entire estate is now under your full control. What do you do? You have several choices:

1) You can free the slaves. If you consider the historical context, you realize this cannot possibly happen because there was no such thing as a "free slave" in North America back then. If you tell your slaves "Stop working. You are all free to leave immediately!", the moment they leave your plantation they will be captured and enslaved once again by whoever finds them.

2) You can let them stay on your property indefinitely. This means they must be fed, housed, and medically cared for like any other person. Where will you get the money to do this? Previously, this was done with money the slaves earned for their master by picking cotton. Since they are no longer working, there are no earnings. You can sell all the land you inherited and use the money to house and feed these former slaves, but consider: they can never leave your plantation for reasons stated in point #1. Also, the money you receive for selling the plantation will eventually run out, and then what? How will you pay for the people living on your property when you're broke?

3) You can ask them to continue working the fields, and use all the money made from their labor for their benefit. But no matter how you improve their working conditions and no matter how well you

treat and feed them, they will still be slaves because they have to work, and they cannot leave.

So if you are a decent moral white person living in the early 1600's in America, the best you can do is be the most benevolent slave master possible. If you can think of a better alternative, contact me and let me know.

Non-Human Slaves

Why is slavery immoral? In my opinion, it's immoral because it forces emotional and/or physical suffering onto innocent people. This means if it can be arranged so that a slave doesn't feel any discomfort, it will be moral to enslave them.

For example, I don't think bees suffer in any way when humans steal their honey, therefore it is moral to do so. In effect, bees are the slaves of humans. It can be difficult to determine whether a given organism is actually suffering and to what extent so there's lots of grey area here. Is it ethical to enslave horses as humans have been doing for thousands of years? I think it depends on how well they're treated. If they are happy and content, why not?

On Creating a Slave-Race: In my experience, almost everyone believes that it is immoral to genetically engineer a slave-race of humanoids for doing dangerous and difficult labor. I disagree. Why not genetically-engineer a being who is the perfect slave? He has no free will and is always ready to do whatever he's told. He'll have no emotions, no hopes, no dreams, no aspirations, no preferences, and he'll be incapable of physical and emotional pain. He'll just be a mindless worker who does what he's told. Why is creating such a being immoral? We already have mechanical robots like this, why is it any less moral to create living biological beings like this?

28. Smoking Bans

Being a non-smoker, I dislike all kinds of smoke. I support smoking bans on public property but not on private property. People who support the ban on smoking in restaurants and other private property often say "I have a right to breathe clean air!" and my response to that is "Where did you get this right? Who gave it to you?"

If you are in someone's private home, do you have the right to breathe non-smoky air? Of course not. You do not have a right to clean air in a place where you have no right to be. If you are a guest in someone's home, you are there only because the homeowner *allows* you to be there, not because you have a right to be there. You have no right nor should you have the right to dictate to the owner of a private establishment how to run their home or how clean the air should be. This includes privately-owned bars, restaurants, stores, shopping malls, etc. The owner of that property has the right to make the rules because it's his property. If someone wants to open a store where customers must be smoking a cigarette to walk in, I have no problem with that. If you don't like the rules in a given store or other privately-owned establishment, then leave. Do not demand that property owners conform to your ideal of how things ought to be. Do you pay the rent there? No. Did you invest your time and labor in starting that business? No. Then who are you to dictate how the business ought to be run? How would you like it if I came onto your private property and started telling you how to run things?

Having said that, I fully support smoking bans in public parks, bus stops, train stations, and other public places where people congregate. All tax payers contribute financially to the existence of public places and as such they should all have the right to enjoy such places free of toxic fumes.

29. Snitching

Most people, especially males, are instinctively opposed to snitching. Snitching or "ratting someone out" is seen as a low, traitorous, despicable act. Anyone with integrity or self-respect will never snitch on someone, or so it is claimed.

First, what is snitching? To snitch means to tell the truth about something questionable or forbidden to authority. Whether it's children snitching on each other to their parents, or informants snitching on criminals to the cops, the idea is that one person exposes the forbidden actions or plans of another to some authority, who will then presumably punish the offender.

I don't think snitching is always bad. For example, a father is at a playground with his children. The father notices a man who is trying to lure the children with candy into a windowless van. What can the father do? He has several choices: He can confront this man and tell him to go away, to which the man can easily respond with "No." The father can physically assault him somehow, at which point the man can call the police and have the father arrested for assault. And finally, the father can call the police and report a suspicious person at a playground, a potential pedophile luring children into his van. In other words, the father can snitch on the man to the cops. Would that be a bad, immoral act? I don't think so. Even a hardened gang-member who has children will agree that reporting this man to police is not a bad thing, yet it is clearly snitching. The reader may suggest a fourth alternative: Tell the man that unless he leaves, police will be called. It's not snitching because it's not done in secret. I think that is a horrible idea because the potential child predator will simply move to another playground. The responsible thing to do is to apprehend this individual, not make him go away. If he goes away, he'll just find some other playground with children to victimize.

What if you overhear a couple of men discussing a plot to fly planes into buildings? Will you snitch on them to the police or will you allow them to carry out their plans? What if you're in a bar and you overhear a man bragging to his buddy about how he raped and murdered a girl for fun? Will you rat this man out to the cops, or will you keep your mouth shut and allow this murderous psychopath to roam about freely in your neighborhood? What if you overhear two boys discussing their plans to shoot up their school? The point is, not all snitching is bad. In fact, I think in certain cases if you *don't* snitch on someone, you'd be committing an immoral act.

When asked "Is snitching a bad thing?" the knee-jerk reaction of most young men is "Hell's yeah! Snitches get stiches cuz they're the lowest form of life!" but I wonder how these men would behave in the scenarios I outlined above.

30. Supernatural Phenomena

The term "supernatural" has no meaning to me. People who believe in the supernatural claim that there exists a realm or world outside of nature. How do they know such a realm exists?

Since faith or an error in reasoning is required to believe in the supernatural, and since I strive to be as rational as possible, it logically follows that I don't believe in anything supernatural. This includes Heaven, Hell, miracles, life after death, souls, spirits, angels, demons, the Devil / Satan / Lucifer, witchcraft, evil spells & curses, Voodoo, psychic powers, ghosts, telepathy, homeopathy, communing with the dead, astrology, numerology, tarot, reincarnation, Feng Shui, dowsing, bio-energy fields, chakras, auras, Chi energy, crystal power, magnetic healing, telekinesis, remote viewing, astral projection, etc. Isn't it amazing how many beliefs people made up? There is absolutely no credible scientific evidence for any of those supernatural beliefs. I would like to be proven wrong in my skepticism and I always look forward to any demonstration of the supernatural.

Without evidence, supernatural experiences are indistinguishable from hallucinations and dreaming. Suppose I tell you "I recently had a psychic experience with tiny magical elves that live on my shoulder." Was I dreaming when I had my so-called experience? Was I hallucinating? Did I have an actual psychic experience? There is no way to tell without evidence. There is plenty of evidence that people dream and hallucinate but there is absolutely no scientific evidence that supernatural phenomena occur or have ever occurred. If such phenomena are real, why are they so elusive and unpredictable and unverifiable? Why are astrology, numerology, and psychic-ology not offered as majors at accredited universities? Is there a huge global conspiracy in academia against them?

For over 50 years (1964-2015) the illusionist-turned-skeptic James Randi has had [a standing offer of \\$1 million](#) to anyone who could prove under laboratory conditions that supernatural phenomena exist. Many self-deluded people applied for the prize but failed to pass even the bare minimum of requirements. Professional scammers such as psychics and “mediums” who supposedly commune with the dead did not apply for the prize because they knew they would be exposed as frauds.

Astrology

The following is an excerpt from an email exchange I had with a believer in astrology. I have expanded my answers for this book.

> astrology, which is essentially mathematical calculations of the solar system placements in the sky

What you've just described, in part, is planetary astronomy. It's a legitimate science that describes and predicts the positions and interactions of celestial bodies in our solar system. Astrology, however, goes a critical step further and claims that those celestial bodies have an effect on human affairs on Earth. What evidence is there to support this claim? It's like studying chimps in Africa and claiming that their behavior affects volcanic eruptions in Hawaii. There is no rational reason to link the two.

You may have noticed that no accredited university offers academic classes in astrology. By "academic classes" I mean classes that count towards a degree such as a Bachelor's or Master's. Is there a global conspiracy in all of academia against psychics and astrologers? Is there a huge cover-up? I doubt it. Please name one science professor at any accredited university who accepts astrology as valid.

And finally, just because volumes of literature have been written on a subject does not mean that the subject has credibility. Volumes of literature have been written on Catholicism, Islam,

ghosts, the greatness of communism, etc. but that doesn't add one iota of credibility to the validity of those subjects. What does add credibility is evidence.

> Perhaps you weren't aware that astrology is a science

You've just contradicted yourself. First you imply that astrology has not been proven by science by asking "is it wise to dismiss something just because it has not been proven with science?" Now you say astrology is a science. How can a science not be proven with science?

The dictionary definition of "science" is "The observation, identification, description, experimental investigation, and theoretical explanation of phenomena." Astrologers do not experimentally investigate anything. They merely go by ancient charts and tables that were drawn up by people who hadn't the foggiest idea of what science is. The scientific method didn't exist when astrology was born, so when people saw something they didn't understand, they just made up an explanation. They literally just made it up. A man gets killed in an unfortunate accident and two people remember that on that morning a black cat crossed the man's path. To a superstitious mind, correlation is causation so obviously the black cat caused the man to die. Never mind that the black cat crossed twenty other people's paths that day and most of them went on to live long, normal lives. That part doesn't get remembered. What gets remembered are the interesting, unusual bits.

And lastly, it has been shown numerous times that astrological predictions are no better than random guessing. You can even prove this to yourself by conducting a double-blind test. Remove the dates from a horoscope and try to find your own. You will succeed only 1 in 12 times.

31. Trial by Jury

Forcing random people to be jurors is like forcing random people to design a nuclear reactor or play a violin concerto. The idea is so absurd I hardly have words to describe it. Today's jurors typically have no training nor experience in jurisprudence, criminal justice, determining the credibility of a witness, weighing evidence and testimony, or using reason and logic to judge the facts of a case. They are the last people I'd want judging my case if I were ever on trial for anything. Furthermore, jurors don't even want to be there. They're present only because of a scary-looking court summons they got in the mail which threatens to have them arrested if they fail to show up. So essentially, jury duty asks unqualified, untrained, uninterested people to do something they don't want to do. And these are the people who have the final say in whether another person lives or dies or spends the rest of his life in prison. How can this possibly be part of a good justice system?

Some jurors decide a person's guilt before they even hear one word from the defense or prosecution. They mentally label the suspect not guilty merely because he's "cute". Others vote guilty because they don't like the suspect's face or race. This is the consequence of hiring random people to do the job of professionals.

The Ideal Jury System

Ideally, jurors will never see the accused. Having the jurors see the suspect can only bias them one way or another. Only evidence should be used to determine guilt. Not the suspect's face, or clothing, or posture, or charisma, or any other irrelevant nonsense that defense attorneys currently use to sway juries.

More importantly, being a juror should be a job held only by people who've passed a battery of tests that show they're open-minded, rational, unbiased, and focused on the evidence. They

should demonstrate that they are not swayed by irrelevant nonsense like an attorney's courtroom theatrics.

To prevent jury tampering, there should be a pool of potential jurors. For a given case, jurors should be selected randomly via lottery. The names of the selected jurors should be kept secret, so that no friends of the accused may bribe or intimidate them.

32. War

Sometimes war is absolutely necessary, as when a hostile nation attacks a peaceful one for financial or territorial gain. The peaceful nation's two choices are: 1. Submit and be robbed / killed / dominated by the hostile attacking nation, or 2. Go to war. History has shown that hostile nations generally do not even treat their own citizens well, to say nothing of the nations they conquer.

Therefore, any people conquered and absorbed by the hostile nation will likely be treated as subhuman. So realistically, the peaceful nation has to go to war. It's either that or spend the rest of your life on your knees as a slave, assuming you're even permitted to live.

Now as for the people who initiate wars, someone far more experienced and eloquent than myself has already voiced their thoughts on this subject. Here's a speech by Smedley Butler, the most decorated Marine at the time of his death:

WAR is a racket. It always has been.

It is possibly the oldest, easily the most profitable, surely the most vicious. It is the only one international in scope. It is the only one in which the profits are reckoned in dollars and the losses in lives.

A racket is best described, I believe, as something that is not what it seems to the majority of the people. Only a small "inside" group knows what it is about. It is conducted for the benefit of the very few, at the expense of the very many. Out of war a few people make huge fortunes.

In the World War [I] a mere handful garnered the profits of the conflict. At least 21,000 new millionaires and billionaires were made in the

United States during the World War. That many admitted their huge blood gains in their income tax returns. How many other war millionaires falsified their tax returns no one knows.

How many of these war millionaires shouldered a rifle? How many of them dug a trench? How many of them knew what it meant to go hungry in a rat-infested dug-out? How many of them spent sleepless, frightened nights, ducking shells and shrapnel and machine gun bullets? How many of them parried a bayonet thrust of an enemy? How many of them were wounded or killed in battle?

Out of war nations acquire additional territory, if they are victorious. They just take it. This newly acquired territory promptly is exploited by the few - the same few who wrung dollars out of blood in the war. The general public shoulders the bill.

-Smedley Butler

33. World Hunger

Despite the fact that I live in the United States where I have plenty to eat and a safe place to live, I still choose to not have children because I don't think it would be very responsible of me to bring a child into this world right now. Having children is a huge responsibility.

Why then, do people who live in Somalia, Sudan, or Ethiopia continue to have children when they know their children will grow up in a horrible place and likely die? Do the adults in those countries not care about the suffering and premature death of their future children? Women have few if any rights in Africa and rape is more prevalent on that continent than any other so women don't have much say in whether they have children or not. This leaves the men. Apparently, African men don't care if their children are surrounded by disease, poverty, starvation, and death. If they did care, they wouldn't have children in such an environment. I certainly wouldn't.

We've all seen those commercials of emaciated starving children in Africa, looking at the camera with their sad puppy-dog eyes and flies buzzing about, and a narrator's voice appealing to the viewer: "Won't you please sponsor this child? For just 75 cents a day, you can provide food, clothing, shelter, medical care, and schooling for this little boy."

What the voice doesn't tell you is that if you help that child survive, he will reach reproductive age and instead of having one million starving children today, there will be five million starving children twenty years from now. In other words, sending money will result in more starving, suffering, dying children.

Death by starvation is nature's way of saying "There are too many of you so some of you need to die." Children dying of hunger and disease in Africa has been going on for millennia so it's nothing

new. I remember those commercials thirty years ago and they're still on TV today. Nothing has changed except now there are more hungry mouths to feed as a result of such commercials.

This is not to say I am indifferent to starving, dying children; I'm not. It's absolutely horrible. However, the simple fact of the matter is that if you send them money now, there will be more misery, suffering, and death later. That's assuming your money will even get there which it probably won't. Your money will instead be used to pay the "administrative costs" of running the non-profit charity organization you're donating to. Costs such as staff wages, building expenses, advertising, and the very generous salaries of its top officers. Any left-over money will be used to buy and send food to Africa. These food shipments will probably be intercepted by guerrillas and warlords, and sold. The money will be used to buy weapons, food and other supplies for the soldiers. Hardly anything at all will reach the starving kids.

But even if there were no corruption and 100% of your money were used to purchase food and medical supplies for those starving villagers, it would still be a bad idea because twenty years later, you'd have five times the problem. All those kids, instead of dying like they normally would without international aid, will survive and reproduce and only multiply the original problem.

If you really want to help starving kids in Africa, you have to do this:

-Find a way to make sure your money is not embezzled or stolen by middlemen. Ensure your money is used to purchase food and somehow ensure this food actually reaches the starving people. This is a very difficult and important first step.

-Re-educate the entire starving population and teach them that the use of contraceptives, contrary to their religious beliefs, is perfectly okay and moral and good. How you'll get millions of

people to abandon their religious principles is a mystery. Good luck with that one.

-Teach the local people how to survive on their own. Give them the tools and the means. This will be a large investment of resources at first (like drilling equipment for wells for fresh water, farming & medical equipment, etc.) but it will be a one-shot deal. You won't have to return later with more food and more supplies. Teach them to farm and raise animals for food, teach them to be independent. If they live in a desert or some other infertile place, move them to land which can support farming. Any food hand-outs they receive should be temporary and they must be made to understand that they need to learn to farm and make food for themselves. The sooner they learn to be self-sufficient, the greater their chances of survival.

So to sum up:

-To stop starvation, they need to grow their own food.

-To grow their own food, they have to invest their labor into the land and expect a return on their investment.

-To expect a return on their investment, they need the assurance that what they produce will not be stolen from them at gunpoint. Currently, anyone with a gun can rob whoever doesn't have a gun. Police are either non-existent, useless, or so corrupt that they participate in the extortion rackets. "Might makes right" is the law of the land. As a result, honest hard-working people have no incentive to invest their money and energy into anything when they know that as soon as they create something of value, it will be taken away by force. In short, they need property rights and those rights should be enforced.

-To enforce property rights, they need honest courts and non-corrupt cops. Getting rid of the entrenched corruption is the biggest obstacle, in my opinion. In most African nations, the leaders are

corrupt. They live in luxury while the locals starve and die. The leaders care nothing for their own people and this is not surprising, since the more brutal and violent you are, the quicker you rise to the top. Generally, the people at the top are sociopathic, barbaric monsters who are good are pretending to be civilized, respectable human beings to the Western media.

Rants

Christians who believe in the literal truth of the Bible:

The Bible consists of stories that have been copied, translated, paraphrased and interpreted to death, often by people who were profoundly superstitious and scientifically ignorant. And to top it off, the whole thing has been censored and edited extensively over the centuries by various Biblical "authorities". And yet despite their best efforts to reduce the amount of silly crap that permeates this book, the Bible of today still features: people made out of dust, a man who walks on water, a woman who turns into a pillar of salt, a pregnant virgin, a talking donkey, a person who lives for days inside a whale, and plenty of other so-called "miracles".

I'm amazed that someone living in a modern, technologically advanced society can seriously believe in talking snakes, talking statues, a sun that stops moving across the sky because some guy told it to stop, water that turns into wine, a corpse that reanimates after being dead for days, and last but not least: a "loving" God that orders death by stoning of some poor fellow who was out gathering firewood when he was supposed to be resting. Apparently, God is so offended by work on the Sabbath that he wants violators not just killed, but killed in a brutal, sadistic manner. What a loving, forgiving, caring God he must be! He also appears to have a very delicate ego because if you utter a blasphemous word against him, your penalty is death. If you dishonor your parents, your penalty is death. If two gay guys get it on, their penalty is death. If a woman is not a virgin when she marries, her penalty is death. Is all this killing absolutely necessary?

Some will say that Jesus canceled all those blood-thirsty laws in Leviticus so God doesn't want them enforced anymore (so much for God being "unchanging"). Okay, but before Jesus showed up those laws were enforced, weren't they? Which means violators

were executed on God's orders. I wonder how many people died because of God's death fetish for trivial infractions. And have you noticed how slavery is not prohibited anywhere in the Bible? We are even told where we may buy slaves, we're told that our children will inherit our slaves just like any other property, and that it's okay to make slaves serve us for life (essentially, work them till they die). This is in Leviticus 25:44. If that's not Biblical endorsement of slavery, I don't know what is.

Evangelical, born-again Christians must perform Olympic-level mental gymnastics to believe that every word of the Bible is literally true but I think I know how they do it. Since Satan is "The Great Deceiver", anyone who tries to shake their faith in the Bible will be labeled a tool of Satan. This means no matter how strong or persuasive the arguments against god, they will be dismissed as Satanic lies. Wow, I must admit that's quite clever. Using the same brainwashing technique, I can fill a child's head with the most insane drivel. I can teach him things like "the moon is made of cheese" and "pigs can fly." Then, to make sure no one can get that crap out of his head, I'll cork it off with "anyone who denies what I've told you is a servant of Satan!" This way when someone tries to reason with the child and explain that pigs don't fly, he'll dismiss it as evil Satanic lies. Simply brilliant.

Military people who say "We're protecting your freedoms":

Most military people enlisted for practical reasons. They didn't like living at home, they needed money, they couldn't get a good job, they wanted military benefits, etc. Of course they'll never admit that those are the reasons they enlisted. Instead they'll say something predictable and patriotic like "I joined to serve and protect my country!" Maybe there are a few people like that, but the majority are not. I know this because I was in the service and I've had quite a few conversations with people on this issue. After you peel away the superficial layer of patriotism, the average enlistee's motives turn out to be just as I've described. If you want

to know who the real patriots are in the military, cut everyone's salary in half and let them leave if they want to. Then see who stays.

Slavish conformity and blind obedience to authority are seen as good things in hierarchical organizations; it's rewarded with money. A Marine sniper or Army infantryman in a foreign combat zone gets regular pay, combat pay, hardship duty pay, family separation pay, and a food allowance... all tax free. In essence, they get paid lots of money to kill people. How is this different from mercenaries?

I would like to know how killing Muslim "insurgents" half way around the world keeps Americans safe here in the US. Quite the opposite, it enrages Muslim militants and makes them want to hurt us. Muslim militants are unjust, cruel, and merciless but they are not insane. They do not attack at random with no provocation as serial killers do. Osama bin Laden made an interesting comment during one of his interviews. He said "You don't see us attacking Switzerland, do you?" He had a valid point. Switzerland has a history of being neutral in conflicts. Meaning they don't stick their noses where they don't belong and they don't interfere in the affairs of other governments. The 9/11 attack had absolutely nothing to do with "hating our freedoms" or any of that other bullshit certain politicians have been feeding us. If you want to know why the enemy attacked us, *listen to what the enemy is saying*. What a radical notion, huh?

The same people we call "insurgents" today used to be called "Freedom Fighters" when the Russians were fighting them. Funny how the labels change, isn't it? They're the same people: armed Muslims who are protecting their native land from foreign invaders.

"This soldier / officer gave his life in the line of duty":

The word "give" means to voluntarily surrender something which means the person has a choice in the matter. Police officers and soldiers are not asked whether they wish to be killed, nor do they volunteer for suicide missions. On the contrary, when they die their lives are violently taken from them without their consent. That's called robbery. They are *robbed* of their lives. They most certainly don't just give their lives away. The only thing they volunteered for is to enlist in the service and they sure as hell didn't plan on dying when they signed on the dotted line.

Even a soldier who jumps on a grenade in a foxhole to save his buddies shouldn't be described as "giving his life" because he does not have a choice of whether to give his life or keep it. He's going to die either way. The only thing he chooses is whether to jump on the grenade and die alone or do nothing and die with his friends. The grenade is going to take his life no matter what (assuming he doesn't have time to throw it away). Yet regardless of how a person in uniform dies, he's always described as "giving" his life in the line of duty... even if he's killed by accident or friendly fire.

The only people who actually give their lives are those who choose to go on suicide missions. And when I hear "suicide mission" the first two things that come to mind are Japanese kamikaze pilots and Muslim suicide bombers.

People who call anyone in uniform a "hero": This applies especially to the media who say things like "Veteran's Day is the day we acknowledge and appreciate the sacrifices and commitments of our heroes who serve in the armed forces. Find a service member today and thank them for your freedoms!" Jesus Christ, what a load of shit!

First of all, the average service member doesn't give a rat's ass about you or me or our freedoms because he doesn't even know that we exist. How could he possibly do something for you or

"sacrifice" something for you when he isn't even aware of you? You could die tomorrow and he wouldn't know or care.

Second, people have watered-down the word "hero" to the point where it means absolutely nothing. Consider some lazy dumb ass who got rejected from every civilian job he ever applied for. He joins the military as a last resort and ends up on an Army base where he sits in an air-conditioned office all day eating donuts and Hot Pockets and playing Solitaire. Apparently this guy is a "hero" because he's in the military and anyone in a service uniform is automatically a hero, right? Last I checked, being a hero involved actually doing something heroic, like risking your life to accomplish a positive and significant thing. A fire-fighter who runs into a burning building to save a child from certain death is a hero. Now explain to me what is so damn heroic about sitting on your ass all day and staring at a computer screen while eating donuts? There are thousands of people in the military who have jobs like this: civilian-like jobs in cozy environments that involve absolutely no danger. I know this because I had a job like that when *I* was in the military. I guess I'm a hero, huh?

Liberals: You are the modern-day Robin Hoods: take from the rich and give to the poor. You want to use tax dollars to help the unfortunates of the world. It is interesting that do not care whether the rich acquired their wealth legitimately or not. In your opinion, mere fact that they are very rich makes it okay to take away their wealth. Question: if the majority of a person's wealth will be taken from them by force through taxation merely because they are wealthy, then what incentive do they have to start multi-billion dollar businesses as Elon Musk and Bill Gates have done? Their companies employ hundreds of thousands of people and contribute billions to the economy. If they knew in advance that the majority of their assets would be seized by the government after reaching a certain critical dollar amount, they would either base their companies off-shore or keep them deliberately small to avoid

going over that critical limit. Tax-the-rich policies stifle creativity, innovation, and progress by removing financial incentives from entrepreneurs. It is ironic that so-called “progressive” taxation policies end up slowing technological progress.

Conservatives: What exactly are you trying to conserve? The way things used to be? So essentially, you want to retard social progress.

Gay people who celebrate gay pride: You're proud of being gay? How can you be proud of something you got with no effort at all whatsoever? Acquiring a sexual orientation requires no work, no skill, no talent, no accomplishments, and no abilities. What's next, you'll be proud of preferring chocolate ice cream over vanilla? "Proud to be gay" is just as irrational as "ashamed to be gay". They're opposite sides of the same coin: Unearned pride and shame. If you want to be proud of something, go do something difficult and praise-worthy.

At this point you probably want to say "Gay Pride is a backlash against religion and other beliefs that demonize homosexuality as wrong, immoral, and perverted. The Pride parade is a recognition of all the difficulties non-heterosexuals face in our society. It brings us together under a common banner and lets other non-heterosexuals know they're not alone, they don't have to live in the closet, they don't have to hate themselves, and they are neither immoral nor bad."

Fine, I agree with that quote (not surprising considering I wrote it) but why do you have to call it gay PRIDE? Why are you praising your sexual orientation? Why not call it "Gay Day" or something? "Proud to be gay" is just as irrational as "proud to be White" or "proud to be Black".

About and FAQ

Who are you?

I'm a heterosexual white male living in the United States. I'm neither Democrat nor Republican because I think both parties have good and bad ideas. I created the website commonatheist.com in 2011 to share my thoughts and opinions with anyone who cares to read them. If you disagree with something I've said, I welcome your comments. I've changed my mind on things in the past so my ideas are not set in stone.

How do I contact you?

Friendly banter is always welcome no matter what you believe. If you'd like to ask a question, provide feedback, or offer constructive criticism, please go right ahead. My email address is in the FAQ section at commonatheist.com

How did you become an atheist?

The question is misleading because it suggests that I *became* an atheist, which is untrue. Everyone is born an atheist. When we are born, we do not believe in Jesus, God, miracles, Heaven, Hell, angels, the Bible, or anything else because we are born completely ignorant of everything. As we grow up, these supernatural beliefs are introduced to us by someone, most likely our parents. I was fortunate to have parents who did not indoctrinate me with religion. My parents never went to church so of course I was never forced to go either. Instead, they stressed education in math, science, English literature, art, and music. I was never told what to believe. Religion and atheism were rarely discussed at home; that was left entirely up to me.

When I was a teenager I was in a stage of philosophical loitering. I didn't believe in God but this was mostly because of ignorance. Out of curiosity, I spent hours in my school's library reading about Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, and even a few fringe religions like Wicca and Satanism. They all seemed absurd,

irrational, and profoundly immoral to me (especially the first three). Then I picked up a copy of George H. Smith's "Atheism: The Case Against God" and it made perfect sense immediately. I was amazed by what I read because I had reached many of the same conclusions independently. It was almost as if the author was reading my mind except his thoughts were far more refined and exacting.

I've always been an atheist. First I was an atheist because of ignorance, but after I researched the world's top religions and read Mr. Smith's book, I became an atheist for rational reasons.

How did the cosmos come to be? How did life begin?

I don't know but that doesn't mean I should accept supernatural explanations from those who claim to know.

Suppose you come home one day and see a large hole in your living room wall. You don't know how this hole got there so for the moment it's a bit of a mystery. Will you accept the explanation that aliens teleported from a far-away galaxy into your living room and burned the hole with their eye-lasers? No? Why not? Just *have faith* that this explanation is correct and then the mystery of how the hole appeared will be solved. Why are you so obstinate and negative and unwilling to believe? You see, I know how the hole got there because *I have faith* in the alien's eye-lasers, but you.... you'd rather wallow in your ignorance and not know.

In case there is any confusion, the above paragraph is my sarcastic nod to Christians who typically say to atheists: "You atheists are so closed-minded and stubborn! Why won't you accept the truth of the Bible? Why won't you accept Jesus? Just have faith that the Bible is the word of God and then there's no mystery about how everything came to be. But you'd rather wallow in your atheistic ignorance and not accept the truth of the Bible. Fine then, be ignorant!"