

9. Masculinity Cares About Life and Liberty

It is common for men to speak about things which they have not studied in depth, which leads to a pattern of misrepresentations, mistakes, and conflict. Masculinity dedicates itself to life-long education, open-mindedness, and willingness to rationally and amiably discuss topics that have become proxy threats.

As an example, observe what Americans today say about the founding of their country. If we are asked what we think of the Declaration of Independence or The US Constitution, the typical reactions are as follows:

1. Proxy Flight: We assume we are being lured into a political debate, so we stop it before it starts, conveniently rationalizing our fear of conflict with trite beliefs such as “Two things you don’t talk about is politics and religion.” This is wrong, not just because it’s proxy flight, but also because a citizenry actively engaged in political discourse is essential to the survival of the republic. Just a superficial knowledge of US Founding Principles tells us this.
2. Proxy Fight: Immediately we will try to identify if the questioner is as foe or friend, using our canned categories: Republican or Democrat, Conservative or Liberal, etc.
 - a. If friend, no problem, we can build and reinforce each other’s beliefs, which increases our pride and license to verbally attack anyone who disagrees with us.
 - b. If foe, usually a debate ensues, and often it gets very nasty.

What these reactions have in common is that they do not actually address the question. Few Americans know the actual founding principles, let alone the huge volume of valuable information that the Founding Fathers condensed into the official documents. Even though common sense tells us that it is impossible to have a rational discussion about American politics without understanding its foundations, people participate in the discourse anyway, typically in combative fashion, demonstrating clearly that rationality is not a priority. Indeed, Yang is watered-down.

It seems easy for many of us to dismiss the message by discrediting the messengers as “a bunch of slave-owning, wig-wearing white guys”. Attacking the messenger is never a substitute

When the debate is lost, slander becomes the tool of the enemy. -Socrates

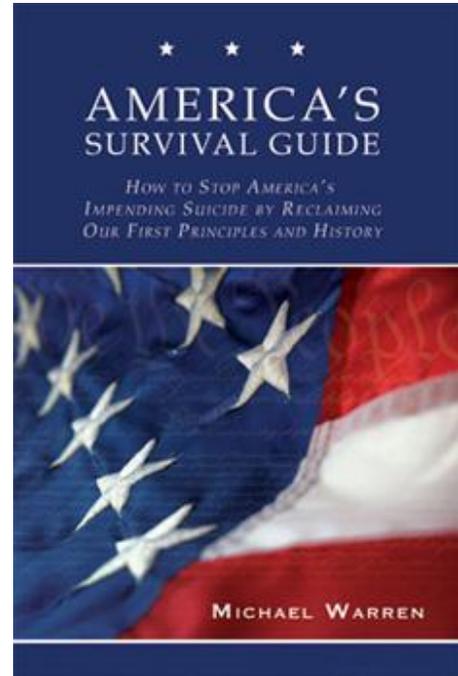
for a rational argument, and need not be seriously entertained. Rather, it does arouse suspicion as to who or what benefits from such an attack. So, instead of attacking/defending the messenger, let’s look at the message - at the actual first principles:

1. The Rule of Law – mandates that the law applies to everyone, no exceptions.
2. Inalienable rights – Life, Liberty, and The Pursuit of Happiness are natural rights.
3. Equality – All humans are created equal (not to be confused with “identical”).
4. The Social Compact – Governments are instituted by, and with the consent of, the governed.
5. The Limited Role of Government – Limited in size and power to its purpose.

The evidence shows that we've abandoned these principles, although most of us seem to not notice or care that much. This is clearly demonstrated with just a little research, and is not within the scope of this book. Plenty of other books make this point unambiguously.

The bottom line: A real man does not criticize, nor does he defend, an ideology that he does not understand. Understanding comes first, yet that is what's missing.

“Almost all of our current political discourse ignores our First Principles and history out of ignorance, convenience, or disdain.....Not only are citizens ignorant, they are unaware and unconcerned about their ignorance. Most Americans spend more time engaged with game shows, reality television, technology, hobbies, sports, and entertainment gossip than on our political system.” - Michael Warren



Natural Rights: Life and Liberty

Here I'm applying what I proposed in the Side Note of Chapter 2: A fairly universal and uncontroversial set of values, namely those that support life and liberty. For the reader who does not consciously regard life (all of life, not just human) and individual human liberty - *at the very minimum* - as foundational values, this work will not be convincing.

The foremost concern: It is certainly possible (and I say probable) to think, speak, and act in ways that harm life and liberty; even though it may be impossible to relinquish our natural *rights* to life and liberty. We are generally not aware we are doing this. We are very busy people, and our attention is focused on other, proxy concerns and activities.

The relevant observation: As individuals we are not vigilant about preserving life and liberty, and as a society we have permitted agents of the Adamtocracy to usurp these rights. Some of us notice this happening, and we blame and attack our political rivals. Others do not notice this (we are blinded by pride), or actively deny that this is happening (pride makes us feel embarrassed, humiliated). This can be very hard to accept, but it is a necessary first step. *Humbled* by the truth would be a more masculine and productive path.

The psychological weakness: Yet more pride. Yes, we are blessed with free will and the capacity to fulfill our natural desire for freedom; but it is pitted against the longing for a loving parent to take care of us, and the pride that leads to the slothful view that we deserve such a paternal-servile power to do so. To the degree that this is the case, we are more like children. Not masculine.

Life – It's preservation must start with a straight dig downward into its very foundation, the soil of the earth, of our bodies, of and our virtue.

Liberty – Both “freedom from” and freedom to” are being extinguished - Freedom from an external agent (vertical) and freedom to create (horizontal).

Let's go out on a limb for a moment, and assume that we agree the individual is endowed (by nature, or God, or fundamentally inherently in some other way) with the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. If this endowment is a given, it follows logically that we must also agree not to encroach on the rights of others, or else we cannot enter into a society on this premise. This is key: the "other". What does it mean? This is complicated. I could argue that I exist in the present, but not in the past nor in the future. If so, then my "future self" is like another person, the "other".



Most psychologists agree that it is uniquely human to imagine this future self, this other, and that it is a sign of maturity for the present self to make sacrifices in order to maximize the life, liberty, and happiness of this future, or other, self. This includes delaying gratification, but it's more; it's also the prevention of unnecessary suffering in the long term for the future self. The same applies to other people.

It seems reasonable that to live somewhat harmoniously in a society, we often must engage in behaviors that we do not like in the present, in order to maximize the lives and liberties of others, and in order to minimize the suffering of others (to clear the way for the pursuit of happiness), whether the other is my future self, or another person, or even other life forms.