

# How to Frugally Enjoy Your Liberty

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Watching the squirrels outside my window (who collect their food by jumping from tree to tree) made me realize that [Thomas Jefferson was right when he said that life is for the living](#). Enjoying the simple beauty of nature and appreciating our own existence is pricelessly indispensable to the human experience. If work is a means to an end and *not* an end in itself, then wouldn't that mean that what is popularly considered leisure might very well encompass the real purpose of our lives?

Academics disagree with each other as to whether there is more or less leisure time now than in the past. Statisticians who conduct longitudinal studies (over the course of, say, [the past 40 years or so](#)) will claim in their findings that there is more leisure time enjoyed currently than before. Anthropologists, like [Peter Farb](#), will assert that before the advent of civilization and/or the Industrial Revolution, tribal nomadic peoples had the most free time of anyone historically. [Farb says](#):

*"Most people assume that the members of the Shoshone band worked ceaselessly in an unremitting search for sustenance. Such a dramatic picture might appear confirmed by an erroneous theory almost everyone recalls from schooldays: A high culture only when the people have the leisure to build pyramids or to create art. The fact is that high civilization is hectic, and that primitive hunters and collectors of wild food, like the Shoshone, are among the most leisured people on earth."*



So, which is it? Well, most studies are quantitatively limited historically, so the sample size in terms of time is, at best, a brief snapshot. Anthropological work, on the other hand, spans a much broader chronological expanse, and thus, possess larger sample sizes. Incrementally speaking, the larger the data set, the more accurate any potential findings are going to be; granted, while there are intervening variables (such as mortality rates, [childrearing practices](#), and technological development), I would submit for your consideration that while evaluating the enjoyment of leisure, it would be best to examine it in a mutually exclusive bubble.

I've noticed over the years that most dissident activity is, sadly, spent on [media consumption](#). Political dissension is practiced, most commonly, in the form of [new media](#) on [the Internet](#); that is, forum discussion threads, live call-ins, and video responses. *Actual* dissident activity (such as holding meetings, pasting flyers, or [guerrilla gardening](#)) takes a *far* back seat to its digital usurper. This is how most dissidents spend their leisure – watching videos, listening to podcasts, or skimming articles ([instead of reading them](#)).

What “passion” you may hear from those who *seem* to be upset about what the government did *this week* is nothing of the sort, but more of a desperate frustration with no remedy in sight. It is depressing, not liberating, to listen to, which is probably why many older people, using their native intuition, do not become regular consumers of that garbage. They may not rationally know *why* they are adverse to it, but their actions are nonetheless totally correct. Whining, bitching, and moaning are *not* “expressing yourself,” but dragging others down to your level. There is no liberty in that at all.

Reformism and its ugly cousin, so-called “online activism,” are high on promises and short on results. Consider what [Stefan Molyneux has said about reformism](#):

*“That’s what I did for many years, trying to exhort and convince people. To believe what I believe, to see the truth; to think, to reason, to work from first principles, to work from evidence. To love, liberty, FREEDOM! It’s just running around wasting my time, and surrendering my personal liberty to the acceptance or rejection of other people. That’s what politics is, that’s [what mere debating is](#), and that is what political libertarianism is. Not only does it not work to bring you freedom, it actually makes you enslaved. It specifically and completely lowers the total freedom in your life... [i]t takes power away from you. You surrender your capacity for human liberty and joy to whether you can convince indifferent people to ‘please, set me free!’”*

Very similar to [what Larken Rose has said recently](#), Molyneux points out how “working within the system in order to change it” is *not* at all similar to how [the solution for escaping from Chinese handcuffs](#) seems counterintuitive. By focusing on the integrity of your daily life, self-liberation actually becomes possible. Molyneux further explains that:

*“It’s about setting yourself free from fear, it’s about setting other people free, it’s about showing people what a free life looks like, which is far more convincing to get people to think about liberty and to live freedom. It is far more convincing to live a free and beautiful and loving and happy and joyful life yourself, [than to send people links to how bad the Fed is](#). That doesn’t set people free...I’m talking about living freedom in your life. Today, tomorrow, next month, next year. Showing people what freedom really LOOKS like, not just describing it in abstract political, economic terms...[w]hen we truly live, as free spirits, as free souls, by God, we outgrow the State.”*

Allowing the rampant consumption of digital media to eat up your sparse leisure time is irresponsible. Is this how you want to exercise your liberty? By literally *wasting* hours of your life away [debating trolls and malcontents](#)? Or would you prefer to instead spend what precious leisure time you have on actually *enjoying* your liberty?

Collective social pressures and [group expectations](#) of what they think our behavior “must” be sets the stage for *artificial* leisure; that is, engaging in certain activities with others because it’s what the “group” wants to do, even though you’d prefer to do something else with your time. Artificial leisure is not only boring, but also a form of subtle posturing. Having done it myself too many times to count, I can tell you with utmost certainty that the lie you may tell yourself that “It’s not the activity that matters, it’s the people I’m with” can only be the truth *if* you genuinely cared about those individuals in the first place. “Friends of convenience,” or unchosen positive obligations to [your family of origin](#), do not count as proof of your loyalty to any of them; *that’s not freedom*.

Feeling free is just as important as *being* free. Even if you lived in [a state of nature](#), what good would absolute liberty be to you if you don’t *feel* the difference between that and where you were before? If there is anything we need more of, it’s *passionate* liberty. You and I should truly care about our freedom, if for no other reason that *not* doing so robs us of our passion. Neglecting to responsibly satiate our desires inevitably leads us to perpetual misery. It’s important feel alive while you are still living, for our time on this planet is finite because we are mortal.

If you’re not passionate about liberty, then you’re doing it wrong, and thus you’re not actually *living freedom*. I’m not saying you should throw caution to the wind, but what I am saying is that you need to *feel* freedom down in your gut and deep in your bones. We don’t need more mainline libertarians spouting off dry facts and figures about how awful the enemy rebel government is (or worse, [advocating reformism as a way of trying to unsuccessfully trim their operation](#)); what we need are [radically passionate libertarians](#) who actually *live* freedom in their daily lives with integrity. Truly living your life, and not a facsimile of it, is what we’re ultimately fighting for, is it not?

Frugality provides the best means through which to enjoy your liberty. Believing that you “must” have [the latest overpriced gadget](#) is a marketing ploy designed to generate artificial consumer demand for what is in reality a lackadaisical product. Equating leisure with expensive toys is a advertising trick that would have even made [Bernays](#)

proud to be the father of contemporary propaganda. Naturally, unplugging yourself wholesale isn't necessarily the solution either; although some people are inclined toward asceticism, the rest of us do require some grown-up toys in order to relax ourselves. So, the impetus necessarily becomes *finding cheaper alternatives* to play with.

Take for instance the idea that, instead of watching films in a movie theater or paying for cable, you subscribe to a [on-demand streaming media service](#) for a monthly flat rate (much like the monthly Internet connection fee you already pay for); even if you decide to invest in a [digital media receiver](#) and a [HDMI cable](#), those start-up costs will [eventually pay for themselves](#) given enough time since your running maintenance costs are *only* that monthly subscription fee, instead of the much larger cable service fee (alternatively, you could also borrow movies and television shows from the local public library, [although be cognizant first of the moral sanction](#) you would be giving to it though).

Rather than purchasing incredibly costly [video gaming consoles](#) and their prohibitively expensive games, consider [handheld game consoles](#) instead. I have fonder memories of my [GameBoy](#) staving off boredom while on long road trips than of wasting my summers away on the [Sega Genesis](#). Besides, the games are much cheaper, and they now can also double as MP3 players or VoIP phones. Of course, you could save even more by simply [playing free online flash games](#) right from your computer.

Proprietary software is "legally" protected by copyright, so this automatically presents a challenge [not just to individual privacy](#), but also to your pocketbook. Buying the hardware is one thing, but the concomitant built-in software that comes alongside the operating system is a massive pain in the wallet. [Free software activists](#) are trying to turn this around, and their accomplishments thus far greatly surpass almost every other type of political activist endeavor you can think of; for instance, the emergence of the OpenPGP standard in the form of [GPG4Win](#) and [GPGTools](#) are the most significant boon to digital cryptography since Phil Zimmerman invented [Pretty Good Privacy](#). Even if you think that copyright is a constitutional prerogative of government, then you must also realize that [the copyright statutes have been used as a legal weapon by the government and their corporate cronies](#) as a tool of soft censorship against political dissidents.

Cellular telephones are in reality, the electronic leash; anyone and just about everyone who desires to bug you, will do so. The cheapest possible ones don't have built-in cameras, are not "smartphones," and will do little else other than being able to make calls and send text messages. Besides choosing between open-face and clamshell styles, your only other real choice is whether to buy a flat rate service plan or the "no contract" pay-as-you-go variation; if you don't make very many or longer phone calls, then I would suggest that the latter is the way you should go (just don't repeat my mistake when I forgot to "recharge" my account by adding a little more money by the expiration date; I've lost \$50 worth of minutes that way).

Contemporary "preppers" suffer from [the mistaken notion](#) that if they just simply buy a whole slew of equipment, storable foods, and guns then they will be "prepared" for anything. Acquiring a bunch of random shit in order to stash it all inside a closet with the intention of never using it, is a pack-rat mindset that has *nothing* to do with material preparations and *everything* to do with [conspicuous consumption](#). Such "credit card survivalists" would do better to simply be honest with themselves and closely mimic the behavior of all the shopping mall zombies who are in essence their next-of-kin; for the rest of us who *are* fiscally responsible, *gradually* acquiring *skills* and *cheap* equipment are what genuine survivalists actually *do*.

Many [alternative media pundits](#) spend inordinate sums of money on their equipment. They buy headsets, smartphones, video cameras, website hosting, and all sorts of other things they think will assist them in "bringing the truth" to the mass population. What they fail to realize is that their most important audience isn't some random guy in South Africa, but their neighbors. They could save their money and perform *real* "activism" by pasting flyers, handing out DVDs to students, and putting on street theater skits, but that isn't sensationalistic enough for them, is it? Why rationally allocate what meager wealth is over for discretionary spending on items that cost less and are more effective for spreading a message? Perhaps because, like a fraternity, if you simply *buy* your way in, you will be "loved" and "accepted" by total strangers who happen to like your counterproductive rants.

Whatever happened to enjoying the simple things in life? Why don't you float in a lake situated in a deserted park while everyone else is at "work?" When was the last time you danced in the rain? Do you even remember how to please your lover? Much like eating chocolate, these simple yet profound activities, while *monetarily* cheap, are all expressions of human joy unparalleled by what can be packaged and artificially sold to you by the [Madison Avenue social engineers](#).

I have never, *ever* felt joy when I *must* go shopping for necessities. It is inconceivable to me why this would be enjoyable for anyone. I can't *buy* happiness, so other than the rational allocation of resources via the price system, what other

purpose can the “shopping experience” be *other than* a type of situation where it is a ubiquitous business practice to manipulate the customer into handing over their remaining tokens of wealth in exchange for items they don’t need or even want? Most of the time when I am looking for something specific that I *do* want, they usually don’t have it anyway! How can any economist claim that corporations are serving to satisfy customer demand when they don’t even try? *There is nothing free market about the corporate “shopping experience” at all!*

As such, it is more prudent to be frugal with whatever monetary wealth you have left, and cherish the simple things in life as much as you possibly can. Spending the FRNs in your wallet sparingly will stretch them farther than if you hadn’t. Don’t fritter your scraps of wealth towards [activist legal defense fund scams](#); spend it instead on a fishing rod for your child so you can teach him how to fish (better yet, help him build his own). Save as much as you can, and then use those FRNs towards financing a business start up, or put it towards capital investments. *If you do it right*, then [you’ll be able to make the money work for you, instead of you working for it](#). Then you can use that infusion of new wealth towards buying a wider range of *cheaper* things than can *genuinely* increase the enjoyment of your personal liberty. You grow richer both monetarily *and* in actuality.

You do not need to purchase a whole bunch of guns, survival gear, or even books in a mindless stampede just because some [Reactive Ralphie](#) told you to. The truth of the matter is that those Reactive Ralphie audiences [don’t care about freedom, and they don’t understand liberty](#). They don’t even question the authority of the government to do whatever it is that the latest outrage is about. [To paraphrase Rod Taylor](#), tyranny is a sin against mankind because freedom is actually sacred. Passionate liberty does not come with a price tag; [I don’t “sell” my vote](#) in the false hope that doing so will *somehow* make me free.

Consumerist toys can only exploit you out of your hard-earned wealth *if you let them*. By realizing that they will *never* bring you fulfillment, peace, or happiness, you can circumvent them not just by emotionally detaching from them, but seeking alternatives. This is not to suggest that you can eat your cake and have it too; it’s more about how to think, and act, [along the margins](#).