

Do I have the Right to Think?

The **Bill of Rights** is a definitive document. If ever you get 2 minutes to read it, you'll surely marvel at its simplicity and directness. And as you read it, you may be glad that somebody took the time to think things through and write it; we're all the recipients of some basic privileges for having it in America. A trial by jury, the right to petition the government for grievances, protections against improper search and seizure... **these are all good things**. Soviet, Chinese, and other governments don't have them.

Although it originally only applied to white men, the document is now embraced by and applies to all. It consists of 10 amendments made to the original US Constitution. George Madison is credited with its creation and passage; and there was considerable debate at the time for both its need and its content.

It **basically spelled out some specific rights for Americans**, in an age where – although often misguided and imperfect – folks were keenly interested in not being ruled by tyrants like the King of England, who they kicked out of town some years earlier for not letting them think.

It allows us to practice our faith, to freely assemble, to form a free press, and more. Historians and politicians have marveled at its efficacy and simplicity. Many of us Americans have benefited from its existence.

Too bad the Right to Think wasn't added in somewhere to the Bill of Rights.

If it did, perhaps we wouldn't be at war with ourselves? Perhaps dissenting views would not be met with scorn and derision? Perhaps we could sit down, present our ideas, debate as ferociously and vigorously as we are able, and still not be labeled as a nut-job, or idiot, or extremist? **If the Bill of Rights included the Right to Think**, perhaps we could argue and finish with a good old-fashioned fist fight in the back alley...and then shake hands and concede when conceding made sense?

Some scholars will point out certain fundamental problems or shortcomings of the Bill of Rights; namely its authors, their reliance on fundamentalist-like philosophies, and – as even Alexander Hamilton expressed – might dangerously imply that by outwardly stating that you wanted to protect specific rights, it might imply that any unmentioned rights would not be protected.

But based on the way things are today, **maybe the Right to Think would have been good to include as 1 of the 10 amendments or added as the 11th**. Because today, despite all the rhetoric about freedom, and rights, and equality, it seems that we're being constantly handed pre-packaged, diametrically opposed, mindless, and crappy choices; regarding how we're supposed to 'feel' or think about virtually every issue.

These choices that are offered to us (by a myriad of sources) often brand us as republicans or democrats, liberals or conservatives, socialists or free marketers. And this 'branding' immediately pits us against each other, by labeling us as part of a rival 'gang', and unable to

think for ourselves...or outside the 'box' they've created. **Worse yet, it severely diminishes our ability to solve things.**

Unfortunately, it's often a choice between lunacy and sheer lunacy. We're either for AK-47's in every living room or no guns at all, increased funding for public education or elimination of any funding for schools whatsoever, or total reliance on the 'free market' for healthcare or Obama Care. And in this mindless minefield, if you park yourself in any corner of thought, your opponent is naturally the enemy, and needs to be subdued. And the hell with the issue or problem at hand...or providing real thought or solutions. We're too busy trying to prove that our point of view is superior and that the other guy's an idiot.

So, if you propose healthy debate on firearms safety, you don't get it. If you want to home-school your child, you're off-base. If you question the sanity of a health care system gone mad with greed (that costs 25 cents of every US dollar), you really don't understand anything. You see, **to the bullies, and marketers, and elite, you don't have the Right to Think for yourself.** You really don't.

If you believe in a just war, where armed intervention is only warranted in the narrowest conditions, then you can't even join the conversation of the war hawks and peaceniks. If you differ on full amnesty or the immediate deportation of illegals, you don't get it. And if you have an out-of-the box idea about Social Security, pension reform, or child safety in the classroom, you need to sit down and shut up. The Right to Think is not part of the agenda for those that make the rules...and the agenda.

Well, **my mother once told me otherwise.** She told me – after I did a really stupid thing with 3 other guys in the 8th grade – that I needed to learn to think for myself. She told me to make sure I stop to think if she, and my dad, and Jesus would be OK with what I was doing. I remember her specifically saying (as the incident involved a bridge crossing) “if they had decided to jump off that bridge, would you have listened to them”?

Perhaps it's not a question of a Right to Think as it is a realization that we're screwed if we don't start thinking right. We've got **\$800 Trillion dollar severely diseased contagion derivative (betting) markets sucking the life out of our world economy**, inner-city problems exponentially getting worse with every new dollar we spend trying to correct, and a soul-less and greed-driven governing and financial (Washington & Wall Street) consortium of excuse makers and selfish, lying bastards...who are minding the store.

Perhaps we need much more than an amendment to the constitution regarding a Right to Think? Perhaps we need a revolutionary proposal – adopted by every American – that clearly states that we are Free to Think differently than the sordid, and silly, and stupid choices which are thrust upon us by the media, the politicians, and the elite...regarding what we're supposed to think, in order to choose sides.

Come to think of it, **my mother guaranteed – and demanded – my Right to Think** a long time ago. And every other American mother has equally done the same. Our moms compel us to do the right thing, to think before we act, and to ‘not jump off the bridge’ just because somebody else tells us it’s OK to do.

You and I have the Right to Think and the command to do so. Welcome to the Main Street Market Exchange. What do you want to do?