

# Let freedom ring

*The right to express your individuality doesn't come cheap*



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If you think freedom comes cheap, think again.

A lot of people in this free nation of ours don't want freedom. They say they do, and for them that's enough, but they don't want true freedom.

See, being free means forever being uncomfortable.

A lot of this came to mind in the recent wave of sexual harassment/abuse cases that are covering the world, and I sat down and thought about what's driving the human race to become this way. I can only come up with one conclusion.

It's easier to be in a benevolent dictatorship than in the pure state of freedom.

Look at yourself in the mirror and ask yourself: "Do I want to be free?"

Are you willing to stand on the corner and watch as the Ku Klux Klan marches down the street, parading their hate-mongering ways to anyone who will listen?

Are you willing to stand and watch someone burn the flag someone in your family died protecting?

Are you willing to see propaganda by those who claim the Holocaust was nothing more than a media charade cooked up to con the American public into backing the war?

Are you willing to listen as a person who has no obvious problems tells you that there is no such thing as "drug abuse," merely careless people?

Are you willing to look at the person with a blue mohawk, pierced tongue and the words "Born To Kill" tattooed on his forehead the same way you look at the person in the suit when hiring someone for a job that doesn't involve customer relations?

Your freedom isn't so comfy now, is it?

America's forgotten the price is has to pay for its freedom. Freedom is about the right to be unpopular or even just dead wrong.

In 1993, a graduate student here on this very campus was forced to remove a picture of his wife in a bikini from his desk because some students found it "offensive." They claimed it was sexual harassment.

Do you know what the real definition of offensive is? It's something that someone is unable to stomach. It means that something somewhere inside of them is unable to stand up to a little criticism or degradation. You mean to tell me that a man's picture of his wife on his desk is offensive?

I don't care if there was a nude painting of his wife on his desk. Is it really any of your damn business? We're talking about personal freedoms and, to some extent, art.

Let's get one thing straight right now - art is another form of freedom.

The minute you

start saying what is and is not acceptable is the moment you start becoming a censor. The moment you start becoming a censor is the moment you start down the path to mental dictator.

Teachers are trying to stress "positive reinforcement" across the nation now, and they're trying to force it into the rest of the world, and I will not have it.

I have an unquestionable right to insult you, your religion, your taste, your ideals, your hopes, and your dreams - the very fabric of your being. And you have the right to do the same to me.

I can take it; why can't you? People talk about a "conducive learning environment." They strive to make everything into a happy little world where students are sheltered from life and have their heads patted when they do good.

Bad news, folks, it ain't all rose gardens and Christmas presents.

There are people you don't like out in the world. Heck, there are people I don't like out in the world. But they've got just as much right to be there as the rest of us.

The jerks, the bigots, the liars, the burnouts and the dopeheads. The perverts, the anti-socials, the communists, the totalitarians, the pornographers, the Satanists and the good little Christians who went to Sunday School every week. The hot-tempered egotists, the quiet types in the corner, the rabble-rousers and the born bureaucrats.

This land is their land; this land is my land.

Being free means I should always be able to tell someone they look attractive and not have to worry about being slapped with sexual harassment charges.

Americans are working longer and longer hours, and we have run out of places to date. We're dating those we work with more and more. That's just the way it is.

Sexual harassment laws are bound together with words like "unwelcome" and "pervasive." Well, "pervasive" would still have Socrates drinking hemlock and "unwelcome" describes my very presence to most women. Someone asking you out on a date is not sexual harassment, no matter how

unattractive you find the person.

You can define these words a million ways, and they still mean nothing.

Sexual harassment should be what it is supposed to be - a way to prevent bosses from treating their employees favorably or unfavorably based on sexual relations.

What sexual harassment should not be is used as a way for people to try and get comfortable by removing the things they don't like from the world. As I've said, being free doesn't mean being comfortable.

I want this nation uncomfortable. I want it saying things

without thinking, and I want a world that says what it means, not one that tries to put rose-colored glasses on everyone and tells them that everything's going to be okay. It's not, but you can argue that with me - in my world, anyway.

Conflict is a good thing.

It drives people and gives them focus. You cannot have good without having evil; there is no day without night. There is no one without the other, therefore it does no good to try and get rid of one.

By saying something is "offensive," you try to classify everyone into one moral majority and there is no such thing. There is no one I trust enough to make a moral decision for me. Do you really think there's anyone who you trust to make that decision for you?

Do you really want a benevolent dictator to decide what is and is not morally acceptable to the masses?

If I'm telling dirty jokes with colleagues and someone happens to overhear and is offended by it, I'm supposed to be at fault? Someone is listening in on my conversation. Maybe I should file for intrusion of privacy. They weren't invited in the conversation, were they? Oh, but then, I could

get sued for bias because ... do you see my point?

Kill all the lawyers and purge our collective souls of this taint.

We're a legal-dominated society and someone will sue me for saying that.

In *Dernovich v. Great Falls*, a clerk claimed she was sexually harassed when her colleagues, mostly female, passed around smutty pictures. No one other than her complained and none of the pictures were directed solely at her. A Montana commission ruled in her favor. How ridiculous can we get?

We're back to this "hostile environment" thing and people being uncomfortable. Isn't it incredible how relevant books like Orwell's "1984" become later in life? Ask yourself if you really want there to be a thought police - do you really

want someone making sure that no one is ever offended anywhere, even if it costs you your freedom?

Do you want to be an automaton? Is your comfort that important?

Are your convictions in your moral beliefs, your spiritual code, your sexual attractions and mental confidence really so low that they cannot withstand the slings and arrows of outrageous fortunes? If you cannot withstand a few words, then I question how strong you really are at all.

Say no to the thought police - say yes to freedom.

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