

**How to be free**

## How to be Free

Dear friend,

In life we often chase wealth-- but I think what we truly desire is freedom -- freedom to live our lives the way we desire, and to have the freedom to speak our minds!

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I've been thinking about freedom for my entire life. When I was a wily Sociology student at UCLA undergraduate, I always told myself that I would never "sell out to the man" and that "I only needed enough money to survive, and that money wasn't the key to happiness."

For my entire life, the reason why I pursued entrepreneurship was because after graduating from college and working a 9-5 job, I decided that it wasn't for me. Even though I had great co-workers and some interesting work, I felt like a slave-- a prisoner, stuck in the confines of the arbitrary 40-hour workweek, which made no sense to me. To myself, I valued productivity, efficiency, and effectiveness and output -- not how many hours I clocked in at the office.

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Many people desire money and 'financial independence'. But I don't think people really have the opportunity to really think what they truly desire-- which is freedom. Freedom of time, freedom of thought, and freedom to direct your energy and attention/focus however you desire.

One of the things I appreciate most about being an American (especially after leaving America for a while) is my sweet sweet freedom, which I once took for granted.

Also, the biggest benefit of me being self-employed and starting my own business is because I have freedom over my schedule and my time. I think the concept of 'financial freedom' is a bit silly -- this concept that somehow you can create "passive income", sit on your butt, and somehow be happy by living off your residual income. I think what we should really focus on is having control over our schedule, our attention, and our time. This is why I believe entrepreneurship and starting your own business as one of the key elements of supreme happiness in life -- which is freedom over your time (and life).

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There's a story of a conversation between the Cynic-Stoic philosopher Diogenes ('the dog'), and when asked, "What is the best human good?" Diogenes responded by saying: "**Freedom of speech.**" -- the freedom to speak your mind, freely, and openly.

Now this is the tricky thing about freedom of speech:

*Even though we might have the political freedom of 'free speech', we are often too scared or timid to say what is really on our mind (perhaps fear of upsetting others, or fear of being punished by our superiors).*

And of course in many places in the world, you are simply not allowed freedom of speech by the government.

Now if you're fortunate enough to live in a country with freedom of speech, my practical suggestion is to be grateful of your freedom of speech, but also not to abuse it. Whenever we abuse our freedom of speech to say inane things, I think democracy dies a little bit. Consider how many people have died in the past, holding the banner of freedom, democracy, and freedom of expression/thought/speech. In America, the country was founded on the basis of "liberty" (freedom -- modeled after the French); the liberty to pursue your own vision of happiness, the liberty to practice whatever religion you desired, and the liberty to speak your mind without fear of punishment from the government.

Thus, if you have freedom -- you must savor it, and utilize your freedom to benefit humanity. To use your freedom to speak on behalf of the weak, poor, or oppressed - and to use your freedom for social good, and for the sake of the collective!

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I'm straying a little bit from my original point on freedom, which is this:

*In life, don't seek to become richer, more famous, popular, or influential-- seek to be more free.*

To me, there is nothing sweeter in life than waking up (without an alarm clock), and having no idea what I want to do during the day-- then acting out my day accordingly. I savor the feeling of not being rushed, to pursue intellectual pursuits which interest me (even though they might not interest anyone else), and also having the freedom to share my ideas publicly via my blog and website without getting censored (which has happened to me in the past on Instagram -- one of the reasons I ended up deleting my Instagram).

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Even though you might not have 100% freedom over your schedule (assuming you have a 9-5 job, or are employed by someone else), recognize that you always have the freedom of mind. This ain't 1984-- where there is "thought police" that can scan your brain for "thought crimes" against the government or others. You have the freedom and the power to believe in what you believe in, and of course, the actions you do in your life have consequences-- sometimes positive and sometimes negative. The most important thing to ask yourself is this:

*How much do I savor freedom in my life, and what am I willing to sacrifice to have more of it?*

BE BRAZEN, ERIC