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The Meaning of Liberty Today

“If liberty means anything at all, it means the right to tell people what they do not want to hear.” This quote from George Orwell, a highly esteemed novelist, summarizes a common controversial issue that occurs often in modern times. People today want liberty, but they are unprepared for what liberty really is: freedom of speech and action, so long as this freedom does not harm others. Some people believe that if liberty to say and do as one wishes offends someone, then that liberty should be restrained. However, a President that recognizes the true meaning of liberty and stands up for the people’s freedom is unsurpassed by any other leader. Although one concept is difficult to thoroughly comprehend. What is the definition of true liberty?

President Gerald Rudolph Ford understood liberty, which was evident from his speech. He said, “A government big enough to give you everything you want is a government big enough to take from you everything you have.” President Ford was aware that the same government who grants us our freedom can effortlessly confiscate it. A leader who understands this will most likely be not only successful, but popular among the people he or she leads.

Liberty is essential in order to achieve the peaceful structure governments strive for. Countless injustices have occurred as a result of the people’s freedom being dampened. Throughout history, tragedies have transpired that affected people’s freedom and restrained their needs. Consider the famous, lingering battle for liberty that plagued countless African-Americans. Shunned from society, they had no civil rights, forced into slavery that impaired even their most basic needs. Even as slavery slowly began to diminish, African-Americans were still forced to live in dilapidated communities filled with poverty and astonishingly deplorable living conditions. These unfortunate, harsh circumstances could have been avoided if the meaning of true liberty were recognized.

True liberty is the freedom to express yourself through thought, action, speech and lifestyle without anyone dampening that freedom - not even the government. True liberty is not simply gaining freedom yourself, but making sure others have equal liberty as well. It is standing up for injustice even in the face of adversity. It is the freedom to say something profoundly important even if nobody wants to hear it. However, there is something many do not understand today: if someone stands up for one group’s liberty by removing another group’s freedom of speech, that is not genuine liberty. The best way to show a person or group that they are wrong in their injustice, is in a firm, courteous, intelligent way, using pure facts; not twisting the truth, and not refusing to let them have their freedom of speech.

The best way to unite a nation is to allow all people the liberty they deserve, as outlined in our Constitution.

“We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defence, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.”

Liberty means unrestrained freedom for everyone. When everyone understands and respects that statement, we will have made a great leap forward as a society and as a country; a nation to be revered across the globe.