

should be given to someone based on skin color or financial status instead of skills?

It looks like about half of all Americans don't understand how life and liberty really work, or they wouldn't be voting for the madness that passes for modern liberalism. No one committed to the ideals of self-reliance and voluntary cooperation or any of the other ideals just noted can reasonably seek the morally bankrupt collectivism that dominates our contemporary political scene. So we'd better take a second look at how we're bringing up our kids -- and ourselves. We'd better take a second look at what we expect from government. A lot of people these days feel entitled to health care, child care and retirement benefits paid for by someone else. A lot of people expect governments to care about them, feel their pain, and provide for their material security. Not a lot of people these days understand that freedom takes work. Not a lot of us are willing to assume the responsibilities of competent adults. Judging from how we vote, many of us would rather be children of the state. Maybe the burdens of freedom are too heavy for us Americans. Maybe the price of freedom is too high for us.

Not to worry, though; we can take the easy way out. We can give our votes to our parental politicians. They will take good care of us, because they care so much for us. Then we won't have to be competent.

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Pamphlet 505

## Competence and Freedom

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Imagine that you have raised your child to be self-reliant, self-directing, honest, law-abiding, considerate of the rights and feelings of others, and committed to cooperating with others toward shared goals for win-win outcomes. Imagine that you have taught your child to act with honesty and forthrightness in his occupational and financial dealings and personal relationships. Imagine that you have taught him the usual standards of decency in respect to sexual, aggressive and acquisitive impulses and that modesty and restraint are better standards than showing off.

Imagine that you have taught your child that when he accidentally harms or injures someone, especially through some negligent act, he is morally obligated to apologize to his victim and attempt to compensate him for the injury as best he can.

Imagine that you have taught your child that he must accept the risks and consequences of his actions, whether good or bad, take personal responsibility for his mistakes, hold himself accountable for his failures, and try to remedy his shortcomings. Imagine that you have taught him to judge the faults and failings of others as objectively as possible, but not falsely blame or scapegoat others for wrongs they have not committed.

Imagine further that you have taught your child that it is morally wrong to use force against others, exploit others, manipulate others, or deceive others for personal gain at their expense. Imagine that you have taught him that in a free society he and every other human being has a property right in his own body that protects him from being enslaved or indentured by anyone, including a government, for any cause whatever. Imagine that you have taught him that he has a right to own something that he has earned or acquired by mutual consent or by gift or by luck. And imagine that you have taught him that he has a right to defend himself and the things he owns.

Imagine that you have taught your child that altruism is a virtue and that charitable contributions and volunteer efforts on behalf of persons who are disadvantaged is one way of being a good person, and a legitimate basis, among others, for self-esteem.

Imagine that you have taught your now adult child that if he has children of his own he is obligated to have them in a stable and committed marriage because that institution is the best arrangement we know of for effectively rearing children. Imagine further that your child has learned that once he has his own children, he has a moral imperative to provide them with the love, affection, protection, discipline, moral guidance, education, medical care, and social training they need, even if he has to sacrifice personally and financially for them. Imagine that you have taught your now adult child that his children are his and his

spouse's responsibilities, not the responsibilities of anyone else.

Imagine further that you have taught your child that if he is unable to strive for these standards of adult behavior because of some genuine disability, then his first duty is to rehabilitate himself, if possible, so as not to be a burden to others, but if rehabilitation is not possible, then his next duty is to accept the voluntary caretaking of others, express his heartfelt gratitude to them for their efforts, and reciprocate in whatever way he can for their benefit.

Imagine that you have taught your now adult child that although he has been entitled to your caretaking over the course of his childhood, he is not entitled to caretaking or anything else from anyone else in the world, but must instead earn whatever he hopes to get from them by offering something in return. Imagine that you have taught your child that no one owes him anything unless he and they have entered into some binding agreement, and that the obligation to cooperate with others by mutual consent is the logical consequence of individual liberty.

Imagine that you have taught your child that individual liberty is the highest political good, because if it isn't, then there is no limit to the wrongs that can be justified against any individual in the name of some other good, such as the good of "the American people" or the good of "society" or the good of "the poor" or "the little guys" or "minorities" or "hard working families."

Now suppose that this young man or woman you have raised according to these ideals becomes old enough to vote. How eager do you think he or she will be to vote for a candidate whose programs use the power of government to take something from some persons without their consent and give it to others? How eager do you think he or she will be to vote for government regulations that restrict freedom rather than enhance it?

For programs that encourage government dependency instead of self-reliance? For programs that attack the moral and legal foundations of individual liberty? For programs that invite the citizen to become a ward of the state, as if he has been adjudicated incompetent and in need of a guardian?

By what line of reasoning will the adult child you have raised convince himself to vote for a candidate whose political culture encourages sexual acting out with its resulting sexually transmitted diseases, unwanted pregnancies, unnecessary abortions and the catastrophic effects of sexual infidelity on marriages, children and families? How eager will your adult child be to vote for a candidate whose political culture rationalizes violence, excuses financial irresponsibility, condones substance abuse, encourages blaming and complaining, insists on political correctness, exploits the victim-villain theme, and authorizes all abortion on demand? By what line of reasoning will your now adult child convince himself that an education or job