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THIS IS YOUR QUEST

Your Mission:

To Experience True Happiness Along the Way

by Joanne Reed

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JOANNE REED

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YOUR MISSION:
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BOOK REVIEWS

“This is Your Quest is a self-help book; I despise the phrase because it describes pop-psych, hippy nonsense, espousing spiritual mantras and upper colonic irrigation. If those are your tools for leading a kinder, simpler life, then so be it. However, if you want to read a book, you need something a bit more cerebral. This Is Your Quest is nothing like any other self-help book you will come across. It is enlightening delight that defies the genre, well-written, insightful and ever so sincere. The approach is individual, the words have depth and the message is uplifting and thoughtful. The book itself is a journey, and Reed excels at holding the hand of her guest readers. There is a gentle voice to the message. In between each chapter, she includes letters to the readers, recapping what’s has been learned and continually encouraging growth. There is a surprising amount of depth in the presentation. I learned a lot while reading it. I am not a major history nerd, but the history was what hooked me. I think it is a really interesting way to break down happiness and comment on the idea of our worth and potential quests.”

Book Reviewer – England

“This book is indeed a journey through mankind’s history and present, inviting us to get rid of all internal and external conditioning to obtain the happiness that we were all born to experience. The author’s extensive research on a wide range of topics, from slavery to healthy diet is astounding.”

Martine - England

“This book is a veritable treasure trove of insights! The author essentially coaches the reader to define her own journey toward

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happiness as she conveys lessons from history, philosophy and economics. Wealth, love and health are essential ingredients to achieving happiness, but while this seems like common sense, the author asks us to challenge some of our assumptions about these very topics. Only when we confront some of our own biases can we move ahead to find more meaning and happiness in our lives. Depending on what each reader is dealing with in life, there is bound to be at least a few messages here that will resonate with the soul. Bon Voyage!"

PNW - USA

"You'll wish you read this a long time ago ... More intellectual and deeper than other books on the same subject. For anyone in (or wanting) a relationship the chapter on love are an essential read. So wish I'd known this earlier."

RLR - England

"In This Is Your Quest, author Joanne Reed has created a self-help book with an overreaching framework: a journey through world history and myriad philosophies, while encouraging the reader to embark on a parallel internalized journey. Shaping the book around exterior-world exploration and discovery and then turning the concept inward is an interesting and stimulating approach that lives up to the projected goal: a personal search to attain happiness through a better understanding of the much-desired trifecta: money, love and health. I enjoyed the book immensely and found her brisk writing style combined with her positive approach to be very refreshing."

Margaret Panofski - Author of the "Last Shade Tree" - USA

"Interesting reading from beginning until the end. Now and then I felt like being at school again. I am familiar with the name beguine women but never realized their background. I lived in a city called Haarlem

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about 20 km West of Amsterdam. Haarlem is an old city with a long history and still has a beguinage (Beguin courtyard) which is a national monument. I always took it at face value without knowing the history. The book is well organized which is also important. Thanks for this book. I wish many people read it.”

Jan Haringa - Holland.

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CHAPTER 7 - SO YOU THINK YOU ARE FREE?

In the Middle Ages, the clergy had a monopoly on knowledge and education and this knowledge was shared only with the upper echelons of society, including the aristocracy, nobles and knights. It was important for the knights to be able to read because all knights were supposed to understand and follow the Code of Chivalry as proposed by the clergy and the church. Bishops and monks provided education to pupils from upper-class backgrounds while education for serfs and their children was unavailable. This difference was because of the basic feudalistic structure; society was divided basically in two classes, the upper classes and the peasants or serfs, the latter of whom had to work hard to earn a living and the right to protection under the fiefdom of their Lords. The upper or ruling class and the clergy kept the serfs uneducated by design so that they could successfully rule over them. Education was reserved only for the elite. Under the feudal system, women had little or no chance of attaining an education. In a few cases, some girls from upper-class backgrounds were given the benefit of education as there were certain obligations for women of nobility that required them to be literate. However, in general, opportunities for education for women were very limited and controlled by the church. Additionally, whatever education women had access to was purely designed to help them marry well, to enable them to become a good wife and mother in the future. The general feeling was that women were secondary, and they needed to serve and remain under the protection of men.

Feudalism, or feudal tenure, was a system of land ownership and patronage that dominated Europe between the 9th and 14th centuries. With feudalism, relationships between different classes were based on land exchange; the King granted land to nobles, the nobles granted land

to lord and lords had peasants, slaves or serfs cultivated this land. The King was considered the true owner of all land and in exchange for land holdings, called manors, lords owed allegiance to nobles and helped them in wars, and nobles owed similar allegiances to the king. Under feudalism, taxes were not paid with money. They were paid in products and services. Gifts and taxes had to be given to the lords by their vassals.⁶⁷ At harvest time, the vassals gave shares of their crops to the lords. In exchange, the Lords promised to give them protection, peace and safety. To succeed, feudalism required considerable manpower. Vassals and serfs worked the manor all year round, bound by law to a lifetime of labor. Feudalism was a coercive system that granted few individual liberties. But in the 14th century, feudalism waned. The underlying reasons for this included warfare, disease and political change. When feudalism finally came to an end, so did the Middle Ages.

The Hundred Years' War, a series of conflicts waged from 1337 to 1453 between England and France over the right to rule France; it was a major catalyst for ending the feudal system. The start of the Hundred Years' War witnessed an unprecedented military build-up, followed by a series of intermittent conflicts that lasted for 116 years. The war was one of the most notable conflicts of the Middle Ages in which five generations of kings from two rival dynasties fought for the throne. As a direct consequence of the war, the army needed men to fill its ranks and fight the enemy; they found new recruits among laborers, who were taught the art of war and acquired new military skills, lifting them from their status of commoner to the rank of military personnel.

Ten years after the Hundred Years' War began; the plague broke out in Europe. This bacterial infection known as the Black Death claimed at least a third of Western Europe's total population. Manor after manor

⁶⁷ A vassal is a person regarded as having a mutual obligation to a lord or monarch, in the context of the feudal system in medieval Europe.

suffered devastating losses. By the 1350s, war and disease had reduced Europe's population to the point that peasant labor had become quite valuable. Yet conditions for the serfs themselves remained largely unchanged; their freedoms were restrained, they endured difficult lives and were still heavily taxed. Unable to survive in those conditions, the European peasantry revolted. The end of serfdom meant the end of feudalism itself and Europe's manors could no longer function with a reduced labor supply. As feudalism faded, it was gradually replaced by the early capitalist structures of the Renaissance.

Thomas Jefferson⁶⁸ wrote the US Declaration of Independence in 1776 near the beginning of the American Revolution. The second paragraph of the United States Declaration of Independence starts as follows: "*We hold those truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by the Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are, Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness. That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed.*" The meaning of happiness in 1776 is understood to have meant "*prosperity, thriving, and wellbeing.*"

But remember things are not always as they seem? What people say or write does not always match their actions. Despite, the libertarian rhetoric that followed the Declaration of Independence, liberty and equality became more and more muted in real life; people started realizing that even if the constitution clearly declared that all men are created equal, in real life some men were more equal than others. As the American people fought for independence against British tyranny and drafted their Declaration of Independence, one can only notice the obvious contradiction between advocating liberty on one hand and

⁶⁸ Thomas Jefferson (13 April 1743-4 July 1826 - USA) President of the United States from 1801 to 1809. Best known for being one of the Founding Fathers of the Declaration of Independence.

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owning slaves on the other hand. Widespread talk of liberty gave slaves high expectations for a better future and assumed that the Declaration of Independence would also apply to them. However, the slaves soon realized that the revolutionary rhetoric of the Founding Fathers did not include enslaved black people. The Declaration of Independence promised, on paper, liberty for all men but in practice failed to put an end to slavery.

Slavery in America began in 1619 when the first African slaves were brought to the North American Colony to aid the production of crops such as tobacco and cotton. Slavery was practiced throughout the American colonies in the 17th and 18th centuries. Most slaves lived on large farms or small plantations. Slave owners sought to make their slaves completely dependent on them and were prohibited from learning to read and write and their behavior and movement restricted. A strict hierarchy among slaves (from “*privileged*” house slaves and skilled artisan slaves down to field laborer slaves) helped keep slaves divided amongst themselves and less likely to rise against their masters. There are many stories of “*privileged*” slaves denouncing to their masters the plans of some of their brothers who were trying to escape. Benjamin Franklin⁶⁹ was right when he said: “*Those who would give up essential liberty for a little temporary security deserve neither liberty nor security.*”

Slave masters understood that their social control over the slaves could not be based solely on physical coercion; knowledge was power. Laws were enacted prohibiting any free person to teach or attempt to teach any slave to read or to write, or to give or sell to such slave any books or pamphlets. Punishment was in the form of a fine or imprisonment. The belief at the time was that literacy was incompatible with the institution

⁶⁹ Benjamin Franklin (6 January 1705 – 17 April 1790 - USA). Author, politician, scientist, statesman and diplomat. Best known for being one of the Founding Fathers who drafted the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States.

of slavery and that it could eventually lead to its downfall through a rebellion of educated blacks demanding the same rights that whites enjoyed. Nonetheless, both free and enslaved African-Americans made every effort they could to learn to read and write as a result of the clandestine efforts of African-American themselves, and some religious groups who saw the religious conversion of slaves as a spiritual obligation, and the ability to read scriptures was seen as part of this process.

Following a movement to abolish slavery in Europe and its empires during the late 18th and early 19th centuries, a movement to emancipate slaves led by free blacks and white supporters in the Northern United States gained strength from 1830s to the 1860s. On 6 November 1860, Abraham Lincoln, known for his "*free soil*" stance of opposing both slavery and abolitionism, was elected President of the United States; within three months, seven Southern states had seceded to form the Confederate States of America - four more would follow leading to the Civil War (1861-65). Though Lincoln's anti-slavery views were well established, the Central Union's aim at first was not to abolish slavery but to preserve the United States as a nation. Abolition became a war aim only later. On 1 January 1863 Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation that "*slaves within the states, or designated part of a state ... in rebellion ... shall be then and forever free.*" The 13th Amendment of the Constitution abolished slavery in the United States; it was passed by Congress on 31 January 1865 and ratified on 6 December 1865. The 13th Amendment states: "*Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction.*" Former slaves received the right to citizenship and "*equal protection*" under the Constitution in the 14th Amendment and the right to vote in the 15th Amendment, but the provisions of the Constitution were often ignored or violated. Despite seeing an unprecedented degree of black participation in American political life,

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African American rights were infringed upon for many years to come even after the official abolition of slavery; the re-birth of white supremacy groups such as the Ku Klux Klan in the South made it even more difficult for African American to make headways. Almost a century later, resistance to the lingering racism and discrimination in the United States that began during the slavery era would lead to the civil rights movement of the 1960s. Martin Luther King⁷⁰ would force Americans to confront contradictions between practices of racial segregation with the concept of equality and freedom proclaimed in the Declaration of Independence. The Civil Rights Movement would achieve the greatest political and social gains for blacks since the Reconstruction Era.⁷¹

Slavery was also used widely in the French colonies in the Caribbean and Indian Ocean. The French slave trade began in the 15th century, not for use within mainland France, although France's northern ports were heavily used to trade and ship slaves, but in the French colonies, where sugar accounted for 80% of exports. Slaves from Africa were brought into the colonies to cultivate sugar cane. Regulatory measures constantly governed the supervision of slaves, the control of their labor, their movements, any possible activities by them outside the plantations and events in their personal lives. These regulations allowed extensive freedom to plantation owners regarding the range of punishment they could administer to their slaves. Slaves were subjected to physical and emotional abuse on a daily basis. There were regular cases of resistance by the slaves; but the phenomenon of resistance on the part of the slaves, individually or collectively, has been the focus of relatively little research. Yet, slaves in the French colonies resisted their plight in the most varied and admirable ways. Slaves in the French colonies

⁷⁰ Martin Luther King (15 January 1929- 4 April 1968 – USA) Baptist Minister, civil rights activist and Nobel Peace Prize winner. Best known for his speech “*I have a dream.*”

⁷¹ The period in US history (1865–77) that followed the American Civil War during which attempts were made to redress the inequities of slavery and its political, social, and economic legacy.

attempted to escape on a regular basis (a phenomenon known in French as “*marronnage*,” whereas slaves living in Réunion, Guadeloupe, Martinique, and Guiana would escape the plantations in coastal areas and head to the mountains where they remained hidden in the hope that the plantation owner would eventually give up looking for them. The word “*marron*” originates from the Spanish word “*cimarron*” which means “*to escape*.”

On Réunion Island, historical accounts reveal stories of the Black-Marrons taking great risks to escape to the mountains, preferring to live as free men in precarious conditions rather than staying at the plantation under the bondage of a brutal plantation owner. Those who successfully escaped established semi-permanent camps in the mountains. Once a small group of trusted companions had settled and had organized themselves, they conducted regular raids on the plantations to steal weapons, food, seeds and farm animals (chickens); they also brought back with them their women and children. Eventually, the Black-Marrons successfully managed to grow their own food, raise farm animals and create a new community of free men, women and children up in the mountains.

In the French Colonies, slave revolts, threatened uprisings and incidents of “*marronnage*” occurred in constant succession. The plantation owners were terrified of these raids which were becoming more and more frequent. They started man-hunts for the Black-Marrons and offered hunters 30 livres⁷² per “*catch*” dead or alive. Hunters had to bring as proof of a “*catch*” (in order to claim their prize), for example the severed left-hand of the Black-Marron they had just killed. Hunters were free to capture or kill men, women and children alike. Despite this brutal repression against the Black-Marrons not all of them were captured or killed and the most resilient managed to keep living as free men and women in the mountains until slavery was abolished.

⁷² The livre (French for “*pound*”) was the currency of Kingdom of France from 781 to 1794.

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The Black-Marrons have become legends in their own right; nowadays, if you go hiking on Réunion Island, you will come across several mountain peaks that are named after them, amongst them, Dimitile, Cimendef, Mafate and Anchaing. One of the most notorious of those Black- Marrons was a slave known by the name of Cimendef. After his escape to the mountains, Cimendef created a new identity for himself. Originally from Madagascar, he created a name from the words “*tsi*” meaning “*non*” in Malagasy and “*mandevi*” meaning “*slave*” – so, Cimendef means “*non-slave.*” Through his new name, he wanted to show everyone his will to live as a free man. Slavery was abolished in France and its former colonies in 1848. The Abolition Decree was approved on 27 April 1848 by the Commission for the Abolition of Slavery. This established the rights and freedoms of association, expression and press publication, as well as male universal suffrage to designate representatives to the National Assembly, freedom of employment and access to education for all. The Slavery Abolition Decree of April 27, 1848 – French Republic – Freedom, Equality, Brotherhood, in the name of the French People:

The Provisional Government

Considering that slavery is an attempt against the human dignity; That by destroying the free will of the man, it abolishes the natural principle of the right and the duty; That it is a blatant violation of the Republican dogma: Freedom, Equality, Brotherhood.

Considering that if actual measures did not follow of very near the proclamation already made by the principle of the abolition, it could result in colonies of the most pitiful disorder.

The decree:

Article 1: Slavery will be completely abolished in all the colonies and the

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French possessions, two months after the promulgation of the present decree in each of them. From the promulgation of the present decree in colonies, any corporal punishment, any sale of not free persons, will be absolutely forbidden.

Article 2: The system of commitment in time, established in Senegal, is abolished.

Article 3: The governors or the general police superintendents of the Republic are charged to apply the set of measures appropriate to assure freedom in Martinique, in Guadeloupe and dependences, in Isle of Réunion, in Guyana, in Sénégal and the other French establishments of the Occidental coast of Africa, in isle Mayotte and dependences and in Algeria.

Article 4: Are pardoned the ancient slaves condemned to afflictive or penal punishments for facts which, imputed to free people, would not have entailed this punishment. The individuals deported by administrative measure are called back.

There is a policy of organized forgetfulness of the past that suits the agenda of the rulers, the people in power. History is written from the perspective of the victors and not the oppressed, whose role in their own liberation is often forgotten or down played. Historical accounts have found a way of denying centuries of resistance by slaves and the role they played in resisting oppression and pursuing their freedom. Historical accounts tend to attribute the happy resolution of a very shameful episode in history to a particular government or piece of legislation; while forgetting the acts of resistance that were carried out by the slaves themselves and the oppressed, who fought bravely for their unalienable right for the pursuit of happiness.

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It is worth pointing out here that despite what most people believe slavery should not be automatically associated with ethnicity. Slavery has existed since the beginning of time; the color of someone's skin was not a key factor to determine whether that person could find himself in the unfortunate position of being a slave or being a master instead. Those who became slaves were chosen because of their vulnerability compared to another dominant group and not because of the color of their skin. Since the beginning of times, Europeans enslaved other Europeans, Asians enslaved other Asians, Africans enslaved other Africans and Arabs enslaved other Arabs. A slave is a person who is the chattel or property of another. The etymology of the word "slave" finds its origin in the medieval Latin word "sclavus," originally "Slav" because of the many Slavs sold into slavery by conquering people.

Thomas Sowell⁷³, the African-American economist, historian, and philosopher points out that: *"Of all the tragic facts about history of slavery, the most astonishing to an American today is that, although slavery was a worldwide institution for thousands of years, nowhere in the world was slavery a controversial issue prior to the 18th century. People of every race and color were enslaved and enslaved others. White people were still being bought and sold as slaves in the Ottoman Empire, decades after American blacks were freed. The region of West Africa was one of the great slave-trading regions of the continent before, during and after the white man arrived. It was the Africans who enslaved their fellow Africans, selling some of these slaves to Europeans or to Arabs and keeping others for themselves. In East Africa, Arabs were the leading slave raiders, ranging over an area larger than all of Europe; slavery is often and wrongly associated with ethnicity and skin color. This practice was an accepted fact of the society of the time on*

⁷³ Thomas Sowell (born June 30, 1930), American economist, Professor at Stanford University, Historian, Philosopher and Writer. Best known for his book "*Black Rednecks and White Liberals*."

the basis that the strongest has the right of appropriation over the weakest.”

This Chapter is dedicated to all the people who have been oppressed and have suffered injustice and who have found the courage to resist oppression and somehow free themselves from their shackles.

To add more depth to this concept of “*freedom*” lets travel East to India. In 1900, India was part of the British Empire; but by the end of 1947, India had achieved independence. India was considered the “*Jewel in the Crown of the British Empire.*” Queen Victoria was made Empress of India and the British had many trading posts in India supported by a major military presence. However, in the 1920s, many local groups wanted to have more say and influence on local policy. Mahatma Gandhi⁷⁴ was born and raised in a Hindu merchant family in West India and trained in law at the Inner Temple in London. Gandhi first employed nonviolent civil disobedience as an expatriate lawyer in South Africa. After his return to India in 1915, he set about organizing peasants, farmers and laborers to protest against excessive land-tax and discrimination. Gandhi persuaded his followers to use non-violent forms of protest including sit-down strikes, refusing to work and refusing to pay taxes.

Employing nonviolent civil disobedience, Gandhi led India to independence against British Rule. One of his key mottos was: “*It is unmanly to obey laws that are unjust.*” His life is the story of a man who fought against an Empire, built a nation and inspired movements for civil rights and freedom across the world. By 1930s, Gandhi decided that the time was right for civil disobedience directed straight at the heart of the British interest. Recognizing the need for a unifying issue that spoke to all Indians, he found one in the Colony’s Salt Act, which

⁷⁴ Mahatma Gandhi (2 October 1869 – 30 January 1948 - India) Leader of the Indian Independence movement. Best known for his non-violent protests against British Rule.

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forbade citizens from collecting or selling vital minerals. He argued that the colonizers were stealing a dietary mineral from the people and then forcing them to pay to get it back. By processing their own salt millions of Indians readily flouted British Rule. This launched the civil disobedience campaign. Ghandi was imprisoned for many years, on many different occasions. He ate simple vegetarian food and undertook lengthy fasting as a means of both self-purification and political protest. Eventually, in August 1947, Britain granted independence to India, but the British Indian Empire was split into two dominions: a Hindu-majority in India and a Muslim-majority in Pakistan. Ghandi influenced important leaders and political movements; Martin Luther King found great inspiration in the writings of Ghandi and used this to develop his own theories about non-violence.

Today, slavery in the form that was legally in place from the 16th to the 19th centuries no longer exists. Yet, in the twenty-first century, one cannot stay indifferent to the fact that unprecedented numbers of people throughout the world are reduced to servitude. Economic hardship, a context of war and family indebtedness are today the essential causes of enslavement. This phenomenon affects all countries alike, including developed nations.

The French Revolution occurred in France from 1789 to 1799 and led to the end of the monarchy. King Louis XVI and Marie-Antoinette were executed in 1793. The Revolution ended when Napoleon Bonaparte took power in November 1799. In 1804, Napoleon became Emperor. Before 1789, France was ruled by the nobles and the Catholic Church. The idea of enlightenment was beginning to make ordinary people want more power. The French people had seen the American Revolution create a country in which the people had power, instead of the king. American diplomats, such as Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Jefferson had lived in Paris, where they consorted freely with members of the French intellectual class. It was contact between American

Revolutionaries and French troops, who served in North America, that helped spread revolutionary ideas to the French people. A growing number of French Citizens had absorbed the ideas of “*equality*” and “*freedom of the individual*” as presented by Voltaire⁷⁵, Jean-Jacques Rousseau⁷⁶, Denis Diderot⁷⁷ and other philosophers.

An economic crisis, prior to and partly the cause of the French Revolution, was taking place due to the rapidly increasing costs of government and the overwhelming costs incurred by war (including the American Revolution). France played a key role in the American War of Independence. The Revolution was perceived as being the incarnation of the Enlightenment Spirit against “*English tyranny.*” Benjamin Franklin was dispatched as American ambassador to France in December 1776 to rally support and was welcomed with great enthusiasm. The French objective in assisting the Americans was to weaken Britain and to seek revenge for their defeat in the Seven Years’ War.⁷⁸ The French saw the Revolution as an opportunity to strip Britain of its North American possessions in retaliation for France’s loss of Canada a decade earlier. France provided Americans with weapons and loans, sent a combat army to serve under George Washington⁷⁹ and provided a navy that prevented the second British Army from escaping Yorktown in 1781.

⁷⁵ Voltaire (21 November 1694 – 30 May 1778 - France) Writer, historian and philosopher. Best known for this advocacy for freedom of religion, freedom of speech and separation of Church and State.

⁷⁶ Jean-Jacques Rousseau (28 June 1712- 2 July 1778 - Switzerland)—Philosopher, writer and composer. Best known for his book “Discourse on the Origin and the Foundations of Inequality Among Men.”

⁷⁷ Denis Diderot (5 October 1713 – 31 July 1784 - France) Philosopher, art critic and writer. Best known for being the Editor of the Encyclopedia and for dedicating many years of his life to spreading knowledge around the world.

⁷⁸ The Seven Years' War was a global conflict fought between 1756 and 1763. It involved every European great power of the time and spanned five continents, affecting Europe, the Americas, West Africa, India, and the Philippines.

⁷⁹ George Washington (22 February 1732- 14 December 1799 - USA). Soldier, politician and first President of the United States from 1789 to 1797. Best known for being one of the Founding Fathers who drafted the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States.

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However, France gained little real value from her participation in the American Revolution, the costs of which increased her debt even more. Her massive debt severely weakened the government and drove it towards the French Revolution. These costs would not be met by the usual sources of state revenue. The taxation system was burdensome upon the middle class and the more prosperous peasants, given that the nobles and the clergy were largely exempt from paying tax. As a result, there was a persistent movement demanding reform of these abuses of privilege, for an equitable means of taxation and/or improved government processes.

The causes of the French Revolution were attributed to several intertwining factors:

- ★ **Cultural:** The Enlightenment philosophy desacralized the authority of the monarchy and the Catholic Church and promoted a new society based on reason instead of traditions;
- ★ **Social:** The emergence of an influential “*bourgeoisie*” which was formerly commoners but had evolved into a caste with its own agenda and aspired to political equality with the clergy and the aristocracy;
- ★ **Financial:** France’s debt, aggravated by French involvement in the American Revolution, led Louis XVI to implement new taxations;
- ★ **Political:** Louis XVI faced virulent opposition from provincial parliaments;
- ★ **Economic:** The deregulation of the grain market, advocated by liberal economists, resulted in an increase in bread prices. In periods of bad harvest, this would lead to food scarcity prompting the masses to revolt.

On 18th May 1804, Napoleon proclaimed himself Emperor of the French and made Josephine, his wife, Empress. It is quite ironic that the person

who came to the rescue during the French Revolution (with the main purpose of eliminating aristocracy and all its abuse) ended up a few years later declaring himself First Consul of France for life and taking the title of Emperor. How did this happen? Even more importantly why did the newly “*liberated*” French people allow this to happen? The Revolution had confiscated land and wealth from the churches and much of the aristocracy and had sold it to the bourgeoisie. The bourgeoisie were now terrified that royalists would strip them of their newly acquired riches, and were determined to do anything they could to maintain their newly acquired privileges. Napoleon, being a brilliant strategist and very “*au fait*” with the art of war, knew that he had to gain the landowners support so created a constitution which gave power to many land owners and gave them the right to retain their land; in exchange, the landowners would support him as Leader of France.

When the constitution was first drafted, it only made Napoleon First Consul for ten years and people began to fear what would happen when Napoleon left office. Again, he took advantage of this feeling of insecurity and fear from the landowners to secure, in 1802, the nomination of the Consulship for life. Napoleon used this period to pack more of his men into government in order to increase his support base; establishing a ruling class of landowners desperate to keep their privileges at all costs. The climate of insecurity came from the fact that the expelled French monarchy was still waiting for the opportunity to restore itself and claim back all “*stolen*” properties. This fear was enflamed by Napoleon’s propaganda machine. The end-result was that Napoleon managed to successfully push the idea that his government must be made hereditary, i.e. on Napoleon’s death his heir would inherit and safeguard the land of the landowners. Consequently, on 18th May 1804, the Senate who had all been chosen by Napoleon – passed a law making him Emperor of France (he had rejected the title “*King*” as it was too close to the old royal government and not ambitious enough) and his family were made hereditary heirs. And just like this, the savior

of France – often depicted on his white horse - who came to the rescue of the oppressed, became the oppressor.

It is not a given to think that everyone wants to be free. Most people are willing to sacrifice freedom for security. In an economically free society, the primary role of government is to protect individuals and their property from aggression by others. Studies have shown that living in a country with high overall economic freedom is a relevant determinant of feeling in control of one's own life. Therefore, economic freedom also influences individual happiness by giving people the feeling of being more in control of their lives. However, it is a misconception to believe that everyone wants to be free.

J.M Buchanan⁸⁰ noticed that the majority of scientists, scholars and academics have assumed that people want to be at liberty to make their own choices, to be free from coercion by others. This assumption has failed to emphasize the fact that liberty carries with it “*responsibility*” and it is evident that many people do not want to shoulder the final responsibility for their own actions. Buchanan noticed that “*Many persons are indeed afraid to be free. Relatively few persons are sufficiently strong as individuals, to take on the full range of liberties and their accompanying responsibilities, without seeking some substitute or replacement of the parental shelter they had when they were a child. Religion does serve this purpose. Organized communities constitute partial parental replacements for some. But more importantly, the State takes on this parental role by stepping in and relieving the individual of his responsibility as an independently choosing and acting adult. In exchange of course for this safety, the State reduces the liberty of the individual considerably and dictates every aspect of his life directly or indirectly. For some individuals, the order and certainty that the State provides may be well worth the*

⁸⁰ James McGill Buchanan (3 October 1919 – 9 January 2013 – USA). Economist. Best known for his work on “*Public Choice Theory*.”

sacrifice in liberty. Those persons want to be told what to do and when to do it; they seek order and security rather than insecurity and freedom, and order comes at a cost that they seem willing to pay.”

The desire for freedom and responsibility is not nearly as universal as many people think. The majority of people want to be controlled and this is how the welfare state was born. In the USA today, more than 47 million Americans use the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) formerly known as the Food Stamp Program. This program provides food-purchasing assistance for low and no-income people living in the US. It is a federal aid program, administered by the US Department of Agriculture. Because SNAP is a means tested entitlement program, participation rates are closely related to the number of individuals living in poverty at any given time. A high level of unemployment is related to a high level of participation in the program. As with any welfare program there are certain pros and cons; the most obvious argument in favor is that it benefits those who are in need by making sure that low and no-income families have enough to eat and live decently. Conversely, the arguments against social welfare programs include that they discourage self-reliance and give politicians an easy tool to leverage power. Wikipedia defines the welfare state as a form of social organization in which the state claims to ensure directly or indirectly the social well-being of citizens by playing a central role in regulating the economy and redistributing wealth and income in order to achieve stated objectives of social protection and justice. According to Thomas Sowell: *"One of the saddest characteristics of our time is that we have demonized those who produce, subsidized those who refuse to produce and canonized those who complain."*

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According to Jean-Jacques Rousseau⁸¹ “*Man was born free, and everywhere you look he is in chains,*” but it doesn’t have to be that way. It is possible to find freedom in an unfree world and this is exactly what Harry Browne⁸² wrote in his book “*How I Found Freedom in an Unfree World.*” I propose to take you on an expedition with Harry Browne in order to get acquainted with his way of thinking; his ideas explain that for people to be free they have to avoid all the traps that they will surely find on their path. Browne explained that, more often than not, it is not other people who take away our freedom, it is ourselves who tend to fall into traps that restrict our freedom.

I want you to picture yourself walking on a road. Each step you take will take you a little further on your life’s journey. Sometimes, you will find the road nice and pleasant, other times you will find it difficult and painful with many obstacles to overcome. What you should realize when you are walking along this road is that there are many traps not visible to the naked eye, but they are there, nonetheless. These traps are waiting for you. If you don’t pay attention you will easily fall into them and get stuck. But do not despair, even if you have fallen into one of these traps all is not lost, you can pull yourself out and get back on the road to continue your journey; except this time, you will be a bit wiser, you will be more aware, and you will be better at spotting traps.

There are many traps that Harry Browne has identified that will prevent people from being free:

- ★ The Rights Trap;
- ★ The Utopia Trap;
- ★ The Burning Issue Trap;

⁸¹ Jean-Jacques Rousseau (28 June 1712 – 2 July 1778 - Switzerland) –Philosopher, writer and composer. Best known for his book “*The Social Contract or Principle of Political Right*” said to have influenced the French Revolution.

⁸² Harry Browne (17 Jun 1933 – 1 March 2006 - USA) Author best known for his book “*How I Found Freedom in an Unfree World.*”

- ★ The Previous Investment Trap;
- ★ The Box Trap;
- ★ The Certainty Trap;

According to Harry Browne, the Rights Trap is the belief that your rights will make you free. Each one of us are born with inalienable rights. According to the American Declaration of Independence every person has the unalienable Rights of Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness. Unfortunately, rights only exist in theory; as we have seen before, history is full of examples where theory and practice are two different things. It is assumed that you have a right to life. Unfortunately, however, if someone kills you, your right to life is of little value. The police may investigate, find the killer, convict him and send him to prison; but none of that will change the fact that you are dead. It is more effective to see to it that no one has the intention and the opportunity to kill you; in the unfortunate scenario where you are being attacked you are able to fiercely defend yourself to protect your right to life. The right to self-defense is an inherent right of every human being. Animals and plants use self-defense mechanisms to ensure their survival. Learn martial arts. There are many benefits in learning martial arts in addition to teaching you how to defend yourself; they help build your self-confidence and your self-esteem, they help your body release endorphins making you happier, they help achieve harmony and balance between your body, mind and spirit. Anybody who is trying to take away your inherent right to self-defense may have a hidden motive; and despite the narrative put forward it may not be all good.

Browne noticed that most people feel that they have a right to be treated in a certain way, but for him it is more realistic to allow each person to be what they want to be, leaving you to look for someone who is already what you want them to be. For example, in a relationship, it is easy to feel that the other person owes you certain things, such as respect, honesty or fair play. According to Browne, people should try to get into

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a mindset where they think that: *“No one owes me moral conduct, respect, friendship, love, courtesy or intelligence.”* If you are not being treated as you want to be treated, it is your vulnerability that must be changed. Focus on the things that you can control. Let go of the things you can't control.

The Utopia Trap is the belief that you must create better conditions in society before you can be free. Browne's view is that an individual doesn't have to live in a free society in order to free himself. No need to try to change the world. There are many ways to be free, when you concentrate on the power you have. Free people recognize that they can't change the world; instead, they first concentrate on the power they have to change themselves. Free people realize that they can choose not to be involved in situations that don't suit them and so instead look for situations that do suit them. A free person doesn't try to re-make the world or his friends or his family, they merely appraise each situation by the simple standard: *“Is this what I want for myself?”* If it isn't you should look elsewhere; a free person uses their tremendous power of choice to make a comfortable life for themselves.

The Burning Issue Trap is the belief that there are compelling social issues that require your participation. You must make sure before participating in those issues that what you are getting is more valuable than what you are foregoing. People may think: *“how selfish!”* Sure, it is, thinking about what you want and what is required of you, but if you keep thinking about everyone else before thinking about your own needs, you will fall into one of those traps, just waiting to catch you.

The Previous Investment Trap is the belief that time, effort and money spent in the past must be considered when making a decision in the present. For example, a woman who decides not to divorce an incompatible husband because she has already invested 15 years in the marriage. In this case, the individual feels that to change the situation

would mean wasting the previous investment. Brown teaches us that the expenditure of resources is important only before you spend them. Once spent, they are insignificant. What is significant is what you receive in exchange for them, and what matters now is what happens in the future; that will depend on what you do now with whatever you have available to you.

The Box Trap describes being in a box or an uncomfortable situation that restricts an individual's freedom. The Box Trap is the assumption that the cost of getting out of a bad situation is too great to consider and that it is easier to slip into a box and stay there. You can come to believe that a difficult situation is just part of living and must be accepted. As an example, Browne uses the case scenario of a woman who realizes that her marriage is nothing like her conception of what a marriage should be. She puts herself in a box and remains in it because she feels it is unthinkable to get out of it. Browne explains that everything you want in life has a price connected to it. The price may be in time, effort, money, emotional turmoil or physical discomfort. However, it always comes back to time. You are not going to live forever. Time is a limited resource. Whatever you do with your time, you pay a price by foregoing other alternatives, other things you could have done with that time. In effect, a box is any situation that restrains your freedom. If you stay in the box, you forgo other alternatives that are more desirable to you. There is a way out, but there is a price to pay to make it right and this price can be emotional upheaval, money, or time.

The Certainty Trap is the urge to act as if your situation was totally certain. Unfortunately, a feeling of absolute certainty is unrealistic. What is true today may not be true tomorrow as things change all the time. At any given time, you have at your disposal only a small fraction of the information needed to make a decision with complete foresight. The important thing is to recognize the limits of any information available as any decision based on this information involves a risk; and

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for every risk there is a liability – a price that you will have to pay if things don't go your way. You are in the Certainty Trap when you ignore that risk. The presence of a risk should not prevent you from doing something, you can go ahead knowing there is a risk but be prepared for it. Taking risks is an inherent part of life; it is only dangerous when you act as though you are not taking a risk. If you are in the Certainty Trap you might walk over confidently into a situation where your loss could be overwhelming. You are in the Certainty Trap if you base your life on what someone has told you is the way to live.

Harry Browne teaches us that a free person takes full responsibility for both the good and the bad in their life. If the market for their service should change, it isn't a disaster as they are mentally prepared for this possibility and immediately look for something new while others sulk over their bad luck. If the product they sell goes out of fashion, they look for something else that is in demand. If the government raises taxes, they look for a way to avoid them. A free person recognizes their own sovereignty. They value their life above all and refuse to make others responsible for their future. Freedom is the opportunity to live your life as you want to live it. It is easy to think that you lack the opportunity to be free because someone has the power to enslave you. But those prison walls only exist because you have chosen to allow them to stand. You don't have to reconstruct the social order; you don't need a miracle; you don't need to reject your own interests and live by someone else's code; you don't have to forsake your own happiness for the benefit of anyone; you don't have to distort your emotions, tastes and values to conform to the norms others think are best for you. All you have to do is to use your sovereign power of choice to release yourself from those who keep you in bondage. You make the decisions and the only standard should be to make decisions that will bring you the greatest happiness. Harry Brown also explained in his book that there are many ways people can free themselves from their shackles.

Freedom from marriage problems; the greatest restrictions upon many people are those imposed by marriage and family problems. The most common restrictions come from marriage and the conflicts of interest that develop between a husband and wife, each feeling that they are getting less than they want out of life. People marry because they are in love. Life is to be lived, not sacrificed. You love someone because of the way they make you feel; because of the way they enhance your life. If what you are doesn't do the same for them, then no amount of sacrifice is going to make things right.

That said now it is a good time to take a trip to Japan in order to learn the Japanese art of "*Kintsugi*." *Kintsugi* teaches us that broken objects are not something to hide but to display with pride, *Kintsugi* means "*golden repair*." Broken ceramics are given a new lease of life by being repaired with precious metals such as liquid gold or silver giving them a more refined aspect. Each broken ceramic has its own story and beauty thanks to the unique cracks formed when the object breaks. The beautiful message the "*kintsugi technique*" conveys is that breakages can become valuable. We should try to repair things because sometimes in doing so we obtain something more valuable. We should try to look at challenging experiences and events that happens to us in our lives in a positive manner, as lessons we are supposed to learn, and we should be open to the idea that it is those challenging experiences that makes us stronger, unique and more precious; that my dear Companion is the essence of resilience.

Freedom from Security describes the fact that it is natural for people to look for security, to look for something reliable and safe. The three forms of security that most people are seeking are: (i) financial security, (ii) intellectual security (the assurance that one is right in his belief) and (3) emotional security (assurance that one will always be loved). Browne teaches us that security comes from your own ability to deal with whatever the world throws at you. Your ability to deal with the

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world depend upon three assets: (i) self-reliance, (2) vigilance and (iii) honesty with yourself.

To be self-reliant is to recognize the fact that no one is as concerned about your future as you are, and no one knows as much about you as you do. People who are self-reliant know that the responsibility for anything concerning their life remains with them and they accept that responsibility. To be vigilant is to recognize that there will be constant change in the world. There will always be unknown factors that could affect your plans. The secure individual is always prepared for changes and surprises and is prepared to deal with them as they arise. Self-reliance means being honest with oneself, to acknowledge mistakes as they become known, and not to brush them under the carpet and pretend they don't exist. If you can accept your mistakes, you can correct them, pay for them (there is always a price to be paid) and learn from them. Individuals who can't acknowledge their mistakes will remain vulnerable and will be doomed to repeat them again and again. The secure individual knows that the future is uncertain but is vigilant. Insecurity comes from vulnerability. The insecure person relies upon protectors, institutions and people who (they hope) will guarantee the result for them; but intuitively they know that their interest can't possibly be the paramount interest in someone else's life and remain vulnerable. Vulnerable people often spend more energy trying to look for (unreliable) protectors than trying to become improve their own self-reliance. Having security is always possible, but it can only come from the willingness to handle situations as they arise and having the knowledge and confidence to know that you can do so.

Intellectually insecure people will look for a philosophy that will confirm their moral correctness. They will look for a leader to compensate their lack of confidence and will look for an enemy to justify whatever goes wrong. That individual refusal to take responsibility for their own actions will condemn them to the illusion of

being free when in fact they are in shackles. Meanwhile, the individual who recognizes their own sovereignty considers the consequences to be the only standard of right or wrong; they know that they are capable of seeing those consequences. Intellectually insecure people can change any course of action that doesn't work and can handle change and surprise as they occur; but would feel insecure and genuinely afraid if someone else's decisions were determining their future. Intellectually secure people know the future is uncertain but is willing to be vigilant and check the results of their actions and to be honest by acknowledging mistakes and correcting them immediately; they find the only kind of intellectual security that makes sense is the reliance upon their own sovereignty.

The desire to be loved, to be understood and appreciated is universal. The problem is that most people believe that the only way to be loved, understood and appreciated is by earning it. Most people seek perpetual love and understanding by getting married, by joining groups or by having children. A challenging idea that Harry Browne puts forward is the idea that if you rely upon yourself, you know that you can find the type of person who will appreciate you. If you rely solely upon marriage, family or groups, you know intuitively that you are vulnerable; you can be deserted at any time. You may find someone to marry, but that doesn't mean that they will always love you or that they will always understand or appreciate you.

Freedom from exploitation comes not from changing other people or the economic system; rather it comes from recognition of the direct alternatives available to you. If you feel that you are being exploited, it is because you feel trapped in a situation to which there are no alternatives. However, to every situation there are always alternatives. By definition, exploitation is usually considered to be the utilization of someone or something for purely selfish reasons, but as Harry Browne points out again and again – each one of us has motivations that are

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purely selfish. Selfish motivations are not in themselves wrong; this is how it is supposed to be; however, you only have one life and one life alone and it is your responsibility to live life the way you wish. It doesn't mean that you have to be ruthless and inconsiderate in your pursuit, only people with a scarcity/zero-sum game mentality will live life on that basis. The secure person can live their life in a way that protects their own self-interest without having to be ruthless and inconsiderate and can use their freedom of choice to choose options that suits them or is available to them. However, now we come to the key question: what if someone is being exploited? Why do they permit it? Why does someone willingly put themselves in a position where they are being taken advantage of? If there are better alternatives available to you and you don't take advantage of them, then it is you who is abusing yourself. Friendships don't have to be excuses for continual demands and love affairs don't have to include constant arguments or sacrifices. If this is your situation, it is because you've chosen to permit it.

Being free also means letting others be free. *"Everyone's freedom ends where the freedom of others begins."*⁸³ Being free means freedom from the urge to control others; even when the actions of others may affect you directly. The idea is to be able to get to the point where you don't feel that someone must act in a prescribed way towards you. You don't have the responsibility to make people see what you see and to act the way you act. It is not your responsibility to convince others of the rightness of your idea. Your only responsibility concerning other people is how you deal with their actions that affect you and the choices you then make. People are free to be and to act the way they want; each person sees their own happiness in their own way. Some may be successful in their Quest, some may not.

The Quest (as seen through Harry Browne's eyes) is to understand that you are sovereign, to understand that you have choices, to live your life

⁸³ 1789 Date of the French Revolution Declaration of Individual Rights of Man and Citizen

the way you want, to free yourself from self-imposed shackles and to try not to fall into the traps and boxes that await you along the way.

The idea that your political party and/or government will act in the public's best interest should be scrutinized. Thomas Hobbes⁸⁴ famous for his book "*Leviathan*," which established a foundation for modern political philosophy, claims that overwhelming central authority and force were necessary to avoid discord, murder and civil war. Hobbes said that life without government would inevitably lead to conflict, to a "*war of all against all*," and that life would be "*solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short*." To escape this state of permanent war, says Hobbes, all individuals must yield their rights to a sovereign authority for the sake of their protection, and if this Sovereign were to act badly, men must accept it as the price of peace. Prior to Hobbes, rulers in Europe defended their right to rule by citing the Divine Right of Kings. But with kingdoms failing, a new justification for rulership was required, and Hobbes provided it. Hobbes, however, was manifestly wrong.

Paul Rosenberg, in his book "*Production vs. Plunder*," puts forward a convincing argument on the very same subject. Rosenberg explains that there are many reasons why an overwhelming central authority is not necessary to avoid discord, murder and civil war, with the most compelling reason being the fact that men have learned since the beginning of time to restrain their impulses, men learned to cooperate because it provides better results. At the end of the last ice age, around 8,000 BC humans were living in small groups scattered all around. These groups were of two primary types: farmers and nomads, where farming leads to a cooperative model of thinking and living, while nomadic hunting and herding leads to a more domineering and brutal model involving more fighting and warfare. Farmers are not in direct competition for the same resources and have learnt to rely upon their

⁸⁴ Thomas Hobbes (5 April 1588 – 4 December 1679 - England) Philosopher best known for his book "*Leviathan*."

neighbors; they help build each other's barns, share tools, give their expertise to help their neighbors repair their equipment and so on. Farmers also respect each other's property lines, so, in farming, there is a long history of mutual help and respect for property. Herdsmen, on the other hand, have tended to mistrust their neighbors and to hide information from them. When nomadic herdsmen found good grazing land, they did not share that knowledge with other herdsmen. If they found a hidden water hole, they did not disclose that location. So, the overall balance was geared much more towards not helping your neighbor. Similarly, there was little respect for property in nomadic culture; and of course, they were well versed in the art of war.

Rosenberg explains that the farmers developed what economists now call a positive-sum view of existence and the nomads developed more of what we call a zero-sum understanding existence. A zero-sum assumption means there is a fixed pool of any specific good and that in order for you to have more, someone else must accept less; if you want an extra slice of the pie, someone else must accept one slice less. On the other hand, a positive-sum existence indicates that the pool of assets can be expanded. In other words, if there are not enough slices of pie for your liking, you can make yourself a new pie. Young nomads were instructed to take from a world of limited resources. Young farmers were instructed to use resources intelligently and to create food. The nomadic existence was based upon a plunder model, placed on top of a clan model. At the base was the family clan, in these small groups, there would have been a great deal of sharing and cooperative decision-making, but the important and final decisions would have been made by the senior male. What these people saw as "*normal*" was a dominant male in charge, with an organized structure below him. The rigidity of these structures led to hatred that sometimes endured for centuries. Added to this, clans tended to constantly compare themselves to other clans, and opposed any change in status between them. So, the structure was very rigid and was not conducive to change.

The most likely structure within the farming society was a decentralized farming structure. These farming groups kept alive an old tradition to gather in much larger groups for a few weeks every year. At these gatherings, ceremonies would be conducted and festivals held, to make marriage arrangements and trade goods. As these farmers slowly expanded across the globe, they settled in places that provided favorable conditions for them to prosper. They created a system of irrigation ditches that allowed them to use river water to increase the area of fertile land. This allowed the farmers to stay in one place, build permanent houses and avoid the strains of moving every few weeks, months or years. Food was plentiful, goods could be accumulated, large communities could be formed, specialist activity could be developed, and innovation could take place. This community or cooperative living led to immense variety and specialization; music appeared, written language and basic mathematics and sciences developed - it was the birth of man's intellectual life. The creative capability of men and women could be exchanged within the various groups and they could inspire and teach each other. Farm communities created a level of prosperity and human growth never seen before thanks to the exchange and interaction between communities. Ideas could be compared, experiments could be conducted, results written and distributed, and the knowledge shared among thousands. Mankind began to flourish.

Rosenberg explained that the nomads saw the world as a place of scarcity and struggle against other men. They developed war gods and patriarchal structures. The farmers on the other hand, developed female gods and cooperative cultures. Female gods were developed because the female embodies creation and productivity: her body literally brings forth new human beings.

The farmers were now immobile; stationary targets are easy to hit and sedentary people are not well suited for combat. Farmers were easy victims. The first to plunder were the nomadic hunters and herdsmen. At

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some point, they expanded into new areas and discovered that rich, stationary farmers were easy to rob. Nomads may have also resented the prosperity of the farmers and their wealth, as it made them look second-rate. Their first actions against the farmers were looting missions. In some places, some of these nomads would have been so successful that they drove the farmers away, leaving them to either look for new victims or return to their previous lives. Before long, a third option developed: steal only a limited amount, not enough to drive the farmers away. This way, you could work the same ground for life - and this is how the first rulers were born – out of plundering!

Like it or not, governance began as persistent theft, with hierarchical nomadic groups sustaining plunder at a level that was low enough for the productive farmers to accept their rulership with a limited level of resistance. On the farmer's side, giving a fifth of his crops to a thug was less bad than facing death, or going back to a travelling gardener lifestyle.

Then the God changed. At some point the dominating male god of the nomadic plunderers was mixed with the productive female gods of the cooperative farmers. The rulers' preferred strategy was to make the farmers give willingly and because the Gods were super-human, they were the obvious tool to use. Since the Gods did not speak directly to men, their "*true message*" was a matter for interpretation and could be turned to the ruler's advantage, if done carefully. So, the rulers created a story that was repeated over and over again - that if obeyed, the Gods would assure great harvests and prosperity. Intellectual priests were added to the equation in order to give more legitimacy to the ruler. Thus, rebellion against the ruler became rebellion against the Gods. Soon enough, the rulers began building temples and monuments under the rationale that these things would help them connect with the Gods. The Gods had become high and glorious and the people were low and dirty. Only very special men, who were very specially prepared could

move between the two worlds. By convincing people that special men, massive structures and dramatic statements were necessary to reach the Gods, a larger share of crops and labor could be collected more easily. And this is how the first priesthood and government were developed, by disseminating convincing stories and putting the ruler onto a pedestal, lowering the level of the people to dirt and making everyone believe that special people (such as priests) were necessary to both worlds.

Paul Rosenberg finally concluded that our first farmers suffered a fate common to a shocking number of true innovators and benefactors: they were overtaken by aggressive and abusive outsiders who claimed the innovators' discovery as their own. Humanity's greatest benefactors have thus suffered the greatest injustice. The first farmers experienced a stunning explosion of creativity but later found themselves under the control of successive waves of rulers, in effect becoming prisoners of barbaric, ignorant men who harnessed and slowly ruined what they had created. At first, the farmers simply gave up a portion of their harvest and tried their best to work around the rulers' regulations, but it became more and more difficult whenever a new ruler arrived on the scene imposing his own and new sets of rules. More importantly, the farmers' range of thought was restricted, killing in the process all creative thoughts. The purpose of building huge temples and monuments was to instill the idea that the rulers, priests and Gods were of a different class than the average man. When a man was given access to their special palaces, he felt as though an honor was bestowed upon him; he had attained a special status and reveled in that feeling. He would now be less likely to turn against the regime. The other way the rulers imposed their authority upon the rest was to make-up stories and narratives in order to make the people believe that men were fashioned from clay and created for one purpose only: to serve the Gods, by supplying them with food, drink and shelter (such as palaces, temple and monuments) so that they may have time for their divine activities spent mainly towards the preservation of their own glory and authority. The ultimate purpose of

the rulers was to install control, regulation and fear into their subjects, so that they themselves could have a life of leisure and luxury.

When people talk about “*anarchy*” they automatically picture thugs wearing balaclavas, burning and breaking everything in their path, fighting the police, creating chaos and complete disorder. If you look at the definition of “*anarchy*” it signifies the absence of a ruler or rulers, a self-managed society and potentially more highly organized than the disorganization and chaos that exists today with left and right supporters fighting tooth and nail to make their candidates prevail and sit in the “*Big Chair*.” The word “*anarchy*” comes from the ancient Greek “*anarchia*,” which means an “*arkhi*,” which means “*ruler, authority*.” Thus, the term “*anarchy*” refers to a person or society without rulers or without leaders. An anarchist society aspires to be more orderly because the political theory of anarchism advocates organization from the bottom-up with a federation of self-governed entities – as opposed to order being imposed (by force – if necessary) from the top-down upon resisting individuals or groups. The German philosopher Immanuel Kant⁸⁵ described anarchy in his book “*Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View*” as consisting of “*law and freedom without force*.” Kant identified four kinds of government:

- ★ Law and freedom without force (**Anarchy**)
- ★ Law and force without freedom (**Despotism**)
- ★ Force without freedom and law (**Barbarism**)
- ★ Force with freedom and law (**Republic**)

Anarchism advocates self-governed societies based on voluntary institutions. Anarchism holds the state to be undesirable, unnecessary, or harmful. Anarchists oppose authority or hierarchical organization in the conduct of all human relations, including, but not limited to, the state

⁸⁵ Immanuel Kant (22 April 1724-12 February 1804 - Germany) Philosopher. Best known for his definition of the 4 kinds of government.

system. In “*Society Against the State*,” Pierre Clastres⁸⁶ examines stateless societies where certain cultural practices and attitudes avert the development of hierarchy and the state. He dismisses the notion that the state is a natural outcome of the evolution of human society.

Anarchist precursors can be traced back to Chinese Taoism and Lao Tzu. Lao Tzu was a proponent of limited government. He sees rightful power as earned and wrongful power as usurped. Many libertarians are influenced by Lao Tzu’s teaching. Lao Tzu (meaning “*Old Master*”) was an ancient Chinese philosopher, writer and founder of Taoism. He is the author of “*Tao Te Ching*” which describes the “*Tao*” as the source and ideal of all existence. One of Tao’s principles is that: “*People have desires and free will and thus are able to alter their own nature.*” Some of his teaching can be found below:

TAO TE CHING

*“If you want to awaken
all of humanity
then awaken
all of yourself.*

*If you want to eliminate
the suffering in the world,
then eliminate all that is dark
and negative in yourself.*

*Truly, the greatest gift
you have to give,
is that of your own self-transformation.
A journey of a thousand miles starts with the first step.*

⁸⁶ **Pierre Clastres** (17 May 1934-29 July 1977 - France). Anthropologist and ethnologist best known for his studies on stateless societies.

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*Stop trying to leave, and you will arrive. Stop seeking, and you will see.
Stop running away, and you will be found. By letting go it all gets done.
Avoid striving,
and practice non-doing.*

*Learn to taste the tasteless,
to grow the small things,
and to multiply the few.*

*Respond to hatred with kindness.
Resolve difficulties while they are easy,
and manage great things while they are small.*

*All the world's problems arise from slight causes,
and all great achievements have small beginnings.
The wise stay out of great affairs,
and so establish their greatness.
Many things that appear easy
are full of difficulties.*

*This is why the wise consider everything difficult.
So, in the end, they have no difficulties."*

Anarchists began to multiply in Europe during the Renaissance. Etienne de la Boétie⁸⁷ was a French judge, writer and a founder of modern political philosophy in France. He is best known for his essay "*Discours de la Servitude Volontaire*" – "*Discourse on Voluntary Servitude*" attacking absolute monarchy and tyranny. The essay asserts that tyrants have power because people give it to them. "*Once liberty has been*

⁸⁷ **Etienne la Boétie** (1 November 1530-18 August 1563- France). Judge and author. Best known for his essay: "*Discourse on Voluntary Servitude.*"

abandoned by society, it stays corrupted and prefers the slavery of the courtesan to the freedom of one who refuses to dominate as he refuses to obey.” La Boétie linked obedience and domination, a relationship which would later be theorized by latter anarchist thinkers. By advocating a solution of simply refusing to support the tyrant, he became one of the earliest advocates of civil disobedience and non-violent resistance. Lew Rockwell⁸⁸ summarized La Boétie’s political philosophy as follows: *“To him the great mystery of politics was obedience to rulers. Why in the world do people agree to be looted and otherwise oppressed by government overlords? It is not just fear, Boétie explains in “The Discourse on Voluntary Servitude,” for our consent is required. And that consent can be non-violently withdrawn.”*

Ayn Rand⁸⁹ (1905 to 1982) gives us some tips in her book *“Atlas Shrugged”* as to the signs to look for in order to spot a society that turned into a tyranny: *“when you see that in order to produce, you need to obtain permission from men who produce nothing - When you see that money is flowing to those who deal, not in goods, but in favor - When you see that men get richer more easily by pull than by work, and your laws don’t protect you against them, but protect them against you - When you see corruption being rewarded and honesty becoming a self-sacrifice - You may know that your society is doomed.”*

*“Such is the nature of a sick society; lies are truth, violence is love, sociopathic behavior is leadership, and most important of all, slavery is freedom.”*⁹⁰

Natural Law is the idea that there are rational objective limits to the power of legislative rulers. For John Locke⁹¹: *“The natural liberty of*

⁸⁸ Lew Rockwell (Born 1 July 1944 - USA) Author, editor and political consultant. Best known for being the Chairman of the Ludwig von Mises Institute.

⁸⁹ Ayn Rand (20 January 1905 – 6 March 1982 - Russia) Novelist, philosopher and screenwriter. Best known for her book *“Atlas Shrugged.”*

⁹⁰ Unknown author

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man is to be free from any superior power on Earth and not to be under the will or legislative authority of man, but to have only the law of nature for his rule. The liberty of man, in society, is to be under no other legislative power, but that established, by consent, in the commonwealth; nor under the dominion of any will, or restraint of any law, but what that legislative shall enact, according to the trust put in it. A liberty for everyone to do what he lists, to live as he pleases and not to be tied by any laws: by freedom of men under government is, to have a standing rule to live by, common to every one of that society, and made by the legislative power erected in it; a liberty to follow my own will in all things, where the rule prescribes not; and not to be subject to the inconstant, uncertain, unknown, arbitrary will of another man: as freedom of nature is, to be under no other restraint but the law of nature.” Aristotle is often said to be the father of natural law. The Natural Law Thesis holds that if a human law fails to be backed-up by decisive reason, then it is not a proper “law” at all. This is captured in the maxim “*an unjust law is no law at all.*” In his treatise “*Leviathan,*” Thomas Hobbes expressed a view of natural law as a general rule, found out by reason, by which a man is forbidden to do that which is destructive of his life, or takes away the means of preserving the same. Aristotle defined human beings as rational animals, emphasizing reason as a characteristic of human nature. He defined the highest human happiness or well-being as “*a life which is lived consistently, excellently and completely in accordance with reason.*” According to Kant, in a free society each individual must be able to pursue their goals however they see fit so long as their actions conform to principles governed by reason.

⁹¹ John Locke (29 august 1632- 28 October 1704 - England) Philosopher and physician. Best known for his Theory on Natural Law.

<https://www.marxists.org/reference/subject/politics/locke/ch04.htm>

Thomas More's⁹² refusal to acknowledge King Henry VIII as Supreme Head of the Church of England and the annulment of his marriage to Catherine of Aragon lead him to be imprisoned and put on trial for treason. During his last remarks to court – defending himself in his trial for treason and knowing in advance his fate of being found guilty for his refusal to assert in writing that the King was the Head of the Church, he made the following arguments to the jury: “*Some men say the Earth is flat and some men says the Earth is round. But if it is flat. Could Parliament make it round? And if it is round. Could the king’s command flatten it?*” What Thomas More so eloquently expressed during his trial was that the Laws of Nature will force government to exercise a certain restraint. There is a limit to what a government and/or a parliament can legitimately do. That limit is set by natural law. Jefferson picked up on this when he wrote the Declaration of Independence. It articulates the view that our rights come from our humanity. There are areas of human behavior for which we do not need permission from the government:

- ★ Our freedom to develop our personality.
- ★ The right to think the way we think.
- ★ The right to worship or not worship.
- ★ The right to defend ourselves.
- ★ The right to be left alone.
- ★ The right to privacy.

If this is so, how can the Government touch these rights? The government derives its power from the consent of the governed; this implies that we (the people) have consented to the surrender of our rights. The idea is that the government should not encroach upon our natural rights, which are sacred to us as human beings, and those rights cannot be taken away by legislation. You can voluntarily surrender your

⁹² Thomas More (7 February 1478- 6 July 1535 - England) Lawyer, philosopher, counsellor of Henry VIII, Chancellor of England. Best known for refusing to acknowledge Henry VIII as Head of the Church of England.

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own natural rights, but you cannot surrender somebody else's natural rights, because natural rights are owned by individuals, not collectively, not by groups, not by the government. Natural rights are ours and are not there to be taken away by the government. The presumption of liberty says the rights that we did not surrender to the Government we retain ourselves and they can never be taken away from us by the government, by legislation, by decree. In an ideal world, governments should only limit themselves to the protection of our natural rights. But this is not what is happening today.

Neal Donald Walsch⁹³ rightly explained that *“people can, on their own, build their own jail. Human beings have a tendency to close themselves off, shut themselves down, lock themselves into a box by their own view on life; they can build their own jail, step into it and close the door behind them. People do this all the time. Resentment, anger, fear, self-righteousness, close-mindedness are the roads they take to their own penitentiary. People mistakenly think that these paths will get them to where they yearn to go: a place of safety. But soon, while sitting in their mental bunker, they find that they have not gone to a safe house but to a jail house.”*

The concept of freedom can be difficult to define; what is *“freedom?”* What does it really mean to be free? G. Edward Griffin spent a lot of time thinking about this concept and created the Freedom Force International Organization⁹⁴ which is a network of men and women from all parts of the world and all walks of life who are concerned about the loss of personal liberty and the growth of government power and they have put together a plan to fight the advancement of tyranny and collectivism. G. Edward Griffin explains the reasons why he came to draft the Creed of Freedom: *“There is nothing more common in history*

⁹³ Neal Donald Walsch (born 10 September 1943 - USA) Author, actor, screenwriter and speaker. Best known for the series *“Conversations with God.”*

⁹⁴ www.freedomforceinternational.org

than for the oppressed people to rise up against their masters and, at great cost in treasure and blood, throw off the old regime, only to discover that they have replaced it with one that is just as bad or worse. For most of history, it has been the habit of men to focus on personalities rather than principles. They have thought that the problem was with the man who rules, not with the system that sustains him. So, they merely replace one despot for another, thinking that, somehow, the new one will be wiser and more benevolent. Even if the new ruler has good intentions, he may be corrupted by the temptation of power – as we all know ‘power corrupts and it corrupts absolutely.’ In those rare cases, where the ruler has good intentions, eventually he will be replaced by another who is not as self-restrained. As long as the system allows, it is just a matter of time before a new despot will rise to power. To prevent power passing to corrupt rulers it is necessary to focus on the system itself, not personalities, and for that to happen, it is just as important to know what we are for as much as what we oppose.” This is why Griffin drafted the Creed of Freedom.

The Creed of Freedom by G. Edward Griffin

***Intrinsic Nature of Rights.** I believe that only individuals have rights, not the collective group; that these rights are intrinsic to each individual, not granted by the State; for if the State has the power to grant them, it also has the power to deny them, and that is incompatible with personal liberty.*

***Supremacy of the Individual.** I believe that one of the greatest threats to freedom is to allow any group, no matter its numeric superiority, to deny the rights of the minority; and that one of the primary functions of a just State is to protect each individual from the greed and passion of the majority.*

***Freedom of Choice.** I believe that desirable social and economic*

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objectives are better achieved by voluntary action than by coercion of law. I believe that social tranquility and brotherhood are better achieved by tolerance, persuasion, and the power of good example than by coercion of law. I believe that those in need are better served by charity, which is the giving of one's own money, rather than by welfare, which is the giving of other people's money through coercion of law.

Property Rights - Human Rights. *I believe that the human instinct for private property is a positive force because it provides an incentive for production, which is necessary for the material support of mankind. It justly rewards those who use resources wisely and punishes those who abuse them. Those without property must depend on others for survival, and those who depend on the State must serve the State. Therefore, private property is a human right, essential for prosperity, justice and freedom.*

Money without coercion. *I believe in freedom to accept or reject any currency, or other forms of money, based entirely upon my personal judgment of its value, because a monopoly over the issuance of money and the power to force others to accept it leads to corruption, inflation, and legalized plunder.*

Equality under Law. *I believe that all citizens should be equal under law, regardless of their national origin, race, religion, gender, education, economic status, life style, or political opinion. Likewise, no class should be given preferential treatment, regardless of the merit or popularity of its cause. To favor one class over another is not equality under law.*

The Great Leader. *I believe that leadership is a natural outgrowth of human dynamics and is essential for social order and large-scale tasks. However, there are two types of leadership. One based on coercion and decree, found in military organizations and totalitarian political systems. The other is based on persuasion and good example, found in voluntary organizations and free political systems. We must evaluate leaders, not only on their stated goal, but on which type of leadership*

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they offer. Their goals may be admirable, but how they pursue those goals may be tyranny. All modern totalitarian systems have a “great leader” who claims to represent the best interests of the people but who is, in reality, merely a dictator. Truly great political leaders do not follow that path.

***Proper Role of the State.** I believe that the proper role of the State is negative, not positive; defensive, not aggressive. It is to protect, not to provide; for if the State is granted the power to provide for some, it must also be able to take from others, and that always leads to legalized plunder and loss of freedom. If the State is powerful enough to give us everything we want, it also will be powerful enough to take from us everything we have. Therefore, the proper function of the State is to protect the lives, liberty and property of its citizens, nothing more. That State is best which governs least.⁹⁵*

The Fraser Institute based in Canada has conducted a comprehensive study on human freedom in order to develop a Human Freedom Index (HFI). The Fraser Institute's latest report has been issued and is titled: *“The Human Freedom Index 2016 – A Global Measurement of Personal, Civil and Economic Freedom – Ian Vasquez and Tanya Porcnik.”*⁹⁶ The authors of the report explain that, *“The purpose of this report is to carefully explore what we mean by freedom and to better understand its relationship to any other social and economic phenomena. Freedom in our usage is a social concept that recognizes the dignity of individuals and is defined as the absence of coercive constraint. Freedom thus implies that individuals have the right to lead*

⁹⁵ Reproduced with permission from G. Edward Griffin

⁹⁶ The Human Freedom Index 2016 – A Global Measurement of Personal, Civil and Economic Freedom – Ian Vasquez and Tanya Porcnik - <https://www.fraserinstitute.org/sites/default/files/human-freedom-index-2016.pdf>

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their lives as they wish as long as they respect the equal rights of others.” The Human Freedom Index presents a broad measure of human freedom using various indicators of personal and economic freedom in the following areas:

- ★ Rules of Law;
- ★ Security and Safety;
- ★ Movement;
- ★ Religion;
- ★ Association, Assembly and Civil Society;
- ★ Expression;
- ★ Relationships;
- ★ Size of Government;
- ★ Legal System and Property Rights;
- ★ Access to Sound Money;
- ★ Freedom to Trade Internationally;
- ★ Regulation of Credit, Labor and Business.

Measured by the Human Freedom Index, the top 10 freest countries are: (1) Hong Kong, (2) Switzerland, (3) New Zealand, (4) Ireland, (5) Denmark, (6) Canada, (7) United Kingdom, (8) Australia, (9) Finland and (10) Netherlands. The United States is ranked 23rd, dropping from 16th place, mainly due to America’s bureaucratic largess as well as its erosion of property rights and rule of law. The positioning of other countries of note include: Germany (13), France (31), Japan (32), South Korea (39), Singapore (40), India (87), Russia (115), China (141).

The authors of the report on human freedom used the definition of Gartneyn Lawson and Block to define economic freedom. *“Individuals have economic freedom when property they acquire without the use of force, fraud or theft is protected from physical invasions by others and they are free to use, exchange or give their property as long as their actions do not violate the identical rights of others. Economic freedom*

and all personal freedoms were rated equally while safety and security and other personal freedoms received the remaining weight. The reason being is that economic activity is at the forefront of people's daily preoccupation. Although, economic freedom decreases the dependence of individuals on government. As such, economic freedom is not just inherently valuable; it empowers individuals to exercise other freedoms."

The authors of the report also explain how important the rule of law, security and safety is in assessing how free a country is. *"Without the rule of law and security, specific freedom cannot in a practical sense be lived out. The rule of law and security are essential to provide reasonable assurance that life is protected. The rule of law, by providing predictable order and reducing arbitrary conduct by the authorities, further facilitates an environment in which freedoms are safeguarded. Without security or the rule of law, liberty is degraded or even meaningless."*

There is perhaps no-one better than John Locke to express what freedom is and how the rule of law plays a pivotal role in keeping us free: *"The purpose of law is not to abolish or restrain, but to preserve and enlarge freedom: for in all the states of created beings capable of law, where there is no law, there is no freedom; for liberty is to be free from restraint and violence from others; which cannot be where there is no law."* A society ruled by law, not men, implies that laws apply to everybody, including the authorities, that they be publicly known and understood, and that they limit the arbitrary decisions of rulers.

The report on human freedom also deals in great detail with security and safety which, as we know, includes the right to life and safety from physical aggression is one of our inalienable rights as human beings. Violence of any kind, except in self-defense or in the administration of justice, reduces personal freedom and in the case of violence that results

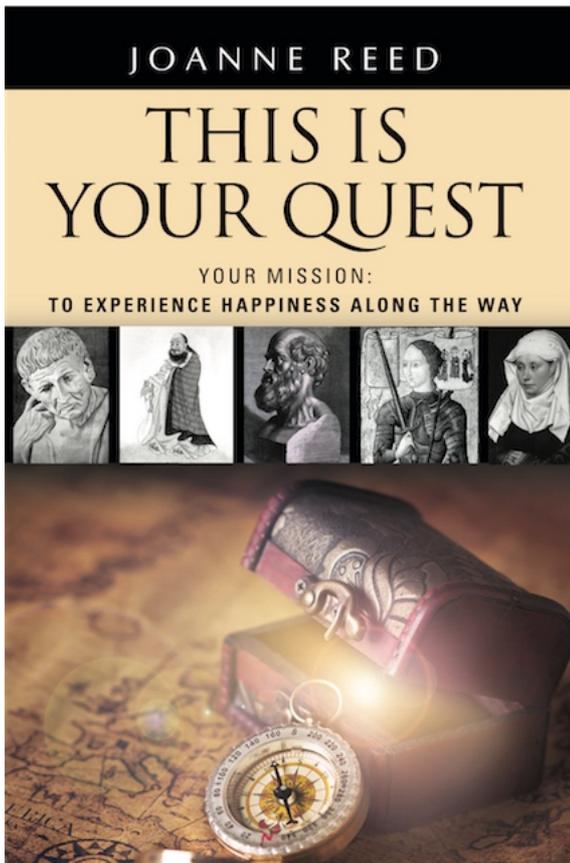
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in death, it eliminates it altogether. Like, the rule of law, security and safety are important factors in safeguarding overall freedom.

You only have one life and one life alone. It is your responsibility to live your life the way you want. Your life can be an adventure. It doesn't have to be a burden.

*And this, my dear reader is your Quest: "Live and Let Live" -
Friedrich von Schiller⁹⁷.*

⁹⁷ Friedrich Von Schiller (10 November 1759- 9Mmay 1805 - Germany) Poet, philosopher, physician, historian. Best known for his work on human freedom.



An exciting journey through history, socio-economic discourse, and philosophical discussion. This book has the potential to change lives, not by giving advice as to how you should lead your life but by exposing you to concepts, philosophies and a way of thinking (for yourself) that may not have been so obvious before.

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