

# Are we really free? essay

[Business](#), [Accounting](#)



In the essay, " Work Rules" by William Greider he talks about what it is like to be an American worker in our society. He poses a question, " are Americans really free? " (Greider) This is a tough question to answer, what is our definition of free and how is freedom accomplished? Do we have more freedoms than the older generations? What roads have been paved for us and what disadvantages are we facing now? Greider's bottom line in this article was that communication is key for a successful business, is that accurate? These are all questions that after reading " Work Rules" I wanted to know more about, I investigated my own family's history, and in doing so made some revelations of my own. I come from a long line of extremely interesting people, all with unique stories about what it is like to be a true American. Many people believe that America is the land of freedom and prosperity, yes it can be, but you better believe that freedom doesn't come without a price. Being a woman, I wanted to know what path has been paved for me, by the help of mother's mothers. My Mother's mother was born here in Reno, NV she was a graduate from Reno High School and at the age of 17 she started working at 1st National Bank of NV as a bookkeeper.

When she started working she was only making \$0. 78 an hour, she continued working up the ranks until she was a teller. It took her nine years to make \$1.

27 an hour. She ended up leaving that job because she had met my grandfather there and the bank did not like bank officers to be with bank employees and so when she became pregnant she was let go. She then moved on to doing bookkeeping and taxes for various doctors where she was making \$400 a month for 33 years until the doctors company merged with

another doctor and she was replaced by someone much younger than her making half the wage.

So my grandmother moved on to working real estate until she retired. My father's mother was born in Indiana. She was an all American girl and was educated through the twelfth grade when she met my Grandpa, married him and left. Her and my Grandpa ended up going to Nebraska where they made their living as farmhands for a while until the wheat harvest began and they moved with the harvest from Nebraska to North Dakota. After the wheat harvest was through Grandma got a job driving a truck alongside my grandpa while he drove a combine.

They then moved on to California where my grandma then became a stay at home mom until they moved to Reno in 1965. While being a stay at home mom my Grandpa started up a hobby of working on antique cars, my Grandma right alongside of him. They then made this a lucrative business for the rest of their lives, restoring any type of antique you could think of from slot machines, to gas stations, to cars. Pretty amazing, but even more amazing is the fact that my grandpa had absolutely no education, as Grandma puts it, " Grandpa went right in one side of the school and right on back out the other. This being said, grandma was left to do all the paperwork, accounting, contracts, etc. Not only did they make their money by restoring, but they were the original American Pickers, they would go through someone's junk, find something someone was going to throw away and turn it into a masterpiece and then sell it or trade it for something new to work on. After talking to my Grandma's about their stories it made me

realize a lot. Some of the freedoms that they have allowed to our generations are things like women's equality in the workplace.

My grandmother was let go from her job for being pregnant, there are now laws in place because of women like her that women now don't have to worry about losing their jobs for becoming a mother. Women's pay is more equal today than it was many years ago. My grandmother and grandfather worked at the same bank, at one point doing the same job and she was making more than 25% less than he was. Pay for women now is almost just as equal as what men are paid. My mother's, mother's job was eventually eliminated because doctors were able to pay younger women less pay to do the same job my grandmother was doing. Greider makes a good point about this when he says, " for the persistent and growing inequalities of income and wealth, a lopsided and self-interested distribution of rewards by those in charge that redundantly favors those who already have great accumulations. It produces many stunting effects on people's life experiences that show up as stressful demands and insecurities imposed upon workers, often ensnaring well-paid professionals as well.

" (Greider) pg. 253) my grandmother's job was taken only to benefit the doctor's wealth. My Dad's mother's business was so successful through their life not only because of both her and my Grandpa's ambitions, but because they were successful communicators in both their business and relationship. I don't think that a business like theirs would last today. They relied on small businesses and relationships they had built with shop owners. They would restore something and sell it to someone they had a good working

relationship with, or an antique store they knew or had done business with in the past. This was the beauty of young American businesses when built in America was something to be proud of. As Grieder points out, " Self-ownership was the road not taken in American history.

The cultural memory still enshrines independent yeomanry-the small farmer toiling his own fields- but the modern organization of work largely obliterated those values. " People can now find already restored items through the internet or connect with people through the web cutting out the middle man. The birth of the internet was death to many small specialized businesses.

To me Americans are free to an extent. We are able to go to whatever church we please, we are able to make choices for ourselves on what we want and what we think is right. Where we aren't free is with things like business. Corporations have caused us to reexamine our lifestyles. That is why Grieder is trying to stress that communication is so important for a successful business. It is important to communicate the needs of business and what you expect of your employees to make them want to come to work for you, no matter how big or small a company. After looking at Grieder's main point, that communication is important for businesses, I think that my families experiences prove that communication is a key factor.

I wouldn't say that I enjoy more prosperity than my grandmothers. For women of their generation they were highly prosepable and made lucrative careers for themselves and managed to raise beautiful families. I think that with their help I have more tools available to me than they did and I am allowed more freedoms than they were. In a way I am more free than

they were because I don't have to fight as hard as they did to achieve goals that were somewhat unachievable in their day.

Unfortunately, even though these roads have been paved our job security has not changed. Each one of us in today's society is replaceable so we have to work just as hard as our grandparents if not harder to ensure our own success.