

The first of six  
american values is  
liberty philosophy  
essay



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

The first of six American values is liberty. Liberty is individual rights, free will, and moral responsibility that people obtain whether it is positive, negative, or social. There are a couple many different theories pertaining to the essential freedom and rights to life under a “ social contract” or maybe to its existence within a “ state of nature”. As indicated by Plato (1497) Socrates argued that a person’s moral or political obligation is dependent upon an agreement to form a society in which to live. When the government violates the social contract, the people then have the right to establish a new government. Whereas Locke (1689) describes a “ state of nature” as a state of equality where all are free to do as they wish with no one person having power over another. Liberty does not however allow people the right to mistreat others and if a crime has indeed been committed then the punishment for that crime should be fitting to the crime that has been committed.

According to Paine (1776) “ Society is produced by our wants, and government by our wickedness; the former promotes our happiness positively by uniting our affections, the latter negatively by restraining our vices. The one encourages intercourse the other creates distinctions. The first is a patron, the last a punisher”. The government must first recognize the rights of every citizen and it must give opportunity to exercise those rights to pursue the American dream. With the help of our founding fathers, The Declaration of Independence provides Americans with the dream of “ Life, Liberty, and The Pursuit of Happiness.”

Liberty is still very much a part of American society today. As a part of a free society, limitations are placed upon people’s actions thru laws created and

<https://assignbuster.com/the-first-of-six-american-values-is-liberty-philosophy-essay/>

passed by their government. Appointed officials within our society to ensure the protection and to respect the rights of others enforce those same laws and regulations. If those laws and regulations have been violated then appropriate, disciplinary actions will be sought. The appropriate disciplinary actions typically consists of the punishment being humane and equal to the crime the committed In order to better protect our liberties all Americans have the right to elect representatives that will act as the voice for the people in efforts to better protect their rights and liberties. These individuals are typical voted into the senate or congress and then once every four years individuals within our society will vote for a new president. Even today, government does its best to apply the “ necessary evil;” to help offset the “ wickedness” caused by our society. Every day we interact with people in a variety of different organizations whether it is a school, a club, Government office, and so forth. Within each of these organizations, there is not only evidence of freedom, but also restrictions. For example, people are free to walk into a courthouse, but once they do so there are also rules in place to prevent a person from taking certain objects in to that courthouse which also places a restriction upon their freedom for the protection of other individuals around.

Legal Equality and Equality of Opportunity throughout history has been something that the American people continue to strive for all the time and even though great efforts have been made to ensure equality there are still instances where fairness is a problem. King’s (1963) famous “ I Have a Dream” speech that focused on equality displayed his views as way for not only our nation to operate, but for the world as well. “ When the architects of

our republic wrote the magnificent words of the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence, they were signing a promissory note to which every American was to fall heir. This note was a promise that all men... would be treated equally." Our founding fathers began the path that led the way to help form equality in to what it is today.

Within America is a richly diverse culture that holds no boundaries to the color of a person's skin, sex, religion, cultural beliefs, etc we will continue to fight for equal rights within our society. As said by King (1963) " With this faith, we will be able to work together, to pray together, to struggle together, to go to jail together, to stand up for freedom together, knowing that we will be free one day." Martin Luther King had a vision not only for his children, but he helped make that vision a reality for all Americans. " And so even though we face the difficulties of today and tomorrow, I still have a dream. It is a dream deeply rooted in the American dream. We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal." Today women also have more rights than ever before, they are not only capable of bearing children and caring for their families, but they are now allowed to succeed in the workplace, allowed to vote, and have equal rights as any man would.

When you look at legal equality one of the major things that you will see is that everyone is entitled to an attorney whether they can afford one or not should law enforcement officials arrest them. This is evident in the readings of the Miranda warning as well as when you look at the sixth amendment.

Within the Miranda warning, enacted after *Miranda v Arizona*. According to findlaw. com " If you decide to answer questions now without an attorney present you will still have the right to stop answering at any time until you <https://assignbuster.com/the-first-of-six-american-values-is-liberty-philosophy-essay/>

talk to an attorney...” In accordance to the sixth Amendment this was guaranteed to us via the U. S. Constitution it is required that any person who is accused of a crime have legal counsel in their criminal trial. However, an individual also has the right to represent them self should they so desire.

Tolerance is a fair objective permissive attitude towards opinions and practices that differ from one’s own. Crèvecoeur (1782) said “ He is an American, who leaving behind him all his ancient prejudices and manners, receives new ones from the new model of life he has embraced, the new government he obeys, and the new rank he holds. He becomes an American by being received in the broad lap of our great Alma Mater.” Tolerance is a very important part of acceptance and freedom in our society. When people teach and help each other they learn from each other as well. Americans come from all lifestyles and from very different societies, because we accept each other regardless of our religion or cultural differences that bind us together. As a result, America has become a very diverse society that is very accepting and tolerant of differences that reside within each citizen.

In a society full of diversified values and beliefs, it is possible to have people with very different opinions. Even during election season one can commonly find people disagreeing over which candidate is best fit to represent the American people. Even though we cannot possibly agree on everything, it is essential to be respectful of those who might be different.

Respect for Dissent pertains to the moral values that all Americans hold. As Thoreau (1849) indicates “ That government is best which governs not at all” he goes on to argue that it is not possible to change what is wrong within the

government and feels that voting really has little or no impact on making change capable. In fact, when a government is unjust he feels that Americans should resort to non-conformity by standing together and refusing to follow laws put in place by the government until which time a suitable resolution is found. We are often placed in situations where we do not always see eye to eye with another person, but it is still our moral duty to do what is right and to have respect for others.

Self-Reliance is an important part of our character, it teaches us to follow our own instincts and ideas; and to be our own self. Emerson (1841/1847) " Trust thyself: every heart vibrates to that iron string." Throughout our lifetimes we must face difficult challenges and hardships that each of us must overcome to prepare us for the future. We should be accountable and responsible for our actions both good and bad. Today people should have confidence in who they are and what they stand for, but to also trust themselves to make their own good decisions instead of having those with Emerson (1841/1847) " A foolish consistency is the hobgoblin of little minds" to tell us who or what to believe or how to act.

Pursuit for Truth can be a life long journey spent trying to obtain the truth. Adler (1981) " When we recognize that the position of truth is ultimate good for the human mind, and recognize this, commit ourselves to the pursuit of truth, we have a number of moral obligations to discharge." On our journey, we can come across many different trusts (versions) to the truth. Truth can only be achieved if an adequate reliable source says yes either this is to be true, or when all agree on what the truth is. As children, we are raised to be truthful in all aspects of life whether it is answering a question or seeking an

<https://assignbuster.com/the-first-of-six-american-values-is-liberty-philosophy-essay/>

answer whilst pursuing the truth. It is important that we are seen as equals and are tolerant of not only our own difference but each other's as well.

Adler (1981) "...It is by opening the mind to the truth, not by coercion or duress, that religious conversion should be consummated." In society today, we are free to choose and pursue any religion we choose without fear of retaliation. Many conflicts often occur because many truths exist as people often see many different sides to one story. Once all parties agree upon a story that story then will become known as the truth.

One of the tools we the people use in the pursuit of truth is the federal court system. The constitution required Congress to establish a Supreme Court and whatever "inferior" courts it deemed necessary, but did not actually create the federal court system, as the structure and function of most courts was left to Congress' discretion. The U. S. Constitution initially established the courts in 1788 when ratified by the required nine states. Choices to fill these positions were submitted by the Executive Branch starting in 1789. Judiciary Act

Congress established the Judicial Branch of Government (what some consider the entire federal court system) in the Judiciary Act of 1789, under the authority of Article III, Section 1 of the Constitution. The court system like the government and its people have grown and adapted to the United States of America's ever-changing needs as our society grows and as time passes by.

Americans may often have their differences; those differences have in turn created a very rich diverse society. Even though we as Americans may often

<https://assignbuster.com/the-first-of-six-american-values-is-liberty-philosophy-essay/>

take for granted or overlook the freedom and benefits that were created and passed on throughout history it is hard to overlook the fact that the six American values are not only present within our society today, but also encouraged by our government.