

7 great virtues essay sample



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BUSTER**

The first virtue Ben Franklin wanted was “ An Aversion to Tyranny”. The main idea of this to Ben is that he doesn’t like tyranny, which is power or control of one person. He didn’t like to be told what to do to and he also liked some control and therefore, have a limited government. Ben didn’t want any dictatorship either, which meant no kings or queens. Franklin realized that he didn’t like the idea of tyranny when he was 12 years old. He became an apprentice at the print shop of his older brother, James, who tended to be a tougher boss.

I think that Aversion to Tyranny definitely still exists in America today. We still do not have any dictatorship in today’s America. We vote as a democracy for our presidents, congress, etc. We do have a president, to represent America and to help make final decisions, but we get to choose who we want to elect. Basically, it’s power to the people, even though we have a presidential leader to help guide us.

The second virtue Ben Franklin wanted America to have was “ Free Press”. Basically, what this meant was that you can write or print whatever you’d like and not get in trouble for it. Although there were some limits to this, there was little to no government control of the press. This let people say what they wanted and free mindedly write in the press. Franklin said, “ There would be very little printed, if publishers produced only things that offended nobody.” I, myself have to agree to this, because if you think about it, it’s true. Franklin also believed that the surest guard against tyranny and arbitrary power was free expression, the free flow of ideas and a free press. He felt no tyrannical society could long exist, if it cannot control the flow of information and ideas.

Like the first virtue, free press still exists today. You are able to freely write what you'd like in the press. For example, it is okay to write to the newspapers and write a "letter to the editor" and express your feelings and preferences. That is legal, and no one can tell you that you aren't allowed to do that.

The third virtue Ben Franklin wanted America to have was "Humor". Franklin liked the idea of using playful and safe humor in life. He believed that if there wasn't much humor, life would be boring and serious, and not as much fun. Franklin used humor even against himself. He created a character in Poor Richard Saunders, the pseudonym he used when he began to publish an annual almanac. The beauty of inventing a fictional author was that he could poke fun at himself by admitting half seriously that money was his main motivation.

Humor exists in America today, as well. People use it everyday, and, to say the least, it spruces life up, and adds a little fun. Even if a person is mad, if someone uses humor, it could make them laugh, no matter how upset they were. Who knows what life would be without any humor. All I know is that it would be quite dull, and this country would not be as good of a place to live in, without it.

The fourth virtue Ben Franklin added to the list was "Humility". When Franklin made a list of personal virtues for himself that he was intent on acquiring, he very proudly showed it around to his friends, one of whom, a Quaker, pointed out that he had left one off. The friend said that Franklin was often guilty of pride, so Ben added "humility" to his list. To say the least, he

never quite perfected the virtue. Humility means that someone is not prideful in themselves, and not “ full of themselves” or self-absorbed. It means that you are more modest, and don’t brag. You will listen to others, and give credit; instead of listening and then start talking about yourself.

Humility exists, and doesn’t exist today in different ways. Sometimes, we have humility, and other times we don’t. Not everyone’s perfect, at times we may brag or boast about ourselves a little or a lot; either way we are still not being humble. Although he was guilty of it himself, Franklin hoped that America would become more humble, and maybe it has, but whether there is a little or large amount of people not being modest, we are still breaking this virtue.

The fifth virtue Ben Franklin put on the list of America’s virtues was “ Idealism in Foreign Policy”. Franklin once wrote, “ The influence of every power is measured by the opinion one has of its intrinsic force.” When he went to Paris as an envoy during the Revolution, Franklin proved himself a master of the diplomatic doctrine of realism by playing an adroit balance-of-power game between France, Spain, the Netherlands, and later on, Britain. The main idea of this virtue, as I see it, is that Franklin basically tried to portray each country’s position as desirable to him.

In a way, this virtue still exists in America today. The only thing I can think of for this virtue in today’s world is Iraq. Even though it isn’t ideal to be at war with a country, we do our best to fight against them and eventually hopefully end the war and win it. The sixth virtue Ben Franklin wanted was “ Compromise”. Franklin used the phrase, “ Both sides must part with some of

their demands,” many times. He used it the most when the Constitutional Convention was deciding on the issue of whether the new Congress should be proportioned by population or have equal votes for each state. For Franklin, who personally believed in proportional representation, compromise was not only a practical approach but also a moral one. He believed that compromisers may not be great heroes, but they do make great democracies. To compromise, it means that each side will give up one or more thing that they wanted to make it fair, since both sides couldn't get everything they wanted. In this way, it makes it fairer to compromise, than to have everything one side wants. Because, when you compromise, each side may not get everything they want, but they take a little of each side and make it even.

I believe that compromising still exists in America today. Compromises are made and it exists in many different ways. America compromises with political issues and with economics also. We, as a country, compromise with other countries, when we exchange or buy products, as for how much we pay and how much products we get in exchange. The same goes for politics, not everyone can get their way, so we compromise and hopefully both sides are satisfied. The seventh and final virtue Ben Franklin added to the list was “Tolerance”. The great struggles of the 20th century were against fascism and then communism. The great struggle of the 21st century will be between the forces of fanatic fundamentalism and tolerance. It is vital that we remember that America was not born with the virtue of religious tolerance, but had to earn it. For example, Franklin left Boston and ended up in Philadelphia, a place unlike much of the world. There were Lutherans,

Moravians, Quakers, and even Jews living side by side in what became as the City of Brotherly Love. Franklin helped formulate the creed that they would all be better off, personally and economically, if they embraced an attitude of tolerance.

So, basically, everyone had to have tolerance for other people, (and their religion) even if it wasn't of their liking, and accept their choices. I definitely think that tolerance still exists in America today. I actually think that it has gotten better. More people are accepting other people's preferences and religions now than when Franklin was President. I think people realize that its okay to have different religions, and that you should respect others of their religious choices. I believe that the strongest virtue in America today is Humor. The reason why I think this is because I think a lot of people use humor in everyday life and it's the virtue that comes the most naturally. If you think about it, America is full of humor, more than any of the other seven virtues. This is why I think it is the strongest. I think the weakest virtue in America today is Humility. There is still a lot of bragging and boasting coming from people of all ages. People will brag about anything they can think of, whether it's about money or how great their Christmas lights are.

That's not what kind of country Benjamin Franklin wanted; he wanted a country that was more modest, and not as " full of themselves". I'm not saying that everyone in the US is like this, but some are, and it's not exactly the best quality to have. The most important virtues for Americans to follow today are An Aversion to Tyranny, Compromise, and Free Press. If people didn't follow An Aversion to Tyranny, this country could be a lot different. It's possible that we could have a different type of leader in charge and we

couldn't get to choose who the leader was. If half of America decides they don't want to have a president anymore then we would really not know what to do. If people didn't follow the virtue to Compromise, it would also affect our country a lot. Without any compromising, nothing would get done and nothing would get bought. If you think about when you're buying a house or a car, if you don't compromise to get the price you want then you won't be able to purchase it. Each side has to give a little for things to work, and if neither side wanted to compromise, it would be very hard for the house or car to get sold, and for you to be able to purchase one for the price you want.

"Free Press", is a very important virtue for the US to have and to follow as well. Without it, I think America would be an angrier place to live, and people could possibly get in more fights because they were taking out their feelings on people instead of writing them down, to the newspaper. Even though a lot of people don't free write to the newspaper, they can still read what other people are writing to it, and see what other people are struggling with.

Maybe the people who were reading the newspaper were struggling with the same issue that the person who wrote it were and that could help the person reading it with their problems as well. Ben Franklin wrote these virtues as advice for Americans, and they helped me understand what kind of country he wanted. So, my advice for Americans today is to remember these seven virtues, and try your best to follow and respect them, as Franklin wanted.

If everyone was aware of the seven virtues Ben Franklin wrote, and learned about them and truly tried their best to follow them, it could actually make a difference in this world. Maybe there would be less fighting if people were

more humble and didn't brag as much. Maybe things would get done faster if people would just take the time to compromise and work things out. We should try to be tolerant of others because if you try your best at being open-minded, it will help you become a better person, and it will help you get along with others better. If everybody tried their absolute best on all of the seven virtues that Franklin wanted for America, it really could make a difference. So, my advice to you is to follow them, and work at them everyday, and maybe one day we will have the America that Ben Franklin wanted.