

Fear Is the Enemy We Must Defeat

In the last six months, five people I've approached about bringing the story of who they are and what they do to a wider public have turned down my request for an interview. A farming and homeschooling family out West, for example, would have made a wonderful article about work ethic, education, and values. In another instance, a woman with a message about the power of movies to change the lives of young people might have shared her philosophy with hundreds of others.

They are all active, busy people, but a tight schedule wasn't the reason for their refusal. And all of them are outgoing men and women, bright conversationalists with lots to say, so neither introversion nor shyness kept them from a chat on the phone.

No, it was fear that brought their silence.

Basically, they were afraid of appearing on a conservative outlet—I write for a couple of these—and thereby drawing attention to themselves, especially from the government. As one woman told me, speaking for her husband and herself, “We just want to keep our heads down.”

All these people struck me as good folks, people possessed of a sense of humor who could make light conversation and who live upright lives with worthy goals. But they were afraid of stepping outside the lines they saw being drawn by our government.

And keep in mind that, with one exception, these refusals came earlier in the year, before September brought us the subpoenas issued by the feds for Trump supporters, [Joe Biden's semi-fascist speech](#), the ongoing travesty of the Jan. 6 trials, and the [FBI seizure of My Pillow CEO Mike Lindell's phone](#).

Most of us, I suspect, can sympathize with this fear. Likely, we are experiencing it ourselves right now. Something sinister is brewing in our government and its agencies, a consolidation of power and wealth never before seen in America.

In addition, we are designed as social creatures, members of a family and a community. We may watch movies about solitary heroes and outcasts—think Gary Cooper as the sheriff in *High Noon* or practically any film starring Clint Eastwood—and we admire such characters for their courage and independence. But in reality, to become an untouchable or to stand alone is a terrifying prospect.

But here's the dilemma, the terrible conundrum: If we fail to defend our beliefs and our God-given rights, then fear wins, and so do those who created the fear.

If you need proof of this silent fear, look no further than some of our elections, when pollsters are proven wrong because the voters they surveyed felt too intimidated to share their real thoughts. In an uncorrupted election process, the truth of how people think and feel comes out in the ballot box.

Professor Adam Ellwanger makes the case that voting is not enough. We must be "[counterculture warriors](#)." He reminds us in an article for *The American Conservative* that those who keep pushing for social change—green policies based on thoughtless dreams and trillions of dollars, transgenderism, the new racism—are no longer a counterculture, though they like to imagine themselves that way. They *are* the culture, and they control every major institution from the military to the universities. They have become what radicals once called "the man."

"My students seemed uncomfortable as they realized that when mainstream culture affirms and celebrates all the ideas, beliefs, and behaviors that used to qualify as transgressive," Ellwanger writes of a classroom discussion. "Well, engaging in

those 'transgressions' makes you a conformist. And you certainly aren't 'countercultural,'" he concludes.

In our upside-down society, then, what was once thought of as "normal" has now become the counterculture.

Professor Ellwanger has given us a demonstration of the courage necessary to stand for our beliefs and for normality. He wrote this article and published it on a conservative site. I suspect that won't go over big among the faculty and students at the school where he teaches.

So how can the rest of us do likewise?

"We need to be willing to *openly live and express* the norms that oppose the left's cultural paradigm," Ellwanger advises. Agreed. And as he and others have told us, that expression can cover a broad spectrum of possibilities: speaking up when we're with a group of friends, joining parents opposed to the shenanigans of school boards and administrators, writing our representatives in D.C. with our concerns, and asking those running for office, especially if they are sitting Republicans, what they have done to oppose the drift into totalitarianism that anyone with eyes can see is happening.

Each one of us can surely find a motive for going on the offensive, as Ellwanger recommends, and bringing the fight to those who have for so long assaulted us. In my case, I have children and a horde of grandchildren, and I don't want them growing up in a country that is looking more and more like Communist China or Stalinist Russia.

Sometimes we have to assess the risks, and then put ourselves on the front line. Sometimes we may even have to pick a hill to die on, and then break out the picks and shovels and fortify the place.

And that time is not just coming fast. It's already here.

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