

# A Farewell and Good Riddance to Empathy

Steve Cuno

There's a reason sales of bumper stickers and T-shirts emblazoned with "I don't give a crap about anyone but me" haven't taken off. Though most of us embrace the sentiment—don't try denying it, you're not fooling anyone—to say so out loud remains unfashionable. Even libertarians shy from too-frequent use of their official brand, *I got mine so screw everyone else.*<sup>®</sup>

Take heart. We, the righteous calous, are slowly winning the fight to mask the *in* in *inhumanity* and the *privilege* in *privilege*. The day is not far off when all of us can wear heartlessness on our sleeves with the smug satisfaction of knowing that the road to true democracy is paved with damns not given.

Perhaps the longest-standing, easiest, and most powerful weapon against humanity is *glib disdain*, which requires neither depth, knowledge, nor thought. Suppose, for instance, the notion of feminism threatens your fragile equilibrium. You need only pronounce the word with a pseudo-knowing eye-roll and sneer. Sympathetic eye-rolls and sneers from fellow easily threatened egos are sure to follow, obviating any need to defend the indefensible.

I first witnessed the power of glib disdain as a mere lad of twelve. My stepmother, a Phi Beta Kappa, used it to emasculate (ironically enough) the term *women's lib* during breakfast. "Women's lib," she eye-roll-sneered. "What do they need to be liberated from? Our first mistake was giving them the vote." Underscoring her point, she hopped up to refill my college-dropout father's coffee cup, lest he face the indignity of fetching the pot for himself.

More recently, the eye-roll-sneer

has made it all but embarrassing to seek after *wokeness* or its predecessor, *political correctness*. No matter that no reasonable person would indulge language and actions that harm the marginalized and underprivileged. This is not, after all, about being a reasonable person. It's about not having to feel bad about not being one.

You can up the ante by singling out extreme examples, inevitable in any movement, and parading them as representative. Don't like minding your tongue? You need only cite the person who jumped all over you for calling your guinea pig a "pet" instead of an "animal companion." This is all but guaranteed to ignite an indignant chorus of "that's the trouble with *those people*."

You might also add a modifier here or there. This is not for the faint-hearted, for it requires a bit of creativity, thought, and vocabulary. Still, if you're equal to the challenge, your exertion is sure to bear fruit. Take, for instance, *social justice*, another concept that the average decent person would be hard-pressed to oppose. Intrepid defenders of the status quo have found that appending *warrior* provides a great way to make a mockery of any who dare champion fairness and equity.

If you're up for a greater challenge, consider *renaming*. Say, for instance, you're of a mind to mock empathy. To do so outright risks laying bare your inner curmudgeon, but you can go to town if you simply rename it *coddling*. Likewise, you can make concern look silly by renaming it *pearl-clutching*, and you can undo laudable behavior by renaming it *virtue signaling*. Indifferent to environmental concerns? Relabel

anyone who prefers not poisoning air and water and not annihilating species a *tree-hugger*. If you find not broiling the planet burdensome, dismiss climate experts as *doomsday prophets*, *extremists*, or *fanatics*. (For added effect, remember to use the above-referenced eye-roll-sneer every time you say "experts.") Also, experience has shown that there's no law requiring you to know the definition of *communism* before applying it to any policy or expectation you find inconvenient.

Finally, let's not overlook the Principle of Charity, the time-honored debate practice of accurately representing an opponent's stance. By "let's not overlook the Principle of Charity," I mean "let's steamroll over it." No matter that *#blacklivesmatter* doesn't hold that other lives matter less, *#defundthepolice* doesn't call for eliminating law enforcement, and *#ibelieveher* doesn't assign preemptive guilt. They can be made to *sound* like that's exactly what they mean, which is all it takes to avoid having to argue against what they *really* mean.

In short: Courage! Stay the course! Throw off the chains of caring about The Other!

Also, let me know if I can sell you a bumper sticker and a T-shirt or two.



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Steve Cuno is the author of four books, unless you count the one under his pseudonym O. B. Sirius, in which case, okay, fine, he's the author of five books. His latest is *Behind the Mormon Curtain: Selling Sex in America's Holy City*. He enjoys walking his dog, foisting pictures of his grandchildren upon captive audiences, and using Oxford commas.