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FREEDOM OF OPPORTUNITY NOT EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY

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GEORGE
REISMAN

Equality of opportunity is an absurdity. Implementing it would require that everyone have an identical genetic makeup and identical upbringing. What counts is FREEDOM of opportunity, i.e., freedom to exploit the opportunities one has, without being stopped by the government, and, by doing so, to create further opportunities for oneself.



Synopsis

This essay shows that the goal of equality of opportunity is both absurd and vicious. Achieving it would require that children all be raised in the same environment and have the same genetic inheritance. In contrast, the essay shows that what we should actually strive for is the freedom of opportunity. Freedom of opportunity means the ability to exploit the opportunities afforded by reality, without being stopped by the initiation of physical force, in particular the initiation of physical force by the government or that takes place with the sanction of the government. For example, people are unable to find work not because there is no work for them to do in physical reality, but because government and labor-union interference, based on the initiation of physical force, prices their labor beyond the reach of potential employers. The amount of work that is out there waiting to be done may be gauged by adding up all the goods and services people would like to have but presently can't afford to buy. The total of such work far exceeds our ability ever to perform it. Physical force, or the threat of physical force, is what stops people from seizing such opportunities to the point of all who want jobs finding jobs. It creates unemployment in violating people's freedom of opportunity. The essay shows what opportunities actually are, how they are the product of human thought and effort, and why and how they require individual freedom for their exploitation. The essay upholds the idea of "the self-made man" and demonstrates how and why in later life "in a free society" children born to poor parents can, and again and again do, overtake and surpass the children of far wealthier parents. The essay is essential reading for anyone who wants to defend not only individual freedom but also economic inequality and the institution of inheritance.

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Customer Reviews

This short pamphlet is very informative. I am a polisci major at the bachelor, master, and phd level, and the material is very good, and I believe it is written well enough that an average high school graduate should understand it.

While I am not an economist but I am a firm believer in a free market Reisman makes his point very clearly that free makets creat an over abundance of opportunities for anyone that wants to take advantage of one, and sadly many don't want an opportunity they want what they are "owed" handed to on a government silver platter.

In this short essay Professor George Reismann systematically destroys and discredits the populist call for equality of opportunity, which is interpreted by socialists as equality of result. Reismann shows the disasters that lead from governments adopting policies that attempt to achieve this so-called ideal state. Under freedom each is allowed to pursue his goals, which leads to peace, freedom, and prosperity. The socialist goal of equality leads to war, enslavement, and poverty, since the advancement of some is seen as stealing from the common fund. But the idea of the common fund is a myth. If the fruits of man's labors are systematically reallocated to others, all production ceases, proving that the common fund itself never existed. Man advances by cooperating with others and helping them achieve their goals, just as all others cooperate with him.

A good essay and a quick "read". Author makes the argument that we each make choices in life, based on what we start with, choices that direct us down the path of success, failure, or some point in between. Being born wealthy does not give you an "automatic" successful life, just as being born poor or being born into a broken home does not doom you to poverty (examples NOT put forth by the author would be many successful poor immigrants, as well as Ben Carson and the current US President). Opportunities continuously present themselves to all of us. What we make of them is a measure of who we are. Author further opines that opportunities can be made by the individual, can

lead either to success or failure, and the winners are the ones that get up one more time than they fall down. No one and no country, can guarantee equality of all wo/men, nor equality of "outcome". Personal responsibility....

I'm not a good reference for the quality of this publication because my rating is based on agreeing with what the author's points....maybe a little prejudiced but would like to think it's a result of observing our recent history and the results of PC, progressive, safe zones, trigger words, etc. cultural changes.

One of the most convincing and concise arguments I've ever read about why "freedom of opportunity" should always prevail over trite arguments about "opportunity of freedom". This short read should be required reading for students at every educational level. Given the many free society opportunities available, one only needs to capitalize on them.

Very relevant an excellent analyses of the current debate on un-equality. Refreshing

Good article. And it gets right to the point. Metaphysical equality and equality before the law are not the same thing.

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