

BEGIN YOUR ANSWER TO QUESTION 3 HERE.

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It is my belief that all opinions are worthwhile. How can someone ever form their own ideas on a situation without hearing all opinions and all evidence first. For an opinion to be well formed an educated it must be based off of all the available information. To shut information out or ignore its existence based on yours or taught prejudices is ignorant. Whether or not opinions foster democratic values is unimportant. People should not be asked to lump their ideas into two categories than choose a side. ~~It~~ Whether or not an opinion fosters democratic values should be a reason to influence someone's reaction to it.

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To me the opinions of other people like public figures or entertainers does not matter to me, whether they are good people or not every one has their own opinion on things.

Like when presidents have a debate on national television over a topic, they give their own opinions not facts. I don't want opinions I want facts. Opinions doesn't help out society any, public facts actually let people know the truth.

Today, most people believe all of these opinions by entertainers. The only reason they do this is because they were on T.V. or they are good singers. But it is not exactly the truth. Say some one like Kobe Bryant and any person from on the street were advertising ~~two~~ different shoes. Kobe says that his shoes are the more comfortable pair, but so does the other guy. Nine times out of ten anybody would pick Kobe Bryant's shoe because he is an NBA player.

Taking someone's opinion can lead you the wrong way like in religion. Say a Christian person meets an Atheist person and they become friends. More than likely one of them is going to change religions. I have seen it happen, so I know what it can do.

These are all reasons why I don't like to listen to other people's opinions. Stick with your own opinions and facts. Instead of changing because some one else said something different,

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Since the beginning of the ~~the~~ United States and the ratifying of the constitution, public speech and opinion have been protected. However, in recent times many public statements have been forced and controlled. Political figures, ~~and~~ <sup>and</sup> because of politics, do not speak their true thoughts. This is also true of entertainers who are ~~controlling~~ controlled by the labels and contracts. Only the opinions of the ordinary citizens contain value and show true thought.

The saying "... crooked as a politician" couldn't be more applicable to today's political figures. Because of political parties, campaigns, and personas, politicians are always saying what the <sup>majority of</sup> public wants to hear. Rarely does a politician disregard the public's reactions. When America was attacked by terrorists, the majority of Americans' ~~first~~ first reaction was retaliation. Americans felt violated and vulnerable and wanted to fight back. President Bush said and did exactly what the public wanted. He like many politicians are persuaded by the public. Take, for instance, the leader who ~~sounded~~ <sup>sounded</sup> in the Bible who sentenced Jesus to ~~an~~ crucifixion. He didn't ~~not~~ see ~~any~~ enough evidence to incriminate Jesus but the public wanted Jesus to die. He did what they asked.

The entertainment industry is a very competitive industry and every entertainer is trying to get the limelight. Many entertainers give speeches ~~and~~

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that ~~that~~ do not say what they really feel. Many entertainers are forced by their contracts to say what the public wants to hear. Only on occasion do entertainers say what they feel, like rap sensation Kanye West when he said that "Bush doesn't care about black people" on a live ~~the~~ TV show for the Katrina disaster. ~~like~~ ~~others~~ ~~was~~ ~~observed~~ ~~that~~. Again we see an entertainer break free of their commands with the baseball player who made that racist comment.

Only ordinary citizens ~~have~~ truly say what they want, because they have no boss or contract to adhere to. It is through town meetings and street interviews that ~~the~~ true opinion is heard.

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In today's society, ordinary citizens are always able to express their opinions in different forums and we learn the opinions of different leaders and role models. Though we may not always agree with others' opinions, expression of opinion is important in fostering democratic values. ~~from~~ We learn the opinions of presidential candidates and others through debates, we help uphold and exercise freedom of speech, and we learn from each others' ideas and arguments that we can access through a variety of media.

A democracy can only function if its citizens are well-informed. In the United States, we learn the opinions of our candidates and current leaders through their statements of opinion on television, in the newspaper, and online. During the presidential race, it has become a custom to hold televised presidential debates where we learn the opinions of our possible future leaders on critical issues. These opinions and their poise and clarity can make or break a candidate, such as in the Nixon-Kennedy debates. Each year, we listen to our president's state of the union address to learn what our leaders plan to do. Their opinions are not only worthwhile, but necessary.

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Without free expression of opinions, freedom of speech and press becomes meaningless. Freedom to express opinions, no matter their controversial nature, is part of what makes America a democracy. In fascist and totalitarian countries, freedom of speech is one of the first rights removed. In Soviet Russia, dictators like Lenin and Stalin silenced opposition by shutting down newspapers and silencing dissidents personally. In the U.S., we have at various times in our history passed Sedition Acts during times of war that resulted in the imprisonment of numerous journalists and ordinary citizens. When freedom to express our opinions is taken away, bad things result. Public opinion helps determine the policy of our country and keep America democratic. While inappropriate opinions should not be advertised on national television for children to see, it is still important that no one be prevented from speaking.

Finally, access to the opinions of others in the modern age is a boon to the educational fields and to anyone seeking to learn. Through online discussion forums, we in America are able to instantly talk with scholars and other students

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around the world and learn their opinions. The internet also allows groups of people with a similar interest and opinion to share that opinion with anyone else interested. Colleges and high schools have begun to create discussion boards for classes so students are able to share their insights with each other at any time. ~~We~~ We learn most sometimes from arguing the ideas and opinions of those who come before us and discussing controversial issues.

Expression of opinion through different media is important. Through music, art, the internet, and other forums, ordinary citizens can express their opinions about government, culture, and society. Without freedom of speech, democracy is nothing. We learn about our leaders and help them lead by expressing opinions. Without the freedom to express our opinions and ideas, where would humanity be today?

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Imagine a world unexplored, one full of possibility, just behind the farthest wood, over that endless ocean, around that forbidden bend. The world of early childhood where scaling the living room sofa was an adventure, or the world of early human history, where every day a new country bared its novel face, every day a new island or land hit the map, where the beginnings of endless fields of study began to unravel and mere thought was a fruitful adventure. Now, imagine that such a stimulating world suddenly became enveloped in a bleak shroud, one which ~~was~~ rendered you blind just as you reached a hilltop, one made of the stuff of Orwellian dystopias: censorship. The suffocation and subsequent murder of ideas. This is the opposite of free communication and expression, and cannot possibly aid the development of the human experience in any way. On the contrary, it stunts it. For in the end, after all our bills are paid and inventions made and competitions played, as Buddha said, "All we are is what we have thought."

We may not live in a world where half the planet is undiscovered, but I hold that our world today is just as raw for pioneering as it was in the times of the Byzantine Empire... perhaps even more so. For while theirs was a quest for exploration and science, and certainly we still have such matters to worry about, ours is one much deeper: the dive into accumulated human experience. We live in an age of globalization, when one can taste the foods and see the sights from all across the planet. We are defined also by instant and vast communication, the ability to converse with someone thousands of miles away and from a completely different background at any time, instantly. And best of all, we live in an age where the ideal of free information exchange is rapidly taking over. Democracy, what started as a system of government for the sake of justice, has evolved and internalized into the people as a new ideal, one which is so sacred that it is worth dying for. It is all-encompassing and multi-dimensional, and therein lies its beauty: for even if someone ~~was~~ were

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to speak out against it, they would be perpetrating its cause. Thus, in a way, we are all on one team, and that is where the power to accomplish truly thrives.

Many find our modern culture laughable, or annoying. Advertisements are thrust in people's faces wherever they go, shows and books are fraught with idiocy. Yet from here stems criticism, and editorials, and water-cooler discussions, and that, not what prompts the discussion, but the discussion itself, is what truly makes up our culture. Primetime news can consist, for example, of a man like Bill O'Reilly, who takes his hour and a half every day to voice whatever opinion he may have, be it for or against the reigning institution, and then invite those who disagree to challenge him, or read angry letters sent in by those who hate him. And many do, and therein lies democracy. Celebrities such as Julia Roberts and George Clooney, both of which never graduated high school, can seize their public access to voice opinions against the government, and therein lies democracy. Cults of followers can choose to believe whatever they say, and therein lies democracy. And someone can criticize them for their blind adherence to those with no educational background, and therein lies democracy. And a liberal revolutionary can condemn the alleged American obsession with higher education, and therein lies democracy. So long as it is discussed freely, it shall live.

One of the most famous lasting philosophical theories is the "marketplace of ideas" theory. It holds that the accumulation of free human minds is like a marketplace. One can buy good fruit at a good price and that is good. One can buy bad fruit at a bad price... and that is good. Why? Because in doing so, the bad fruit reinforces the inherent 'goodness' of the good fruit, and thus that which is truly good is equipped to endure longer. Or perhaps

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the shopping populace disagrees radically on which fruit is good or bad, and this buys a variety, enabling them to make more informed produce decisions in the future, and allowing the economy to flourish with so much exchange.

This theory is essential to the democratic ideal. The play ~~the~~ Inherit the Wind tells the true story of that first brave Tennessee schoolteacher who dared teach Darwinian evolution to his students, a feat illegal at the time. During the trial, his lawyer made the following case: It is not a man on trial, but the right to think, the right to be right and the right to be wrong. He claimed that victory for this man was not in the conversion of all to atheists, but that moment when a pupil was on the witness stand and, when asked whether he believed what the teacher had taught him, responded, "I don't know... I'll have to think about it." At the end of the play, the daughter of the reverend confesses to reading Origins of Species, and not liking or believing it. However, she explains, that is not the point. The point is, as phrased in the play, that "ideas are like children... they need to come out. Some - as healthy as a bean sprout. Others, siddy. But the sick ones die off, and the strong ones live on, and knowing that is what faith really is, not blind adherence to a book. Ideas are like children, and if people don't get them out... they'll die." And when one idea dies, and one person dies, eventually the rest will follow.

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