

"I have a right to my own opinion"

When you put a view or opinion out there you make it everybody else's business and have no right to tell them that they must not challenge it. Not everybody who says they have a right to their opinion means you must not hand them a challenge. But many do. This study is about them. The secret is to prepare them by having them agree beforehand that opinions are only attempts to work out the truth. Also, encourage people to ask questions instead of voicing their opinions. Instead of, "I think President X is right to liberalise abortion" say, "Do you think President X is right to liberalise abortion?" Opinions can enslave but questions cannot. Truth mixed with lies is worse than a lie for it fools easily. It is worse to abuse truth by mixing it with lies than to lie straight out. The right to my opinion brigade use their alleged right to further half-truths and lies.

Opinion is dangerous for it tempts people to settle for having an opinion when they should not settle and look for more accurate opinions and try to find the truth. Settling into opinion leads you to be passive aggressive towards those who differ from you or who would challenge your opinion and sometimes you will try to shout them down because you know you are standing on shifting sand.

Main Points

- People believe you have the privilege not the right to get the truth. That view is stupid. The truth is a right. While there is some truth you do not have a right to you have the right to enough truth to live a sensible life.

- People say they have a right to their opinion when you say or are about to say something that may challenge that opinion. That is a ploy to shut you up and to shut what is possibly the truth up.

- Opinions and beliefs should be deployed only in a search for the unvarnished truth. Truth does not belong to you. The truth is not yours. It is truth whether you like it or not. It is up to you to embrace truth and it is not up to truth to embrace you.

- An opinion is a little better than a guess. Your opinion is a necessary evil - it is something you have to endure until more light comes along. Opinions are not ends in themselves but only symptoms of a journey towards truth.

- Opinions need to be implemented by sincere reason or thinking. To say that X was cured of the flu because x sprayed musk on every day is to voice an opinion that is devoid of logic. The person just wants to believe this for she knows that you cannot say that growing a geranium caused World War 2. So the opinion is really meaningless rubbish not an opinion. In fact the stronger the opinion is held the worse it gets in terms of irrationality. Any respect given to it will be fake. You cannot respect such incoherence no matter how hard you try. An irrational idea gets more irrational not less when you try to support it with evidence because evidence is being abused not used. If God gave you your thinking cap he will not be honoured by anything irrational not even if it is religious.

- Opinions and beliefs affect your actions because of how you see others and how you see things. If you think your opinions should not be challenged then you are acting like a spoilt brat. You only damage yourself and corrupt and insult others with that kind of attitude. You also show that the opinion you hold to be so sacred is not an honest opinion - you suspect it is rubbish and you don't want its silliness unravelled.

- "I have a right to my opinion" is used to stop the opinion being examined or tested meaning you do not want to HEAR what the other person has to say against it. But what gives you the right to say you must not hear it for you expect others to hear your opinions and your challenges? That is how you got your opinions for heaven's sake! Nobody thinks that that although you have a right to your opinion that others have a right not to hear it. If we thought that we would always keep our opinions to ourselves.

- "I have a right to my opinion" when used to stop somebody trying give you the chance to change your mind implies that you think all opinions are equally valuable and useful so it does not matter what opinions anybody has. Its a nod to the dire threat of relativism - relativism teaches that truth is whatever you want it to be. Relativists are never consistent - nobody values the opinion that child abuse is a sacrament of God. Nobody who treats one opinion as good as another even if they are diametrically opposed really believes that one opinion is as good as another. If you are not into challenging the opinion you certainly do have to challenge the relativist attitude. The attitude is a bigoted hypocritical poison that seeps into everything everywhere. Relativists are saying to you, "Okay this is my view and I will not change it. Do not challenge what I want to believe. I believe what I want." This only leads to people being afraid to speak their minds or thinking there is no point. It would be a dangerous thing if most people thought that others believe things not because they seem credible but

because they want to believe them.

- "I have a right to my opinion" masquerades as humility when it comes from a person who regards all opinions as good or true as each other. This sounds cosy and tolerant until you realise that it is saying that everybody is right no matter how much they contradict one another! If you are right and are arrogant about it that is not good but what is worse is being sure you are right when you are simply wrong or your view is not as convincing as you imagine.

- "I have a right to my opinion" when used to stop somebody trying give you the chance to change your mind is just totally insane when the opinion is self-refuting. It challenges itself. It asserts and denies itself.

-If you have a right to your opinion, you do not have a right to your facts. Imagine what would happen if people had the right to their facts. They would be able to murder and still claim that merely because they want to be thought innocent they are innocent. Facts matter and opinions only matter as a means of trying to be open to the truth. It is really the facts that matter. You cannot turn something into a fact merely by having the opinion that it is true. To say you have a right to your opinion overlooks the fact that it is not about your rights but the rights of the truth. If you have a right to your opinion it is because you have a right to truth. In that light, it is never right to refuse to have your opinion challenged or examined or corrected. You do not have the right to try and silence the challenger.

-An opinion is very close to a guess or an assumption. By definition, it is not enough to base trust on. You don't trust a stranger with your wallet even if your opinion is that he will not steal from it.

- I have a right to my opinion is used selectively. It is usually used to silence people whose religious or moral views you do not want to hear. And political ones too - and we all suffer from the consequences of that! You never hear of an accounts assistant who insists that her unprofessional and ridiculous financial statement is correct and using, "I have a right to my opinion so I will not correct it for it is right" as giving her the right to refuse to have it fixed. "I have a right to my opinion" is used to enable moral religious lies and errors. Even if the opinion is right the intention is to create unnecessary risk of error and lies happening and growing in power. Using "I have a right to my opinion" to silence people is active support and it calls on the person you are talking to to stop challenging your opinion and thus passively support you in your lack of respect for truth.

- "I have a right to my opinion" as a silencing tactic is too open to abuse. A person can pretend something is their sacred opinion in order to further an agenda. If you want to be judged sincere in your opinion, then don't say "I have a right to my opinion" to silence people.

-Avoid opinions to the best of your ability. Have beliefs instead and ground them as best you can in evidence and avoid contradictions. It is not right to have opinions in important matters unless the evidence is not clear. An opinion is a necessary evil. It is something you put up with until you get more light.

-An opinion that is stated is asking for dispute. It is open to dispute and therefore requires it. Expressing an opinion is automatically asking for it to be challenged if needed. That is why it is never acceptable or polite to say, "I have a right to my opinion" in order to refuse to listen to a challenge - it is declaring yourself dishonest. You are saying you want the other person to hear your opinion but you don't want to hear their opinion that you are wrong. To say you have a right to your opinion is saying that nobody has the right to ask you to think more. That is arrogant and unfair.

-You are not entitled to your opinion. You are entitled to what you can make a good case for. To say you are entitled to your opinion means the person who believes that murdering grannies for drugs is entitled to believe that. What you should say is that you are entitled to your opinion only until you get more light and evidence. If you are really entitled to your opinion then why are you risking somebody else changing their opinion to yours when you discuss it? Surely opinions should not be discussed at all if they are that sacred.

- If somebody states a fact that others do not like, they will try to undermine her or him by claiming it is her or his opinion. It is unfair to accuse a person who states a fact of stating an opinion. It is unfair to them and to the truth. You may say that you have a right to the opinion that they are not stating facts but opinions! That would be a harmful opinions. It is cruel and sneaky and irresponsible to accuse anybody who claims to have a solid case for believing something of merely having an opinion or opinions that try to silence others. It is no better than gaslighting which tries to get between a person and their attempts to attune to reality.

- The right to my own opinion brigade often accuse people who know facts of merely having opinions and not facts. They are making a judgemental and arrogant accusation. It is very insulting to tell a person who knows something that they do not. It denies that serious belief in anything exists or that anybody knows anything. Instead of serious believers you have people who say they are serious believers but who are seriously attached to something. It is like they are addicted to what they pretend they know or strongly believe.

- Opinions like beliefs have consequences for ourselves and others. Your opinions will impact on your behaviour and values. Evil and unfair opinions lead to evil.

-You are entitled to what you have earned. You do not earn opinions or beliefs. They just happen. You are not entitled to your opinion but you are entitled not to be harassed for holding the opinion. It is foolish to say nobody has the right to stop you from thinking. Nobody can do that so rights do not come into it.

-Ask a person why they think they are entitled to their opinion when they try to silence you by saying "I have a right to my opinion". They are trying to silence you so you have a right to know why you should forfeit your right of freedom of expression.

-If they think they are entitled to it because it is no doubt right, then they are guilty of arrogance. An opinion might be right but it is not right to treat your opinions as fact and it is deceitful to promote them to others as facts. They might be facts but the point is you don't know that.

-When you say something is your opinion you are asking for it to be debated for you do not need to have an opinion. You can just suspend taking an opinion. Having an opinion when you have the option of not having one is raising the question of "Why?"

-If a person feels so strongly about their opinion that they ask you not to debate it any more then it is more than just an opinion. Just tell them that. And if you feel too strongly about your opinions and they are really opinions then you must have emotional problems.

-I have a right to my opinion translates as, "My view is my business not yours. Butt out. I don't care if I am wrong." In fact, you state your opinion and when you put it out there that does make it other people's business and especially if they value truth. Grow up.

- "I have a right to my opinion" when coupled with deliberate ignorance is really claiming that because you have free will you have the right to believe anything. But free will will give you the freedom and not necessarily the right. It is evidence that directly determines belief not free will. Free will is irrelevant as regards the right. There is no right, there is only the freedom at best.

- You cannot silence anybody with "I have a right to my opinion" when your opinion like everybody else's was formed through people and channels challenging you to think. Opinions do not appear out of thin air. Thinking about anything means being open to seeing it being challenged. You are not tolerant if you impose silence on people with "I have a right to my opinion" - you claim you have the right to the opinion that you should. But if that is true, why should you be allowed to express your opinion and not the other person?

- "I have a right to my opinion" sounds like a nod to tolerance but in fact it is not. When groups with opposing points of view say, "I have a right to my opinion and that is that" the rancour only gets worse. Each side will accuse the other of refusing to try to understand it properly. And at least one of the groups is accused justly. Real tolerance highlights truth not what people want to think. Using "I have a right to my opinion" is an attempt to force silence on the views of others and force like that only feeds intolerance and anger.

- Religion does not encourage the practice of using "I have a right to my opinion" to dodge a challenge or dodge getting corrected. But it does encourage it when it comes to "sacred" truths. The theologian will use it to silence the person who offers proof that Jesus was just another deluded prophet or that it is cruel to excuse the inexcusable in saying that God is right to let all the terrible things that happen happen. Countless examples could be given. They just don't want to see anything that shows they are wrong. What they want to think matters even if it means they lead others astray.

- Religion and superstition and supernatural claims and beliefs gives you extra things to have opinions about. It would be simpler without such beliefs.

-People who use tactics to silence you such as, "I have a right to my opinion", are taking advantage of the fact that forbidding certain opinions from being articulated never changed anyone's opinions. They don't want to let you voice your contrary opinion for they want to create the false impression that theirs is "better" or "wiser" than it actually is. Even if it is better and wiser, that is not what they care about. Don't enable their arrogance. Enabling it is feeding it.

-Those who are afraid to challenge an opinion because the person claims a right to it could challenge the person for trying to assert like that and make out that his opinion is something sacrosanct and above your opinion that it should be challenged. That way you are challenging not the opinion itself but the person's arrogance towards you. It is a good way of

paving the way for challenging the opinion.

- If you call something your opinion in spite of it being obvious to you that it must be wrong you are contradicting the facts and the evidence. It makes to sense to call something an opinion which means it must be based on some sort of evidence however weak and then to oppose the best evidence because it refutes it. It makes no sense to have a contradictory opinion: "I believe Jesus loves sinners but does not forgive their sins." If you contradict yourself you are asking others to say to you, "You say X and then Y so which is it and why?" To silence them with, "I have a right to my opinion" is just childish and unfair.

-Nobody can make you or force you to change your opinion. That only proves they cannot do anything about it not that you have a right to your opinion. The freedom to have an opinion does not add up to a right to have it. The right to have it depends on whether you are open to truth or not. You only have a right to an opinion if the opinion is in fact correct or if you are trying to be correct and are willing to scrap the opinion should it be proven wrong.

the bible says...

2 Corinthians 11:3, 4 "But I am concerned that even as the serpent beguiled Eve by his craftiness, so your minds may be corrupted and turned away from the straightforward simplicity of teaching about Christ. Because if someone comes along preaching another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or if you receive a different spirit, which you did not receive originally, or if you receive a different gospel which you did not originally accept, you put up with these things too easily.

This clearly forbids a Christian to use, "I have a right to my opinion," too much. It only applies in matters of uncertainty and unimportance where the facts are disputed and the evidences inconclusive.

God commands all men to believe on the name of His son, Jesus Christ, not have their own opinions about him. 1 John 3: 23 "And this is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment." An opinion and a belief are two different things.

CONCLUSION

If you think a person wants to waste your time by ending your chat with I have a right to my opinion then make sure you ask them questions so that they see the contradiction in their thinking. People are less defensive when they are asked to think.

Do not let yourself be bullied by people who go "I am entitled to my opinion." You have told them your belief and opinion fair and square and they come back defensive which is an attempt to get more honour and protection for their opinion at the expense of yours. They demand respect for their opinion - by which they mean it should not be disputed - while they dispute yours. They are saying, "I dispute your opinion that mine should be questioned. I am being unreasonable because an opinion means that which is open to dispute." They are trying to silence you as if their opinions are about them and not the world. Their opinions are not about them. People who think their opinions are about them are the ones who are trampling on the poor and oppressing others. Don't be an enabler of such horror. Mostly it is religious people who go "I am entitled to my opinion." That warns you about the dangers of religion.

Remember that the person who asserts their right to their opinion in an attempt to silence you is denying your right of freedom of speech. Yet they assert their freedom of speech in order to claim they have a right to their opinion. What about yours? They should be told what they are doing!

If some opinions are sacred and nobody must ever say they could be wrong then freedom of speech is nonsense. Those who use freedom of speech to curtail freedom of speech are hypocrites who do what they condemn in others. Who decides what opinions are sacred? Who decides how many of them are sacred?

Freedom of speech is far more important of a right than a right to opinion. There would be no opinions without communication. And an opinion must always be expressed in a spirit of, "I would like to be corrected if I'm wrong, but this is my opinion." That is what opinions are all about - trying to get the truth instead of trying to be a fundamentalist and encourage nonsense. The right to my opinion brigade does not know what an opinion is - a provisional position until further information comes.

You do not have the right to your opinion. You have the freedom to have your opinion but that is a different thing. It does not follow that because you are given the freedom to say things that you have the right to say them. You do not have the right to see a strange light in a cinema and then express the opinion to others that it could be a fire. The law will come down on you for that!

"I have a right to my opinion" is common.

It is not rude to ask the person who says it, "And on what grounds do you think you have the right to hold this opinion?" They invited the question whether they care to admit it or not.

And it is not rude to say, "You are saying you have a right to think something to be true. That means you saying you have to be open to checking it out." You could then change the subject.

Or you could say, "I agree. We both know opinions are just views we hold about the truth and that we have to make sure we are informed correctly."

The rule of thumb is, NEVER EVER LET "I HAVE A RIGHT TO MY OPINION" BE THE LAST WORD!

The freedom that comes from talking about an uncomfortable truth is better than the comfort of avoiding that talk altogether.