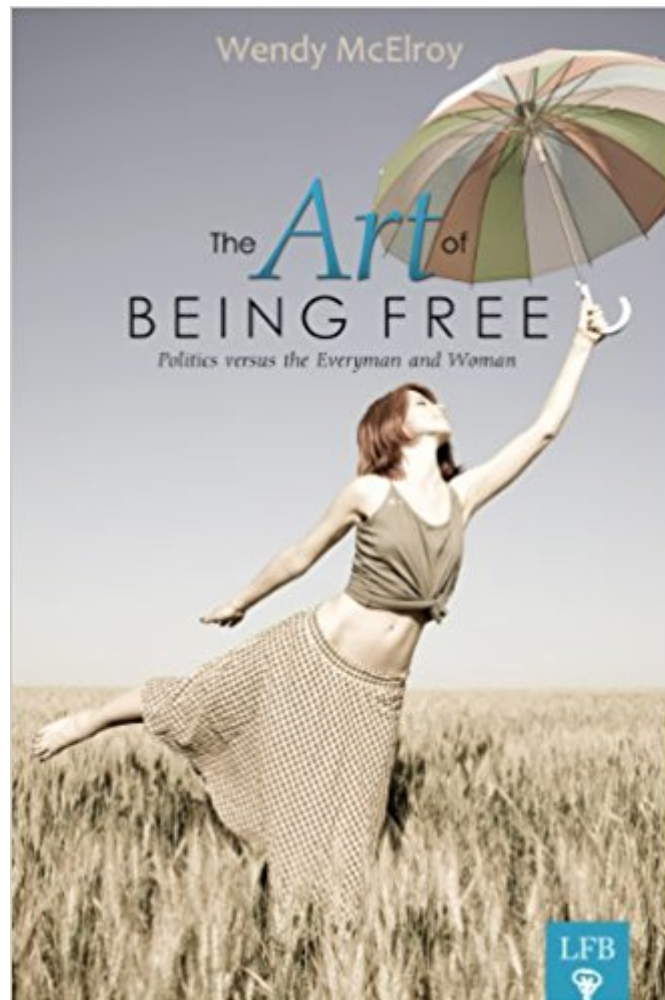


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The Art Of Being Free: Politics Versus The Everyman And Woman



Synopsis

This is a book on the current state of freedom, by one of the great thinkers and essayists of our time: Wendy McElroy. But it is unlike any you have ever read. It deals with the current crisis in a way that no one else does. It has deep and fascinating research on all the main issues we face: the loss of security in the name of security, the state's role in strangling economic opportunity, the petty central planning that has regimented every aspect of life, the loss of basic civil liberties. The argument is relentless, fresh, and eye-opening as never before. But she goes a step further, even several steps further. She argues that your rights and freedom are too important to wait for political reform. We must take our fate into our own hands, and live free regardless of what the political elites are attempting to do to us. Can we live full, free, and prosperous lives in these times, starting now? McElroy says that we can and we must. She presents a new way of thinking about how to build civilization even when it is so under attack. In her view, the worst mistake we can make is to allow our lives to be consumed by politics and the awful realities that surround us. We must instead surround ourselves by people and things we truly love. The best way to fight back, she says, is to find and build freedom for ourselves. We must discover the art of being free. The last chapter alone has been called one of the most inspired and inspiring pleas for real-life liberty ever penned. Here we have a manual on not only what is wrong with the world but also for how to refuse to be beaten back by our overlords. Despite the subject matter, then, this is a libertarianism that is bright, upbeat, and triumphant, even in these times.

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Customer Reviews

This is a book on the current state of freedom, by one of the great thinkers and essayists of our

time: Wendy McElroy. But it is unlike any you have ever read. It deals with the current crisis in a way that no one else does. It has deep and fascinating research on all the main issues we face: the loss of security in the name of security, the state's role in strangling economic opportunity, the petty central planning that has regimented every aspect of life, the loss of basic civil liberties. The argument is relentless, fresh, and eye-opening as never before. But she goes a step further, even several steps further. She argues that your rights and freedom are too important to wait for political reform. We must take our fate into our own hands, and live free regardless of what the political elites are attempting to do to us. Can we live full, free, and prosperous lives in these times, starting now? McElroy says that we can and we must. She presents a new way of thinking about how to build civilization even when it is so under attack. In her view, the worst mistake we can make is to allow our lives to be consumed by politics and the awful realities that surround us. We must instead surround ourselves by people and things we truly love. The best way to fight back, she says, is to find and build freedom for ourselves. We must discover the art of being free. The last chapter alone has been called one of the most inspired and inspiring pleas for real-life liberty ever penned. Here we have a manual on not only what is wrong with the world but also for how to refuse to be beaten back by our overlords. Despite the subject matter, then, this is a libertarianism that is bright, upbeat, and triumphant, even in these times.

The Art of Being Free is a new manifesto from Wendy McElroy. And it's not only a tremendous addition to the freedom literature, it will, I'm sure, also serve as a powerful recruitment tool for the freedom movement. As Wendy reveals in the book's preface -- and as anyone who's spent twenty minutes in this movement should know -- she's no anarchist tenderfoot. At 15, Wendy was already reading Ayn Rand. This, plus her intense study of every American individualist from Benjamin Tucker to Murray Rothbard, led to a decades-long conviction that "whatever happens within society -- from the free market to war -- begins with the individual who agrees or dissents. The individual says yes or no and it is this lever of consent at which freedom lives or dies." Yeah, it's that simple, which makes Wendy's new book both eloquent and extremely persuasive. The Art of Being Free is broken into four sections. The first provides a quick survey of natural rights, the State, and the theoretical footing for the freedom philosophy. The second section applies that theory to issues like public education, workers' rights, foreign policy, and the war on drugs. Where this volume really packs a wallop, though, is in the two sections that make up its second half. Here, McElroy tackles anti-political strategies and tactics for moving forward to a truly stateless society. Section 3, "Principles Work Through People," introduces five "historical friends" who embody Wendy's ideals.

Each of these mini-biographies -- of French philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau, French writer-historian François Marie Arouet de Voltaire, author-naturalist-tax resister Henry David Thoreau, American abolitionist William Lloyd Garrison, and newspaper publisher R.C. Hoiles -- is inspiring and insightful. And each illustrates a freedom principle. McElroy finishes up with a rousing -- but qualified -- call-to-action in the book's final section, "Getting There From Here." Although she admits America is now a police state, Wendy confesses, "Nevertheless, I am an optimist." "My optimism," she continues, "comes from turning one question over and over in my mind like a worry bead. The question is, 'What can be accomplished right here and now in my own backyard?'" "Grassroots movements," she writes, "are the path from here to there." But Wendy advises against focusing on the struggle alone. Beyond the battle, we libertarians should center our attention on living the liberty lifestyle ourselves. "This is a pitfall of caring passionately for freedom and being politically active: sometimes you forget to live. You forget that life is not about opposing things but embracing them. ..." "I act as though the State does not exist," she says. "Make space for the 'business of living' -- the areas of life that allow you to say, 'Here, the state is nowhere to be seen.'" "The Art of Being Free is educational, instructive, and ultimately inspiring. I can ask for no better guidebook to fighting for and living the stateless life.

This book is quite the eye-opener. It is an easy read, but is packed with information worth noting for further study. McElroy's style is clear, yet has a definite style and grace that is quite contrary to some writers in academia. I would recommend this book to anyone, especially those currently involved in the liberty movement.

An up to date look at the libertarian ideal as applied to the current problems in America today. Candid and refreshing! Well worth the read.

Based on how modern society tends to view life in a banal, purely entertainment, extreme thrill manner, Art of being free gives hope to the person that wants to think outside the box and not follow the herd to the best of their abilities...

It is well written book. I got some new ideas about government controls and our freedom. Too often we give up our property rights for government implied security.

Should be required reading for everyone! The country is too regulated and we are being pushed into

being zombies, just following orders coming out of Washington. As a people, we are not being encouraged to think for ourselves or make decisions for our own well-being. Our children are being brought up to be dependent on the government for everything.

I was expecting a book much more along anarchist, individual freedom, lines. This book is more economic oriented which surprised me considering the jacket info.

On Friday July 13, 2012 I had the pleasure of meeting the author Wendy McElroy during FreedomFest 2012 in Las Vegas. She was on a panel entitled (Part 1 & 2) "Live Better, Live Liberty: The Quest to Get Government Out of Our Lives". She spoke with passion, empathy and deep conviction of those intangibles that bring true happiness into our lives. I bought her book "The Art of Being Free" and she kindly autographed. Wendy has written one of the very best books I've ever read on classical liberalism. Do not confuse this term with the term "liberal" as it is commonly used today. The two terms could hardly be more different. In laying out her premise, she references Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, Henry David Thoreau, Murray Rothbard and others as she calmly, yet forcefully argues for a more free society. The book is short yet concise, and that is exactly what makes it so good. The "Art of Being Free" will both frustrate you, as you come to grips with many of the freedoms we have already lost, and yet will encourage you to hold on to your joy and hope for a better future.

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