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Ten very good things 10: Inequality [1]

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Where some look at people and wish we were more equal, I revel in the diversity of humankind, and in the different talents and skills we can make available to enrich the lives of others. Inequality is my good thing number ten.

10. Inequality

One of the great virtues of the human race is its variety. We all have different tastes and different talents. We value things differently, and through our choices, we give expression to our unique characters. Freedom is valuable because it allows people to give effect to their own values and to live by the precepts they think are important.

It is because we are different that we co-operate in trade, with each party to an exchange preferring what the other offers. Some of us are talented at music or sports, and have abilities that others enjoy seeing us exercise. Some of us are creative and can think of new ideas to offer. Some of us are risk-takers, eager to undertake new ventures in the hope of success.

This diverse and pulsating pool of different talents is what enables human beings to progress, to innovate, to strive for excellence. People who want equality more than freedom are sacrificing the diversity that makes people strive for different goals, and they are compromising the creativity that leads humanity to improve and to progress.

Some people imagine a world in their mind in which people are equal. This is not the real world with its rich diversity, so they often try to make that real world behave like the imagined one. In doing so they sacrifice the freedom that enables people to live by their own values, and the variety that provides examples we might choose to emulate if we can.

It is not equality we should value, but opportunity. An equal, but static society is less likely to provide people with the chances of fulfillment than one that allows them to advance towards the goals they think worthwhile.

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