

## Free Speech: A Double-Edged Sword

Free speech is a double-edged sword, it can be used for both good and harm. Free speech has made America different from other countries. We have the right to talk, complain and express opinions as we please, although we carry the responsibility of what we say. Our words can be useful and cause a good change, or our words can be used to hurt people.

As much as I would love to limit free speech to only useful opinions and positive things, it would destroy the whole idea of FREE speech. Many people have different perspectives of what is right and wrong. These are influenced by their life experiences. What may be positive for one group may not be for another. Expressing an opinion in a manner that does not cause harm or pain to others would be ideal.

I was lucky enough to grow up in a culture that taught saying mean things is not acceptable, but you could express yourself freely. At first this was hard to comprehend as a kid, but as I learned more about free speech through history I understood its power. History has shown us its negative influence, like hate speeches, or the life-changing impact such as with Martin Luther King Jr.'s speech "I Have a Dream".

As Americans, we have the right to say whatever our hearts desire, but it comes with cost if it is harmful. We should not abuse our right to speech, we should express what change we want to see in the world, and how we can accomplish that change, but not at the expense of others. In a perfect reality all people would understand the wisdom of Buddha: "When words are true and kind, they can change the world."