

“OPINIONATED”

A short time ago I was called opinionated and it hurt me to be labeled as such. The way it was said made me feel like it was a negative trait. Because of that comment, I have spent a lot of time in some very necessary soul searching, and I found out one very important thing about myself . . . I am opinionated.

But what is an opinion anyway?

An opinion, is merely an evaluation, impression, or estimation of the quality or worth of a person or thing. Henceforth, judgement goes along with it, almost hand in hand, and judgement is having the power and understanding to compare and decide what is right or wrong for ourselves. Is judgement then the product of our opinions? If an opinion is an evaluation or even an estimation of a given circumstance or person, that means that it's as fluid as life itself. Take it a step farther and we discover that it's as changeable as well. Because of that, an opinion cannot be forever because people and things are changeable, and they are not forever either.

I do make judgements concerning my life and how I live it. What others decide to do with their lives is strictly their business, but if I don't want something in my life . . . well . . . I simply don't have to allow it in my life. That would definitely sound judgmental, but by the same token, I have kept myself relatively free from a lot of garbage in life because I had the good sense to know what I did and didn't want. The key is that I don't judge and condemn a person for who and what they are, but I do judge a given impact on my life based upon an opinion I formed. And that opinion is for my own protection and not anyone else's benefit.

It may seem like I'm a cold, hard person because I try not to let others influence me. I'm not. I simply know when I'm not going to change anyone's life by my opinions. In that realization I at least have the good sense to stay clear of the things that I cannot even remotely affect. It's safer that way. Safer for me, safer for them.

So what's the bottom line? Am I opinionated? I think it's good to have the ability to make opinions. Is it good to be opinionated? I think so. It's a good trait, a good condition to live with and by.

But when reading this, be careful, because we need to understand that opinions are like running lights on a car, they are merely safety features. Never would we let a light drive our car, so why should we let an opinion drive our life?

Remember that opinions are one of our God given safety features for our vehicle as we zoom through life, and we must never forget that there will be many others who will forget to use them righteously and with compassion. When that happens, we're no longer talking about opinions, but have stepped into the rigid zone of 'rules'. The danger with rules is that they're generally intolerant and inflexible, and without proper practice our opinions can traverse the dividing line and get us into a lot more trouble with life.

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