

# Keeping The String Uncut

by Patrick Lalley

I have spent a considerable amount of time as of late thinking about who I am and who I used to be.

Now I expect that you do the same type of thing on occasion. Who am I and where do I fit into the whole spectrum of this big nutty world? That's nothing new or ground breaking and it certainly isn't worthy of coverage in and among itself.

But the thing that has struck me the most and the point that is perhaps worthy of thought by both you and me is: how and why have I changed? Specifically, have I altered my philosophies and opinions merely to fit a world that is more materially rewarding and easier for my conscience to live in?

Let's consider this example if we may. It is loosely based on the author while admittedly leaving out some of the more embarrassing parts and allowing for modification based on the like experiences of acquaintances.

Our subject is the typical angry young man with regards to respect for authority in general and particularly the parochial school officials which were part of daily life.

He was lucky to observe many of the pitfalls that swallow up similar pseudo rebels that have passed before and so was spared unfortunate abuse of drugs and alcohol while at the same time was no stranger to their effects.

But this diversion certainly didn't relieve the anger of adolescence and early adulthood and relative poverty only fed the gnawing hate for the entities of elitism and oppression. To release the anxiety he turned often to music and the late 70's rise of British punks and other forms that told stories of social breakdown. He felt different, and tried to look different, from the mainstream society he thought was spiraling into the depths of conformity.

He believed in equality for all people yet he questioned whether it could ever

happen. There were always the powerful and rich to keep the little guy down. He wondered if any real change would occur without the bloodshed and death which he abhorred.

Unlike the hippies and yuppies of the generation past he was not able to drop out. Our hero always kept his string to society uncut, however thin. He worked at his job, earned his keep and more or less continued on without much transgression.

The college years provided some new insights and a broadening of scope. He began to fit in a little more and look more like the norm, as much as he could. But he never lost those basic philosophies of equality and justice combined with mistrust of the vested interest and the powerful. Education, he thought, had changed many of his compatriots. Instead of broadening they had narrowed, becoming focused on the materialistic and insignificant prizes of the capitalistic machine of which they were now the tools.

Life outside academia wore him down however and he flirted with the edges of business and the two-party politics of conformity. He felt their gentle tug like a reoccurring dream, unable to awake. He found himself living the unthinkable world of compromise. Get along to get along, boy. Now the string back to the anger of his idealism was growing thin...

Back in the present we have to ask ourselves if we should ever allow that string to be cut. Living through the Reagan years and seeing former hippies and activists driving Beemers and such makes one think it's all a cruel joke.

As for me, I still listen to my music loud when I can and I've noticed that the lyrics are still often angst ridden, begging for change. Perhaps my kind and I are slipping into a smaller and smaller minority. But to me it's better than the alternative. ☺

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