

Should You Avoid the News?

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Throughout history, there have been individuals who had a vested interest in whipping up hysteria amongst the domestic population. By gaining oligopolistic control of the means of communication, these con artists now have the ability to manipulate the populace into whatever direction they should so wish. Despite efforts to circumvent this control, it would unfortunately seem to be the case that a related breed of confidence men do the same thing against American dissidents by pretending to be one of us, all the while directing us down paths that are either ineffectual or counter-productive.

In light of the various subversions within the [alternative media](#), the veracity of attempting to exercise the liberty of the press is now brought into question. Although the impetus to circumvent the [mainstream media](#) (MSM) is certainly a good one, I am less than impressed with how the [Patriot Rockstars](#) have mangled the [message of Liberty](#), to say the least. What needs to be determined is that, considering the [Carousel of Carnivores](#), should American dissidents avoid the news?



Rolf Dobelli's essay, [Avoid News: Towards a Healthy News Diet](#), gives 15 reasons why he thinks the consumption of news is useless and even harmful (many, if not all, of these reasons are also echoed by [Martijn Schirp](#)). Briefly, these reasons could be highlighted thusly:

1. News skews risk analysis
2. News is irrelevant
3. News fails to explain the underlying processes
4. News is physiologically harmful
5. News feeds confirmation bias
6. News encourages shallow thinking
7. News is addictive
8. News increases opportunity costs
9. News divorces reputation from achievement
10. News suffers from a lack of verification
11. News forecasts are always wrong
12. News is a venue for corporate bias
13. News reinforces learned helplessness
14. News projects a false sense of caring
15. News kills creativity

Initially, this sounds completely plausible, but perhaps it would be a good exercise of due diligence to really evaluate these claims made by Dobelli and Schirp. As a good friend of mine has incessantly reminded me, "There are always two sides to every story."

First, it is important to understand the current playing field by keeping your ears open, lest you be caught unawares of what [the Establishment](#) is doing against you. Second, it would be the height of foolishness to limit yourself to one source (even within dissident, alternative media circles), since this only makes you susceptible to the problem of the [Six Blind Men and the Elephant](#). Again, this is why it's imperative to "shop around," as it were, *because* of corporate and governmental agendas.

It's not as if Dobelli and Schirp were completely wrong, however. Insincere narratives woven together by self-declared *intelligensia* want to do your thinking for you, instead of providing you with an explanation of the underlying processes at work; all they really can tell you is "that something happened." Shallow thinking is certainly an epidemic of sorts because *people don't think* (especially considering the effects of [Because YouTube Said So...](#)); this is exacerbated by the lack of due diligence (as exemplified by the claims that the [Sandy Hook school shooting](#) was *somehow* a hoax). And predictive forecasts *really are* always totally wrong.

Yet, there are some, perhaps unwitting, misconceptions promulgated by Dobelli and Schirp. For instance, these claims of physiological harm seem to me to be akin to the reasoning used by [peaceful parenting advocates to explain why they abhor spanking](#) (both neglect to mention that exercise, as a form of stress, increases muscle size, and is thus beneficial for healthy growth). Opportunity costs only arise from the lack of self-control, that is, the news junkies' lack of focus is, in fact, a problem of their own making, and thus such opportunity costs are *not* the fault of the news; otherwise, such a pseudo-justification could be applicable to quite just about anything. You have to keep in mind that news junkies react without thinking; hence, why they usually have pretty bad cases of the [victim mentality](#).

It's not as if the Carousel is innocent of forming their own celebrity culture, given the very existence of the Patriot Rockstars themselves. These Rockstars are also the same individuals responsible for projecting a public image of themselves as "caring" about the principles of Liberty, all the while leading us down the road to perdition. I view this as the quintessential reason to embrace your own folk and the actual people in your life, rather than give any sort of serious credence to the babbling of some self-made pundit. Finally, the news kills *curiosity*, not creativity; if you're so scared or cynical that you acquiesce to becoming a couch potato, then it's your own damn fault for not following up on leads for those stories that interest you.

A few more observations are in order that neither the MSM nor the Carousel would care to divulge. It would be foolish to underestimate the effectiveness of the [prima facie story tactic](#), that is, a deliberate obfuscation of the facts that leads the consuming audience into a condition that Gary Hunt has called, "befuddlement," which is essentially the marriage between cognitive dissonance and information overload (put another way, there is so much data the audience can't interpret that they eventually throw their hands up in the air and acquiesce to whatever the self-selected pundits choose to promulgate *this week*). Equally foolhardy would be to ignore the [McVeigh Syndrome](#), which is the "bravery at a distance" usually exhibited by the Rockstars and their sycophants, [as demonstrated most recently by their condemnation of the Hutaree Militia](#).

So, what is one to do? I think it really depends upon your goals. If your aim is to achieve peace of mind by consciously avoiding exposure to sensationalistic garbage, then yes, I would wholeheartedly suggest that you do what Dobelli initially recommends by completely cutting out all news consumption; however, if your goal is to counter the MSM, then what you should be doing instead is looking at all the sides of a story from as many *primary* sources as possible, before forming a judgment. Obviously, this is quite difficult to do individually, and is best done in a collective effort of some kind, perhaps in the form of a verification clearinghouse.

How is one to apply these suggestions, though? Dobelli advises us to read books, magazines, and trade journals instead, as well as the need to talk to friends and family. The problem with these recommendations is that since the news is time-dependent (unless you're reading an investigative expose), your circle of personal contacts, more likely than not, are getting their information from the very same news services that you are abstaining from in the first place. Perhaps a better avenue is to *verify* the sources for yourself, and the first steps to doing this in a cooperative manner is the [Committee of Digital Correspondence](#). They are still seeking correspondents, so if you want to write sourced articles for them, they would be happy to publish high-quality reporting.

Ultimately, I have a sinking feeling that most dissidents I've talked with over the years aren't truly interested in tackling the MSM, despite their [Reactive Ralphie impressions](#) to the contrary. What comes across clear as day is their desire to simply *not* be bombarded with corporatist agendas, in which case, I will recommend to

them my thoughts as a refinement upon Dobelli's suggestions – cut down on how much time and effort you spend reading, listening, and/or watching the MSM **and** the Carousel, and instead spend that time [writing book reports \(like I do\)](#), since I think you are much more likely to find sources for the truth in carefully researched (though possibly dated) books, rather than incomplete and misleading news articles, radio broadcasts, or video press releases. Perhaps then you'll start to realize that it's not necessarily the truth, but your own personal liberty, that matters.