

Progressives: Who Are We?

- **Socioeconomic progressives** think that everything is a matter of money and class and that all solutions are ultimately economic and social class solutions.
- **Identity politics progressives** say it is time for their oppressed group to get its share now.
- **Environmentalists** think in terms of sustainability of the earth, the sacredness of the earth, and the protection of native peoples.
- **Civil liberties progressives** want to maintain freedoms against threats to freedom.
- **Spiritual progressives** have a nurturant form of religion or spirituality. Their spiritual experience has to do with their connection to other people and the world, and their spiritual practice has to do with service to other people and to their community. Spiritual progressives span the full range from Catholics and Protestants to Jews, Muslims, Buddhists, Goddess worshippers, and pagan members of Wicca.
- **Antiauthoritarians** say there are all sorts of illegitimate forms of authority out there and we have to fight them, whether they are big corporations or anyone else.

There are many types of progressives. Whichever one(s) you identify with, you should recognize that all are just special cases of something more general. People who share progressive values should come together.



Help Us Build the Progressive Majority

British Columbia's New Democratic Party is our province's expression of progressive politics. If you, like us, agree with the ideas herein, we invite you to support the NDP and to get involved. We believe all people who share progressive values have a common cause and should work together.

The Young New Democrats are interested in finding ways for us to express our shared values in order to present a comprehensive and positive vision for a better future. We're here to support tomorrow's leaders to develop a strong alliance of all of the progressive forces in our society.

Get involved with the UVic YND Club. We're looking for members who want to become effective spokespersons for the NDP and for a coherent progressive vision -- people who are interested in volunteering with political campaigns, who want to develop their communication and public speaking skills, who want to meet other progressives, and most of all, people who care about social justice.

Get Organized!

References: This material was adapted from the work of George Lakoff and the Rockridge Institute. For more information, visit www.rockridgeinstitute.org.



Do You Know Left from Right?

The NDP is British Columbia's progressive political party, but what does it mean to be progressive? Politics is conveniently divided into left and right, progressive and conservative. Do you know where you stand? In this paper we give you a bite-sized explanation of the moral frameworks that are the basis of progressive and conservative ideologies so that you can decide whose side you're on.

The Progressive/Left-Wing Worldview

The progressive worldview assumes that the world is basically good and can be made better and that we must work toward that. The most important values are empathy and responsibility – empathy means we are able to feel what someone else is feeling; responsibility means that we look after the well-being of others, but also are responsible to ourselves so that we will be able to take care of others. Empathy connects us to other people in our families, our neighbourhoods, and in the larger world. Being responsible to others and to oneself requires cooperation. In society, nurturant morality is expressed as social responsibility. This requires cooperation rather than competition, and a recognition of interdependence.

Progressive values and the political policies that follow from them are:

- *Strength* so that we can carry out our responsibilities
- *Safety and Protection* from harm (gives us health care, social safety net, environmental protection, workplace safety, police and fire protection)
- *Fulfilment in Life* so we will desire others to be happy and fulfilled (leads to support for education and lifelong learning, for enjoyment of the arts and culture and for religious and spiritual institutions)
- *Fairness and Freedom* (upholding civil liberties, equal rights, universal education and health care, equality before the law and freedom from corruption)
- *Opportunity and Prosperity* (again universal education, Government support of honest

business practices, Government economic and infrastructure investments)

- *Community* (gives us institutions that care for people in the community, environmental standards, sustainable planning and development and an active civil service)
- *Cooperation* so we can meet our shared goals (Government that consults its citizens and facilitates their political involvement)
- *Trust, Honesty and Open Communication* (leads to support for open and accountable Government, Government that responsive to the will of the people through mechanisms of fair elections, referendums, recall proceedings and more)

The Conservative/Right-Wing Worldview

The conservative worldview assumes that the world is dangerous and difficult and people are born bad and must be made good. It is a competitive world and there will always be winners and losers. There are two kinds of citizens: the good, disciplined ones who are wealthy or at least self-reliant and whom the government should not meddle with; and the whining, undisciplined, dependent ones who must never be coddled.

In society, the Government is the Moral Authority, upholding and extending policies that express Moral Strength. Social programs only “spoil” people by giving them things they haven’t earned and keeping them dependent. Taxes beyond the minimum needed take away rewards from the good, disciplined people and spend it on those who have not earned it. The right promotes unimpeded competitive economic activity so that both the

disciplined moral people and the undisciplined immoral ones are able to receive what they each deserve, based on their own choices.

Right-Wing values and the positions and policies that follow from them are:

- *Small Government* (leads to a laissez-faire economy, minimal social services or only private/charitable social services)
- *Non-interference of Government in the Economy* (leads to the privatization of public utilities and government services, business-friendly policies like relaxing environmental regulations, relaxing labour regulations, and reducing corporate taxes)
- *Limited Social Services* (from their view of self-reliance: leads to reducing taxes to “starve” social services and wage-cuts to government employees, both to cut costs and reduce the level of service, and to make way for their privatization)
- *Order and Discipline* (through severe enforcement of the rules, if necessary)
- *Belief in the Traditional Patriarchal Family* (leads to opposition to women’s, aboriginal and minority issues, opposition to abortion)