



WORKING FREELY—JUST NOT POSSIBLE

Kathlyn Q. Barrozo
Class of 1991, University of Santo Tomas
B.S. Medical Technology

Freedom is not absolute. There will always be limits to whatever freedom we enjoy. Along with freedom is the responsibility to make use of whatever freedom we do have in a most responsible manner. Perhaps that is simply going around the question of whether freedom is absolute or not, but it very much answers the question. We enjoy a lot of freedom nowadays but that doesn't mean we should throw all rules to the wind and not care about the effects of our free actions. We have been meant to be intelligent beings and that means our freedoms are in place in order to make us more aware of our duties to the world.

I, for one, have enjoyed working at my own pace and time. I have had the opportunity to work with great employers whose rules vary as those employers themselves.

Working for a phone company before, my colleagues and I were given the freedom to choose what part/s of the year we wanted to take our annual vacation leaves. However, the younger employees had to wait for the more senior ones to finish deciding on which part of the year they wanted to have their vacations on. When I worked as a call center agent, my co-workers and I had the freedom to drink all the coffee and chocolate drink we wanted, which were freely supplied by management. We were also free to browse the web on our free time, but never during working hours and never on sleazy sites.

Working for an ESL school, my co-teachers and I had the freedom to choose our working hours. However, that being so, we were not allowed to "choose" our students; they were assigned to us and choosing teachers was an exclusive option that they had. My online ESL career also involved being able to choose my working hours, but not enjoying my own country's holidays since they weren't holidays at our students' own country. As a freelance worker, I can work at the hours I choose and in as many days as I elect to work. However, deadlines are to be kept and work quality has to be consistent. Falling short of a client's expectations means you either lose a client or not get a very good feedback. That would really ruin any freelancer's reputation and imperil their chances of getting future jobs. There is no security of tenure, too.

Working with absolute freedom, I have found, is never possible. Each and every form and manner of employment holds certain rules that can not be bent or circumvented. Therefore, we have to strive to work to the best of our abilities in order to continue enjoying the freedom of knowing that we'll still have money coming.

Ahh, work. Got to get back to it now, folks.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

1. Why is freedom not absolute, in your opinion?
2. What are your concepts of freedom? Elaborate on them.
3. Can freedom always be equated with power? Why or why not?
4. As a professional, what types of freedom do you think workers in your industry should enjoy?
5. How can freedom be controlled, monitored or restricted?