



Retirement *Lifestyle*
Advocates

RADIO PROGRAM

Expert Interview Series

Guest Expert: Jeffrey Tucker
Real Clear Markets

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Dennis Tubbergen:

Welcome back to RLA radio. I'm your host, Dennis Tubbergen. And joining me once again on today's program is returning guest, Mr. Jeffrey Tucker. Our long-time listeners will recognize Jeffrey as a prolific author and commentator. He is a daily columnist for RealClearMarkets. You can read his work at realclearmarkets.com. He is on Twitter as @jeffreytucker and his most recent book is Liberty or Lockdowns. Jeffrey, welcome back to the program.

Jeffrey Tucker:

It's so good to be here as always.

Dennis Tubbergen:

Jeffrey, when we talk about celebrating the anniversary of the declaration of independence on this weekend, I think one of the principles on which the United States was founded is liberty. I think often that term maybe is a bit misunderstood or misconstrued. How would you define that?

Jeffrey Tucker:

It's the presumption that our lives work better and the social order functions better. By better, I mean more prosperous and peacefully under conditions of freedom, which is to say unmanaged from the top and rather puts a premium on human volition and its exercise as versus violence in all forms. That's how I recognize liberty. Over the centuries, we've gradually begun to realize this involves human rights to move, to choose, to trade, to own and speak, and to worship.

Jeffrey Tucker:

All these facets of liberty are very important because they recognize fundamentally the dignity of the human person and the idea that human beings are intelligent enough to make best decisions for their lives, certainly better than any outside force, a planner, a King, a Pope. That we're better at shaping our lives than... So we don't have to put our social order or our families or institutions under the control of something outside to tell us what to do all the time. That's the essence of what freedom is. If so, I would say the single most important idea to emerge in the history of humanity, because it's what unleashed so much prosperity and long lives and good lives and actually, I would say moral lives and a coherent orderly social order.

Dennis Tubbergen:

Jeffrey, given that the founding fathers had this vision of freedom and liberty, how do you think they would perceive the United States today and the current health of liberty?

Jeffrey Tucker:

Well, it's in grave trouble. No, I don't think we fully realized how fragile the system was until last year when it was all taken away from us. Our businesses were shut, our right to worship was curbed, our ability to travel, even the right to leave our homes. And when we could leave our homes, we had to use a government approved piece of face covering and it was really an attack on liberty in the sense of... When I say the freedom to manage your life, it's not just about speech and that sort of thing, it's also about the perception of what's good for our bodies and our lives and our health, right?

Jeffrey Tucker:

The public health takeover of 2020 embedded within itself a presumption that you and I did not know what was best for us. We could not assess the risks of disease. We had to depend on our masters to tell us what that is. There's a holistic view of the social order has to be completely turned over towards disease mitigation from this one germ, and that you and I did not know what was best for us, and that we had to just comply, obey and if we didn't, we were disruptive, disloyal and deserving of approbation, coercion, pinning. Yeah, that's the opposite of freedom. Now, we're through with that now for the most parts of the country, not most parts of the world than most parts of this country, and I'm grateful for that.

Jeffrey Tucker:

But the effects of that are very long lasting I'm afraid, and it's showing itself in so many ways in the decline of health generally, the collapse of cancer screenings is going to vex us for years. The CDC's own survey about mental health in America is quite devastating. 43% of Americans are reporting things like hopelessness and depression, anxiety, fear, stress, compared to the previous year of 2019 it was 11%. One in 10 people you'd meet have mental disorders of one sort or another. And then most of our lives, as a result of the lockdowns, now it's more than four in 10 people. This is very powerful. We've seen a collapse in public morality expressing itself, and the 30% increase in murders and assaults and burglaries and general mayhem is the order of the day in most cities.

Jeffrey Tucker:

The FAA reports that they're getting 10 times as many reports of unruly, and sometimes violent passengers on airplanes. There's all these indications that we've seen a dramatic decline in public health and public morality since the lockdown. I think founders would have presumed that this was true. You can't just take away people's freedom and expect that just to... For everything to be fine. It's not fine. Things are not fine in America today.

Dennis Tubbergen:

Jeffrey, now that we're largely through the lockdowns, as you mentioned that the effects of this are going to manifest itself for a long time. As you were talking, I was thinking about an article that I read recently that due to the fact that all these stimulus programs were really funded largely through money creation last year, we're now seeing inflation emerge and to a certain extent, these programs that were created and funded through newly created money are actually now because of all the money creation actually hurting the people that they were designed to help. In a way that's robbing people of their freedom and liberty also.

Jeffrey Tucker:

It is, and one wonders how this is going to all unfold. The Federal Reserve is just saying, don't worry about it everything's going to be fine. But you look at the money supply data, and I have serious questions about this, as my friends. It's like a law of economics that everything else is equal. If productivity and velocity remain the same and you dramatically increase the supply of money and credit, you are going to be experiencing a rise in prices. I mean that's something that everybody has long recognized to be true, and no matter which way you want to look at the money supply aggregates, whether it's the M1, M2, M3, MZM or the monetary base, we've seen a dramatic, huge, an unprecedented increases in money creation.

Jeffrey Tucker:

Let's just say mostly designed for the purposes of buying new debt that has been made necessary by virtue of congressional spending. I think that's... We're living in very strange times. I mean you just never know where the new price increases are going to appear or how they're going to manifest themselves, smaller product sizes, increase in commodities, broken supply chains, the shortages, and strange areas from chicken to used cars.

Jeffrey Tucker:

It's funny because chairman Powell, excuses all of this with just very specific reasons for each of these things. He got a lot of satisfaction when lumber prices fell back to a rational level recently. But I don't know, you know what

I mean? It's true that there's a reason for all these. In each case you can come up with a reason for the dramatic price increases, whether it's a gas or housing prices or food or clothing. But at that some point, you have to recognize that this upward price pressure on so many sectors is not healthy and could very quickly get out of hand.

Dennis Tubbergen:

Jeffrey, how do you see this playing out? Let's stay with that topic if we could for a minute, because I'd love to hear your perspective on this. Do you think the FED ultimately tapers and slows the rate of money creation due to political pressure? Because inflation is really robbing many Americans of their ability to put food on the table and keep a roof over their heads, or do you think ultimately they are as many analysts say that they're trapped, they're painted into a corner and they really have no choice because if they quit printing, we've got a deflationary collapse so they're going to continue until such time as we have a currency issue. What's your perspective?

Jeffrey Tucker:

Well, it is the timing of everything is extremely tricky. You have a political problem right now that the America is ruled by a one-party state now, the democratic party, at least from the top down. And so the FED is going to be very much interested in doing what the party in power wants, and they face an existential crisis in 18 months and they're trying to try to hang on to the House and the Senate. And then two years later, they're going to be fighting for the presidency, which I don't think there's any hope for that. But the FEDs definitely are going to want to try to keep the appearance of economic recovery going. But if that unleashes inflation, inflation is extremely unpopular politically.

Jeffrey Tucker:

Even though the 1970s were a half a century ago, the memory of how that fundamentally transformed America is still there. I mean it was the inflation of the early 70s and then really of the late 70s that led to the rise of Ronald Reagan and a complete transformation of the public attitudes in this country towards government. Inflation is the prism really that everybody wants to avoid, so I think your point is a good one. It's like, well, what's worse, recession or inflation, or maybe you get both, and that's possible.

Dennis Tubbergen:

Well, my guest today is Mr. Jeffrey A. Tucker. You can find him on Twitter as @jeffreyatucker. He is a daily columnist for RealClearMarkets. We'll chat with him a bit about his most recent book in the next segment, Liberty or Lockdowns, that's when RLA radio returns stay with us.

Dennis Tubbergen:

Welcome back to RLA radio, I'm your host, Dennis Tubbergen. I have the pleasure of chatting on this holiday week with Mr. Jeffrey A. Tucker. You can find him on Twitter as @jeffreayatucker. He is a daily columnist for RealClearMarkets, at realclearmarkets.com and his most recent book is Liberty or Lockdowns. I have read it. I would encourage you to do the same. Jeffrey, let's talk a bit about the book. What was your motivation behind putting that book together last year?

Jeffrey Tucker:

Panic and desperation.

Dennis Tubbergen:

That's very honest, actually.

Jeffrey Tucker:

Yeah. From January, I knew lockdowns were coming and or rather, I knew they were possible. By the first week of March, it became clear to me they were going to happen. They finally came about in the middle of March and I just had the spooky sense that you can't just get rid of people's freedoms and rights and shut down the economy without having some terrible effects. I went on a frantic hunt to try and understand the origins of lockdown ideology, what drove it, aspects of public health as it relates to viruses, whether, and to what extent you can actually suppress them.

Jeffrey Tucker:

I've put all this research together into a book that came out in September. By October, everything began to change. We had the Great Barrington Declaration. I was very honored to be a part of the drafting of that and the release of that, and really a momentous reaction in this country. It was two weeks to flatten the curve and next thing you know, we were still in September, October and November, we're still under lockdowns. But I think I made that... My book made a big difference and it still holds up. In the book I discussed the past pandemics, whether it was polio or 57, 58 or 67, 68 and 69, 2009, 2006, 2012 and 2013, and all the aspects of urology and immunology as it relates to public policy and all the players involved. Now, since the book came out, of course, we've had a lot of information come out among which the Fauci emails and evermore data coming out about why and how this happened to us.

Jeffrey Tucker:

It's all been extraordinarily revealing. I'm working on my next book to be published probably before the end of the year. My book is one of many that's going to come, but we're going to be getting these books out for years. And there is a huge dance, there is a huge struggle right now in public culture to... Or a big fight over how it is we're going to understand what happened to us, was it the right thing, or was it a catastrophic policy? I think in the end the good guys are going to win the struggle. I think people are going to realize that what happened to us was unnecessary and unhelpful, and actually super destructive of public health and morality. And we have to come to a consensus on this.

Jeffrey Tucker:

But the establishment is going to push back very hard. They're going to have all their commissions that will tell us that lockdowns are great. The only problem is that people didn't comply with them enough. That's going to be the normal line everybody is going to say. Certain people are trying to use the lockdowns right now as a way of transforming life in America, away from a system of free enterprise and liberty, peace and prosperity over to a system of despotism and control by managerial elite from the top. That's what's going on today. It's also exciting times to be alive. But I think everybody needs to be involved in the great intellectual struggle because how we understand what happened in 2020 is going to determine in many ways what kind of world where you want to live in, in 2021 and following.

Dennis Tubbergen:

Jeffrey, you mentioned the Great Barrington Declaration as you were talking. And I think there may be some listeners that aren't familiar with that. Could you enlighten them?

Jeffrey Tucker:

Well, it was sometime in late September as I just put my book to bed and I thought well, something needs to be done here. There's not nearly enough people who are opposed to what's happening in this country. We live in a country of the bill of rights and the constitution, a presumption of freedom. Suddenly it was all gone and people were in shock. There was a lot of shock and awe and confusion in the land and I really needed some allies in the struggle so I reached out to a professor at Harvard named Martin Kulldorff, invited me to his house and we just talked a little bit about public health and as it relates to viruses, news, panic and stuff.

Jeffrey Tucker:

He was much more Alarmed about the state of America then, he was reviewing and the streets. And then two weeks later, he wrote me and said, "We really need to have a conference, a small conference between serious scientists and journalists to explain to these people about germs and public health generally." He very sincerely and honestly thought the problem was that journalists did not understand so that's why they weren't writing what was true. We know now that's not the case, right? The real problem was that it was much more fundamental. They were writing what they were supposed to write because they felt like that was what their editors and their owners wanted them to write. Nonetheless, we did hold the meeting and at the end of which it was Kulldorff in particular, who said, "Look, we need to memorialize this as some kind of public statement." He suggested an open letter, I said I didn't think that was very good. Waited for it, and I suggested declaration. He suggested Great Barrington Declaration because that's the town at which we held the meeting.

Jeffrey Tucker:

Within 24 hours the same had media story all over the world because there's three top scientists saying lockdown is a bad idea. We need to let the virus circulate as it naturally does among the people for whom it's not risky of severe outcomes and protect above all else people based, not on class, not on race or language or national origin, but rather on the great universalizing principle of age. They suggested a solution of focus protection. While, everybody else lives a normal life, achieve heard immunity and we get through this pandemic with as little social disruption as possible. What they were saying was completely, I would say like conventional wisdom in 2019. But in 2020, it was quite the shock to hear truth, just basic truth.

Dennis Tubbergen:

Well, you mentioned too earlier in this segment, the Fauci emails, and I certainly have not gone through those in significant detail, but I've gone through them enough to know that there was at least a couple occasions at a minimum when Dr. Fauci was saying one thing privately and another thing publicly. And certainly that has added to the distrust I think, of the American public for authority, for maybe the mainstream media. In fact, I think I just read a survey that 29% of the American public now trust mainstream media, which is shockingly 71% do not. It seems like there's this undercurrent, this grassroots undercurrent growing in the country at this point. Would you agree with that?

Jeffrey Tucker:

No question about it. The loss in the faith of the system is palpable and it's affecting media and public health and government and every aspect of everything, they just don't have any credibility left. This is why all the frenzy recently about the Delta variant is not really having any kind of effect. I don't believe that we'll ever have lockdowns in this country, at least for the next generation, because people are so furious and the loss in confidence in authority figures is incredible.

Jeffrey Tucker:

Fauci himself is very interesting figure. He more or less had his head screwed on straight until about something like February 25th, he'd be saying mostly normal things throughout January and most of February, he was saying, I think I'm just going to quote him. He said, "We don't need a vaccine to get through this. All we have to do is see the infection rates fall. People should not panic. There's many things that affect health among which, non-pathogenic diseases like heart disease and cancer or diseases like cancer, but diabetes and that sort of thing. And people need to think more holistically and with less panic."

Jeffrey Tucker:

He was saying all this stuff throughout January and February. About February 27th he changes his mind, not because the data changed. For some reason, I think he saw the writing on the wall and realized that this is the pandemic response so the country was really more about politics than public health. And he turns out to be quite the political person. By August, suddenly he's writing articles and academic journals about...

Jeffrey Tucker:

February 28, there was an article published in which he said, "Look, this is the flu, and it's not going to be worse than past flu pandemics. It's going to affect only the most vulnerable people." He signed off that article really let's say like the second week of March or February. But then he flipped sides and became a full blown lockdown and convinced Trump to block travel from Europe and to lock down the economy and that sort of thing and then Trump got wise to him. But a lot of the pandemic responses was driven by politics just to create a chaotic environment, which there could be a flipping and in control of the White House, by that I'm absolutely convinced.

Jeffrey Tucker:

So that by August, Fauci was writing articles saying crazy things like we need to get rid of cities and the sporting events, and we need to... You should get rid of your pets in your home because they spread disease.

Governments can be in charge of whether you can have a dog or a cat. This is in August of 2020, so he really underwent a huge transformation from being more or less a decent scientist to becoming just basically a political spokesman. And now you see that he's doing nothing than going on television warning everybody about the Delta variant. He is quite the central figure in all of this.

Dennis Tubbergen:

Jeffrey, we've got just a little over a minute left in this segment, a minute and a half or so. You at one point said that you're optimistic that ultimately we're going to get back to having more freedom, more liberty. I'd like you just to comment on that as we close this segment on this holiday weekend.

Jeffrey Tucker:

The math in life moves episodically. We went through a very dark time and I think we're not through those dark times, but you start to see signs of life with people's attitudes towards the media, with you get a growing public skepticism towards power and government. I think within 18 months we're going to see a very different America than what we saw the last year. Freedom is going to come at a premium and the despotism that we lived under is going to go away. Still, not through the struggles and we've got probably an economic crisis coming, but I think we can get through it.

Dennis Tubbergen:

Well, we're going to have to leave it there. My guest today has been Mr. Jeffrey A. Tucker. You can find him on Twitter. He's also a daily columnist for RealClearMarkets, realclearmarkets.com is the website. His most recent book is Liberty or Lockdowns. Jeffrey, look forward to your book being released hopefully later this year, and always appreciate our conversations. Thank you for joining us today.

Jeffrey Tucker:

My pleasure Dennis. Thanks so much for having me.

Dennis Tubbergen:

We will return after these words.