

If You Believe in Science, Individual Freedom Is the Only Answer

Self-organizing systems are an incredible strategy to deal with complexity. Government is not.

By [John Conlin](#)

So you believe in science, eh? Excellent! So do I! Well, let me clarify. I don't "believe" in science; I accept there is reality and this "science-way" of thinking has proven itself the best method for discovering this reality. What you or I *believe* has no impact on this reality.

And what of this reality? How can we discover it to ensure our continued success and even our continued survival?

[Isaac Newton](#) was one of the most influential scientists of all time. He was a titan of his time and a key figure in the culmination of [the scientific revolution](#). His [Philosophiæ Naturalis Principia Mathematica](#) is perhaps the most influential book in all of science.

He discovered the laws of gravity and motion; creating a set of equations that were very accurate in describing many of the physical properties of the world around us. His laws describe how gravity seems to affect objects but it doesn't explain why gravity occurs. His theories have thus been described as "descriptive."

But to discover the more fundamental, underlying reality which could explain gravity we had to wait for [Albert Einstein](#) and his discovery of [general relativity](#).

With general relativity, Einstein developed a theory that actually explains gravity rather than simply describing its effects. Through mathematics, Einstein proved gravity is not really a force of attraction between all objects with mass. Instead, he discovered that gravity is a result of the warping, or curving, of space and time by any and all mass.

Unlike Newtonian physics, which is merely descriptive, general relativity describes a more fundamental reality and is thus predictive.

Even though no one has ever actually seen space or time or the supposed warping that mass causes, Einstein's ideas have been supported by an ever-growing and interconnected body of evidence and are widely accepted today as an accurate reflection of reality.

My hypothesis is we confront a similar process when thinking about the founding of this country and the truths expounded in the [Declaration of Independence](#) and [Constitution](#).

Like Newton's, the Founders' thoughts were descriptive. They had lived with the arbitrary power of kings and tyranny and knew that individual freedom was

man's God-given natural state. They then attempted to build a political and economic system that reflected this reality.

And just like Newtonian physics, the results have been amazingly accurate. Anywhere individual freedom is allowed to flourish, good things follow.

Like Newtonian physics, the laws America's Founders discovered describe how freedom impacts societies but they don't describe why this occurs.

But as with Einstein and general relativity, there is a more fundamental, underlying reality that does explain why individual freedom always works—and big government always fails.

And this more fundamental reality is the new science of [swarm intelligence](#)—especially as applied to human existence.

When free individuals—be they bison, elephants, fish, honey bees, or humans—collectively live their lives they experience something called swarm intelligence. It is the collective behavior of decentralized, self-organized systems.

Most of the time people think of swarm intelligence in living creatures when referring to hives of bees, schools of fish, or herds of animals but human “schools” have always existed. In fact, all of humanity across all time could and should be considered a school or herd.

A key ingredient in swarm intelligence is that no one is in charge. There is no “management” at all; just countless interactions between individual members with each following simple rules of thumb, each one acting on local information.

No member sees the big picture. No member tells any other what to do. No fearless leader is required or desired. Swarm intelligence acts as a huge intelligence multiplier. The swarm will always be far more intelligent than any single individual.

Bees, ants, herd animals, *all life* in fact—and, yes, that includes humans—have unknowingly experienced this same process since life itself began. This is a process whereby individual freedom leads to order, structure, and progress, not anarchy. It is true whether it is fish or human life. It may seem counterintuitive but it is reality.

On top of swarm intelligence, we humans have complex language, the ability to use tools, and the ability to store and transmit information over generations which has increased our collective swarm IQ even further. In effect, we each enjoy the fruits of millions and millions of lessons learned since the dawn of life itself, enabling us to collectively live like never before.

What is actually counterintuitive is the modern belief—a belief that is only milliseconds old in the scheme of things—that top-down, command-and-control systems are superior to this; that a boss of some sort is always required to drive and direct progress.

The reality is just the opposite. Attempting to put a boss in charge via the organizations we call government will act as a huge intelligence eraser. It will cause the swarm to cease to function, to the detriment of all.

Self-organizing systems are an incredible strategy to deal with complexity; government is not. Worse yet, top-down, command-and-control systems will sooner or later create catastrophic failures. Not so with self-organizing systems.

In self-organizing systems the solutions to various issues are emergent—they just seem to occur. In top-down systems, they must be pre-defined, and thus some “boss” must start out knowing more than the swarm—an impossibility from the start.

These top-down political beliefs and the governments they directed were created long before we had any knowledge and understanding of how these natural systems work. Thus, it is not surprising they took a “we know best” approach to action and design.

But now we do know of these fact- and reality-based processes. Our political beliefs and governmental organizations—including K-12 schooling—should adjust to these recently discovered facts immediately.

The discovery of general relativity profoundly changed the way we understood the world around us. It is one of the greatest scientific discoveries of all time.

This is no different. It will drive a reexamination and reframing of almost every area of our existence. And many will fight to ignore it. People seldom willingly give up power.

Others will attack the source. Einstein was just a patent clerk when he first proposed general relativity. I’m just some schmo from flyover country. But just as Einstein knew he was right and that he had discovered a more fundamental reality, so do I. The facts don’t lie.