

Blue Jean Nation is a grassroots uprising of commoners, anchored in bedrock that can be summed up in four words: Freedom. Democracy. Equality. Service.

ALTOONA, WI - I'd like nothing better than to see the No Labels movement succeed. But deep down I know it won't.

Labels can be helpful and they can be harmful, but they are inevitable all the same. They are a basic human need, we depend on them. They serve as shorthand. Like a picture, a label is worth a thousand words. They also enable us to categorize, put things in order. Even if the slate could be wiped clean and all of today's labels suddenly vanished, new ones would be created in no time.

Come to think of it, wiping the slate clean and starting over would be a great blessing, especially in politics. The old political labels have grown worthless , even toxic.

Like most Americans, I don't feel comfortable calling myself a Republican or a Democrat. I am politically homeless. Neither "liberal" nor "conservative" accurately defines me. Only in the political world do people try to pass themselves off as purebreds, as 100% this or 100% that. Normal people are mutts. I am a mutt, and so are you. Here's my proof. Try finding someone — anyone — who agrees with you about everything.

Being a mutt doesn't leave you or me without a world view or philosophy of life. It does make us uncomfortable when others try to slap one of the old labels on us.

The label of my choosing is *commoner*. Blue Jean Nation is a grassroots uprising of commoners who look at things a certain way , but those views are anchored in bedrock that can be summed up in four words:

Freedom

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Democracy

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Equality

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Service

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Freedom means being able to be who you are and live the life you want. But it doesn't mean doing as you damn well please. True freedom is more than individual liberty. With freedom comes responsibility. Exercising one's own freedom carries with it an obligation to respect and protect the freedom of others. Contrast this with the warped, sociopathic mindset that, for example, leads the filthy rich to believe "freedom of speech" entitles them to spend as much money as they want to amplify their voices, even if it drowns out your voice and denies you representation.

Democracy is more than a form of government, it is a way of life. Yes, the government needs to be of the people, by the people, and for the people. But so does the economy. And democracy cannot just be something we have, it has to be something we do too. It's more verb than noun.

Equality is a core American value rooted in the rejection of royalty. It comes out of a sense of fairness and distaste for privilege. No one should get to start out at third base. A commitment to equality plus democracy plus true freedom equals social and economic justice.

Service is about looking out for each other. It is neighbors helping neighbors. It is communities coming together. It is concern for the common good. It is civic duty. It is thinking less about what we are entitled to and more about debts we owe to society. It is caring for the planet we call home and all of its inhabitants.

For us blue jean commoners, the good life and a great society stand on these four slabs of bedrock.

— *Mike McCabe*