

What is your opinion?

By Jim Leonhard

We are quite frequently asked “*what is your opinion*”?

Before we delve into this further, let us consider the dictionary definitions of “opinion.”

Here are some that will help to frame this discussion^[1]:

- a) a thought or belief about something or someone
- b) a judgment about someone or something
- c) a belief or judgment that rests on grounds insufficient to produce complete certainty.
- d) the thoughts or beliefs that a group of people have
- e) a judgment made by an expert

For purposes of this article, let us focus on the first three definitions since they pertain to an *individual*’s opinion rather than a group’s or one expressed by an expert.

Now that we have definitions, we can return to the question “*what is your opinion*”?

Of course, the answer will depend on the context of the topic or the subject we are being asked about. Assuming that we have a clear understanding of what the questioner specifically is inquiring about, we may feel some pressure to provide an answer even if it is to say “I don’t have an opinion about that”. While that would be a reasonable response, it may not be acceptable to the questioner.

So, other responses may include:

- Telling the questioner what we *think* they want to hear, so as to appease him (*even if we do not truly feel or believe that way*).
-
- Giving a flippant or sarcastic answer because we do not really have an answer, or to avoid articulating an “unpopular” opinion.
-
- Voicing an emotionally charged opinion intended to attack aggressively our perception of the questioner’s belief.
-
- Providing a thoughtful statement that calmly, clearly, and concisely expresses our true opinion.

Obviously, there are many other options for a response.

But whatever your opinion happens to be, a key consideration should be how your opinion was informed.

Many people, or resources, can influence one’s opinion, including friends, family, strangers, educators, social and news media, history, or other sources of information.

However, as spiritual, human beings with free will, we should be aware that we are responsible for the consequences of our thoughts and words, as well as, our actions.

So before expressing an opinion about something, or someone, we would be wise to listen to our intuition, which is connected with our spirit and not just to our intellect, in forming opinions.

The law of reciprocal action means that whatever we think or say will return to us. Therefore, we need to consider this carefully before expressing an opinion that may be negative about something, or slanderous about someone.

Thus, unless one has first-hand knowledge or expertise, it is wise to leave that opinion unexpressed, lest one karmically burdens their soul unnecessarily.

Conversely, if we seek someone else's opinion, we must acknowledge our personal responsibility to investigate their response using our intuition as well as our intellect to distinguish among the Truth, Fact and Opinion. Failure to do so will lead to our sharing in any burdensome karma arising from blithely accepting that opinion.