



# **No, They Can't: Why Government Fails-But Individuals Succeed**

*John Stossel*

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**No, They Can't: Why Government Fails-But Individuals Succeed** John Stossel

**New York Times** bestselling journalist John Stossel shows how the expansion of government control is destructive for American society. Emmy Award-winning journalist John Stossel is a self-proclaimed skeptic, attacking society's sacred cows. Now, he dismantles the most sacred of them all: the notion that government action is the best way to solve a problem. From the myth that government can spend its way out of a crisis to the mistaken belief that labor unions protect workers, Stossel, a true libertarian, provides evidence that the reality is very different from what intuition tells us. His evidence leads to the taboo conclusions that: • Government *already* dominates health care—and that's the problem. • The state keeps banning foods, but food bans don't make us healthier. • Government-run schools and teachers' unions haven't made kids smarter. Utilizing his three decades in journalism, Stossel combines sharp insights, common sense, and documented facts to debunk conventional wisdom and challenge popular opinion about the role of our nation's government.

## No, They Can't: Why Government Fails-But Individuals Succeed Details

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**John Stossel**

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# From Reader Review No, They Can't: Why Government Fails-But Individuals Succeed for online ebook

## Shea Mastison says

"I can go to a foreign country, stick a piece of plastic in the wall, and cash will come out. I can give that same piece of plastic to a stranger who doesn't even speak my language--and he'll rent me a car for a week. When I get home, Visa or MasterCard will send me the accounting--correct to the penny. That's capitalism! I just take it for granted.

Government, by contrast, can't even count votes accurately."

John Stossel is the rare libertarian in the mainstream media. Using his position as a well-known, award-winning journalist; he dismantles the myth of effective government action in this book. Many of his arguments are supported by Hazlitt's Broken Window Fallacy, raw economic data and common sense. This is one of the best popular political books that I've read so far this year.

I highly recommend it.

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## Dwayne Roberts says

A good read, certainly indignance-raising. The only errors I noticed were minor (such as calling Ayn Rand a libertarian). The book doesn't delve into why independence, smaller government, absence of force, etc. is virtuous; it assumes, as does the Declaration of Independence, that they are self-evident. The book promotes a foreign policy that is, in my opinion, a little isolationist, although Stossel himself admits his unsurity, pondering where to draw the line. Quite interesting to me was his comparison of working for the liberal ABC network, then the more libertarian Fox. That story, however, is covered more deeply in another of his books.

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## Ross Blocher says

If you're looking for a quick introduction to the Libertarian viewpoint, this is a good primer and worth considering. "No, They Can't" (an obvious pun on Obama's "Yes We Can") decries government overreach in the economy, business, regulation, health care, workers' rights, diet, safety, censorship, education, the war on drugs, military, and conservation. John Stossel is a long-time television host with a history of exposing scams and challenging common conceptions. He's done some great work on skepticism. Most of his career was at ABC, but now he's over at Fox (he discusses the transition extensively in the book), a non-union shop that gives him the freedom to upset all the apple carts he wants.

This book has the same goal of disabusing the public of notions Stossel sees as false. Each individual argument is prefaced by two statements: "What intuition tempts us to believe" and "What reality taught me". Stossel does a poor job of stating his opponents' arguments in a single sentence, and sometimes we get some odd constructions. For example: **"What intuition tempts us to believe:** To protect the tigers, ban tiger hunting. **What reality taught me:** To protect tigers, eat tigers." (he thinks Ted Turner farming buffalo is somehow relevant to saving jungle cats and rhinos), or, **"What intuition tempts us to believe:** Tax the rich!

**What reality taught me:** The rich don't have enough. Really."

The thrust of the book is that government unrelentingly attempts to control more functions of society, and that control is never dialed back. As good as the original intentions may have been, central planning is always doomed to failure. Government's solutions are backed by force and there's no consequence for failure or squandering taxpayer money. On the other hand, individuals acting in the free market introduces competition: driving down prices for consumers, encouraging development of better practices and technology, and letting failed ideas go out of business.

There's a lot of fair points here. Stossel presents the most egregious examples of failed government programs and wasted money. I totally agree with him on the power and benefits of the free market, and that bottom-up solutions are the best. When they are available and working well, government should get out of the way and let them do their thing. (Funny enough, pretty much all of his examples are of businesses doing great things in America, in the very system he's decrying.). I even agree with Stossel on cutting military spending and ending the drug war.

All that is well and good, but then Stossel goes off the rails. The book is jam-packed with ridiculous analogies and comparisons. Here are two consecutive sentences (p118): "Heck, in the agriculturally rich Soviet Union, there was so little food that mothers sent their kids into the fields to kill mice and rats. Yet now, somehow, under President Obama's management, government will give us better health care? Give me a break." Give me a break, indeed. Stossel rarely presents data and makes wide-reaching conclusions in nuanced situations. He relies heavily on anecdote, shifting constantly to back up one of his points with statements like this: "A North Carolina doctor we interviewed hired four people just to fill out forms. He wishes he could spend that money on caring for patients." Some of the points are just out of date (and proven misguided), as the book was written in 2012. He talks about the high unemployment rate under Obama, which was already falling at that point, but is now down to 4.9%. Stossel also lumps in small issues, like certain politicians trying to control what people eat with legislation, that are not part of, say, the Democratic Party's platform. He'll point out where various overreaches have been overturned by law, and I can only think, "Yeah... that's the system working, buddy."

The discussion about education was particularly irritating. Stossel talks about how terrible public schools are, and recommends getting rid of them in favor of private schools. His example for how much better schools can be are to point at the success of *charter schools*. Nowhere does he acknowledge that charter schools are also publicly funded. Still like them, Stossel? He also tries to pretend that they must play by the same rules in terms of accepting students (they don't). Even then, he must admit that test scores aren't improved between private and public schools when accounting for socioeconomic factors, but he still prefers private. He wants to abolish the Department of Education (and refers to the public education system repeatedly as "the BLOB" without any explanation of why that term is relevant or helpful to the discussion - it's not even an acronym). This raises the question: how would all children go to school without public schools? He seems confident that even poor parents will go out of their way to get extra jobs and pay for private schooling, because they want the best for their kids. Again, this is backed up by an anecdote of a parent he talked to. Why do you think we created public schools in the first place, Stossel? Because that wasn't happening! Yes, private schools are fantastic. There are lots of problems with the public school system. No, doing away with it entirely will not improve education.

Another primary point in that chapter is that we need to get rid of teachers unions and tenure. If you're not afraid of losing your job, you'll be a bad employee and automatically turn lazy and greedy - Stossel really promotes that idea throughout the book as if it's a universal truism, and provides a handful of examples of the worst offenders. Having just finished the book, I walked through a TSA line yesterday and couldn't help but

notice: the employees were friendly and professional and fast. The woman who greeted us laughed and smiled and told my son how handsome he was as she efficiently moved us through the line. I pondered how someone writing at Stossel's level could make an equally-effective counter-argument with that anecdote.

I really want to go into more detail, but I have once again written an absurdly long book review. I'll just sum up: I think Stossel is misleading with this book from the very title: "No, They Can't: Why Government Fails - But Individuals Succeed". He's already skewed the conversation. Government is treated as some sort of monolithic edifice, "them/they", that operates in its own interest. In some instances that's true. However, government is made out of people, many who want to make a positive difference. Sometimes they're actually successful, and you could fill another book with *those* examples that never show up here. Government also strives toward transparency and accountability - there are certain decisions for which we want everyone to have a seat at the table, regardless of their connections. Business, on the other hand, is characterized as "individuals". I don't recall Stossel ever actually using the word "corporation" in the book, and he ignores the various abuses of private industry that necessitated regulation in the first place. The stock market isn't even mentioned in the book. Stossel feels that eventually all problems will be solved because consumers will support good causes and impoverish the bad. Even if that were true, those gradual changes would in many cases not be fast enough to help people who really need it. Greed and laziness and cruelty exist in government AND business - it's messy, because it's real life and it's all run by humans. We really do need a combination of approaches - sometimes the free market is the best, but sometimes government has to balance the equation. Is the mix perfect? No. Will it ever be? Probably not. That's why we've got to keep working.

I'll still give the book three stars, because I like Stossel's role as a challenger of popular assumptions. I think that's valuable, and I think he's made about as good a case here for Libertarian politics as one can - so it's worth reading, and can definitely provide some good food for thought on some of the issues.

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## Dale says

### Libertarianism thought delivered painlessly by nice guy Stossel

*Published April 10, 2012 by Simon and Schuster Audio.*

*Read by the author, John Stossel*

*Duration: 9 hours, 14 minutes*

The title of this audiobook, *No, They Can't*, is a play on the 2008 campaign slogan of then-candidate Obama, "Yes We Can!" Stossel, of course, is the TV consumer reporter turned anchor of ABC's *20/20* who now hosts a weekly show of Fox Business News and a series on one-hour specials on Fox News. He has won nineteen Emmy Awards. He begins his book with an explanation of why he left ABC after more than 20 years and how the culture of ABC made it very uncomfortable for him to explore stories in any way except the tried and true politically correct way.

The premise of the this audiobook is that entire thought process behind that campaign slogan is wrong - the government cannot do a lot of the things that people want it to do, and even if everyone agreed it should give those things a try, it would do a very poor job of them because government is inefficient at almost everything it does.

Stossel is an outspoken but soft-spoken Libertarian and he makes a very thoughtful presentation of Libertarian thought on a variety of topics. He generally starts with a variation on this phrase: "Intuition tells

me...but reality has taught me..." and...

Read more at: <http://dwdsreviews.blogspot.com/2012/...>

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## **Valerie says**

This was my first delve into reading a libertarian book. I've researched online and read some articles, but haven't touched anything that laid out so many political issues at once. I've always been a socially liberal person, but am still looking as to where I fit in on financial issues. I was looking for this book to give a base understanding of the libertarian ideals and Stossel delivered. You may ask, "Then why the three stars?"

While Stossel did provide that base layer of knowledge, I was left feeling more confused at the end of some chapters than I was at the start. Some of his examples seemed cherry-picked and poorly expanded upon; he acknowledged that there would be strong rebuttals to his words but didn't go into why those wouldn't discount his theories. This left me with an impression that he wasn't providing strong arguments, but rather singular examples that happened to support his claims. There were many instances where his anecdotes seemed lost on me, liked I needed way more background information on the libertarian standpoint before reading this.

Overall, I think that this book is great for people that already consider themselves libertarian or libertarian leaning. For someone just beginning to look into the political party, it might not be the best first step. I found myself wanting to look up every single issue he brought up. So, kudos to this book for planting the seeds of a new viewpoint, but ultimately there was a lack of the depth that I was searching for.

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## **Peter A says**

I am getting old. That's a good thing because I have the advantage of having watched government for a long time. At one point I thought, incorrectly, that government could solve problems. And I thought I knew everything. Both observations were incorrect. Government throws money at problems. That rarely solves the problems but can sometimes ameliorate the suffering of some individuals involved. That's a good thing...sometimes. When there is too much money, it has a corrosive, corrupting effect. When it occurs too often it attracts the vultures to feed at the trough of human misery. Because they are well fed, the vultures multiply. Stossel demonstrates with a series vignettes that we have reached a point where the vultures have propagated to an extreme extent and now encourage tragedy and other situations that will encourage the money to flow.

As Stossel, I have moved from liberal to a libertarian. Where once we practiced a live and let live, *laissez faire* approach to our government assuming they will act rationally. We assumed the help they provided would be helpful. We have migrated to the position that when government acts to help they fail to consider the secondary and tertiary effects, they stay engaged too long, and they pervert the charitable intent of their actions by institutionalizing the assistance so it stays forever.

Obviously I enjoyed reading this book. I could not stop agreeing with his indignation and awe at the ineptness of our government. Having worked with government at all levels during my career I have a great deal of respect for the individuals who are our public servants. It is the mechanism of rules and regulations with the threat of jail when broken that tends to put most of these public servants in the position of having to

implement stupid, clumsy, oafish policies. As the government becomes larger, it becomes more unwieldy resulting in less common sense, excessive waste, and ineptitude.

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### **Stefani says**

If you're a liberal, you'll hate this book. If you are an open-minded conservative (like I was so many years ago when I read his first two books), it will make you think. If you are a libertarian, this is a book for you. Government is not the solution to our problems... government IS the problem... and it's high time we shrink it down to size.

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### **Kendra says**

I always knew I had libertarian leanings and this book sealed the deal! This book confirmed many of my suspicions-and fears. As much as I appreciated this book, at the end I was depressed. How have we derailed from such a great path and how, oh how will we ever get back on track??

Highly recommend to anyone interested in putting their politics under a microscope. He doesn't pull any punches with democrats or republicans so if you feel protective of either party, you may need to prepare a "safe space" for yourself before delving in:)

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### **Johnrh says**

This is libertarian John Stossel's retort to the big government political slogan "Yes We Can". It is his latest book for individual freedom of choice and against overbearing government. Stossel was a consumer reporter on ABC network and its 20/20 investigative show for a couple of decades. Since becoming more conservative and sanely libertarian he has been on the Fox News network and has his own show on Fox Business Network.

Although a libertarian in the Ron Paul vein, supporting legalization of drugs and prostitution and less military intervention overseas (not that there's anything wrong with that), he is always open to debate. I thought the book might be rehashed scripts of his TV shows but I have found it to be a fresh, reasoned discussion even if the topics are similar.

A few lines at the end of Chp. 1 'Fixing' The Economy summarized that portion nicely:

"Bureaucracies have no bottom line, no market prices for their "output", fewer rewards for excellence. What they have is an incentive to keep their heads down and to spend all the money budgeted (or lose it next year)."

"It is absurd to think the humongous constellation of federal bureaucracies is going to identify and root out "waste" in any significant way. ...No one spends other people's money as carefully as he spends his own."

"You can't change those incentives by electing a different president or a different Congress. The only way to do it is to switch from the noncompetitive, parasitic incentive structure of politics to the competitive, efficiency-seeking incentives of the free market. Good government has to mean less government." (p. 44-45)

I'm not planning to comment on every chapter but Chp. 2 Making Life Fair intrigues me. I've been wanting to know for some time just who are the Fairness Police? I've always heard 'life isn't fair'. I've also never heard so much about income equality, even to the point that it is statistically measured in depth in government reports. Since when is everyone supposed to make the same income? Yes, corporate CEOs are chastised for making phenomenal sums but no one disparages professional athletes, movies stars, or singers for doing the same. Is that 'fair'? I admire people who make substantial incomes but I'm not jealous or envious. I never felt such people has ever deprived me of one cent of my income because of their income. But I digress.

Passages from Chp. 2:

"As Aristotle noted, "That which is common to the greatest number has the least care bestowed upon it."

"If individuals can take from a common pot regardless of how much they put in, then each person has an incentive to be a "free rider"—to do as little as possible and take as much as possible because what one fails to take will be taken by someone else. Soon the pot is empty."

What private property does... is connect effort to reward, creating an incentive for people to produce. Then, when there's a free market, people trade their surpluses to others for thing they lack. Mutual voluntary exchange for mutual benefit makes the community richer." (p. 55)

Sounds fair to me.

Throughout the book Stossel heads subsections with a format "What Intuition Tempts Us To Believe:" (statement) "What Reality Taught Me:" (response).

For example:

"What Intuition Tempts Us To Believe:"

If we want nice public spaces, government must create them.

"What Reality Taught Me:"

The nicest public spaces escaped government control. (p. 56.)

He will then expound upon the issue, sometimes specifically, as in the previous subsection citing Manhattan's Bryant Park cleaned up by private efforts, other times generalizing.

Chp. 5 Fixing Health Care made me think about some issues. When we have insurance we pay little attention to the price of things. We pay for the coverage and can generally get as much treatment as we want within the contractual confines. We don't bargain, negotiate, or shop around for the least expensive of any particular procedure, even a common blood test. We usually make a co-pay and that's it. We may get a statement from the insurance company saying how much the doctor billed them and how much they actually paid based on their contractual agreement with the doctor. It's always less than the doctor billed, but if I paid the doctor cash I would probably pay the full amount. I've had some hospital surgeries in which the hospital portion of the bill was say \$30,000 but the insurance company only paid \$5-6000. What's up with that? Who over billed or who under paid? (OMG I am straying again from just a review, but he has made me THINK!)

Stossel contends that we may be OVER insured. Many of us might be better off having a high deductible insurance for major illness or injury and paying cash for the small things. As I look back on the phenomenal sums I and my employer paid throughout my career we might have been better off paying cash, though despite some injuries I have avoided all but a few major health problems. I was fortunate. Wouldn't it be nice



if part of your health insurance premiums were like a savings account where you could get a refund at the end of 20-40 years if you stayed healthy. What about that for incentive?

Thoughts from Stossel in Chp. 5:

“One of America’s biggest health-care problems is not that 48 million people lack insurance—it’s that 250 million Americans have too much of it.” (p. 121.)

“Because employers pay most of the bills [employer-based health insurance], the patient doesn’t shop for insurance. Because the patient has insurance he doesn’t care what services cost. Because he doesn’t care and doesn’t shop around, the cost of care goes up and up.”

“Third-party payment destroys the shopping process that is the essence of a market.”

“What holds costs down is patients acting like consumers, looking out for ourselves in a competitive market. Then providers, even insurance companies, fight to win business by keeping costs down.” (p. 123.)

He does take a swipe at the sacred cow of Medicare but his main complaint is that it is hugely, HUGELY, unfunded.

This is a good chapter.

Loved this quote in Chp. 6 The Assault On Food: “Government attracts do-gooders and meddlers who believe that, as Mark Twain put it, “Nothing so needs reforming as other people’s habits”” (p. 153.)

Chp. 7 Creating A Risk-Free World: “Nineteenth-century libertarian writer Herbert Spencer wisely said, “The ultimate result of shielding men from the effects of folly is to fill the world with fools.”” (p. 166.)

On ‘seat belt laws save lives’: “...economist Sam Peltzman argues that increased safety features on cars have the ironic effect of encouraging people to drive more recklessly because they worry less about accidents. ...Studies do show that people drive faster when they are snugly enclosed in seat belts. ...Perhaps the best safety device would be a sharp spike mounted to the dashboard—pointed right at your chest.” (p. 170-171.)  
[!!-JH]

The chapter on education is good. We spend a fortune per student in the U.S. and don’t get results.

Chp. 10 The War On Drugs is a sensitive issue. I can see prohibition doesn’t work but it’s hard to wrap my head around legalization. Stossel is usually factual but he is a bit sloppy when he cites “The U.S. government says heroin and nicotine are similarly addictive, but people don’t rob convenience stores to get Marlboros.” (p. 216.) Uhhh, does not make sense. There is no reference in the footnote section at the back of the book. Very loose logic.

“While drugs harm many, the black market harms more.

And regardless of the harm, what about freedom? Once we become adults, we should own our own bodies.” (p. 225.) Logically true, but hard to stomach. Sort of like motorcycle helmet laws. We don’t have one in Colorado and my lady cringes when she sees people riding without helmets, but I say it’s their choice if they want to risk splitting their skull and they’re not harming anyone else.

The chapter on Budget is very good. Stop... spending... money...

I thought the reference section at the back was too loosely constructed. There are no footnotes during the book, which can be a good thing as one can spend too much time incessantly flipping back and forth. Instead the rear section has loose references by page number. Some items I questioned while reading did not have any reference in back. It seemed very random and not very valuable.

Very good book otherwise. Not a rant, but a reasoned discussion. You don't have to agree with him in order to read this. You might learn something regardless, or at least have an appreciation for his point of view, many of which are shared by others tired of big government.

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### **Oren says**

It was an interesting read and certainly introduced new ways of thinking to me that I haven't thought of before. The book is also funny and entertaining, especially when Stossel attacks those that make claims that he disagrees with.

Unfortunately, Stossel takes very strong stances on many issues but will only give brief, over-simplistic justifications for many of those stances, without ever going into why the other side's logical support is wrong. Many times he'll make a claim and use logic to support it instead of evidence and statistics. The Washington Times has a review proving Stossel wrong on several points with actual studies. Read this book with caution.

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### **Karen says**

I think I need to switch to the libertarian party. I identify with nearly everything they espouse. Specifically, very limited government!

I agree wholeheartedly with Stossel's views stated so well here. I've even come to accept and agree with his suggested cuts to social security and medicare, so they can be privatized and made better by free market competition.

I have two sons who are active duty military. I would love to see them come home to the states and stop policing the world. Yes. Cut military spending. Establish a mission goal. We are the UNITED STATES military! We should be guarding and protecting OUR OWN borders. Let the rest of the world police themselves!

I have learned so much, reading this. Stossel states his point so well. But now I'm depressed because I can see, like never before, what must be done. And I can't imagine an administration with the backbone to do it!

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### **SusanwithaGoodBook says**

The BEST non fiction book I've read in long time. I love John Stossel - have since I was in high school. He and Brit Hume were my favorites when I was young. They were the only ones on ABC that made sense to me. Such voices of reason. I loved this book because it explains how many of the things we're told or taught

are just plain wrong, and how we hurt ourselves and those we claim to help with our faulty thinking. I'm a libertarian by nature, so I knew Stossel's views lined up with mine in many places, but I was surprised by some things I didn't know about the way things worked, and I was pleased to discover that his views on the military are not inconsistent with my way of thinking. I thought he was "anti-war" but he's just "anti-nation building" and that's a different animal altogether.

I loved it so much I plan to give it to every highschooler who sends me a graduation invite. (along with some money, of course) Most of them probably won't read it, but maybe some will be open minded enough to read it and consider the possibility that the "right way" of thinking that we're so often fed just might be wrong.

I can't recommend it highly enough... even if you disagree with him, he'll make you think, and that's always a good thing.

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## **Malin Friess says**

Five Stars! Five Stars! No they Can't (an obvious shot at Obama's Yes We Can) makes the strong argument why government fails (so make it smaller) and individuals achieve.

Stossel quit his job at ABC after he found that he couldn't do journalism like he wanted to do. Even though he disagree's much with Fox News (on gay marriage, military spending, legalization of drugs, etc) he took a position with them. He claims the Fox News is more open minded and educated that the other stations.

Stossel is of course a Libertarian and does an excellent job of explaining his views and makes many compelling arguments (He could do a much better job than Ron Paul railing against the Fed and ranting about going back on the Gold Standard.

A few of Stossel's arguments

- 1) Taxing the RIch more doesn't work...they stop working. In California back in the 1960's the top tax rate was 90% for income beyond 400,000. Do you want to know what Ronald Reagan did after making movies and he hit the limit....he took the rest of the year off and road horses.
- 2) Alternatives to OBama Care...Whole Foods gives it employees catastrophic medical insurance with low fees and high deductibles but also puts in 1500 dollars into a HSA. Many of their employees now have over 10 k in this account...they are now consumers and are watch their health care cost and avoid costly ER visits.
- 3) We now spend over 155 K to educate a child K-12...3 times the inflation adjusted amount from 1970. But scores are flat.
- 4) Less Guns = less violence. Stossel doesn't think so. Washington DC with the strictest hand gun laws (recently argued as Unconstitutional by the Supreme Court) also has the highest rate of home break-ins.

Great Book!

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## Jerry says

In this series of examples, John Stossel argues persuasively that we are almost always better off making our own decisions instead of appealing to government—mainly the federal government—to solve them for us. Because politicians aren't any smarter than we are, and even if they were, their incentives to make a decision are different from our incentives to make our own lives better.

He leads off each discussion with a statement on *What intuition tempts us to believe* such as that *Markets are cruel. Government is kind* and a response of *What reality taught me* such as that *Governments' attempts at "kindness" are cruel*.

The final sentence of each essay often leads into the next topic.

In some cases, he attacks topics in ways that I haven't thought of, but really should have. For example, seat belt laws:

The first seat belt law required a certain kind of belt. That set the standard and relieved auto companies of the need to compete in seat belt safety and comfort. No longer did Volvo need to try to invent a better seat belt than GM's; it would have been foolish if it tried. The new seat belt would have to clear onerous and expensive regulatory hurdles. Even if it were safer, the first time someone was injured wearing one, personal injury lawyers would swarm, knowing that they could convince some juries that deviation from the government standard was "reckless." For carmakers, it is safer to stick with the government standard. Drivers and passengers, of course, are also stuck with the government standard, and that makes us less safe because we'll never see the improvements carmakers *might* have made.

The seat belts I wear today are not significantly different than the seat belts I wore when I bought my second car thirty years ago. Think about how just about everything else we use has changed over thirty years. Imagine if government regulations had frozen what kinds of phones or computers we could use back then. *We would never know what we're missing today.*

The biggest passenger-safety feature added since then, the air-bag, was so poorly managed that it required several other regulations mandating serious changes in how we seat our passengers, to keep them from dying *because* air-bags deploy.

There were a lot of things I disagreed with, too, but all were worth reading and thinking about.

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## Craig says

Fantastic book that helped me get a firmer grasp on how libertarians see the world. And frankly, Stossel may just win me to their cause. I especially loved his discussions on education, gun control, and drug legalization. Concerning the latter, I'm not totally convinced that the libertarian view is the right one, but I'm much more conflicted about it now, which means I'm having to take a good hard look at what my own beliefs are. I appreciate that in any book.

Two things that kept a star off of my final review:

- 1) No actionable advice, like how to stop the government from growing, if that's the goal.
- 2) A whole lot of anecdotal evidence, with less emphasis on data (not that wasn't *any*, just not enough for my taste). I'd love to see a longer book go deeper into some of the issues and give more data to support the seeming mounds of anecdotal evidence.

All in all, a wonderful read from a guy who can take complex and sensitive topics and explain them simply and passionately. I'd love to read a book that can explain liberal and/or conservative political philosophy in as simple and entertaining a way as Stossel's.

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