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Workable Worders

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Some moderators and organization leaders are apologetic when they introduce me at their events. One organization president introducing me as the keynote speaker distanced herself so much from my activities that after she concluded her remarks, I asked, "Are you still sure you want me to speak?"

I may be the only person in the world to have been a featured interviewee on the Rush Limbaugh Show (conservative) and Pacifica Radio's Democracy Now (progressive). Such a variety of experiences and associations cause me trouble with people who want others to choose sides.

Back in the day, I was the only student known to simultaneously be a member of the Objectivist Club of Harvard, the Black Students Association, Democrats at Harvard, the Harvard Republican Club, and the Harvard Crimson newspaper.

I have heard scuttlebutt of some whispers alleging that I am an undercover agent for the FBI, CIA, and South Korea's NIS. I have also been warned that I may be getting monitored by those organizations and targeted by North Korea.

How can those things all be true of one man?

With that as context, dear reader, you may not be surprised to learn that this year, I have been a featured speaker, moderator, panelist or deeply involved with events in association with the Cato Institute, Harvard Graduate School of Education, Harvard KORUM, Ayn Rand Institute, Korea Hana Foundation, UniKorea, Asia Liberty Forum, TEDx, Seoul City Hall, high schools, companies and universities around the world, media, the Nashville chapter of the Bastiat Society of the American Institute of Economic Research, and the 66th session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women.

One conservative friend messaged after hearing that I had been invited to speak at Harvard last month. "Those crazy liberals let you speak there?" I told him that it was probably about the 10th time I have been an invited speaker at various schools on the Harvard campus.

When people complain about organizations, sponsors, or partnerships I have been part of or associated with, I give them the opportunity to suggest alternatives. No one complaining has ever made a constructive recommendation when given the chance to do so (my email is in the bio of

this column).

One friend asked if I ever get confused because I cooperate with a variety of people and organizations. Should I forget what I believe or have done because someone turned on a microphone with their logo on it? I meet people at our level of agreement.

At the invitation of an organization supporting single moms in Washington, D.C., I was the replacement speaker for the mayor of Washington, D.C. I have a standing offer to be a replacement speaker for a conservative mayor.

Some have embraced my big-tent approach. In a review of Yeonmi Park's book, "In Order to Live," Atlas Network CEO Brad Lips wrote, "I say that Casey is one of a kind because I simply know of no other Harvard-educated black Texan libertarian who has dedicated himself to the plight of North Korean defectors."

I'm not saying I'm the only person in the world like this, now or in history. "Renaissance Man" and "Polymath" are two of the main terms used to describe people whose knowledge crosses numerous fields.

Benjamin Franklin is often identified as being the archetype of a polymath or Renaissance Man (writer, scientist, inventor, statesman, diplomat, printer, political philosopher and founding father of the USA).

I would like to propose a different category of polymath or Renaissance Man for people engaged in action, not mainly knowledge acquisition. Nineteenth century freedom fighter Frederick Douglass was an author, but it was based on being an orator, editor, abolitionist, and organizer over his five decades of activism.

James McCune Smith said that Douglass was not fashioning "mere words of eloquence," but rather, "work-able, do-able words" that might forge a "revolution."

Howard Fuller is a modern archetype of a Workable Worder. Over five decades, he has been a community organizer, founder of Malcolm X University, a street protester, school district superintendent, philanthropist, fundraiser, founder of various advocacy organizations, he now has a charter school named after him and without trying he has been a mentor to people like me.

I am occasionally made to feel that I need to choose sides, especially during election years. My activities are for 1) my lifelong self-education 2) building experiences with a variety of people around the world 3) so I can cooperate with others who want to cooperate with me at our level or agreement.

If that means being featured by Objectivists, libertarians, single moms, North Korean refugees, conservatives, and progressives who disagree with each other, that's fine with me. They can organize a conference discussing how they all get along with me, with me as the keynote speaker. My only request is that I would like to choose who introduces me