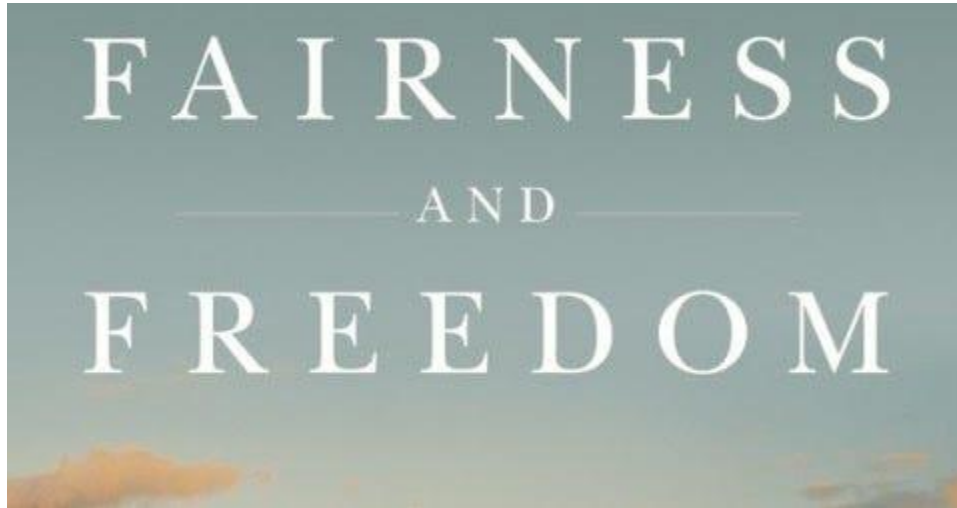


# A Balancing Act

Leo Oja, April 5, 2024

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## Navigating the Nuances of Fairness and Freedom: A Call to Action for Peoples Party of Canada Supporters

In the heart of every Peoples Party of Canada (PPC) supporter lies a profound belief in the principles of fairness, freedom, respect, and responsibility. However, the clarity and depth of these principles can often be obscured by the noise of political discourse, leaving many to wonder about the true essence of what we stand for. This article invites us to delve deeper, to explore and crystallize our understanding of these foundational values that guide the PPC. As we navigate the complex interplay between individual rights and collective welfare, it becomes crucial to articulate a vision that harmonizes these aspects into a coherent and equitable framework for Canada's future.

At the crossroads of political philosophy and pragmatic governance, we find ourselves wrestling with a question of paramount importance: *How do we strike a balance between the autonomy of the individual and the needs of the community? Should we try?* This article is not merely academic but touches the core of our daily lives and the policies that shape our society. From healthcare to environmental stewardship, from education reform to economic development, the PPC's approach seeks to navigate the delicate balance between personal freedom and societal obligation, advocating for a model of governance that empowers all Canadians to thrive within a fair and equitable framework.

Join us as we embark on a journey through the landscapes of political philosophy, examining the teachings of thinkers like John Rawls and Robert Nozick and exploring practical implications for today's Canada. We will scrutinize how the PPC's philosophy influences policy recommendations across various domains, advocating for a society where fairness and

opportunity are not just ideals but realities for every Canadian. This exploration is more than an intellectual exercise; it is a call to action for PPC supporters and voters to engage deeply with the principles that define us, shaping a future that reflects our shared values of fairness, freedom, respect, and responsibility.



Previously, we delved into the intricate philosophy underpinning the People's Party of Canada's approach, highlighting the party's commitment to fostering a society that prizes intellectual rigour and policy effectiveness above emotional reactivity. A pivotal question at the heart of political philosophy and practical governance: How can we harmonize individual responsibility with collective welfare to cultivate a fairer, more equitable Canada?

The debate between individualism and collectivism marks a critical divide in political philosophy, contrasting visions of society's structure. John Rawls advocates for a society that elevates its most disadvantaged, emphasizing fairness and equality through collective action. In contrast, Robert Nozick champions individual rights and minimal state intervention, highlighting personal freedom.

Collectivism prioritizes the community's needs over individual desires, promoting shared goals and collective well-being, often at the cost of personal preferences. In contrast, individualism upholds personal freedom and autonomy. The PPC navigates this spectrum by valuing personal freedom and advocating for minimal state interference while supporting a social framework that ensures fairness and opportunities for all Canadians.



Consider healthcare, which, while a provincial responsibility, requires balancing personal choice and societal obligation. A logical step would be advocating for more private options within a universally accessible framework, allowing individuals more freedom in their healthcare decisions while ensuring that no Canadian is left without essential care.

In environmental policy, this balance manifests in debates over regulation and innovation. A PPC approach could emphasize the role of technological advancement and market-based solutions in addressing environmental challenges, proposing that individual and corporate responsibility, incentivized through less restrictive regulatory frameworks, can lead to sustainable practices that benefit the collective.

Again, a responsibility of the provincial governments, Education similarly presents opportunities for reform that respects parental choice and student needs while aiming for broad societal benefits. Policies could focus on diversifying educational options, supporting alternative schooling methods, and enhancing vocational training, all within a framework that ensures high standards and accessibility.

The government's role in this balanced approach is not to dominate but to facilitate, creating conditions where personal freedom and social welfare coexist and flourish. This means regulatory frameworks should be designed to protect and empower, ensuring that interventions are measured, targeted, and always in service of enhancing individual agency within a just society.

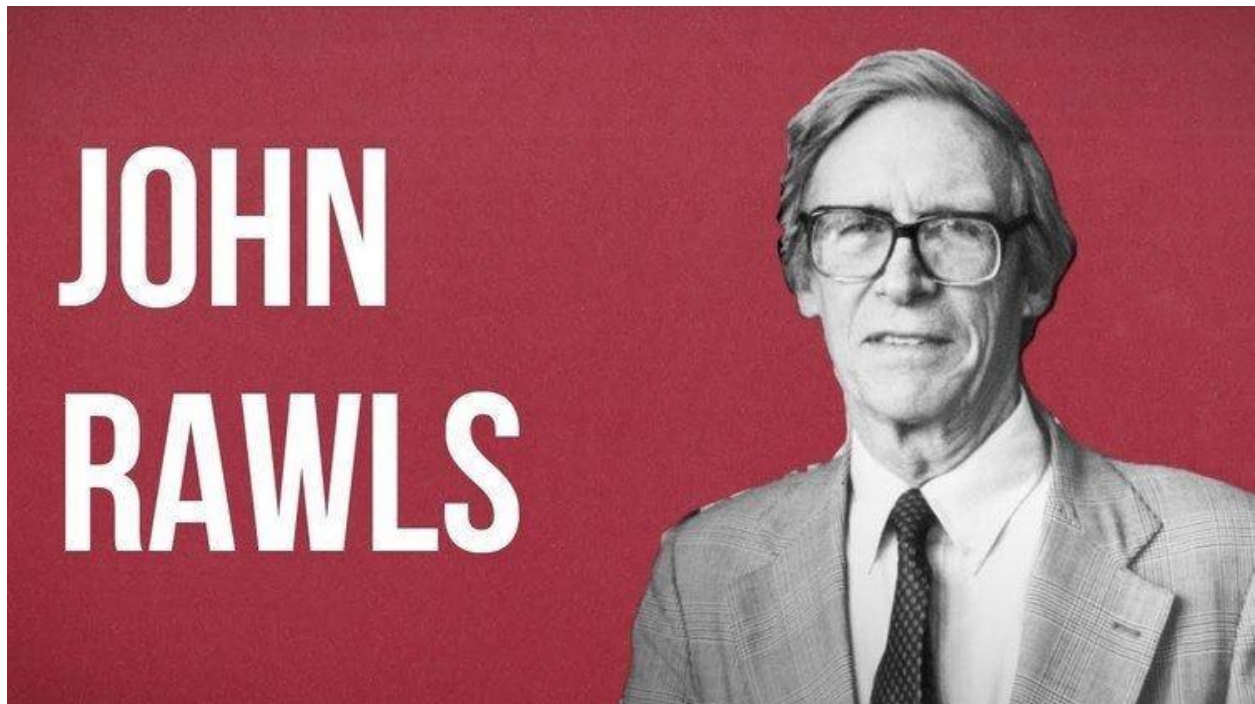
Central to this vision is the empowerment of citizens through Education and active participation. Civic Education can demystify complex political issues, encourage informed debate, and foster a sense of responsibility towards the community and country. Individuals can better understand the

delicate balance between personal freedom and collective welfare by engaging in the political process, contributing to policies reflecting Canadian society's nuanced realities.

I do not speak for the PPC. There is a democratic process that is followed to establish political policies, but could make recommendations such as:

1. Enhancing financial literacy, critical thinking, and civic engagement in curricula to prepare students for informed citizenship. This should be similar from province to province.
2. Encouraging private sector innovation within a publicly funded healthcare system to improve quality and access. Again, there should be some commonality amongst the provinces.
3. Implementing market-based incentives for sustainable practices and balancing regulatory measures with innovations encouraging individual and corporate responsibility.

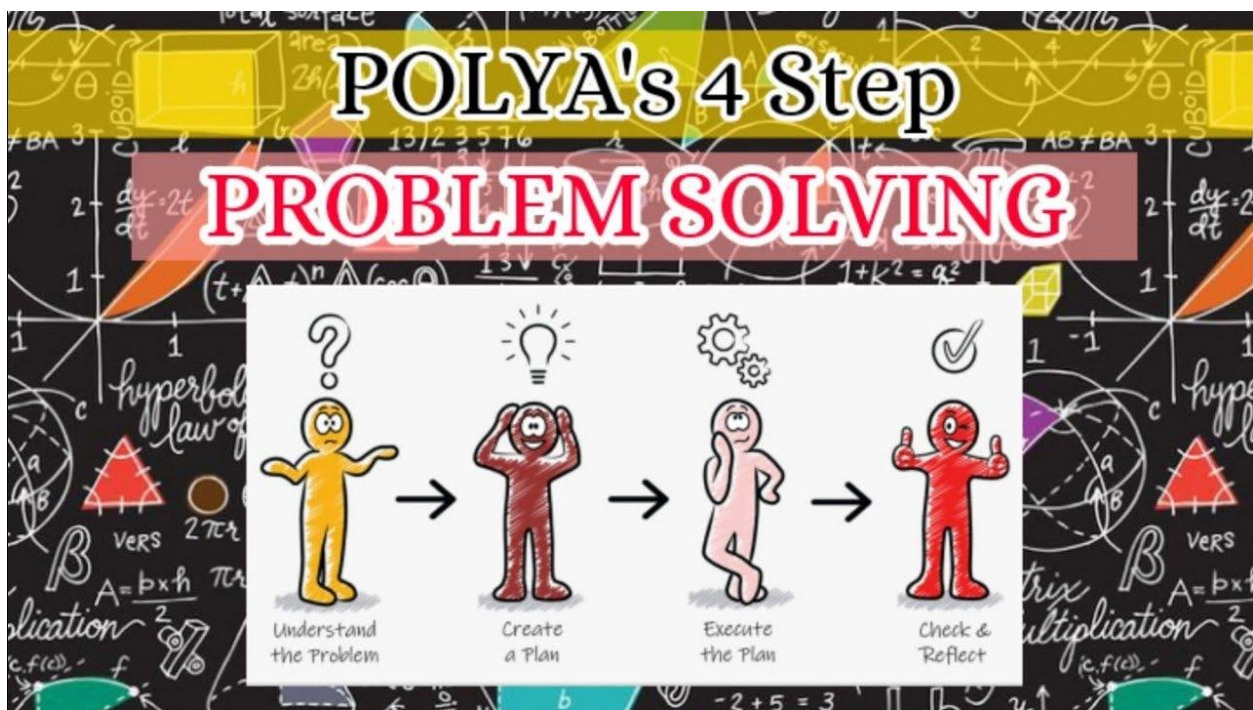
There are others but notice that nothing is disadvantageous to any Canadian; it is not enough to attend a high school course that features financial literacy. There will be skills and principles that must be understood. There is no real optional consideration here. Our sense of personal responsibility encourages this diligence in learning at home, at school, and amongst peers.



This is exceptionally important. Let us look at [Rawl's Question 2 again](#), "*Can we claim our society is just if some people are stuck in poverty through no fault of their own?*" Are people with a learning disability the same as people who are simply not engaged?

The engagement of students in learning has been a problem for the past few decades. Some social media memes point to a perceived irrelevancy of Education in the future, e.g. "Wish I was doing trigonometry right now... said no one ever." or, "Sure, I can analyze Shakespeare, but how do I write a resume?" There are many others, and you might have your favourites.

I do not pretend to have solutions to social problems, but I do know that many gifted people have ideas for possible solutions. They might not have the political clout to have their way considered. One such example came from my browsing the University library. I stumbled on to a book many decades old, and within only ten minutes of reading it, I was surprised and shocked by its relevancy. The book is "[How to Solve It](#)," by George Pólya, was an eye-opener for me, yet I am in my Autumn years and had retired from teaching nearly a decade earlier. This book was like a healthy shot in the arm. Let me explain.



Pólya's book presents a thoughtful approach to solving problems, not just within mathematics but applicable to problem areas. Here is a summary of problem-solving steps as applied to assembling an IKEA product:

1. **Understand the Problem:** Before diving into the assembly, thoroughly review the instructions and parts list. Ensure you have all the necessary pieces and tools, just as you would clarify a math problem's given data. Understanding the project scope—what the finished product should look like and what steps are likely involved—is akin to comprehending a mathematical question before solving it.
2. **Devise a Plan:** Planning involves strategizing the assembly process, like planning a solution to a math problem. Decide the order in which you will tackle the assembly,

which might involve grouping similar parts (simplify ?) or starting with the product's base. This step is about foreseeing how different pieces fit together, anticipating potential challenges, and preparing for them, mirroring the strategy formulation in problem-solving.

3. **Carry Out the Plan:** Executing your plan means following step-by-step instructions and adjusting as needed—akin to solving a math problem after devising a strategy. This might involve piecing parts together in a specific order, using tools accurately, and periodically checking your progress against the manual to ensure accuracy. Flexibility is critical, as real-time problem-solving may require adapting your plan based on unexpected issues or missteps.
4. **Look Back:** Review your process and the finished product after completing the assembly. Reflect on the challenges you faced and your solutions – this is like reflecting on the steps taken to solve a math problem. This could involve considering more efficient methods, avoiding errors in future projects, and understanding how the process might apply to other tasks. Reflection solidifies learning and improves problem-solving skills for future endeavours.

By framing the IKEA assembly process through Pólya's problem-solving steps, we can see the universality of his method. Whether assembling furniture, solving a mathematical equation, or facing life's myriad challenges, the core approach of understanding the problem, planning a solution, executing the plan, and reflecting on the process is a powerful toolkit for effective problem-solving.

George Pólya's methodology was revolutionary for several reasons. First, it formalized a flexible and universal approach to problem-solving that transcends mathematics, making it applicable to virtually any problem. Second, it emphasized the importance of the process over the immediate finding of a solution, encouraging a deeper engagement with problem-solving as a critical thinking exercise.

His work underscored that solving problems is not just about applying formulas or memorized procedures but also understanding, strategizing, executing, and reflecting. This holistic approach fosters critical thinking, creativity, and adaptability—invaluable skills in academic settings and everyday life.

When he wrote his book, students were often asked to "simplify" a series of complicated mathematical expressions into simpler ones, but no one understood its place in problem-solving. As a result, I would approach science teaching differently now, and keep your eyes out for my next science book, "*Parent-Powered Science: Inspiring the Next Generation of Thinkers*," currently in development.

Let me finish by stating the obvious. Pólya's legacy in Education profoundly impacts how problem-solving is taught and approached—by encouraging a mindset that values the process of discovery and learning, contributed to a shift towards more thoughtful, engaged, and practical education practices.

It occurs to me that history teachers should also spend time looking at the problem-solving approaches historical figures used. This concept of relevancy and importance to the lives of young students should be at the forefront and not an afterthought.

Facing challenges is an inevitable part of life and a critical driver of personal growth, scientific progress, and societal advancement. Success, in many ways, is defined by our capacity to approach problems with creativity, resilience, and a willingness to learn from every attempt at solving them.

"Progress" should be a balancing act of acknowledging what we learned in the past yet looking for ways to improve going forward. In Canada, the other parties do not speak of fairness as a political foundation. It does not break their thinking horizon. Yet, it is pivotal. It is important. Canadians should all have equivalent opportunities to learn and to bring relevancy to their Education. Everyone has that personal responsibility to find the best way forward for them.