
The \"A\" Word

Posted by bjorn - 2008/02/28 12:13

Are you comfortable using the "A" word to describe your theological stance? Why or why not?

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Re:The \"A\" Word

Posted by Rasta - 2008/03/03 14:15

Good question. I am fine with it. I simply don't care, or pay attention to misconceptions of the word.

It does NOT mean that you outright deny any possible form/forms or any possible god/gods/godess/godess,etc.

It simply means disbelief in God X. You can use any God from any faith to fill in the X.

If you put an apple in front of me, I have no choice wheather or not I am going to believe it exists.

I must.

The converse is true with god.

I didn't choose to be an atheist. I chose to label myself an atheist, after I realized I was one.

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Re:The \"A\" Word

Posted by Atheos - 2008/06/13 17:30

Absolutely. I am not a fan of labels, but that one is pretty cut and dried for me. I don't wear my atheism like a badge, it does not define who I am, merely my stance on a particular issue. Atheists are free of the cookie cutter mentality of "You are a Christian so you believe in Jesus." or "You are a Scientologist so you believe we came from outer space."

And Rasta, here is the definition of the word.

Atheist: a person who denies or disbelieves the existence of a supreme being or beings.*

So yes, being a 'by the definition' atheist, I deny and/or disbelieve in the existence of supreme beings and/or the supernatural. I don't believe in God or Ghosts, Vampires or Valkyries, Dragons or Devils.

*cited source: Dictionary.com Unabridged (v 1.1)Based on the Random House Unabridged Dictionary, © Random House, Inc. 2006.

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Re:The \"A\" Word

Posted by CrystalID - 2008/09/11 17:45

I am comfortable with some people, not with others. I do not use it at work with my individuals EVER to label myself, and I do not share my personal beliefs at work. A few trusted co-workers do know, and I do use the word with some of them.

I had felt comfortable using it amongst friends, until I found out a former friend may be acting a bit nasty toward me because of my beliefs. This is one of the first times I actually feel that someone I trusted has judged me based solely on my beliefs. Not a great feeling.

I feel it is fine to be labeled once in a great while when necessary, and I would never lie to someone. I am an atheist, through and through, and I am proud of that!

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Re:The \"A\" Word

Posted by Vic333 - 2008/09/15 20:15

I never use to use it, now I do. I decided that I'm not comfortable being friends with anyone that would judge me because of the word "atheist". I try to act friendly and understanding of others, and I can't understand anyone changing their opinion just because of it. It's not the first thing I'll tell anyone because I feel they should get to know me first before I start sharing my beliefs. Though, once you get me going, I can go on for awhile.

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Re:The \"A\" Word

Posted by Minnesota Joe - 2008/09/18 16:33

If anyone asks I would tell them, but I don't volunteer the information. I guess that makes me at least a little bit uncomfortable with it, although I also don't offer other personal information about my life.

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Re:The \"A\" Word

Posted by CrystalD - 2008/09/18 18:22

Yeah, I see not offering it up unless asked. I don't think that means you're 'uncomfortable'. I, very often, do not offer it up unless asked.

I feel like it's like any other topic, in that you need to really gauge the situation and decide how comfortable you are with that person, how comfortable they will be with you, and what your interests/ideas are. Even for mundane things, like shoe shopping, it's the same. Some people I'll talk about shoes with, other people wouldn't want to talk about that. Shoes, god, what's the difference? :)

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Re:The \"A\" Word

Posted by Dearth_MD - 2008/10/12 14:59

Calling yourself an atheist in front of a christian can be very annoying. A lot of Christians feel like you telling them is a sign from god that they have to save your should by converting you and that with the power of god by their side they have the strength and patience to enlighten your black doomed soul.

Not labeling yourself saves you from having to hear some circular logic served (t) style.

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Re:The \"A\" Word

Posted by CrystalD - 2008/10/12 15:55

It can be annoying. I know one person who found out about me who couldn't stop saying 'you're going to burn in hell!'... But, honestly, I was glad she knew and the annoyance was mostly hers, I'd like to think. :)

Part of the problem is that atheists are seen as being argumentative and obnoxious, which isn't so.

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Re:The \"A\" Word

Posted by scott.E - 2008/11/09 17:46

Good question.

When people ask me about my beliefs (ie: what church i go to as they always assume I am non rational) I simply tell

them I am an atheist and they react as if i told them a black man with a 12 inch penis took their daughter home after doing drugs. Priceless look on their faces.
Normally after that I get asked how can I not believe in god and blah blah blah and then they tell me that they will pray for me. To which I answer : If god has not answered they prayers for kids starving, being abused or all the other horrible things in the world, then why would he convert me to being a christian.

I enjoy the word Atheist yet I dont normally use it.

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Re:The \"A\" Word

Posted by Vic333 - 2008/11/09 18:14

Calling yourself an atheist in front of a Christian may be annoying. But, admitting to being a Christian in front of an atheist can be pretty irritating as well.

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Re:The \"A\" Word

Posted by Minnesota Joe - 2008/11/11 16:08

Calling yourself an atheist in front of a Christian may be annoying. But, admitting to being a Christian in front of an atheist can be pretty irritating as well.

A person holding the minority philosophical position in a particular social setting may feel intimidated or annoyed, true, but is that really the issue here?

In practice, there is a stigma attached to atheists that doesn't apply to Christians. Atheism is often equated with immorality, communism, or worse. Even some who are atheists in all but name refuse to so label themselves in an (misguided in my opinion) attempt to avoid these mistaken associations (see Sam Harris for example, although the reasons he gives are somewhat different).

Not that we should whine about it. Besides, it sure seems like it is getting better and in any case it is more productive to simply work to correct the stigma.:)

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Re:The \"A\" Word

Posted by CrystalD - 2008/11/12 14:20

I think the point of calling yourself an atheist or a christian is this: It's just good common sense to NOT do those things with people right away.

Much like a person on a first date does not have to disclose an STD (unless they actually plan to get down that evening...), the same is true for your social positions, of which I consider religious or non-religious the same...

I would say what is MOST annoying on both sides of the issue are people who are constantly talking about 'what' they are. I don't feel the need to announce to every person I meet that I'm an atheist, and for the most part, I keep my mouth shut about it, not because I'm embarrassed, but because it is often not the right time or place to share that information. This was my same argument for atheist charities. It's AWESOME to be involved in charity work as an atheist, I would just encourage people to also participate without labeling yourself.

As important as I consider my atheism, it is certainly not the only thing about me that's worthy of sharing, and it's probably not even the most important thing I could share with someone about myself!

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Re:The \"A\" Word

Posted by darwin - 2008/11/12 14:27

I think that works if everyone does it. If everyone were anonymous, than charity is for charity sake. But, the reality is that much charity is done as a form of marketing and promotion. Companies and organizations participate in events to visibly appear to be helping the community. I think there is value in a group of atheists getting together and doing something as a group of atheists. As for individuals, it's tacky to bring your personal philosophy into an event if it isn't asked for, but it can be productive if a group of Christians and atheists came together to work on something.

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