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The OU football stadium can hold more than 85,000 people. According to the National Communication Association's website, their total membership is about 7,700, with about 3,000 regularly attending the annual national convention. The International Communication Association has about half that many. The pink part of the stadium seating chart indicates how much of the OU stadium the total membership of NCA would fill if all its members came to a game. More than 90% of the stadium would be empty. According to the Social Science Citation Index, even after a lifetime of publishing and effort to have a "presence," the most prestigious scholars in our field are lucky to have their best work cited more than 30 times and often by themselves or their immediate students/co-authors. A major problem at ICA and NCA national conventions is poor attendance at panel sessions and even absenteeism among panelists and respondents. It is estimated that attending a national convention costs over \$1000 dollars. That's an expensive 15 minutes of fame (the amount of time given to many presenters). No study of readership has been done of journals that members are required to take as part of their membership dues. From personal observation, I suspect that many are never taken out of their plastic wrappers and without such compulsory subscriptions they would quickly go out of business. It is a captive audience. The moral of the story is: This is a small world. It is not that hard to be outstanding in such a small community. It is easy to get involved. Network. And ... think beyond NCA and ICA to a larger audience. Try to make your communication scholarship relevant and interesting to a larger world. Get your head out of this department and out of this field. Look up and look around. Don't be limited by local stories of "greatness." That way delusion lies. Don't flatter local gossip with your attention. Work hard. Read widely and critically. Finish and move on to do your own research agenda. Studies show that your peak cognitive ability is reached around your mid-20's. If you have no burning interest in communication, leave for another vocation as soon as you can. Time is valuable and the world is full of opportunities. You have but one life.

Those who won our independence valued liberty both as an end and as a means. They believed liberty to be the secret of happiness and courage to be the secret of liberty. They believed that freedom to think as you will and to speak as you think are means indispensable to the discovery and spread of truth; that without free speech and assembly discussion would be futile; that with them, discussion affords ordinarily adequate protection against the dissemination of noxious doctrine.

They recognized the risks to which all human institutions are subject. But they knew that order cannot be secured merely through fear of punishment for its infraction; that it is hazardous to discourage thought, hope and imagination; that fear breeds repression; that repression breeds hate. [Basic human dignity] lies in the opportunity to discuss freely supposed grievances and proposed remedies; and that the fitting remedy for evil counsels is good ones.

Believing in the power of reason as applied through public discussion, they eschewed silence coerced by authority -- law -- the argument of force in its worst form.