



[Jordan Peterson: Why The LEFT Hate Me \(Full Interview\)](#)

Margaret Hoover: .. as crisis and meaning God yes or no why not take on this question of the existence of God you've decided that you don't and didn't self-identify as a conservative as recently as five years ago but I think it's fair to say there are many on the Left who are fearful of you and your message now and I wonder if you have a reflection on why that is?

Peterson: I'm not a fan of people who put group identity first. It was the moral failings of each person at the level of the individual that was actually the cause of the totalitarian catastrophe and that's not political, that's psychological.

Hoover: He's become an accidental icon of the conservative movement. Should the left be afraid of Jordan Peterson, my guest this week on firing line. My guest today has been called everything from the most influential public intellectual in the Western world to Oprah for men. In the blink of an eye doctor Jordan Peterson went from being an obscure Canadian psychologist to an internet celebrity known for challenging identity politics and political correctness on Campus. His second book "Twelve Rules for Life an Antidote to Chaos" topped bestseller lists and has led to sold out live lectures around the world and still he is not without controversy. To some critics he has more Dr. Phil than Oprah they see his audience and accuse him of stoking anxieties of white cisgender heterosexual males unable to cope with their loss of status in the 21st century.

Hoover: Apologies doctor if those adjectives were triggering. (Peterson: they were they were a bit) in a viral video Dr. Peterson asserted that in order to be able to think one must risk being offensive, despite the obvious flaw in his logic that a Canadian could ever be offensive, he has clearly struck a nerve and any professor who makes analysis of classical text exciting deserves the right to risk offence. Dr. Peterson welcome to firing line. (Peterson: Thank you very much)

Hoover: Twelve rules for life stand up straight with your shoulders back, pursue what is meaningful if it's not even expedient, tell the truth or at least don't lie, treat yourself like someone you are responsible for helping, be precise in your speech. What is it about these rules that has so resonated in our culture?

Peterson: Well I think the fundamental issue is likely my tangling together of responsibility and meaning. You know I start with a pessimistic perspective I would say although I think it's realistic and very straightforwardly discussed the fact that people have difficult lives and that life itself is full of suffering and that we make it worse with our own voluntary stupidity and willful blindness and even malevolence and that's what we contend with you know. We contend with suffering and malevolence and as a consequence it's necessary to pursue something that has substantive meaning to set against that and I think that it's self-evident, once it's articulated anyways, that most people find deep meaning in their life as a

consequence not not of their rights or or they're impulsive pleasures even but as a consequence of bearing responsibility. For themselves, for their family for the community and the heavier the responsibility the better.

Hoover: This resonates universally but you've tweeted that 91% of your followers or that your adherents are men is there a crisis in manhood that you're addressing?

Peterson: um I think, I don't think there's a crisis in manhood I think what there is is a very foolish attempt by many radicals in our society to make an association between male competence and patriarchal tyranny, which is a very very bad idea.

Hoover: This is a continuing theme throughout time to sort of tell men to sort of buck up and take responsibility and find meaning.

Peterson: it's an anthropological truism that men need to be initiated in some sense to to to to mature, they seem, because I think the reason for that it's not as common among women precisely and I think the reason for that is that biology matures women and the responsibility that comes along with that, I think, it's a built-in punch and so but with men because they can delay and delay and delay then it's necessary for society to catalyze their development. It's more necessary anyways, time might do it but they're not as pressured as women in in all sorts of ways and so that lack of necessity has to be replaced apparently that this is what you derived from the anthropological literature, by by a social attempt to to foster maturation and I think the best way to do that is, well I believe that the best way to do that is through appeal to to nobility in some sense is that you know not only will you find meaning if you adopt responsibility but it it takes you away from that stupid suffering and shame and makes you into something that can you know look at itself in the mirror without without grief and misery.

Hoover: Do women have a role to play here?

Peterson: yeah well absolutely I mean it's also necessary for women to adopt responsibilities fine (Hoover: but you say biologically it's built in a bit more so) I don't think there's more encouragement at the moment for for women to to to take their place in society, perhaps less encouragement on the motherhood side that might be optimal especially for young women because I think they're often sold a bill of goods but certainly there's no shortage of encouragement for for girls and young women to take their place in in the world of career, despite the fact that that's apparently a patriarchal tyranny. Maybe it's not if it's run by women I don't exactly understand the logic behind that.

Hoover: So let's go to the radical left in universities because that's I mean you are a product of university environment you were an associate professor at Harvard for five years you've been at the University of Toronto for almost 20 as I understand it and now you've been on sabbatical but the the thing that really catapulted you to international fame and and and really highlighted your voice was your articulation and attack against identity politics on campuses.

Peterson: That was part of it you know, I don't really think that's what it is what it was. What happened was that my lectures online before any of this political stuff emerged had a million views, million and a half views I guess by October 2016 which is when I made a couple of

videos that were political oriented and that did cause us an expanding firestorm in Canada and elsewhere and there were a number of what would you say steps in that expanding outward but really the reason that this is developed is because people came to my youtube channel to check out the political debate but they stayed for the content.

Hoover: To the extent that viewers are aware of you, they're probably aware of you in the context of the controversy of the bill, which was called the C-16 bill in Canada, which was an amendment to the Canadian Human Rights Act and the Criminal Code and it was intended to add gender identity and gender expressions. (Peterson: well that was its stated intention). That was its stated intention and your let me just concisely frame this and feel free to correct me, your objection was actually not an objection to LGBT freedom or to being able to identify in your own life privately transgender individuals as he or she if you as a background in clinical psychology determined that was appropriate for you but but your your interest in this bill was was the speech compulsion. A*** right so you became this ..

Peterson: There was two issues, one was compelled speech, so which by the way it was made illegal in the United States in the 1940s by the supreme court right unless it's commercial speech you can you can compel certain forms of commercials speech.

Hoover: Compelled speech meaning the government telling you how to speak what to say and what is legal and illegal to say we have a First Amendment in this country.

Peterson: Well even more specifically what you have to say instead of what you are forbidden to say. So first of all there's all the things you can say then there's some things you're forbidden to say then there's the category of things you have to say okay. So the Supreme Court in the U.S. decided there was no category of things that you had to say and forced by the government that was that was against the that was ran contrary to the First Amendment. They did that in Canada (Hoover: and in Canada what they said is there was compelled speech around identifiers for LGBT individuals) as well for transsexual people in particular yes but but it was broader than that without specifying what those pronouns would be or under what conditions they would be used. So that was the first thing and what I objected to was the the fact that the politicians dared to produce legislation that moved out of the political domain as far as I'm concerned into the philosophical or even the theological domain by compelling voluntary speech and that had never happened in in English common law context before and as I said it already been made what illegal technically illegal in the United States, so that was number one.

Peterson: Number two was and this was more a consequence of the policy documents surrounding Bill C-16 okay. It instantiated a social constructionist view of gender into the law, so that's a no-go as far as I'm concerned because the differences between men and women are not entirely social constructed socially constructed, they're not only a consequence of the environment and the science is absolutely clear on that and it isn't clear in Canada whether it's even legal to hold that opinion anymore.

Hoover: You're a clinical psychologist, you treat patients many different kinds of patients have you treated transgender patients. (09:48)

Peterson: Not specifically although I have treated people who have had trouble various troubles with their sexual identities um troubles with their sexual identities yeah conflicts and crises and that sort of thing.

Hoover: But in your interactions with people that decide to go on self-identifying in the opposite gender that they were born as or as their body manifests, you have no problem I've heard you say calling them by the pronoun that they choose to be identified as.

Peterson: Well it depends on the pronoun. I mean I used he and she as requested, as seemed socially appropriate when requested politely. There's a whole slew of pronouns seventy of them I think different sets now and I haven't been inclined to use those, no one has actually asked me so it's not like I've rejected a student's claim which is not to say that I would just kowtow to a student's claim either because it isn't actually up to you which words I use to address you that's actually up to me now I might have to pay a price for that but but that's okay and we don't have our pronoun pronouns language is a common mode of communication and it's socially negotiated it's not something that you decide by fiat especially not if you're the government.

Hoover: You talk about social justice warriors on campus and this bullying effect that they have, that the best way to encounter bullies is to stand up straight and put your shoulders back.

Peterson: That's just the best way to encounter the world I mean, you know that chapter which is chapter one has been subject to a certain amount of criticism apparently the critics believe that I'm justifying the existence of hierarchies merely by pointing out that they've existed for far longer than the West and capitalism, which is not what I was doing, I was pointing out that they're far more fundamental than the Marxists let's say are willing to consider and this is. See this is actually a bad thing it is definitely the case that hierarchies dispossessed people. It's definitely the case that the bulk of the spoils let's say from from the construction of a hierarchy go to a small minority of people that's an iron law but it's not a consequence of capitalism it's a way deeper problem and so if you want to address the problem of inequality you have to do it in a much more sophisticated way than the Marxists managed because they assume that that's a consequence of capitalism that's just, it's preposterous.

Hoover: The critics would say that the social justice warriors are perhaps binding together in order to stand up straight with their shoulders back in order to ..

Peterson: No they're not there they're binding together in groups to portray the world as a place where people bind together in groups to justify the use of power and to put forward a, what would you call it, to put forward an ideology that denies the the notion that the individuals have the center of the conceptual scope.

Hoover: So I have a question about then, at Harvard for example, there are a group of Asian-American students who are suing (Yea), because they feel that as a group they have been

discriminated against, specifically on competency or in merits, right that's ..

Peterson: That's because the the reason for that though is because the whole game became about identity politics to begin with. (Hoover: But then they have) you've started with well (Hoover: identity politics in order to use that as a tool to combat) exactly what the right-wing collectivists say, especially the white supremacist types. If there's gonna be identity politics we better gather ourselves together in our group and get ready to defend ourselves. It's like yeah you play that game and see what happens it's not a good game.

Hoover: I your passion enthusiasm for this (jbp it's more than it's terror) well yes but you're you're motivated and you're focused and and you're you're directed at this problem and I noticed that you've been on sabbatical for two years I sense that the place to fight this is in universities you've identified universities as creating this problem and why not go back and fight it at its Genesis.

Peterson: yeah I think it's better just to take it directly to people, I think the new media forms video and podcasts allow people like me let's say to communicate with the broader public in a way that's never ever been possible before and that's actually much more effective in many ways than the classical university.

Hoover: in a lot of ways I understand that I mean you reach more people certainly and you're talking to people who are interested in might not hear your message otherwise

Peterson: and they add well and the interested parts really relevant I mean the lectures that I'm doing now for example which average about 2500 people the only people that come are people who want to be at the lecture so that's the real universe.

Hoover: The flip side of going to YouTube is that while you have millions of people, tens of millions of people seeing you, in a world of seven billion people is it is it an echo chamber of a very narrow and intense niche audience and it doesn't have maybe the reach or the downstream effect that fighting back at the University.

Peterson: I think it's better (Hoover: why) well these are estimates so far is that one slice of my videos or other have been viewed 500 million times so and that's in a very short period of time that's only across a couple of years. I also don't exactly know what's possible in the universities I think they're making so many mistakes that it isn't obvious to me how they can be put right and and the mistakes are compounding and that, I'm still at the University of Toronto and by the way the University of Toronto is a fine institution as far as institutions go. It's not particularly radical and they were confused at the beginning when all of this started to happen and went after me partly as a consequence of confusion and they've been very good to me since then so. (15:32)