

Everyday Justice: The Courageous Lifestyle of Using Your Power for Good

Devaluing and dehumanizing words and actions have built a cultural edifice one brick at a time. It is now in our power to dismantle that structure of injustice one validating blow at a time.

The journey of everyday justice begins internally before it is lived externally. If words create thoughts, which are manifested in actions, we can rewrite our internal narrative as we confront every thought that would lessen the value of a human being in any way. Once we align our beliefs with justice—power used for good—it will become our automatic pattern of thought. This new way of thinking will be revealed by all that we do and with everyone we meet. What can this look like?

Empathy and Validation: The greatest gift we can give ourselves is to authentically and genuinely value all of humanity. We will never truly value others until we are able to see value in ourselves. My childhood experiences left me believing lies about my worth: “I’m not good enough.” “I’m damaged goods.” “I must protect myself because I cannot trust anyone else.”

Everyone, especially men, was viewed as a potential predator. Everyone was out to take advantage of me, so “I’d better get them before they get me and step on them before they step on me.” The darkness of these and other lies that I believed about myself was my greatest enemy. It was not the injustice that was done to me, but what happened in me that shaped the negative trajectory of my life.

I became an instrument of injustice through my words and

actions believing it was the only way to protect myself. I believed that these self-protecting needs-motivated attitudes and actions made me outwardly powerful. However, they were but a smokescreen hiding how internally powerless I truly was.

When I remember my emotional torment and the continuous self-sabotaging choices I made, empathy bursts inside of me for others. I have an experiential knowledge that reveals that others have their own untold stories of pain and suffering. How could I judge someone harshly when I was that one? How can I condemn, expose and belittle them when I walked a comparable path?

I stand in awe of how one validating and healing truth upon another progressively saturated my way of thinking, believing and acting. Emotional health began to flourish as walls came down and healthy boundaries were built. Ego-driven fear was dismantled granting access to the innate ability to love and value another.

Start with your own internal dialogue. Every validating discovery is a victory won that will be reproduced in your spheres of influence. The ability to see your value allows you to generate value in others. Everyday justice is as simple as looking into a stranger's eyes and acknowledging them with a smile and an honoring nod of the head as you walk by. Complimenting the cashier, holding the door open to allow another to go before you, writing a note with a good tip on a restaurant receipt and so forth are simple acts of everyday justice—your power used for good.

Family: The proving ground for everyday justice is at home where we let our guard down. How do we respond to our children when their room is a mess, when they fail a test or they throw a temper tantrum? How do we respond to our spouse when they cannot read our minds knowing exactly what we need? How do we respond when those closest to us inconvenience us?

Justice begins in the home by treating your partner with the same love and respect through which you first won their heart. Make the hard choices to love and respect them enough to reject offense and resolve to work through every difference with understanding. Bringing validation into our homes creates healthy families that will, over time, have a huge impact upon the whole of society.

Our words hold the power to heal and build worth. Everyday justice is telling your family that you love them and are proud of them. It is supporting them when they fail and face challenges, instructing them in perseverance. It is recognizing that you are the voice of authority that can affirm their value.

Larger spheres of influence: When our private world and family culture are established in everyday justice, we will become a powerful influence in our workplace, our community and even our nation. We will be a carrier of hope, a difference-maker and one who models a higher and better way of living, loving and leading.

The response from those you influence will be either jealousy and competition because you will refuse to participate in divisive dialogue, gossip and slander, or people will be drawn to you. I've learned that many more will want to partner with you because you've proven your trustworthiness. If you do not let people gossip to you, they will soon learn that you will not gossip about them. If you reject prejudgment, bias and assumptions, others will know that you will not prejudge them.

Imagine how everyday justice can shift the culture in your spheres of influence. You do not need a title or position to have a voice of influence in your workplace. You will be one who bridges the divides with your lifestyle of everyday justice. When the divides are united, opinions, ideas and solutions can be found to benefit all. The ground between our differences is the place of strategic solutions when navigated

with respect. That is everyday justice! {eoa}

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