

Everyday Justice

The Courageous Lifestyle of Using Your Power for Good

Dr. Melodye Hilton

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Everyday Justice

Introduction

A beautiful dark-haired girl was born into a family who valued her and loved her deeply. Her mother and father were thrilled to finally have a little girl and were very protective over their one-and-only petite princess. She had many aunts, uncles and cousins from both sides of the family and it was not uncommon to visit them often. When she was two years old while visiting family, her uncle offered to show her their tiger-striped cat. She trustingly went with him. What seemed like an innocent gesture of kindness towards his niece was in actuality his cunning opportunity to get her alone to sexually molest her. This happened repeatedly every time they would visit.

At such a young age, she held this secret inside of her. Even then, she wanted to protect her mommy and daddy knowing that they loved her uncle. She knew they would be hurt and upset with him and she didn't want them to be sad. Meanwhile, she awakened frequently in terror and tears from nightmares of a tiger-striped cat attacking her. When her mother would rush to console her, this precious two-year-old knew exactly why she was dreaming these repeated dreams. However, she felt responsible to shoulder the burden to protect the family from the hurt and shame of her abuse.

Until she was nine years old, repeated accounts of violation occurred in the shadows from various individuals. The shame, fear of exposure, and protection of those she loved kept her silent. This little girl grew up believing lies about her worth, identity, and value because of her experiences.

That little girl was me.

What happened to me as a small child was vile and revolting. My uncle devalued my worth in order to satisfy his sexual cravings. It was intentional injustice—an abuse of his power. This man used deliberate emotional manipulation, his physical strength, and with his narcissistic perversion he stole my innocence and femininity from me. He used his power to satisfy his sick desires at my expense.

Even with this reality as a very true part of my story, I can say with confidence that I no longer stand as a victim of this narrative. Though scripted in my life's book, the early chapters of my story do not define me. In fact, I have chosen to re-write the future because of my past. Out of the injustice that I endured, I am driven to do justice and help others to do the same. Rather than embracing the label of a victim where the wounds remain fresh over time, I have chosen to let those wounds heal to painless scars that remind me of the power that I hold to shape someone else's life. The pain inflicted upon me then now serves as a motivator to live with empathy and a determination to value others with every demonstration of my life.

On a broader scale, as I look throughout history, I see the interminable power of those courageous enough to catalyze their pain into purpose. When someone chooses to expose a misuse of power and instead stand for what is right, they initiate the reshaping of the culture to come. Many of these individual's bravery was compelling enough to motivate government to enact legislation to defend the vulnerable. Their sacrifices and unwavering determination modeled a way of life that challenged the masses to confront their biases and bigotry.

A clarion call persists as our world continues to experience an epidemic of prejudice, mistrust, and injustice. Not everyone has the position or platform to influence the laws of the land from the highest courts; but every one of us has the power of influence to impact the lives of those around us just by doing what is right. We can be the voices of everyday justice as we choose to use our power for good.

The Cradle of Everyday Injustice

The human brain is an interictally woven database warehousing every word spoken in our presence from the womb to the present; these words created thoughts, which generated emotion, and ultimately shaped our beliefs and actions. All injustice begins with a formed belief that a person or group does not hold value. This devaluation becomes the poisonous internal permission to treat said person or group as though they do not matter.



When we as individuals do not assess our thoughts, attitudes, beliefs, and actions we can easily find ourselves treating others unjustly. Every unchecked thought of pre-judgement or bias leaves room for a devaluing attitude or belief that will culminate into an act of injustice. We must hold ourselves to a higher standard. We cannot excuse our angry outbursts or irritated attitudes as acceptable

behavior. We are privileged to possess our rights to free speech but must be careful not to misuse this freedom by touting condescending or divisive remarks due to our differences. This applies both face-to-face and online. We must espouse both honor and respect towards our fellow man—even when we disagree. The end does not justify the means.

Our inalienable rights, freedoms, and independent thinking are beautiful, and our military fights so that privilege is never taken from us. Our voice does matter and it should be heard. However, when we communicate and act in ways that devalue another valuable human being, it is immoral and will propagate injustice.

In the 1960s and 1970s, Stephen Biko was at the forefront of a grassroots anti-apartheid campaign in South Africa. He said, “The revolutionary sees his task as liberation not only of the oppressed but also the oppressor. Happiness can never truly exist in a state of tension, even if the tension is only of conscience.”¹

¹ Biko, Bantu Stephen “I Write What I Like: Selected Writings” University of Chicago Press, Oct 16, 2015 page 213 Published and arrangement with Bowerdean Publishing Company, Ltd.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. said, “Man is man because he is free to operate within the framework of his destiny. He is free to deliberate, to make decisions, and to choose between alternatives. He is distinguished from animals by his freedom to do evil or to do good and to walk the high road of beauty or tread the low road of ugly degeneracy.”²

Each one of us can walk in everyday justice as we use our power and freedom to choose what is right, to act honorably, and to reject every thought, belief, or action of injustice.

² Martin Luther King, Jr. The Measure of Man – 1959

Everyday Justice

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 that 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 experience left me believing a lie 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, were potential perpetrators. Everyone was out to take advantage of me so, *“I 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 were 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 though 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 story 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 allowing 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.

"Constant kindness can accomplish much. As the sun makes ice melt, kindness causes misunderstanding, mistrust, and hostility to evaporate." Albert Schweitzer³

"Be the reason someone smiles. Be the reason someone feels loved and believes in the goodness in people."⁴

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 inconvenienced from those closest to 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 home creates healthy families that will, over time, have a huge impact upon the whole of society.

"Your greatest contribution may not be something you do but someone you raise." Unknown

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.

"Live so that when your children think of fairness, caring, and integrity, they think of you." H. Jackson Brown Jr.

Larger spheres of influence: When our private world and family culture is 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 pre-judgment, bias, and assumptions others will know that you will not pre-judge them.

"Nobody cares how much you know, until they know how much you care." Theodore Roosevelt

³ John Mason, *You can be your best starting today*, 2015 ISBN 9781441228284

⁴ Roy T. Bennett, *The Light in the Heart*, ISBN:978-0987917751

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!

Conclusion

“Never believe that a few caring people can't change the world. For, indeed, that's all who ever have.” Margaret Mead

I'm not naïve to the fact that we live in a fear-driven world; you don't have to look far to see that it is sorely infected by an epidemic of mistrust. With that being said, I cannot allow my highest and best to succumb under the weight of pessimism and cynicism. I refuse to allow a devaluing culture to sculpt my worldview or frustrate my dream. I must continue to live, love, and lead believing that people are inherently good as I choose to value all of humanity.

Will you join me taking one step at a time on a lifelong journey of everyday justice? We will falter and fall but we will get up, brush ourselves off, and keep walking. Society is looking for real and authentic citizens who will model a new and better way of thinking, communicating, and acting as they live their everyday lives. We can be those who will help instead of hurt, give instead of take, create instead of destroy, and build up instead of tearing down; we can be those who make it right when we stumble.

Everyday justice is contagious because it promotes emotional health in the one giving as well as the one receiving. Science reveals that we can reject every negative, toxic thought and rewrite the instructions of our brain just by the way we choose to think. Those thoughts are translated to actions, which shape how we feel and respond to life situations.

Habits are developed in twenty-one days as our brains are rewired with memory that will literally transform our self-view, view of others, and our worldview. This is not putting our head in the proverbial sand ignoring the injustice we see; it is looking through the lens of what can be.

Harriet Tubman was born into slavery. She escaped but used her freedom to rescue others bound in slavery through partnering with other abolitionists and antislavery activists. She first had a dream to obtain her own freedom, empowering her to become an instrument of justice. She said, *“Every great dream begins with a dreamer. Always remember, you have within you the strength, the patience, and the passion to reach for the stars to change the world.”*

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. had a dream and so do I.

I choose to dream of a world where devaluation and dehumanization become unacceptable and all of humanity is valued and protected. A world where the abuse of power, corrupt business practices, and that which exploits the weak becomes bankrupt.

I choose to dream of a world where the color of a person's skin, their ethnicity, and all their physical characteristics mean nothing more than their beautiful uniqueness. A world where there is honor given to the elderly with their age-weathered skin and their time-tested wisdom. A

world where children are not marginalized into a box of their parent's convenience but are a treasure worthy of investment.

I choose to dream of a world where gossip and half-truths fall upon deaf ears as hearts are protected and reputations secure. Where neither men nor women are stereotyped or seen as second class as mutual respect and appreciation are demonstrated both publicly and privately.

I choose to dream of a world where the majority live everyday justice as they choose to be a part of the solution.

You and I together can demonstrate value to our family, our workplace, community, and our world. Everyday justice is using your power for the good of others; it is doing the right thing, and doing the right thing makes dreams come true.

Unmasking Prejudice

Silencing the Internal Voice of Bigotry



Prejudice is a word that is often associated solely with race. However, the truth is that we pre-judge all the time based upon countless factors, including gender, age, race, beliefs, politics, or any other infinite number of minute differences; it is a common habit for all of humanity to form an opinion without facts, firsthand experience, and without empathy and value for our fellow man. What if these habits

changed? What if our default response was first to love, to learn, and to listen?

In ‘Unmasking Prejudice: Silencing the Internal Voice of Bigotry’, Dr. Melodye Hilton thoughtfully addresses:

- The many faces of prejudice and bigotry;
- Pre-judgment and assumption as societal stumbling blocks;
- The dangers of gossip, rumors, and slander;
- The personal pain of prejudice through real-life stories; and
- Our responsibility as humans to stop devaluation by representing a restorative influence.

‘Unmasking Prejudice: Silencing the Internal Voice of Bigotry’ invites all of us to recognize and remove the hidden masks of prejudice so that we can have a hand in changing the cultural narrative and bringing healing to our land.



#StopDevaluation

A movement of courageous voices that will confront the epidemic of prejudice and bridge a cultural divide through validation.

When we devalue another person in any way, it subconsciously gives us permission to treat them as though they don't matter. When something isn't important, we treat it poorly, harshly, unjustly. When we ignore or deny a person's worth, we treat them with the same contempt. Oftentimes, we don't consider a small thought, mindset, habit, or action as damaging; however, these seemingly innocent fractures all too often create a chasm of divide between our fellow humanity. Friends and neighbors become enemies as we take and give permission to exploit one another's weaknesses and differences, and every single time, pain is caused.

Devaluation is a contagious disease in society and it must be cured. You and I hold the power to be a part of that cure! The #StopDevaluation movement is a call to action to be an initiator of change. We can be the ones who begin to bring healing instead of harm by bravely seeing the value in ourselves and in others.

What does it mean to #StopDevaluation? It starts with intentionally assessing our own thoughts, attitudes, and beliefs concerning ourselves and others. If our thoughts are not generating value, we have to confront them in our own minds and choose to change the way that we think.

The #StopDevaluation movement is for those who will challenge themselves to be the change makers within culture. This means refusing to participate in gossip, rumors, slander, and bigotry. It means choosing love over hate, knowledge over bias, mercy over judgement, and kindness over insult. It means believing and speaking the best of everyone and confronting those who bring harm in healthy ways. These powerful choices will change us, and we can change our world.

Join the movement.

Follow us on social media @StopDevaluation (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram)

Subscribe to #StopDevaluation YouTube Channel:

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCBxFt7_mRxQuJmYYyshPvw

Subscribe to #StopDevaluation mailing list: <https://drmelodye.com/stopdevaluation/>

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Dr. Melodye Hilton has developed a unique and personal approach to consulting and coaching that creates a positive and sustainable impact. With years of leadership experience, she works with individuals and teams around the globe as a leadership consultant, behavioral analyst, and executive team and personal coach. Her passion is in the development of people, as she believes that each person has a unique, valuable, and necessary contribution to bring to the table. As individuals develop the internal soft skills of leadership, their ability for both personal fulfillment and organizational productivity exponentially increases.

Dr. Melodye's recognition extends throughout all ages, socio-economic, and educational backgrounds through her work in corporate and local business, government, and not-for-profit organizations, as well as public and private educational sectors. She is a Master Certified Trainer for Taylor Protocols, Inc., training people to discover their Core Values Consciousness in pursuit of personal excellence and happiness. In addition, she has served as vice-president of a not-for-profit corporation for over 35 years and founded the International Training Center for the development and equipping of leaders. Dr. Melodye's core passion for justice (power used for good) led her to establish the Voice of Justice Foundation to aid in the rescue and care of orphans, trafficking victims, and others in need of hope, vision, and purpose.

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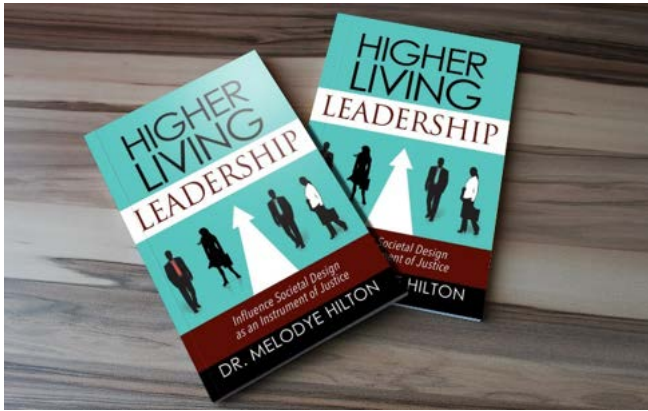
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Learn more about Dr. Melodye's philanthropic work, VOICE OF JUSTICE FOUNDATION: www.DrMelodye.com/voj

Higher Living Leadership



Influence Societal Design as an Instrument of Justice

Discover a New Way of Thinking for Leadership Success

Through years of experience in training and consulting leaders of various spheres of influence, Dr. Melody Hilton has developed and packaged scientifically based concepts and principles that transform the

leader and their leadership application from the inside-out. Presented for immediate, practical application in a marketplace setting, individuals are guided to discover their validation quotient — the attributes that unleash personal leadership value — and generate it in others to positively transform culture.

Whether leading a small family or an entire nation, this values-driven content can revolutionize the way leaders view and apply leadership. In this book, Dr. Hilton reveals the practical steps to: Discover personal purpose that drives decisions and determines impact, discover and operate out of intrinsic value and be empowered to recognize it in others, recognize the effects your thoughts and choices have on the brain, body, and the fulfillment of purpose, employ Higher Thinking through continued development of the mind, purposeful choice, and values-driven self-management; and become an authentic leader who establishes trust naturally.

“In “Higher Living Leadership”, Dr. Hilton invites tomorrow’s leader to think differently. Her invitation is not based on idealistic theory and philosophy, but rather, is inspired by, and rooted in real science, yet speaks to true heart of leadership and human potential.” Peter Demarest, Co-Founder, Axiogenics, LLC, and Co-Author, “Answering the Central Question”.

This remarkable marketplace book shows that leadership is far more than just a title; it is a way of living. What distinguishes successful, influential, and confident leaders from the rest? The answer is “Higher Living Leadership”