

Children and Vengeance

by

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Dear Young Person,

These past weeks I've watched story after story of kids shooting kids. We adults must be doing something radically wrong and I'm not sure what it is. So I've constructed a list of things I've learned. I hope it helps:

Life is hard. It is full of struggles and difficulties. I'm not sure why. It just is.

Life also is not fair. It is full of injustice. I'm not sure why. It just is.

Life is short and fragile. We are sometimes powerless. Why do children suffer? Why do children die? I'm not sure why. It happens.

Many adults spend a lifetime complaining about their lives. When you find life hard, unfair and fragile, there exists a temptation to reach for the path of least resistance, an escape that is a quick fix like drugs & alcohol.

But there also exists a very diabolical temptation to strike back, to get even, to make things right in a twisted way. We adults glorify it in movies. We sometimes act it out on our highways. We even snicker about it in sports. It's called vengeance. Don't go there. Vengeance is for losers and fools.

Everyone likes to be liked. Everyone wants to be cool. It is really tough not getting back at someone who has done you wrong. It is even tougher when you know others are laughing at you.

Vengeance is a cancer that eats away at what you are and makes you something less. It is an insidious evil. It is an evil that consumes your life if you allow it a moment of your time. It is a dreadful state of mind and when acted upon, a horrible existence. Ask yourself, have you ever seen a happy, vengeful person?

Vengeful people are miserable creatures. Remember, Captain Ahab was so consumed with destroying Moby Dick, he ultimately destroyed himself inside long before he drowned.

Obstacles such as being hurt can either be stumbling blocks or stepping stones. Choose to step rather than stumble. It is more than a state of mind. It is a conscious choice.

You can fashion something wonderful inside yourself especially at the darkest of times when life seems so hard, unfair and fragile. You don't have to choose apathy, despair or vengeance. You can boomerang evil and use it to forge strength, courage and character.

Be something by doing something - anything that is positive for your community. Pick up a piece of litter that isn't on your property and isn't yours. Say please and thank you to the sales clerk at the store. Smile at people and say "hi" even if it is not reciprocated. Most importantly, find yourself a house of worship. While there, choose one activity where you can give something back.

Take responsibility for everything you do and even a little for someone else. Never make excuses. The world is full of excuses.

Dare to make a difference. Dare to care. Remember, the opposite of love is not hate but apathy, the total absence of feeling. Be enthusiastic. Have a passion for life. Take responsibility for helping someone, anyone less fortunate.

Don't be afraid to fail. You owe it to yourself to try. If you have a better idea, try it. Stick to your convictions. The road to success is full of failures.

Embrace honesty, loyalty and humility. These are the rarest and most highly regarded qualities in the workplace.

Look in the mirror. Look in your eyes. Now look beyond that which you visibly see. What do you see? You are a beautiful person. Don't allow anyone to strip you of that belief. Only you can choose to allow someone to take away your dignity. Don't allow anyone to make you feel like something less by being called names. You are a unique gift.

Life is hard, unfair and fragile. We adults need your help to make this world a little easier and a little fairer.



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