

The Twists, Turns, and Trials of Justice

In theory, justice is simple. Commit a crime, go to jail. Have an issue in the community? Easy: just grab a group of friends and solve it. However, in practice, justice is complex. Justice is like a kaleidoscope: it changes depending on which way you look at it. Justice is the invisible bond to our society. It's the glue: it keeps us together. Each one of us strives for justice, subconsciously or purposely. Each one of us craves for peace, equality, and accountability for all. In this conquest though, we trample each other with our opposing thoughts and opinions.

For some, justice may seem impossible in a society of 7.53 billion people, but under the surface, people are trying every day to bring certain issues to light to achieve justice. You might see someone spreading their message via social media, one of the most prevalent apps on someone's phone. You might see a movie with an underlying message. You might see an author try to convey a pressing issue in a novel or even a children's book. Attempts for justice are ubiquitous in just about everywhere, ranging from issue to issue. Despite this, not all issues receive the same amount, if any, justice. Climate change is one of the most heated social issues of today and yesterday. However, change is not happening. Our leaders, even our own president, refuse to believe that the Earth is on a downward spiral. Giving up hope is just as bad as blinking a blind eye. There are many things the general public can do, including the youth. Almost half of the population (45 percent according to the Pew Research Center) is on social media. In fact, former president of Egypt, Hosni Mubarak, resigned his position due to the overwhelming magnitude of protesters that took a stand against his corruption and brutal police practices. The Egyptian Revolution of 2011 first started on Facebook after police killed 28 year old Khaled Mohamed Said. From there, tens of thousands of people flooded the streets of Egyptian cities

such as Cairo to protest. This is evidence that we stand stronger as a community than one person alone.

In order to start a movement, you first have to be the movement. This designates to transmute yourself afore you transmute others. As so famously quoted by Michael Jackson, “If you want to make the world a better place, why don’t you look at yourself and make a change?” The truth in these words is astonishingly accurate. The world’s greatest leaders had one thing in common: they practiced what they preached.

A quality all catalysts of justice should possess in order to achieve what they are passionate about is the ability to educate, be educated and listen. To blindly follow is just as ignorant to blindly teach. The human brain is capable of holding 2.5 million gigabytes of knowledge and memory. There is no expanse of knowledge deemed in excess for the wonders of the human brain. One who wants to attain justice for their community has to educate themselves and then educate the public to oust ignorance. To bring justice to those who have been facing injustice, we first must simply lend an ear. Listen to the voices that have been silenced by society. Hear everybody’s truths out. From there, share how people around the world are facing the same injustice. Use your voice to make a difference. “Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly,” as quoted by Martin Luther King, Jr., reflects the ideas of how we are all connected as a community.

Akin to life, there are countless barriers and obstacles standing in the way of justice. Bias, discrimination, and simply ignorance are the carriers of injustice. To navigate these barriers, we first have to hold ourselves accountable. We all are susceptible to being biased, ignorant, and

discriminatory, and these oppressions are sometimes ingrained in us systematically. Hate has been around since the beginning of man. Hate leads to bias which leads to fear. Fear blinds us into ignorance. It's a vicious cycle. But that doesn't mean we can't end it. As preached by Martin Luther King, Jr., "Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that."

To create a more just society, we must all learn to accept and love everybody. Bias will tear us apart. We need to hold certain people accountable for their actions but we cannot create blame. Society needs to treat everybody equally, as hard as that can seem. Love unites us. Unity is the key to revolution. As a youth, I'm constantly told that the future is now and that I need to focus on my goals for the future. But this makes me wonder: if we are living in the future, why are we dwelling in the past? It is important to learn about our history to avoid the mistakes of the past, but by having outdated mentalities, we are falling victim to the very thing we vowed not to do: hate.

The past doesn't change what happens to the passed; the future does. Change starts now. The children now are responsible for our future. We can't control what they do, but we can educate them. On the topic of education, an issue we should all be aware of is climate change. More specifically, how fast fashion contributes to the fast decline of our once green planet. There is an immense amount of misinformation and unawareness about fast fashion. Not to mention one of the biggest fast fashion companies, Forever 21, started in Los Angeles, barely a 40 minute drive away. With a checkered past, Forever 21 has a history of child and sweatshop labor, employing underpaid and malnourished workers overseas via middle man factories to escape the blame. Many of their clothing goes straight to landfills for a plethora of reasons: the apparel simply going out of style, the materials falling apart due to the low costs for cheap fabrics, and the

excess of clothing that remain unbought in stores are just to name a few. However, Forever 21 is not solely responsible for the fashion industry's wastefulness. All fast fashion brands and even luxury brands like Gucci are accountable for emitting carbon. In fact, the fashion/ textile industry is responsible for 10% of all humanity's carbon emissions according to the World Bank, an organization targeting poverty and climate change. To put that into perspective, that's more carbon than aviation (2 percent of all emissions) and shipping (3.1 percent of all emissions) emissions combined. So, what does climate change and fast fashion mean for California? Climate change can and will lead to more wildfires, as well as a decrease of drinking water, sea levels rising, heat waves, and poorer air quality says the United States Environmental Protection Agency (the EPA).

We need to love each other and come together as a human race. That will lead to beautiful, extraordinary things. We've done it before and we can do it again. In 1985, a massive hole was found in the ozone layer over the South Pole. In the 1990s, the ozone layer was depleted by 10%, the worst it has ever been. But things started looking up. Recently, as of last year, NASA has reported that the ozone hole has been the smallest it's ever been since it was discovered. This is due to countries agreeing to phase out chemicals that damaged the ozone layer found in hairsprays, shaving creams, and refrigerators. This is an instance of human determination and unity. We can bring justice to our communities if we love, listen, and link together.