



Convenience Morality

When I was a young man around the age of 20, one of my martial art teachers taught me a very valuable lesson. Actually the reality is he did it unintentionally by stealing from me. Just recently another person that I thought was a friend of mine and a high ranking grandmaster did something similarly by showing me their true colors in a conversation we had. The first story the teacher didn't technically reach into my pocket and take my money or go into one of my bank accounts and steal. He went back on a series of promises resulting in a huge amount of money lost for me and years of time wasted. We had entered into a business partnership together. The deal was, I would work hard and put in the time and make money through a series of companies we started and we would invest the profits into real estate, later flipping the properties for a profit and keep growing the business.

At one point he decided he was going to live in the very house we invested in and make it his permanent residence. In turn I was going to lose out on all the time, money, effort and energy I had put into this first deal. He justified his actions 100 different ways, skewing the facts but the reality was he was living in a house I worked hard for to buy. This was one of the most valuable lessons I ever learned.

Skip ahead 25 years, as a martial art teacher running a rather successful martial art school I deal with people on a daily basis interacting with hundreds of people. While the majority of clients are kind, honest, loving great people, I have seen a trend that supports my theory, leading me to believe that a majority of people will do what is right, expected and proper as long as it fits neatly into their schedule. If it takes above and beyond effort to do what is correct they may stop, making an excuse or finding a reason to walk away and not do anything at all. I have come to one definitive conclusion - society has adapted what I call "Convenience Morality."

In a many situations people are frozen in the feeling of ease and comfort. One of my mentors and self-help guru's Tony Robbins talks about the human desire to experience pleasure. I agree with his statement. Sometimes though this quest for pleasure may be short term and result in long term pain or a minimum wasted time - RE: drinking alcohol, smoking, drugs, Stealing, cheating, over eating or eating improperly etc. Another example that is less drastic may be procrastination. Waiting till the last minute to study for a test and then cramming. This person may pass the test but they will forget the material just as quickly - resulting in wasted time due to the lack of actual knowledge for time spent. The initial desire to experience pleasure is destroyed by the long term result of long lasting pleasure. The same goes for Morality. What can I do today that is easy to help people? There are a small percent of the population that will go out of their way to help people if it doesn't fit into their comfort zone or pleasure. For example if we help someone and it makes us feel good, and is easy to do, we may do it. But if we know helping someone may create pain for us, a larger group of the population will avoid it. This again, is a matter of convenience or comfort.

I have proven this over and over again when I run charity events in my martial art school. With the mass volume of students I have in my school we could ban together and make a considerable difference. Unfortunately, when I speak to my students, parents and friends, they look me in the face and yes me to death. They don't actually go out of their way to help.

Recently out of 350 people asked to help raise money for the C.T.F – Children’s Tumor Foundation only 30 people stepped up and actually helped us raise money. Some I really pressured and the only reason they did anything was to avoid the pressure I was putting on them on a daily basis, while others stepped up willingly. My pitch to all students was to simply go out and ask 5 people to donate. It didn’t matter if they only raised \$20, which is a very small amount. If we multiplied that by 350 people we would have raised \$5000. Instead 30 people went above and beyond and we raised \$2700 dollars. 10% of the people put the effort forward, while 320 people stood by and did nothing.

Now in their defense, I can say, they are all great people: who knows how busy, involved with other charities or not aligned with this event they are. Maybe they are not comfortable with asking others, maybe feel funny or do not like the feeling they get when put in this situation. Maybe what I feel is right, is totally 100% different to them. Again, this supports my theory of “Convenience Morality.” If it is not entirely inline with their life, then they step away and do nothing. Another quick example is litter. I continually still see people throwing garbage out the window of their car, the biggest being cigarette’s. My daughter recently did a cleanup of a park with her girl scout troupe – she cleaned up nearly one hundred discharged cigarette’s among other garbage. I can’t imagine people don’t realize. What is it? Do they not care? Again, it is all about convenience. The convenience morality.

So rather than continuing negatively with what people should do. I want to layout a few scenarios to help you or others grow their compassion and morality muscles and change their paradigm.

5 Steps to Change

- 1. Write down 3 things you would like to see change around you. For example: Litter, over eating etc. Then decide what you can do to make a difference. Remember – picking up garbage when you see it, removes it for others.**
- 2. Help to educate others about your quest and this type of mentality. Take this article and share it with others. Ask them to be a part of the change. Start a movement**
- 3. Try to pass down your good behavior to your family. Don’t say “do as I say, not as I do.” Actually lead by example and teach others to do the same.**
- 4. Create an awareness on facebook, or email friends about the good things you’re doing. For example: It was gross but I did it anyway – I cleaned up garbage on the side of the road, or in my neighbor’s yard. Etc.**
- 5. Pay it forward – ask people that you do good for to do good for someone else. Not pay it back, but pay it forward. If you do a good deed and they pay it forward it can literally impact millions. Remember we can easily complain about things we do not like, or we can be a part of the change. Let’s make a difference.**