

Relationship Rehab Show

Episode 31: Bring Meaning and Purpose to Your Life

Much of this episode is taken from the book by Donald Miller entitled, "Hero on a Mission." He points out that when boiled down to their essence, there are only four types of persons in the world. And, we may each act in each role on any given day!

The Villain is someone who wants revenge, who plots mayhem, who judges others as inferior and in need of punishment or "instruction," who reacts to feedback with defensiveness, who gossips or takes pleasure in the misfortune of others.

The Victim is one who believes himself to be powerless, at the mercy of difficult circumstances. She lives a life of defeat and depression. He, or she blames others or the weather or the government or God for everything about life that is uncomfortable or difficult.

There are times in nearly every life where we may be the victim of something beyond our control...a fire destroys our house, an accident causes severe damage, the death of a loved one, a crime perpetrated against us, a partner who abandons us, we live in the middle of a war zone. In most of these cases, it becomes a choice whether or not we remain a victim to those circumstances.

The Hero is one who is faced with an insurmountable challenge and chooses to find a way through it. He may have no idea how to succeed. She may be totally ignorant as to how to survive this event. But the Hero within is called forward to find a path through to survival, or recovery or amazing success.

The Guide is one who has been the victim in similar circumstances and finds meaning in helping another victim become the hero in their own story by offering practical advice and encouraging support. Guides are created by becoming the heroes in their own stories, often by experiencing deep pain as they gain mastery through overcoming tragedy.

Examples:

Next week's episode will feature an interview of a mother whose child suffered permanent brain damage due to bacterial meningitis. You won't want to miss the story of her movement from victim to hero to guide.

My late husband Jim's home burned to the ground due to faulty wiring. He and his family got out with only their lives and sleeping garments intact. Everything else was lost. They were victims of a tragic fire. Neighbors provided temporary clothing. They moved into a motel. Jim went into action by going to a store for a long list of items they needed immediately. Shortly a

friend lent them \$10,000 as a down payment on another home for them to buy while the original house was being rebuilt. Although the nightmares of waking to the smell of smoke lasted off and on for years, the family recovered from that tragedy. They were soon, again, self-sufficient, not remaining victims who depended on others indefinitely.

A friend of mine, nicknamed “Gunner” Payne became a spiritual mentor for me after I became a widow at the age of twenty-three. He and his family experienced the unimaginable horror of his teenage daughter’s murder. In excruciating pain, he sought answers to find a way to go on living after this tragedy. The answers he found for himself led him to bring hope and healing to others. Over many years, he became a beloved spiritual Guide for hundreds. Gunner even found the profound strength to forgive the murderer, visiting him several times in prison, before this man was put to death for his crime.

When I speak ill of another, or judge another as inferior, or practice some form of prejudice, I am in the role of the Villain. When I blame someone or something for my unhappiness, I am in the role of the Victim. When I choose to practice gratitude to pull me out of a dark mood, I am being the Hero. When I recently shared a marriage relationship concept to a man who said that he and his wife struggle to give their marriage the attention it needs, that concept made a profound impression on this stranger at my door. I was being the Guide.

None of us are locked into any of these four roles. We get to choose, moment by moment, which role we will play. I recently saw the testimony of a man who was a “victim” of a bomb blast while serving in a war zone. He lost both legs. Yet he named the past ten years of victory over this “handicap” as the best years of his life. He moved through Victim, receiving the help of many Guides in recovery and rehabilitation, to a Guide who inspires others.

Which role are you in today? Which role would you aspire to be playing today? What step can you take toward becoming the Hero and eventually a Guide? It only requires one small positive step, one decision, one prayer of gratitude at a time to move forward.

Let’s move forward together,

Nancy Landrum

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