Responsibility

by Kaleb Conroy Stone

Everyone has many different responsibilities: the responsibility of a student to be dedicated to their studies; the responsibility of a politician to lead their people, and better their nation; the responsibility of a parent to raise and care for their children – the list is unending. You could probably come up with many responsibilities relevant to you off the top of your head, though some of them you may not care to think about. We all have things we are expected to do, or things we want to do. Those things are your personal responsibilities and being responsible means working towards them. Is that all there is to it, though?

There are more things you must do if you truly wish to be a responsible person. Simply doing the things you're already expected to do is not enough. Some people do this by taking on more responsibilities. A person who responsibly handles one or two tasks will not be seen as equally as responsible as somebody who handles five. However, if you take on too many responsibilities, there can be major consequences. Firstly, simply having too many ongoing responsibilities to handle will cause undue anxiety and can be horrific to your mental health in the long run. Even worse, is the feeling of failure when you inevitably let other people down – as well as yourself – by dropping the ball on one or more of your responsibilities. You will be seen as irresponsible, and you will feel absolutely terrible about yourself overall. In the pursuit of being a responsible person, nobody should take on more than they can handle.

Everything thus far is what most people would think of when they hear the word responsibility, but there is an entirely different, and deeper, side to the word than that. Each and every responsibility mentioned so far has been completely personalized, differing greatly, or entirely, person-to-person. That is not the whole picture, however. There are some core responsibilities that

everyone has, responsibilities that we all should uphold and respect. Those are the personal responsibility to the world, and the self – or the outward and the inward.

We all have at least one mission in life suited to our personalities and lives. This could be a career, your personal relationships, or really any form of passion at all. We use these missions and passions as objectives and wield them to better ourselves, but more importantly we utilize them in order to make our mark on the world. Everybody wants to be known and to have made a noticeable difference in the world. One of the core responsibilities shared by all is to ensure that we successfully make our mark somehow and strive to have it be a positive one.

Alongside making our marks on the world, we allow the world to make its marks on us. We all change over time, it is inevitable – and equally crucial. It is up to us to make sure that those changes make us better people, instead of worse. Throughout life, we should constantly seek to better ourselves, as well as our environment, and not one of us should ever stop our self-betterment. However, in the search for improving the self, seek not to eradicate it. Do not override who you truly are in the pursuit of making yourself a greater person. You may owe it to yourself and those around you to be as best as you can be, but never try to be the best someone else can be.

The tasks we all undertake in our daily lives, the greater callings we all strive for, the changes we all wish to make in the world around us, and the zenith we all seek to find within ourselves are the key forms of responsibility. Alongside that, I believe them to be the primary forms of human existence as a whole. Our responsibilities that we successfully fulfill are what we will be remembered for. They are what make us, and what may unmake us. Responsibility is our lives; our lives are our responsibility.