

Enduring Lessons - Overview

Overview

For years, survivors have beckoned that we “never forget” what happened during the Holocaust so that nothing like it would ever again occur. Sadly, we have seen atrocities related to hatred and prejudice continue to occur throughout the world. The message from survivors was not only to remember, but to recognize that we all have a responsibility.

The task of trying to make the world a better, kinder place can be daunting, but it is not impossible. Atticus Finch in Harper Lee’s *To Kill a Mockingbird* is a fine example. In this classic novel, Scout, Atticus Finch's five year-old daughter, is shocked to learn that her father is going to defend an African American in the 1930s, racist deep South, particularly after he admits to her that there is no way he can win in front of an all-white jury. She asks him why, to which Atticus responds:

"Simply because we were licked (beaten) a hundred years before we started is no reason for us not to try to win." He goes on to explain, in essence, that by doing the "right thing" now, even if we lose today, it will help move the ball forward little by little so that, in time, the "right thing," good, will prevail.

In other words, your actions today – big or small – matter. Change begins with you! Here are some things you can do:

- 1) Hold your elected representatives accountable; tell them you care about what’s going on in the world;
- 2) Choose one area in danger, learn more, and tell others what you learn;
- 3) Small actions count: treat others with respect, challenge stereotypes, stand up to bullying, hate, racism, prejudice and injustice!
- 4) Get involved! Visit HolocaustCenterSeattle.org for a list of organizations working to stop genocide.

Finally, who better to impart concrete lessons of the Holocaust than survivors? Watch these clips, then answer the question below.

Holocaust Survivors - Video Clips

The survivors featured below live or have lived in Washington State. The country listed in parentheses is the country in which they were living during the Holocaust. These survivors, with their history and stories, have shaped our community, contributing to its richness and diversity. They challenge us to understand history through personal narrative - to see complex human beings behind the facts.

Alter Wiener - <https://youtu.be/blmW7WvOK4w>

Based on my life story, the most important thing is to appreciate what you have. And to appreciate what you have, go read about books, how it is in other countries, pay attention to the news. There are people who are still hungry, hungry today, who have no home, they are homeless, millions of them. And think about them. Not just about yourself.

You know Victor Frankel said, "The meaning of life is only if you do something for somebody else." Not just for yourself. And there is so much you can do. Look around. And when you know how to appreciate, you are going to have a happier life.

Henry Friedman <https://youtu.be/D1HJrwAemSo>

Never to give up hope. Because you're looking right now at a Holocaust survivor. I'm the best example because each one of us is different. But each one of us can make a difference. Don't be indifferent. When you see injustice being done to a fellow human being because you can make a difference. And I'm alive because one person made that difference. Period.

Laureen Nussbaum - <https://youtu.be/uWzcEX9vYfE>

All of us, young or old, need to listen to your own conscience. You probably, when you have a choice, you probably know what is the better one. Usually it's the harder one that's the better one. But listen to your own conscience.

Steve Adler - <https://youtu.be/Ch6RE6HRwHA>

I would say...respect people who are different, because almost everyone is different from you. And when someone doesn't show that respect by saying something negative, defend the person who is being attacked. That's bullying and we need to do away with it. I think that does the job.

Question

- 1) Discuss one specific thing that you resolve to do that can honor the message and legacy of Holocaust survivors.