

The Virgin Islands Consortium

From Drama And Chaos To Success, Grace And Mercy: You Have The Power

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It took courage for readers to share with me some of these personal and professional experiences which by all accounts are great inconsistencies, but in the end, these great inconsistencies can be understood as lessons learned, hard spiritual evolutions—revolutions even, and necessary cycles to internalize the lessons we didn't learn at the exact moment these atrocities were being waged against us. As we reflect on the great inconsistencies of life, we come out on the other end, armed with the know-how, toolbox, and power to walk away from chaos and vehemently reject altogether anything in our lives that does not nourish or grow us.

The terminated executive and social climber who became accustomed to maligning the character of subordinates and abuse of power in the workplace until faced with sexual harassment lawsuits— one from a man, and the other from a married woman.

One minute of anger weakens the immune system for up to five hours, while one minute of laughter boosts it for over 24 hours.

The gay middle manager who points his fingers and disparages others in petty and denigrating characterizations about how they choose to brand themselves, when these trivial characteristics of their personal brand takes nothing away from his individual essence and has nothing to do with the bread and butter kitchen table issues and the substance of people's lives. He makes non issues a focal point of discussion and federal offense, yet he has failed to come out of the closet and grapple with the truth about his sexuality, when the very same people he denigrates accepts him for who he is as a gay man and respects his rights as equal under the law.

John Mayer said it best. The beast, reckless with 'Say What You Need To Say' violent words and venomous actions who sent up a 100,000 foot column of ash and smoke filled with a green envy tirade which the world immediately saw through for the jealousy the diatribe really was, when that monsters time would have been better spent tending to more serious and closer problems with a marital spouse and their revolving door in and out of the penal system, and managing a parent whose words and position about their adult child undermines the very toxic agenda that adult child is trying to advance on others.

The married business owner couple who owes the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) approximately \$700,000, and who negotiated a payment plan with the IRS right before charges would be filed, through a politically connected friend with ties to a former administration, yet points their fingers in dismay and ridicule at a single parent who owes a \$25,000 college tuition, and is now on public assistance because they were laid off during their company's reduction in force.

The executive whose spouse is doing serious prison time for fraud and stealing millions of dollars from the government, that according to the public record, shows their entire family— including the spouse that is not in prison, benefited knowingly and financially from the theft, yet their family is about town, demonizing law abiding citizens and publicizing fake controversies, when if the family were to hold the mirror up, they would realize that silence and humility is golden.

Interrupt our worries and decide to make ourselves happy in spite of the lies, fake controversies, gotcha moments, and trivial gaffes.

What do all of these great inconsistencies have in common? Drama, chaos, and a hot mess. What can we learn from their toxicity? We are stronger and more courageous than the drama, chaos, and mess. Most importantly, we have the power to find peace and happiness in the eye of category five hurricanes, and we have the luster, laminate, and what it takes to make lemonade out of lemons.

In life, our character will be assassinated and people will teach us things we did not know about ourselves, criticize, and deride us. Everyone has an opinion. Sometimes as false

as those opinions are, we will feel humiliated to know that these lies, misrepresentations, and character assassinations, and their damaging effect is out there in the universe, but be strong and hold on because lies, misrepresentations, and character assassinations have a reverse effect and joy comes in the morning.

While the universe is working on our behalf, do not let up. If we fall, make sure we fall on our back so we can look up. If we can look up, we can stand up. If we can stand up, pull a Jay Z, 'Gon Brush Your Shoulders Off', get our hustle on, and go for it. Then while we are standing, 'Shake It Off' like Taylor Swift recommends and stretch our imagination to tap into our creative prowess and best thinking.

One minute of anger weakens the immune system for up to five hours, while one minute of laughter boosts it for over 24 hours. Laugh out loud at our naysayers and their drama, chaos, and mess. Microwave some popcorn, cut the cheese, warm the peanuts, chill the wine, ice the beer, and invite family and friends over for a movie and laughs. Interrupt our worries and decide to make ourselves happy in spite of the lies, fake controversies, gotcha moments, and trivial gaffes.

As we reflect on our lives, relationships, and careers, move away from the opportunities we may take to lie, slander, and assassinate people's character. Every time we are tempted to do so, sweep out the corners where sin has accumulated in our own lives and make peace where we can.

When the movie has ended and our friends and family have left, cry if we have to, let it all out, and enjoy a good night's sleep. In the morning wake up, open the shades to sunshine, be thankful for another blessed day, and work feverishly to create lasting partnerships with sincere friends and colleagues who complement our strengths and strengthen our weaknesses. Don't ease up now, because it is at this precise moment, the next success story will surface.

We may never have an opportunity to thank the naysayers, we may not have the chance to show gratitude to those who assassinate our character, and formal occasions may never arise where we can express appreciation to those who paint us how they want us to be instead of how we really are, but some things are certain. These people, without even knowing it, may strengthen our family ties, launch our careers, and serve as inspirations and ingredients in our success stories. In the spirit of making lemonade out of lemons, know that in life we will never learn the tough lessons from our sweet spot. This bit about our sweet spot is indeed a tough lesson to learn, but understand that if we are always liked and adored, we may miss opportunities that build character.

As we reflect on our lives, relationships, and careers, move away from the opportunities we may take to lie, slander, and assassinate people's character. Every time we are tempted to do so, sweep out the corners where sin has accumulated in our own lives and make peace where we can. Remove the empty and barren places in us where we do not allow the Fruits of the Spirit to enter, reveal our struggles where we have been unfair and indifferent to others, and transform those struggles into forgiveness, grace, and mercy.

This power is within each of us.

Image Credit: Inside Women Magazine

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