



We all know about hero worship, be it a mentor, parent, athlete, celebrity, or what have you. Do these heroes and heroines deserve a place in our lives? Of course they do, so long as the mantel you place these heroes on isn't so high it's humanly impossible to reach them. Mantels have their dangers, but that's not what I'm here to write about today.

I'm here to talk about the villains of our collective. Do we worship them? No way, you say? That's a no-brainer, 00Sutty. But what would James Bond be without his villains? What would Superman be without Lex Luthor? Would Dallas have ever been one of the biggest shows in TV history without J.R. Ewing? The 23rd century will be dull if Kirk doesn't have Khan's vengeance in going after the Genesis Project.

I digress, since I'll take any opportunity to work in a J.R. Ewing reference. So here it is, the yin and yang of it all. How much time do you allot to the villains and villainesses of your life? Do you know who they are? Could they be you? Are they always the Darth Vader death star of destruction to your "babe in the woods" Luke Skywalker? Do you have to be a villain to win? Dabo Swinney vs. Urban Meyer would suggest otherwise, so I feel we've bought into a bill of goods when we assert that nice guys finish last.

Now that all those cute quips are out of the way, let's be clear that I'm writing to myself as much as I am the *Wholly Holistics* faithful. I, too, am as guilty as the next guy or girl at focusing on what went wrong in a situation. Who did what to whom and how I shoulda, coulda, woulda responded. That response merited below the belt nuclear war to save face, didn't it? Why have a respectful, albeit disagreeable discussion, when you can incinerate that bridge so carefully built?

One of the keys to understanding this villain worship is acknowledging our human nature. That's where the awareness we foster via meditation comes in. We may have been born into these human tendencies, beautiful as humanity is sometimes, but that doesn't mean we have to be a slave to our nature. For example, isn't it in our male make up that we try to have sex with every girl we can get our hands on? Sure it is, but we can choose not to be f***boys. As I just pointed out, we have a choice in the matter. A daily, hourly and minutely meditation in life is habit that can be formed with practice just like any other activity in life. We can choose not to let the actions or inactions of others dominate our mental landscape. Ten years from now, will you look back at the time wasted with villain worship?

With that question in mind, let's explore and identify who these villains in life are. Sometimes we are they and they are us. I know that's confusing, but so is the temptress that keeps you twisted and excited only to dash your dreams against the rocky shore of empty promises. Is your villain circumstances rather than an actual person? "It's always something," followed by a long string of expletives as to why something just doesn't seem to work out. Stop pushing and let it be. Does that take discipline? Darn right it does, but there's a choice to be made. Do we find ourselves always having to defend that certain person? In the face of overwhelming evidence, do we still assert the villain's innocence? (Insert Bill Cosby or any number of others who have been able to hide behind their power and celebrity.) Do we vilify a victim's innocence? We vilify innocence not only when we ask "what was she wearing?," when she was assaulted, but when those nasty narcissists weave their black magic webs and we blame ourselves. Sure, we all fall into that web from time to time. The web can even feel really good, fleeting as it may be, but fleeting nonetheless. We can choose to be as aggressive at severing ties with an unhealthy situation or person as the aggressor desperately attempts to manipulate. It's only when we continue to allow victimization in our lives that we become our own villain. (Insert the cave scene from Empire Strikes Back here.)

Finally, the larger picture... We need these villains in our lives to grow on a personal and karmic level. They let us know what we don't want to be. They let us know where our weak spots are. They compel you to grow into your own hero or grind you into an early grave. The choice is yours.

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