

Justice

As a volunteer you may witness parts of society that seem unfair and overwhelming. It is important to understand what justice is and your potential role in dealing with "social injustices."

- Justice means that we deal fairly with others, recognizing the equality and dignity of all. It requires that we work to insure that all people, especially the poor and the weak, have access to opportunities. It assumes that none of us is free until all of us are.
- Often we are propelled into the struggle for justice when we experience an injustice ourselves; we are not treated fairly at work or our friendship is exploited by an associate. One day while reading the newspaper, we may be shocked to learn of the treatment of certain groups in our society. Or we may step back and realize that we have been ignoring what are clearly injustices around us. Our very lack of concern can wake us up to the need for justice.
- There is also a "shadow" side to this spiritual practice. Sometimes in our fervor for justice we decide that we can ignore the rights and dignity of those who oppose us. Instead of being justice seekers, then, we become fanatics.
- Justice enhances dignity and equality and balances/counters oppression and fanaticism.

Practice justice by demanding it. Words can be as forceful as deeds — the prophets of old proved that. Name injustices when you see them. Speak boldly and put your body and your money where your mouth is. Stand up and be counted.

We must not, in trying to think about how we can make a difference, ignore the small daily differences we can make, which, over time, add up to big differences we cannot foresee. * Marian Wright Edelman

The rich must live more simply, so that the poor may simply live.

* Charles Birch quoted in *Life Abundant* by Sallie McFague