

By Carol P. Waldhauser, Executive Director



The Story of Jekyll and Hyde and Self-Discipline

Whether it is voluntary or involuntary, big or little, sudden or gradual—most of us need to face change. Change may range from minor everyday events to major life events. It can be about ourselves or our environment. Often, when we are confronted with change, either through necessity or choice, we are being given an opportunity to redefine ourselves and to choose an outcome that will allow us to grow and to be fulfilled. After all, by embracing and promoting positive change, we learn more about who we are and what we can do. We grow. We gain confidence. We make a difference by improving ourselves and enriching the world around us. So, why do so many of us fear or resist change? Is the Jekyll and Hyde Syndrome to blame?

The process of change is often tough and challenging. Think of your state of mind when you choose to do something that is positive, enjoyable, and easy for you. Then, think of the flip side—the feeling of deprivation you get when you try hard to kick a bad habit or change something. Generally, proceeding in doing something is always easier to digest than stopping something. (1) Also, what is totally aggravating is that some of us are able to transform our plans for change into actions resulting in successful achievements while some of us dream, think, and plan change, but actually accomplish little or fail entirely. Ironically, the difference between successfully changing or failing miserably could be understanding the Jekyll and Hyde Syndrome and knowing how to implement the life skill. That life-skill is self-discipline.

Self-discipline appears in various forms, such as perseverance, restraint, endurance, thinking before acting, finishing

what you start doing, and/or the ability to carry out one's decisions and plans, in spite of inconvenience, hardships or obstacles. Clearly, it includes self-control; the ability to avoid unhealthy excess of anything that could lead to negative consequences. One of the main characteristics of self-discipline is the ability to forgo instant and immediate gratification and pleasure in favor of some greater gain or more satisfying results, even if this requires effort and time. (2)

Bottom line, sometimes one side of us wants to engage in a productive activity to change. For example, it is our intent to work on that brief and stop procrastinating, it is our intent to lose that ten pounds and exercise more, or it is our intent to stop a behavior that is bad for us. But, another side of us wants to watch television and eat fatty snacks and/or anything else to avoid doing that task or implementing change. This battle of wills brings us to the Jekyll and Hyde Syndrome that just could be the greatest roadblock to personal change. Most psychological theories support that humans are made up of several different selves. Literature, too, supports this theme describing the inner struggle within us. A strong example of this inner turmoil is the story of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde.

A Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde is the original title of a novella written by the famous Scottish author Robert Louis Stevenson that was first published in 1886. The work is commonly known today as *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, or simply *Jekyll & Hyde*. It is about a London lawyer named Gabriel John Utterson who investigates strange occurrences between his old friend, Dr. Henry Jekyll, and the evil Edward Hyde. (3) In Robert Louis

Stevenson's work, there are two personalities within Dr. Jekyll—one apparently good and the other evil.

Recently I discovered how Theodore Bryant, MSW (Human Behavior Specialist), in his book *Self-Discipline in 10 Days*, cleverly used Robert Louis Stevenson's novel to express how we can sharpen the skill of self-discipline to make change in our lives. In this book, Bryant explains how one part of us wants to use self-discipline to manifest change and that part is Dr. Jekyll. On the other hand, there is another part of us that fights change and that part is Mr. Hyde. He believes that "...we all have a rebellious side to our personalities that resists any form of structure." (3) In fact, Bryant accepts that we bring this rebellious seed from our childhood: "The child we once were still lives inside us, and every child battles authority. Hyde, the name we will call your inner childlike rebel, battles any form of authority, even if the authority is you. Hyde subconsciously says: 'nobody can tell me what to do, not even me.'" Equally as important to understand, Hyde is that part of us that knows all of our weaknesses, fears, and insecurities. Sadly, Hyde also knows how to use them against us. Bryant says "this devious little imp inside you plans to employ every method of manipulation available to keep you from following your action steps to change." (4)

Using Bryant's Jekyll and Hyde Syndrome, Hyde will childishly resist cooperation with Jekyll. Rather than have Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde sabotage your plan for change, as well as your self-discipline skill, Bryant suggests that you incorporate this awareness of the struggle between selves and deal with the part of you that offers resistance. Because Hyde is cun-

ning, baffling, and powerful and has zoned in on such tools as cynicism, negativism, defeatism, escapism, and delayism—you can learn to fight him on his level.

Cynicism

According to Bryant, Hyde is a master cynic. Expect that your efforts at implementing this self-discipline system will be constantly bombarded with cynicism from within: “it is too difficult to change, etc.” Your Dr. Jekyll can combat this cynicism by having faith in your ability to improve.

Negativism

Negativism will combat your optimism with negative self-talk. According to Bryant, Hyde wants to keep you from multiplying your powers of self-discipline. If that can be accomplished by dampening your spirit, Hyde will do so by reminding you of all that is wrong with the world. It can change your attitude and your attitude can work for you or against you. In other words, believe in your Dr. Jekyll.

Defeatism

As Bryant puts it, “Remember, a part of you does not want self-discipline so Hyde will attempt to drown your enthusiasm by pointing out all your perceived shortcomings, then use them to trick you into self-defeat.”

Escapism

Believe that life, for the most part, is based on the cause-and-effect principle. In your life, your actions are the cause; the results of your actions (or non-action) are the effects. According to Bryant,

Hyde will try to divert you from the day’s goals. In fact, Hyde will coax you toward another activity that will instead provide some sort of escape.

Delayism (Procrastination)

Whether it is Bryant’s program to *Self-Discipline in 10 Days*, or another trait or habit that you are trying to change through self-discipline, it is imperative to recognize whether a given delay is working for you or against you. Bryant believes that this question must be constantly addressed if Hyde’s tactic of delayism is to be neutralized.

Using the skill of self-discipline and knowing the roadblocks to successful change as pointed out above—you can change. Remember, it has been said, “If you could give the person who is responsible for most of your troubles a kick in the caboose, you would not be able to sit down for a month.” For more information on this or for those of you who wish to make changes in your life, call (302) 777-0124 or e-mail cwaldhauser@de-lap.org.

References and Suggested Reading:

- (1) *Life Coaching for Dummies*, Jeni Purdie, Becoming Your Best Self, 2nd Edition, P. 65.
- (2) *Willpower and Self Discipline, What is Self-Discipline – Definitions* by Remez Sasson.
- (3) *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* – Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia.
- (4) *Self-Discipline in 10 Days*, by Theodore Bryant, MSW (HUMAN BEHAVIOR SPECIALIST), Hub Publishing, 2011, P.8
- (5) *Self-Discipline in 10 Days*, by Theodore Bryant, P. 9. ⊕

New Format for the Delaware Law Review

By Alisa E. Moen, Esquire

The *Delaware Law Review* is embarking on a new format of publishing articles on recent developments in the law, with each Section of the Delaware State Bar Association having opportunity to regularly feature its members and publish updates in their respective practice areas. As we move away from an academic approach, the hope is that the new *Delaware Law Review* will offer a diverse platform for all practice areas and become a “go-to” resource on Delaware law. We look forward to collaborating with the Section leaders in generating current and relevant content for the *Delaware Law Review* and anticipate debuting the new format in June of 2013.

As always we look forward to your submissions and ideas.

Alisa E. Moen is a partner with Blank Rome LLP and the current Editor-in-Chief of the Delaware Law Review. ⊕

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