

As I have been writing and posting the Voices segments on the website, it continues to come to mind the quote we generally hear only from the wealthy. “With great wealth comes great responsibility.”

Though I do not have great wealth, I look around and inward to realize all the gifts, talents, abilities, friends, family, and experiences that I do have. It brings a great sense of wealth to mind. It also brings a great sense of responsibility to serve and to use my experiences in the most beneficial, productive way that I can. This purpose, as with any purpose and mission can be quite frustrating at times because one really doesn't know what impact they are making, if any.

My purpose has never been to seek out pity or vindication of my life's experience – but to bring to light the struggle so many experience. I often look back with clarity that feeling of being silenced and being perceived in a manner that simply was not pure or true. I then recall all the people that I have met and befriended that were and still are silenced. There simply must be a better way and finding that way even on the smallest of scales is my purpose.

We all have been given great gifts and all are different. With those gifts we do have great responsibility. During the times that you do not feel as though you are making any difference or impact, it is imperative to keep your eyes on the goal and focus on the purpose within you. Your impact, regardless of the cause is felt and will continue to be felt. The only people I truly pity are those that live a life with no purpose, no mission beyond themselves. That would be a sad state to be in because

regardless of your monetary measurement, you have no wealth at all.

As I made a small donation to the relief effort in Haiti last night, I caught myself saying, “I wish I could do more!” The fact of the matter is – that is part of my problem. What I can do is enough as long as I am doing. We must do, however. The scene from Port au Prince is not a movie, it is not an imaginary land that we only see from our television from our protective, privileged American lives – it is all too real. The per capita income in Haiti is 523 dollars per year.

I am not one that believes that anyone should feel guilty for what they have or be guilt (ed) into philanthropy. However, I do believe that it is important to assess your gifts in life and ask the realistic question, what can share. Giving to those in need, to me, is saying “thank you” for all that I have been given myself