



The Broken Among Us Teach Us, by Bryan Stevenson

What sustains me is this knowledge I have that itâ€™s really the broken among us that can contribute a lot to our quest for full, equal justice. When youâ€™re broken, you actually â€” you know something about what it means to be human. You know something about grace.

You

learned something about mercy. You learned something about forgiveness. Itâ€™s the broken among us that can teach us some things.

And knowing that you donâ€™t have to be perfect and complete gives you

a way of moving through challenge that would be hard if you think that thatâ€™s not something thatâ€™s possible.

And so I tell my young staff, you canâ€™t do this work, you canâ€™t be in some of the painful places weâ€™re in, you canâ€™t hold children whoâ€™ve been abused, and not be impacted by that. Youâ€™re going to

shed some tears. You are. And youâ€™re gonna be overwhelmed, youâ€™re

going to get tired, youâ€™re gonna get pushed down â€” all of those things are going to happen, and it doesnâ€™t mean youâ€™re weak. It doesnâ€™t mean that youâ€™re not up to the task. It doesnâ€™t mean youâ€™re incompetent or incapable. It just means youâ€™re a human being. And thatâ€™s what I want: I want human beings.

And so what sustains me is, in part, this knowledge that I canâ€™t always feel confident and sure and clear; that there are gonna be times when itâ€™s uncertain whatâ€™s going to happen. And Iâ€™ve

tried

to appreciate that.

And I do feel, at times, lifted up by the spirit of people who have endured way more. I talked to John Lewis just before he passed away, and it was such an honor knowing him. And I was just saying to him, â€œI feel so privileged, as a result of what you did.â€• And I told him, â€œIâ€™ve had hard days; I get death threats and all that kind of stuff. But Iâ€™ve never had to say, â€œMy head is bloodied but not bowed,â€• like you did.â€• And when you realize that those injuries created spaces that some of us could occupy, that were a little less violent, you begin to appreciate what you can do.