



## **Become the Change, by Oprah Winfrey**

Some people might find it ironic that I've never been much of a TV watcher. Aside from old reruns of *The Andy Griffith Show*, I stopped regularly tuning in to sitcoms the night *Mary Tyler Moore* went off the air. At home, I skip the late-night news because I don't want to take in all that negative energy right before sleep—and on vacation, I seldom have a TV in my bedroom. On days when I do flip through the channels, it's almost certain I'll find at least one show that involves sexual exploitation or violence against women. In my early days on-air, I was guilty of doing irresponsible television without even knowing it—all in the name of "entertainment." More than a decade ago, my staff and I booked a husband caught in an adulterous sex scandal, and right there on our stage before millions of viewers, the wife heard for the first time that her partner had been unfaithful. It's a moment I have never forgotten: The humiliation and despair on that woman's face made me ashamed of myself for putting her in that position. Right then I decided I'd never again be part of a show that demeans, embarrasses, or diminishes another human being. I replaced the "If it bleeds, it leads" news philosophy with an intention that still guides me—to use the medium of television for its higher good. Once the light bulb came on for me that day, my calling became to create shows that encourage and inspire as much as they entertain—television that leaves guests with their dignity and helps us all see our lives in a different way. I know for sure that what we dwell on is who we become—as a woman thinks, so she is. If we absorb hour upon hour of images and messages that don't reflect our magnificence, it's no wonder we walk around feeling drained of our life force. If we tune in to dozens of acts of brutality every week, it shouldn't surprise us that our children see violence as an acceptable way to resolve conflict. Become the change you want to see—those are words I live by. I don't know how many years I'll be blessed with the privilege of reaching millions each day, but my prayer is that I'll use my energy never to belittle but to uplift. Never to devastate but to rebuild. Never to misguide but to light the way so that all of us can stand on higher ground. --Oprah Winfrey