

# UNTIL JUSTICE Rains Down

## Teaching Kids To Mind Their Own Business

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**Publisher's Note: Reprinted from January 1988**

Like Dr. Martin Luther King, I, too, have a dream. My dream is that our kids will begin to learn to mind their own business.

That's right. Mind their own business. But not in the way you're thinking. I mean they should be encouraged to start their own businesses for the purpose of making money off people like you and me.

It's all very logical. The way to get a young person's attention is to talk about money. Money buys Reeboks, Members Only jackets, automobiles and college and technical school educations. Money, despite what Jackie Collins and Dr. Ruth would have you believe, is the true international language. Everyone understands its power and its meaning. Even little kids.

Think about it. No matter how smart you are (as in making all "A's" in school or scoring high on college Scholastic Aptitude Tests (SATs) or how dumb you are (as in quitting school at an early age or in screwing your life up by doing drugs or doing "time" in the joint) everyone has the capacity to make money. You can do it by making stuff, selling stuff, delivering stuff, removing stuff and doing stuff for people who don't have the time or the inclination to do it for themselves. And if you do it well, with honesty and class and offer a reasonable price for your services, you can make a lot of money.

If you ask me (not that anyone has), this is the kind of advice we ought to be giving our young people. Why? Because it is the kind of advice everyone can understand and everyone can relate to. Smart, dumb, short, tall, male, female, fat, skinny, nice looking, ugly, rich, poor. Everyone has the ability to make money. Besides, everyone needs money. And there are lots of people out there willing to give it to you.

Let me cite one good example. A couple of weeks ago, it snowed like crazy. When it stopped, I had to go out and shovel that "stuff" off my sidewalk, off my car and off my driveway. I had to be one of-say-millions throughout the south in the same predicament. While I was out there doing it, I'm saying to myself, "I'm getting too old for this mess. I could have a heart attack and die. Worse, I'm out here missing the playoff game on the "tube" inside my warm, comfortable den."

I'm just the kind of customer ripe for some fat 14 year-old kid and his skinny 11 year-old sister to come knocking on my door, with a borrowed shovel and a broom and offer to do all this for me at a reasonable price. He says he would shovel the walkway, the sidewalk and the driveway while she swept the snow off the automobiles "before it hardens on the windshield making it more difficult for you to get off later." Then, he says, when she's done with the cars, she'll sweep up after him. The total "package" will cost \$22.50.

Of course, I'll respond with something gown-up like; "How do I know you're worth \$22.50 (as in do you have any references)?" He'll respond with something basic like; "just step outside and look what I did for your neighbor sir."

Well, they've got me. They saw a need. They picked a good street with a bunch of people, like me, living on it. They offered a reasonable price for the work to be preformed. And they had references. They do the work and I give them three tens, (even little kids have enough sense to know that few people walk around with \$22.50 in their pocket) and tell them to keep the change.

I figure if they started out at about 8:00 a.m., break for lunch (you just know some nice, sweet little "old" lady is going to invite them in for hot chocolate and sandwiches), knock off at five, they're a cinch to clear about

\$100-200.00 a day.

Making that kind of money puts ideas in people's heads. I can envision those same kids knocking on my door in the spring, this time with a used lawn mower and a new rake and heavy duty garbage bags they purchased with the money they made off concerned people during the winter, saying; "You remember us from January when we shoveled your snow so well? Well, we noticed that your grass is high and we're prepared to cut it, rake it up, bag it and have it ready for the garbage man to take away for you at a reasonable fee, say \$17.50, sir." Those kids were good citizens, too. I remembered that when they shoveled the snow, they didn't put it in the street. They piled it in the front and back yard. When it finally melted, it "helped" the grass grow out of the brains of babes.

Sure, I'll say. Now, they've got a contract and guaranteed repeat business.

Business. That's the ticket. My example shows that anyone can go into business and do well if he offers a good service at a reasonable price. These lessons can be learned early. Once one kid does it, others will see the benefits accrued and follow suit. They'll find their own street with old people and young lazy people living on it and go into "business". That money will get good to them and they'll "keep up the good work", as they say.

There are other lessons they'll learn too - besides making money. It will instill in them that hard work will pay off. It will give them the impetus to try harder in other daily pursuits, like making good grades in school. If not "good" grades, better grades. Further, it will give them a sense of selfworth that many of our kids don't have. Instilling the business ethic in our young people early has many rewards.

In the spirit of Dr. Martin Luther King, this is my dream. I have a dream that such a fat 14-year old kid and his skinny 11-year old sister will come knocking on my door the next time it snows and when spring comes. And when fall rolls around, I'll look out my window and see them walking up my walkway, this time with the used blower they bought with the money they earned in the spring. They'll have T-shirts on emblazed with "Fat Kid and Sister Enterprises" and I'll be at the door waiting for them. And so will a lot of other people.

When the job's done, I'll probably invite them in, pay them, and say, "before you go, how about a nice cold glass of iced tea and a Delmonico Steak?"

Business. That's the ticket to a whole lot of things. Dr. King would agree.

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