Stay in Control:

Do Not Let the Evil Inside Take Over

“You must suffer me to go my own dark way. I have brought on myself a punishment and a danger that I cannot name.” (33) Good people can have a dark, morally unsound part in them that they do not show. Many individuals all around the world have a sense of decency and depravity within themselves. In the novella, Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, by Robert Louis Stevenson, Utterson tells the story of Dr. Henry Jekyll. Jekyll is an old friend of Utterson. He is well known in the town. Jekyll starts acting very peculiar. He stays inside his cabinet a lot of the time and he is now interested in a new face in town, Edward Hyde. Jekyll writes a will that says if he dies or disappears that Hyde should get all of Jekyll’s possessions. Hyde does many awful things such as tramples over a poor child; he murders a very important person named Davers Carew, and he scares all who see him. Poor Jekyll is sick and he hates Hyde but Hyde is in control of Jekyll’s life. Hyde is in Jekyll’s cabinet and kills himself with poison. Jekyll wrote a letter explaining that Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde were the same person. The evil side of Jekyll had come out from a potion that he concocted and drank. Throughout the novella, Stevenson develops the notion that the power of decency and depravity are both together in people’s lives from wanting something completely opposite to a person’s character through practicing both of those desires to suffering the consequences of the decision to live two different lives.

In life, many people want and ask for things that are the opposite of ideas or beliefs that they were raised on. In many cases this would be called rebellion. Also life demands wants. Almost everyone wants something at some time in their life. In the novella, Jekyll wanted to show that, “man is not truly one, but truly two [.]” (57) illustrating that he thought that man had two sides. Throughout his studies of this idea Jekyll found that, “[he] for [his] part, from the nature of [his] life, advanced infallibly in one direction and in one direction only. It was on the moral side,” (57) proving that the other side of him that he wanted to live was the moral side. He was not a man who cared about this before until he discovered a way to live both sides of himself. We note that Jekyll likes when he is transformed when he writes, “I felt younger, lighter, happier in body;” (59) showing that the potion that he created actually made him happier and changed his self-appearance. But Jekyll also noted that he saw himself to be, “more wicked, tenfold more wicked, sold a slave to [his] original evil,” (59) explaining that the other side of him was evil. Jekyll explains why he wanted to be the two sides of his conscience when he states, “men have before hired bravos to transact their crimes… I was the first that ever did so for his pleasure [.] (61) showing that the evil side of Jekyll, which was Hyde, wanted to commit crimes and do bad things and so by having this second character, he could now commit immoral actions and never get caught because he would, “escape into [his] laboratory door, give but a second or two to mix and swallow the draught that [he] had always standing ready; and whatever he had done, Edward Hyde would pass away like the stain of breath upon a mirror [;]” (61) which indicates that anything bad he did he could get away by turning into his other self.

Practicing two different sides of one’s own character is not always a good thing. It could get out of hand and no one would know who the real you actually is. When Jekyll took the potion he became an entirely different person. He explains this when he writes, “I had now two characters as well as two appearances, one was wholly evil and the other was still the old Henry Jekyll… the movement was thus wholly toward the worse [.]” (60) presenting that through his selfish desires of being both sides of his conscience, he could now turn into something very evil and do very bad things without anyone knowing that it was him. Jekyll desired to do bad things when he wrote, “the pleasures which I made haste to seek in my disguise were, as I have said, undignified[;]” (61) showing that the things he sought after to do in his other side were shameful and awful. Jekyll joyed in being the other side of himself because in horrible circumstances he would have, “a transport of glee,” (65) illustrating that in the evil he committed, he found happiness and joy.

There are always consequences to the actions made. They may be good or bad. In Jekyll’s case they are bad. It was Jekyll’s choice to find a way to turn into his other side. He knows that he made a bad choice when he writes, “I have brought on myself a punishment and a danger that I cannot name [.]” (33) proving that he knows that because he made Hyde, he has punished himself and he has to pay the consequences of that choice. Jekyll did not think that Hyde would take over but, “the powers of Hyde seemed to have grown with the sickliness of Jekyll [.]” (70) illustrating that Hyde could take over Jekyll because of the horrible guilt in Jekyll. Hyde could take control because Jekyll was now so weak. There is evidence within the text that Jekyll has allowed Hyde to take control of him when he states, “I was led to remark that whereas, in the beginning, the difficulty had been to throw off the body of Jekyll, it had of late gradually bud decidedly transferred itself to the other side [.]” (64) evidencing the point that Jekyll did not see this coming. He did not realize that in the end, his other side, Hyde, would take over and he would not be free of the evil inside. The power of depravity had taken over Jekyll. His side of decency was long gone and all that he had left was the evil inside. Jekyll is in mourning and he knows he has done something wrong when he writes, “If I am the chief of sinners, I am the chief of sufferers also,” (33) showing that he is extremely sad and sorry for all of the bad he has done when in the body of Hyde. He has to pay the consequences now for the actions that he took in creating two identities. Dr. Jekyll had to suffer the consequences of his actions and the consequences that he had to face were extremely wicked.

Recognizing that the power of decency and depravity are both together in people’s lives from wanting something completely opposite to a person’s character through practicing both of those desires to suffering the consequences of the decision to live two different lives. The power of decency and depravity is in all of us. Some people do not let out both sides because it can lead to bad things. Stevenson develops the idea throughout the text that people have the power of decency and depravity in them. Letting both sides out will not show people who you really are and it can sometimes turn into a bad situation. If people stay in power of decency and do not let depravity take over, life would be free from the evil that many people bring into the world. By having both decency and depravity, the world is a more diverse place. But if both of this characteristics are harnessed and used for good then the world will be a more peaceful and a world without a lot of evil within.