

# What If I Become Evil?

*"You either die a hero, or live long enough to see yourself become the villain." – Harvey Dent, The Dark Knight*

What if I become evil?

This is a great tragedy: to go through life struggling for the good only to become corrupted, to lose, to give in, to actively participate in making the world worse.

Many people (enough to leave an impression) have worked hard for the good – and then fallen. They become jaded, power-hungry, cruel, hateful, spiteful. They become bitter at the things they work so hard for, and so they turn to destroying those things.

We all know there's a chance of that for any of us. We all know how torn our hearts are between good and evil. And we all want to think that we will die as heroes, instead of living long enough to become villains.

But for me, the answer to that great fear isn't any guarantee that I will always be good or that I will die well (or that I am good now, for that matter).

I put myself in context of the larger story of good. And then I realize that my own failure (god forbid) would not be the end of that story.

One effect of working for the good might be to show us that while our own goodness is one of the most powerful forces in the world for change, it isn't ultimately the only power in the world. There is something about reality itself that calls out the good in humans (and you might say in all living things, too).

Sure, some good people become evil. But just as many evil people become good. And even more sleepers wake up to the good within them. The world works in such a way that just as evil gains the upper hand, new heroes rise up. If this wasn't true, I wouldn't be here writing to you. History would have ended with the Assyrians, or the Mongols, or the Nazis.

If I decided to take the path of these conquerors, I'd end up on the ash heap of history, too. The good would continue to rise and rise again. I might become evil, but reality would remain good.

I take some comfort in that. And I'll live as well as I can in that trust – but I won't slack up either in going after the joy of the good.

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