

Bill Wilson and Harvey Milk

Bill Wilson “became an unemployable drunk who disdained religion and even panhandled for cash” (Cheever1). Harvey Milk, “young and gay...was to await an adulthood encumbered with dim career prospects, fake wedding rings and darkened bar windows” (Cloud1). It would seem that these two men would have very little to offer society. On the contrary, the men employed strong leadership skills when they proposed to make guidelines for society to follow, in hopes to make the quality of life more acceptable for people who were suffering. In the process of uniting with their peers, they became stronger and influenced the fundamentals of our social structure. Bill Wilson and Harvey Milk were leaders in society and gave of themselves for their convictions.

Bill Wilson and Harvey milk had strong leadership skills. Bill Wilson applied his leadership skills when he formulated the “revolutionary 12-step program, the successful remedy for alcoholism” (Cheever 1). Bill Wilson, being an alcoholic himself, intuitively knew what was needed for an alcoholic to stay sober. His ideas were so enlightening that the program established a winning curriculum for other people suffering directly, or indirectly, from different compulsions (Cheever 1). The foundation that Bill Wilson laid for recovering addicts was so strong that Aldous Huxley considered Wilson “the greatest social architect of our century” (qtd. in Cheever 1). Bill Wilson was not the only person that wanted to lead people to deliverance. Harvey Milk also had ideas and wanted to implement them into society for the benefit of the gay community. Milk embraced his sexuality, and according to author John Cloud, “became the first openly gay man elected to any substantial political office in the history of the planet” (1). Harvey Milk had achieved that status when “he defied the governing class of San Francisco in 1977 to become a member of its board of supervisors” (Cloud1). At last, Milk was in a position where he could make a difference in the gay community. During his time “As supervisor, Milk sponsored only two laws--predictably, one barring anti-gay discrimination...” (Cloud 2). As can be seen, Bill Wilson and Harvey Milk were not men who could stand back and watch their kind suffer. They felt they could do something about it and took advantage of their capabilities. Their flair for guidance made a difference for people anguishing from addictions and people living alternative lifestyles.

Equally, Bill Wilson and Harvey Milk gave of themselves to help those who suffered like them. Bill Wilson did not gain economically from his servitude. He did not further his education, even an upstanding one, when offered. Furthermore, he did not want to have anything to do with advertising himself on publications (Cheever3). The honor for Bill Wilson was having the ability to enrich people’s lives. While Bill was loyal to his audience, Harvey Milk’s sacrifice was insurmountable. In defending death threats, Harvey Milk says, “If a bullet should enter my brain, let that bullet destroy every closet door” (qtd.in Cloud3). Harvey Milk was assassinated in the fall of 1978 (Cloud3). It seems that Harvey Milk was well aware that his political status would be the end of his life. However, he felt so strongly about the rights of the gay community, that he gave his life for it.

As can be seen, both men positively influenced their peer groups and experienced losses because of their beliefs. Bill Wilson aided people suffering from addictions by formulating guidelines to follow when treating their illnesses. In addition, Harvey Milk implemented a law protecting the rights of gay individuals. While Bill Wilson refused any monetary gain from the self help programs he established, Harvey Milk lost his life because of his political opinions.

Works Cited

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