

## DO IT FOR A DAY

### DAY 22 –PICK A FIGHT

*The villages were abandoned in Israel, they had declined, until I, Deborah, rose up.*

*Judges 5:7, KJV*

On November 5, 1872, Susan B. Anthony cast a ballot in the presidential election in her hometown of Rochester, New York. She was arrested, charged, tried and sentenced for having voted illegally. At his two-day trial in June 1873, he was forced to pay a fine of one hundred dollars. *"I will never pay a dollar of your unjust penalty"* Anthony said. And never did.

Susan B. Anthony dedicated fifty years of her life to a cause that was once considered a crime: the right of women to vote. **He did not live to see the 19th Amendment passed, but his courage was a catalyst in that cause.** A century later, an image of the woman who refused to pay a hundred-dollar fine is engraved on the one-dollar coin, the Susan Anthony dollar.

On the occasion of her eighty-sixth birthday, Anthony gave a speech at the Church of Our Father in Washington, D.C. She evaded praise, giving credit to all who had given their lives for the cause. of women's suffrage. These were his final words: *With these women consecrating their lives, failure is impossible!!*.

**I love that “failure is impossible” mentality.** Do you remember our thesis? **Almost everyone can achieve almost anything if they work hard, consistently, and smartly. It may not happen in your lifetime, but the legacy is the things that survive after you.** It's doing the things that will make a difference a hundred years from now. It's growing fruit on other people's trees!

Susan B. Anthony never lost her faith in the end of the story, but every move begins with a simple step of faith.

I wasn't just embracing the wave; I was cutting the rope. I eat? With a great gesture! For Anthony it was putting his vote. For Rosa Parks, it was refusing to give up her seat on the bus.

All those women remind me of another woman named **Deborah who rose with power in the 13th century BC.** There was a vicious circle that was repeated over and over again in the days of the judges of Israel. People did what seemed best to them. Then God would raise up judges—twelve of them—to help Israel find their way back to

God. The fourth judge was a woman named Deborah, who led the nation for sixty years. She was not only a judge but also a poet and a prophetess. According to Jewish tradition she was one of seven prophets. And last but not least, Debora was a mother.

The nation of Israel was experiencing an economic recession and military oppression. And what were they doing? Cowering in fear! The villages were abandoned in Israel, they had decayed. Not only had they lost their way, but they had lost the will to fight. It wasn't a very encouraging picture, but there is one script change that deserves a drum roll: "...until I, *Debora, got up*". (Judges 5:7)

There is an eternal obviousness and it is that "**All that is needed for evil to triumph is for good men to do nothing.**" Of course, I would add "good women" to the equation. It only takes one person to stand up. It only takes one person to get into the water. It only takes one person to cast a vote.

"Let's go back to Deborah.

Israel was held captive by the Canaanite king Jabin and his general Sisera. According to a rabbinic tradition, Sisera's voice was so powerful that it could shake walls and cause wild animals to halt in their tracks. Deborah was immutable. She led the Israelites into battle as Joan of Arc, and helped them win their independence. There is a footnote at the end of that song: "Then the country had peace for forty years." (Judges 5:31)

**What made it possible for there to be peace? That a woman rose!** Débora broke the glass ceiling in many ways. She proves our thesis: almost anyone can achieve almost anything if they work hard, consistently and smartly. Of course, you will have to cut the rope like Deborah did. I eat? She declared war! I am not speaking literally. **But figuratively speaking**, you need to get out of your corner of the ring and fight for your good habits. It is the only way. At some point you must declare war on your bad habits.

A few years ago I was part of a panel at the National Prayer Breakfast with Bob Goff. Said, "Pick a fight." That means getting into good trouble, as the late John Lewis would say. Pick a fight against poverty. Pick a fight against injustice. Pick a fight for some realm cause you care about. If you are willing to fight, you have a chance to do so. **The same goes for forming or breaking habits. "**

When we identify ourselves as the hands and feet of Christ, do we think about the implications? Do you remember what happened to the hands and feet of Christ? They were nailed to a cross with nine-inch (23 cm) nails. What makes us think that we will be exempt from pain and suffering? **When we suffer for justice's sake, the gain justifies the pain."**

She demonstrates our thesis: **almost everyone can achieve almost anything if they work hard, consistently and smartly.** Of course, you will have to cut the rope like

Deborah did. I eat? She declared war! I am not speaking literally. But figuratively speaking, you need to get out of your corner of the ring and fight for your good habits. It is the only way. At some point you must declare war on your bad habits.

“Just as happiness is the indirect result of blessing others, habit formation is not a self-centered effort. Some problems are only solved by helping others. Not only does it help put your problems into perspective, but it makes them lose steam.