



LEADERS' DIGEST

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From the
Editorial Desk

An eye for an eye! Why?

When a certain guideline is established, when rules and regulations are designed, when an agreement becomes the formal commitment to abide to, then the possibility of retribution exists. Other than paper formats, there are also societal, cultural and religious standards that fall within this subject.

If the expectations, the deliverables are not clear and/or not understood, then retribution becomes one sided. It is therefore the onus on all parties involved to be on the same page and comprehend the subject, that if not attained to it in its strict direct terms or in its spirit may lead to retribution. In other words, clarity, congruency and acceptance will avoid a subjective counter-action, including a counter-attack.

If we make a differentiation between perspectives: feeling, thinking versus acting, we may realize that revenge seems to be more the action performed by many when retribution was the appropriate way. Further, retribution is mostly attributed to negative situations, i.e.: dispensing or receiving a punishment. But retribution could also be the dispensing or receiving of a reward. Therefore, praising also falls under retribution. *I only found this out when researching the word to write this article.*

Retribution is used in British English, while the US English calls it reprisal. Whichever the language we are using, the fact remains that most people could need a realignment vis-à-vis the word revenge. Do you feel that people around you act more in revenge or retribution? Keep your answer in memory and answer the question again after reading this article. More precisely, can it be that it all depends on the emotionality standard of a person as the guiding and deciding underlying element? Hmmm!

From the linguistic dimension within our daily communication, be it at home or at work, when was the last time you heard somebody use the word retribution.

Interestingly the verb for it that is mostly used is 'pay back'. There is no verb directly shaped from the word itself. 'I will retribute you!' doesn't work.

Let's say that it is part of our daily vocabulary and that we are clear about its definition and application. Let's assume that all know what the main difference between retribution and revenge is: retribution as an objective act of justice, very specific and measurable; revenge: a personal emotional justice with no clear boundaries. Does the cultural and emotionality aspect play a role?

Cultures where people easily take any form of criticism, detailed observation about how they do or not do something or get intellectually challenged, can easily fall into the 'revenge-club' category. It is not about their education standard; it is not about their age nor experience in life. It is about their emotional threshold, their emotional vulnerability or their instinctive eagerness not to upset somebody. As much as they may not act out the revenge feeling in a direct, obvious manner, covert approaches are used to represent those. These include using silence when their input is valuable and necessary, delaying a decision to stress out the other party, avoiding being in the same space as the so-called' offender, etc.

On the other hand, those programmed in less emotional environments like those in Nordic countries (yes!!, less sun, slower emotional reactivity) will have a tendency to act retribution rather than revenge, even if their inner monologue has a hint of revenge.

It is likely that we have a mix of both aspects and through coaching we will learn and inspire not to engage in vengeance, persecution, intimidation or isolation but resort to forgiveness, sympathy and arbitration.

Will you change your answer from the fourth paragraph?