

Exploring the Difference between Justice and Revenge:
Of course, I support Justice over Revenge.

Ray L. Winstead

Definitions:

Justice, in its broadest sense, is the principle that people receive that which they deserve, with the interpretation of what then constitutes "deserving" being impacted upon by numerous fields, with many differing viewpoints and perspectives, including the concepts of moral correctness based on ethics, rationality, law, religion, equity and fairness. ([Wikipedia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Justice))
<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Justice>

Revenge is committing a harmful action against a person or group in response to a grievance, be it real or perceived. ([Wikipedia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Revenge))
<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Revenge>

According to [Dr. Leon F. Seltzer](#):

Link to above: <https://www.psychologytoday.com/intl/blog/evolution-the-self/201402/don-t-confuse-revenge-justice-five-key-differences>

1) "Revenge can masquerade as justice, but it frequently ends up perverting it." *"Revenge is predominantly emotional; justice primarily rational."* Justice is "about righting a wrong that most members of society (as opposed to simply the alleged victim) would agree is morally culpable. And the presumably unbiased (i.e., *unemotional*) moral rightness of such justice is based on cultural or community standards of fairness and equity. Whereas revenge has a certain selfish quality to it, "cool" justice is selfless in that it relies on non-self-interested, established law."

2) *"Revenge is, by nature, personal; justice is impersonal, impartial, and both a social and legal phenomenon."*

"The driving impetus behind revenge is to get even, to carry out a private vendetta, or to achieve what, subjectively, might be described as *personal* justice." On the other hand, *social* justice is impersonal. It revolves around moral correction in situations where certain ethical and culturally vital principles have been violated. When justice is successfully meted out, the particular retribution benefits or protects *both* the individual and society."

3) *"Revenge is an act of vindictiveness; justice, of vindication.*

The intense effort to avenge oneself or others can easily become corrupting, morally reducing the avenger's status to that of the perpetrator. Two wrongs do not make a right and (ethically speaking) never can. Degrading another only ends up further degrading oneself." "In opposition, justice is grounded in assumptions, conventions, and doctrines having to do with honor, fairness, and virtue. Its purpose really isn't vindictive. That is, bloodthirstiness has no part—or *should* have no part—in precepts of justice, at least not in the way the term is presently employed. It's based on established law, and its proceedings are designed to dispense to individuals precisely what is deserved: nothing more, and nothing less."

4) *"Revenge is about retaliation; justice is about restoring balance*

The motive of revenge has mostly to do with expressing rage, hatred, or spite. It's a protest or payback, and its foremost intent is to harm." "On the contrary, justice is concerned with dispassionately restoring balance by bringing about equality—or better, *equity*. It centers on proportion as it equates to fairness. Not driven by emotion, restorative justice—meted out by a court of law—seeks to be as objective and evenhanded as possible. It's *not*, as is so much of revenge, about doing the other side "one better" but about equitably—or properly—punishing wrongdoing." "In brief, the *kind* or *magnitude* of justice meted out is contrived to "correspond" as exactly as possible to the gravity of the original injury."

Also see this [additional article by Dr. Seltzer](https://www.psychologytoday.com/intl/blog/evolution-of-the-self/201401/five-biggest-problems-with-revenge-and-their-best-remedies):

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/intl/blog/evolution-of-the-self/201401/five-biggest-problems-with-revenge-and-their-best-remedies>

1) "Revenge Is Primitive, Barbarous, and Savage."

"That is, there's something not quite civilized about it. And it really can't be validated as either ethical or sensible."

RLW: For example, consider this real statement as quoted by Seltzer to illustrate the point.)

"I'm a fighter. I believe in the eye-for-an-eye business. I'm no cheek turner. I got no respect for a man who won't hit back. You kill my dog, you better hide your cat."

Seltzer continues: "To me, this quote suggests the adolescent mentality of someone who believes that revenge is somehow synonymous with personal honor and self-

respect (and dangerously confuses revenge with justice). To kill your adversary's innocent pet just to "get even" with him for slaying your own merely supports the dysfunctional belief that two wrongs make a right. Clearly, they don't: The second wrong only exacerbates an already bad situation, significantly subverting your own humanity in the process."

2) "The Material, Psychological, and Spiritual Costs of Revenge Can Be Devastating."

"An eye for an eye will only make the whole world blind." — Mahatma Gandhi (This is one of the best known—and most damning—verdicts on revenge.)

"Revenge always escalates." — Rob Bell

3) "Wreaking Revenge on Another Is Either Corrupt or Corrupting."

"It degrades the one pursuing revenge." "Endeavoring to repay in kind some injury done to you ultimately makes you no better than the one toward whom you're so compelled to discharge your venom." "All we achieve by exacting revenge is to make ourselves the equals of our enemies, whereas by forgiving we show wisdom and intelligence." — Paulo Coelho.

Alternatives to revenge - also by Dr. Seltzer:

1) "Assert Your Honor and Rectitude by Foregoing Revenge." "In taking revenge, a man is but even with his enemy; but in passing it over, he is superior." —Francis Bacon

2) "Transcend Revenge Through Forgiveness."