

*If you only have a minute:* Rooted and Unwavering is all about connecting deeply with ourselves, others and our service in the world. Focusing on the part we own in any problem, even if that's only 1%, we discover an inner resourcefulness and strength that is invisible to us when we dwell on the 99% we cannot control.

## 1% Is More Than You Think

By Esther Groves and Hylke Faber

"I didn't have any notion about what I had done until I heard the clicks of handcuffs tying my hands behind my back," says Jon Antonucci about the day his charmed life came to an abrupt halt.

Until that low point, Jon had it all from a very young age. By age 7, he had developed an entrepreneurial spirit. By age 12, he was teaching martial arts and soon had many students. By the time he was 19, he had established himself as a martial arts master with a good reputation, money, and perceived power. "I was in control," he recalls. "It was all about me."

But, he admits, he was not really connected with himself and others. By his own admission, he lacked integrity. He was fired from his job. He was so disconnected from his deeper values, that when friends encouraged him to participate in something foolish, he obliged. "I wanted to feel like I was doing something. What happened did not become real until the consequences hit," he recalls.

That foolish thing was setting fire to the business that had terminated his employment. His best friend, who lit the match, died in the fire. Yet, Jon thought he could talk his way out of the situation. He was not the one to light the fire, he rationalized. His only crime was breaking a window. "I thought, I'll do a little time and pay some restitution." To his surprise, he was charged with arson and first-degree murder.

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"We always have impact on others, whether we realize it or not. It is up to us whether it is good or bad." – Jon Antonucci

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When he tried lying his way out, he ended up spending 12 years in prison. "It was 5 years before there was an epiphany," he says. Gradually, he began to connect with his strength and faith by taking real ownership for his part. He learned that, even if we own only 1% of the situation, we have to take accountability for that 1% and not hide behind the 99% that may be outside of our control. Focusing on our 1% helps us to grow and respond to any situation from who we choose to be, not as a reactive victim to our circumstances.

Focusing on his 1%, Jon discovered a fortitude he didn't know he had. He turned his prison experience into an opportunity to help others. In one defining moment, as the leader of a Bible study for fellow prisoners, Jon was told by a gang member that Caucasians were not allowed to talk to Black people any longer. He was warned that if he did, he might end up "leaving in a body bag." After reflecting deeply and connecting with his values, Jon realized, "This doesn't just impact me, this devalues other human life. This sets an example for those that are looking to me for an example."

He told the gang member, "You do what you've got to do. And I'm going to do what I'm going to do. So follow your values - you do what you feel is right. But I'm going to do the same thing." Instead of making

the other person wrong, Jon took a stand for his own values. He refused to comply. He lived to tell the story.

Eventually, Jon was released from prison and today is a leadership expert, servant leader and founder of SML Consultive, doing what he is called to do and inspiring others to lead with love.

“We are being forged like a diamond through our life’s experiences to become who we are called to be.”  
— Jon Antonucci