

Ways To Be The Change

Below is a list of many different ways to support change. It's not that we do all of these things. But it is crucial that each of us do something. We cannot stand by in our comfortable space anymore. Our humanity demands we act. Here's what we can do...(with resources at the end)

1. Advocacy

Advocacy is what we do as individuals and organizations to influence decisions within political, economic, and social institutions. I know it can be daunting, but it really works. Contact your representatives to encourage them to act or to support them if they are aggressively addressing these issues.

2. Vote

Register to vote. Vote. Encourage others to vote. Research the candidates and legislation. Cast your ballot for people and policies that are looking out for the environment and all of humanity.

3. Leadership

Take part in a campaign for someone you would like to see hold an office either locally or nationally. Or run for an office yourself.

4. Speak Up

Become active in spreading empowering information, whether it is through word of mouth to friends and family, via your online networking and emails, or just by having a conversation with colleagues at work.

5. Stand Up

When you hear a family member, friend, colleague or stranger use racist remarks or talk about a group of people in a disparaging way...say something. Not to create an argument or demean them, but to make it clear that you are offended by their remarks and will not stand for it.

6. Listen Up

Before you head out the door with that megaphone to spread your message, remember to always be courteous and open to hearing what others think and feel. While you may not agree on everything, debating issues you feel strongly about in a calm and non-aggressive fashion could be eye opening experience for all.

7. Attend a Rally or Protest

If history has taught us anything, it's that there is power in numbers and nothing changes without discomfort. A collective voice is a loud and strong one. Look for information on rallies or demonstrations in your area. Post that information then invite friends to join you.

8. Education—You

Educate yourself and others. Take on issue of social justice and find out as much as you can. Read books by people of color and the unwritten history of POC in America. Make sure to add positive and successful stories. Connect with someone who works in an area of social justice that you care about and have a conversation about issues they face.

9. Education –Youth

Check into the education of our youth. Talk to teachers, principals, board members and ask how topics of social justice and compassion are addressed. Ask how the multi-faceted history of our country is being taught. Get involved.

10. Reclaim Your Community

It's vital to get know your neighbors and those around you as you promote social justice. You will find you have similar concerns about things going on in your neighborhood and may be able to join together to mobilize for change. Make a difference where you are.

11. Volunteer

Your local shelters need you. Sparing some time to help others in need will help organizations struggling to respond to the demand for help – not to mention, give you a new appreciation for all that you have and continue to empower you to do more. Don't underestimate the power of volunteering.

12. Support Local Organizations

There are a multitude of groups that fight for equality and basic human rights for all. Find ones whose messages resonate most with you and find out how you can support their events and campaigns.

13. Support Local Businesses of People of Color

Explore diverse restaurants, shops, artists and musicians that belong to people of color. Support their creative and business efforts by becoming a patron.

14. Embrace Diversity

Take part in festivals and events that are ethnically focused, to gain a greater appreciation of diverse cultures. Bring your family and friends.

15. Sign a Petition

We are all bombarded with emails and pleas from groups hoping we will sign their petition or pledge. It takes five minutes to sign your name to one of these documents, but could mean the world of difference for those trying to give legs to their cause

16. Walk the Walk

Remember social justice begins right where you are. There is no point going out and urging others in the community to change their words and actions if you haven't first looked at yourself in the mirror. And if the shoe fits...check on your own white privilege. Read up on it, be honest about it, own it and be ready to change.

17. Be Your Own Fact-Checker

Just because you read something on social media or your neighbor told you something, does not make it true. First, ask them where they got their information. Second, find out if it is true before passing on potentially damaging information.

18. Give

Find an organization you trust and put your money where your heart is. Even a few dollars a month adds up when we do this together.

19. Have an Online Presence

I know this makes people nervous, but it is a huge platform. Use your social media to share information and raise awareness. Do so with respect and be ready to defuse conversations that may become heated or disrespectful.

20. Support Our Youth

Our country has a long history of youth-led activism that has brought about significant social change. Encourage and support any young person who has an idea and desire to change the world. But do not expect them to do it all. We are in this together.

21. Encourage Others

There are many great resources we can all share with friends and family. Maybe give one of the books as a gift for a birthday or at Christmas.

22. If So Inclined..

Pray, meditate or mindfully send positive energy into our communities and the universe.

23. Meet Regularly

Find a group of like-minded people and commit to discussing current events. Gather for support and accountability for goals you have set. [Note: This is not to suggest that you live in a bubble without being challenged by other options and ideas. Rather, it is to be supported on the very difficult journey of activism.]

24. Self Care

We get weary. Sometimes you need to back off for a bit to recharge. I like the image of an Echelon. Birds flying in a V shape create echelons. This creates a draft that the birds behind can 'coast' on and conserve energy - except for the one who's up front - they work the hardest. Now and then, the birds change positions so each can take a turn at resting and a turn at leading. Take a time out when you need it, but then jump right back in.

25. Be Visible

Sometimes you don't even need words. Place a sign in your yard or in your window. Bumper sticker? Why not. Wear a t-shirt with a logo that clearly spells out your message. I saw someone with a piece of duct-tape on his shirt with the letters 'BLM' printed boldly...brilliant.

26. Write an Activist Statement:

"I refuse to be part of a modern-day holocaust.
I will not be silent.
I will not give up.
I will work for change.
I will love my neighbor;
no matter their sexual orientation,
no matter their gender identity,
no matter their skin color,
no matter their country of origin." ~ Misi

Final thoughts:

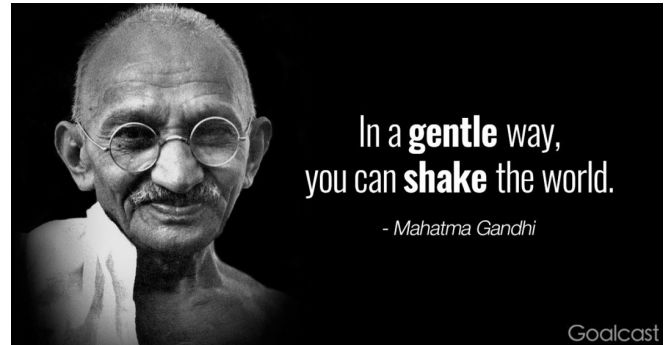
- ☆ Only take on what you can manage—yet challenge yourself. Add actions as you grow in confidence.
- ☆ Self Care: It can become overwhelming to deal with everything that is going on in our country right now. Take a break when you need to, but then get back to this important work of activism and education.
- ☆ Remember we are each responsible for doing this work. It is not the job of our friends or colleagues who are people of color to soothe our guilt or to educate us.
- ☆ Find a group for support and encouragement. You can always email Misi at heartswayhome@gmail.com

RESOURCES

Congressional Contact Information:

Find out who your Congressional Representative is at:
<https://www.house.gov/representatives/find-your-representative>

D.C. Captiol Switchboard: 202-224-3121
Nancy Pelosi: 202-225-4965 or 415-556-4862
Mitch McConnell: (202) 224-2541



You may also want to find influential people on twitter, Instagram or facebook.

ORGANIZATIONS

5 Young Activists That Will Inspire Youth

American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU)

For almost 100 years, the ACLU has worked to defend and preserve the individual rights and liberties guaranteed by the Constitution and laws of the United States. www.aclu.org

National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)

The mission of the NAACP is to secure the political, educational, social, and economic equality of rights in order to eliminate race-based discrimination and ensure the health and well-being of all persons.

www.naacp.org

Kids in Need of Defense (KIND)

We strive to ensure that no child appears in immigration court without high quality legal representation; advance laws, policies, and practices that ensure children's protection and uphold their right to due process and fundamental fairness; and promote in countries of origin, transit, and destination durable solutions to child migration that are grounded in the best interests of the child and ensure that no child is forced to involuntarily migrate. <https://supportkind.org/>

The Leadership Conference of Civil and Human Rights

The Leadership Conference was founded in 1950 as the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights by A. Philip Randolph, head of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters; Roy Wilkins of the NAACP; and Arnold Aronson, a leader of the National Jewish Community Relations Advisory Council. Their visionary leadership was grounded in their commitment to social justice and the firm conviction that the struggle for civil rights would be won not by one group alone, but through coalition. www.civilrights.org

The Obama Foundation

The Obama Foundation is guided by a core belief: that ordinary people working together can change history. Our mission is to inspire those people to take action, empower them to change their world for the better, and connect them so they can achieve more together than they can alone.

<https://www.obama.org/anguish-and-action/>

Black Lives Matter

We are a collective of liberators who believe in an inclusive and spacious movement. We also believe that in order to win and bring as many people with us along the way, we must move beyond the narrow nationalism that is all too prevalent in Black communities. We must ensure we are building a movement that brings all of us to the front. They have several toolkits on things like: healing action, justice, conflict resolution and one for white people. www.blacklivesmatter.com

Faith Action Network (FAN)

is an interfaith advocacy nonprofit organization through which thousands of people and over 120 faith communities across Washington State partner for the common good. They offer information about upcoming legislation, advocacy and education on social justice issues. They give you the tools you'll need to have your voice heard. Here's a good place to start: www.fanwa.org/advocacy/advocacy-toolkit

READ

[10 Black Authors You Should Read](#)

PDF on Policing & Advocacy

An Advocacy toolkit for fair, safe and effective community policing.

<https://civilrights.org/wp-content/uploads/Toolkit.pdf>

Understanding White Privilege by Frances E. Kendall

Racial privilege is hard to see for those who were born with access to power and resources. Yet it is very visible for those to whom it was not granted. *Understanding White Privilege* is written for individuals and those in organizations who grapple with race every day, as well as for those who believe they don't need to. It is written for those who have tried to build authentic professional relationships across races but have felt unable to do so. It is written for those who believe strongly in the struggle for racial justice and need additional information to share with their friends and colleagues. Inviting readers to think personally about how race--theirs and others'--frames experiences, relationships, and the way we each see the world, *Understanding White Privilege* focuses squarely on white privilege and its implications by offering specific suggestions for what we each can do to bridge the racial chasm.

White Fragility by Robin Diangelo

This book illuminates the phenomenon of white fragility and “allows us to understand racism as a practice not restricted to ‘bad people’ (Claudia Rankine). Referring to the defensive moves that white people make when challenged racially, white fragility is characterized by emotions such as anger, fear, and guilt, and by behaviors including argumentation and silence. These behaviors, in turn, function to reinstate white racial equilibrium and prevent any meaningful cross-racial dialogue. In this in-depth exploration, Diangelo examines how white fragility develops, how it protects racial inequality, and what we can do to engage more constructively.

So You Want to Talk About Race by Ijeoma Oluo

How do you tell your roommate her jokes are racist? Why did your sister-in-law take umbrage when you asked to touch her hair--and how do you make it right? How do you explain white privilege to your white, privileged friend? Ijeoma Oluo guides readers of all races through subjects ranging from intersectionality and affirmative action to "model minorities" in an attempt to make the seemingly impossible possible: honest conversations about race and racism, and how they infect almost every aspect of American life.

Lies My Teacher Told Me by James Loewen

This book shows how inadequate history courses in high school help produce adult Americans who think Donald Trump can solve their problems, and calls out academic historians for abandoning the concept of truth in a misguided effort to be “objective.” What started out as a survey of the twelve leading American history textbooks has ended up being what the *San Francisco Chronicle* calls “an extremely convincing plea for truth in education.” Loewen brings history alive in all its complexity and ambiguity. Beginning with pre-Columbian history and ranging over characters and events as diverse as Reconstruction, Helen Keller, the first Thanksgiving, the My Lai massacre, 9/11, and the Iraq War, Loewen offers an eye-opening critique of existing textbooks, and a wonderful retelling of American history as it should—and could—be taught to American students.

Irresistible Revolution by Shane Claiborne

Living as an Ordinary Radical. Many of us find ourselves caught somewhere between unbelieving activists and inactive believers. We can write a check to feed starving children or hold signs in the streets and feel like we've made a difference without ever encountering the faces of the suffering masses. In this book, Shane Claiborne describes an authentic faith rooted in belief, action, and love, inviting us into a movement of the Spirit that begins inside each of us and extends into a broken world. Shane's message will comfort the disturbed, and disturb the comfortable . . . but will also invite us into an irresistible revolution. His is a vision for ordinary radicals ready to change the world with little acts of love.

How to Love by Thich Nhat Hanh

How to Love is the third title in Parallax's Mindfulness Essentials Series of how-to titles by Zen Master Thich Nhat Hanh, introducing beginners and reminding seasoned practitioners of the essentials of mindfulness practice. This time Nhat Hanh brings his signature clarity, compassion, and humor to the thorny question of how to love. He distills one of our strongest emotions down to four essentials: you can only love another when you feel true love for yourself; love is understanding; understanding brings compassion; deep listening and loving speech are key ways of showing our love.

The Wisdom of Compassion by the Dalai Lama

This is the Dalai Lama at his most human, and most humane. We see how he approaches the world with playfulness, optimism, and a profound empathy for the suffering of others. Through his own conduct, he shows us the tangible benefits of practicing kindness, forgiveness and compassion. And he demonstrates that opening our hearts and minds to others is the surest path to true happiness.

Finding Peace through Spiritual Practice by the Interfaith Amigos

Pastor Don Mackenzie, Rabbi Ted Falcon and Imam Jamal Rahman, who have become known as the Interfaith Amigos, believe truly effective interfaith dialogue can inhibit the demonization of any religion. Their work together, which began with the horrors of 9/11, aims to help us see all authentic spiritual traditions as sacred avenues to a shared Universal Reality—when we achieve this, the healing of our shared personal and planetary problems begins. In this book, they look at the specific issues we face in a pluralistic society and the spiritual practices that can help us transcend those roadblocks to effective collaboration on the critical issues of our time. They examine: How Spiritual Awareness Can Heal Our Own Traditions, Beyond Polarization: Confronting Our Most Personal Obstacle, Spiritual Paths to Environmental Stewardship, Spiritual Paths to Social Justice and How to Make Spirituality a Way of Life

Crucial Conversations by Patterson, Grenny, McMillian and Switzler

This book draws our attention to those defining moments that literally shape our lives, our relationships, and our world. The quality of your life comes out of the quality of your dialogues and conversations. You will find the tools to: Prepare for high-stakes situations, transform anger and hurt feelings into powerful dialogue, make it safe to talk about almost anything and be persuasive, not abrasive.

BOOKS FOR KIDS

Happy In Our Skin by Fran Manushkin
Show Way by Jacqueline Woodson
Thunder Boy Jr by Sherman Alexie
We Shall Overcome by Debbie Levy
Dreamers by Yuyi Morales
Be Kind by Pat Zietlow Miller

WATCH

[10 Documentaries About Race](#)

13th (Netflix)
Dear White People (Netflix)
American Son (Netflix)
If Beale St Could Talk (Hulu)
King in the Wilderness (HBO)
Se you Yesterday (Netflix)
The Hate You Give (Cinemax)
When They See Us (Netflix)
The Innocence Files (Netflix)