



How To Be An Effective Change Maker

We are at a crossroads in the United States. Before, we had unfinished business when it came to issues directly impacting our families: gender inequality, sexism, racism, the pay gap, a lack of family supportive laws and policies, etc... Now, even our past progress and victories are under siege. It's time to stop the ball from rolling backward, turn it around, and push it back up the hill...and then beyond. And it's going to take each one of us. Here's how YOU can be an effective change maker.*

Step One: Ground Yourself in the Issues

In order to make change, you first need to identify what exactly you think needs improving. If you're just getting started, try honing in on one issue in an effort to focus your time and energy (understanding that intersectionality touches everything). Need help narrowing it down? Here are some strategies:

- Consider your own life. What issues affect you personally?
- Tune into your emotions. What makes you crazy mad?
- Think back to conversations you've had with friends, family, and colleagues. What topics have triggered your inner injustice alarm?
- Reflect on whether there are some hot-button topics you wish you knew more about. Get read in.
- Ask yourself: What issue won't I get tired of talking about, to anyone and everyone? That I can take with me everywhere?

Step Two: Get Informed

Before you can begin making change, you must know your issue inside and out. (This has the added benefit of giving you confidence and further igniting your passion).

How do you get prepared? Start with what you know – your lived experience – and build from there. Talk to others. Diversify your network. Show up at events. March. Go to conferences. Participate in trainings. Join groups on Facebook and other relevant social media platforms. Find local organizations working on your issue and get involved. Read and read some more. Research the statistics and data. Make sure all your information is up-to-date and well-sourced.

Step Three: Take the Issue Everywhere

Once you're versed in your issue, bring it up with everyone, wherever you are: meals with family and friends, your place of worship, City Council meetings, work, school, the gym, your legislators' offices, the organizations you are involved with, online, your kid's school. Everywhere.

Bringing up your issue can be intimidating. Do it anyways. Making change is not comfortable. You've got the knowledge; it's time to raise your voice. Speak with authenticity and relate genuinely with others. Tell them a story. Tell them your story. Educate. Organize. Advocate. Make a difference.

* Many thanks to Dr. Wendy Smooth, Professor in the Department of Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies at The Ohio State University, for her help in creating this guide.

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