How to Take a Stand and Change the World
by tyler tervooren

One of my favorite things to do is dream up all the ways I could make a difference in the world. Of course, there are countless ways to do it, and it’s easy to just get lost in my thoughts if I let myself; I could spend days just sitting and thinking if I wanted to – probably even weeks.

The real trick, I think, is finding something that can change the world and actually feels doable – something that doesn’t require you to do the impossible to actually succeed.

That’s why, lately, I’ve been really fascinated with the idea of simply taking a stand. It’s such a simple act, but it’s probably the most powerful thing a person can do to really effect change.

Of course, it’s not that easy. You have to get over the fear or criticism and ridicule in order to take a stand. That takes work, but it’s within reach. I’ve never met anyone that, with a little work, couldn’t take a step towards saying or doing something they really believe in.

Taking a stand is the first step but, ultimately, taking a stand for something is what’s required.

It’s easy to have contempt for something you don’t like. Maybe you even get worked up enough to do something about it. But when you’re done, what do you have? If you’re successful, you’ve destroyed something that you thought was ugly or unjust from the world. That’s useful, but even more important is standing for something that will create a lasting change.

In fact, I think that standing for something is really the only way to be truly effective in the long run. Standing against means working to destroy, while standing for means working to create.
It’s a complete paradigm shift, but it’s necessary to really create the world that we want to live in.

Think about it. If you’re disgusted by rape, then it makes sense to stand up against it and the people who do it. You feel passionately about it, so you speak out to tell the world that it isn’t okay. But what’s the result? The world already knows that, and yet it still happens.

What if, instead of taking a stand against rape, you took a stand for the equal treatment of women in society? A much more difficult task, for sure, but that’s the real culprit isn’t it?

Standing against something addresses the symptoms of a problem while standing for something is far more effective at actually fixing it. Creation beats destruction.

Standing for a cause you believe in is more difficult than standing against one because the triggers that excite you to action aren’t as obvious.

If you think there’s a world changing message inside you, here are some things you can do to make sure you take a stand for something you really believe in.

1. **Take something you stand against, and turn it around.**

   If you hate rape, stand for equal rights for women. If you don’t believe in war, why not fight for peace instead? Want to stop the destruction of the environment for our own amusement? Stand up for land preservation and responsible use of resources.

   Don’t waste your time fighting the symptoms. Use your energy to support a real solution to the underlying problem.

2. **Find the most important thing you do every day and tell people about it.**

   Having a hard time figuring out just what to take a stand for? Look at everything you do in a day, find the most important thing, and do more of that. Then, tell people about it. Tell everyone you know. Tell anyone that will listen. That’s a good place to start.
I waste more time each day than I’d like to admit, but eventually I sit down and write an essay. Writing is the most important thing I can do every single day.

Don’t do anything important with your day right now? Take a stand for doing more important things. Go from there.

### 3. Don’t beat around the bush.

Standing for something means setting aside your fear of ridicule and saying what you really believe. Don’t allude to it. Don’t lead into it. Don’t beat around the bush.

Say it. Say it and mean it. State it as if it’s fact, even if it isn’t. If you want it to become a fact, you have to treat it like one. And don’t say you’re sorry when someone disagrees.

### 4. Change just one person.

There’s this happy, feel-good idea that you can change the world all by yourself. It’s a lie. You can’t. But you and one other person can. You don’t have to convince the whole world to change – just one other person.

If you can change just one person, then that one person can change one other person. This only has to happen a few dozen times before the entire world is a whole new place. Start a movement, and let the movement do its job.

### 5. Take a stand every day.

This isn’t something you get to do once and then sit back and relax. Find time every single day to take a stand for something you believe in.

### 6. Wake up early.

Taking a stand for something and changing the world is going to take work. You get the same number of hours each day that everyone else does. Get up early and get a head start.

### 7. Go to bed late.
Rather than staying up to watch reruns of canceled sitcoms, stay up late to plan out how you’re going to get a head start when you wake up early tomorrow.

Be efficient where you can, but don’t let it efficiency rule your life. Focus on doing something awesome at whatever cost. Pay attention to what works and what doesn’t, but most of all, just work really, really hard. Do that enough and the world will listen.

8. Build a platform.

Spreading your message is a lot easier when you don’t have to repeat yourself. If you want to make your message stronger, deeper, and more impactful, find a way to save it so that people can always find it while you continue to work on something new.

   *rite a blog*. Record a podcast. Shoot a video. Better yet, do all of those things and do them all at once. Then do them again.

9. When the room is quiet, shout.

When you have a captivated audience that wants to hear what you have to say, let them have it. Shout at the top of your lungs if you have to. Don’t let anyone think for one second that you don’t eat, sleep, and breathe your purpose.

This will change people. That’s a good thing.

10. When the room is loud, whisper.

When it feels like the noise is so loud that you could never shout above it, don’t try. Instead, whisper. People always want the opposite of whatever it is the rest of the world is giving them. So give them that.

In a world of cacophonous noise, speak softly to intrigue. Once everyone’s listening, then start shouting.

11. Make a scene.
Don’t be afraid to be ridiculous. Make a scene, flail your arms, dress like a clown, get noticed. Then, deliver the goods.

12. Take your message on the road.

You can publish your blog, podcast, and youtube channel every day and reach a lot of people, but you won’t get to everyone.

If you really want to make a difference, take your message on the road. Go to the people who don’t read blogs. Go to the people who don’t even have the Internet.

If your message is important, don’t let your medium hold you down. Your blog can’t always do the job. Take it upon yourself to talk to the people that need to hear your message in the way that they can actually use it.

· Create art.

If you have something important to stand for, then you probably feel pretty strongly about it. Make sure you always convey that.

Anyone can write a report, not everyone can write an essay. You have the ability to change people with your passion. In everything you do, be an artist. Paint a masterpiece by telling your story in a way that people can’t ignore.

What are you going to take a stand for? How are you going to change the world today?

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Image by: danny.hammontree

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