



Chapter 6: Your Part in a Movement

How do individuals take meaningful action in civic discourse and change in a democracy? The persistent protests taking place in the U.S. have shifted how people perceive civic engagement. Learn how civic participation has become more accessible and has broader appeal in the current pandemic.

Conversation Questions

1. If you have taken steps to be more actively engaged in civic issues, what changed for you or propelled you to take this step? What's different this time?
2. What barriers to civic engagement have you experienced or witnessed?
3. What are the implications of performative or superficial activism and allyship?
4. How have you seen a shift in communities impacting local laws and systems?
5. What does it mean for a company or organization to make a statement related to a social justice movement?

Key Definitions

- *Activism* – a practice that emphasizes direct vigorous action especially in support of or opposition to one side of a controversial issue (*Merriam-Webster*)
- *Ally* - a person who is a member of an advantaged social group who takes a stand against oppression, works to eliminate oppressive attitudes and beliefs in themselves and their communities, and works to interrogate and understand their privilege (*Social Justice Terminology, Suffolk University Boston*)
- *Civic engagement* - broad set of practices and attitudes of involvement in social and political life that converge to increase the health of a democratic society (*Encyclopaedia Britannica*)
- *Social injustice* - injustice or inequity in terms of the distribution of wealth, opportunities, and privileges within a society (*Dictionary.com*)





Read

“How to Participate in Politics” by Ian Prasad Philbrick and David Leonhardt for *The New York Times Magazine*

<https://nyti.ms/2PBANMN>

If politics is a conversation, every American has a voice. Here is how you can use yours more effectively.

“Use Your Social Network as a Tool for Social Justice” by Raina Brands and Aneeta Rattan for *Harvard Business Review*

<https://bit.ly/2DtTclp>

How to use social networks to take action to prevent and confront bias in the workplace and beyond.

“How to Stand Up for Change When You Feel Helpless” by Amanda Litman for *Oprah Magazine*

<https://bit.ly/2PnSX4l>

If being active seems impossible due to physical and budgetary restraints, this article offers ways to still fight for change.

“How To Stay Politically Active While Social Distancing” by Johanna Silver for *Now This*

<https://bit.ly/33pwxl2>

You can use this time indoors to stay engaged with candidates and issues you care about.

Watch

“Social Media Activism and A Call to Action” by Alexa Chukwumah from *TEDx*

<https://bit.ly/2PsY434>

In a TEDxBrownU presentation, Alexa Chukwumah talks about the inspiration for Sanitary Aid for Nigerian Girls, whose work has impacted over 7,000 women in Nigeria.





Listen

***Run For Something* by Amanda Litman (audiobook)**

<https://www.hoopladigital.com/title/12469888>

The must-have guide for young progressives looking to run for local office, complete with contributions from elected officials and political operatives.

“Stay Black and Die” from The Daily for *The New York Times*

<https://nyti.ms/2DgFyJ4>

One demonstrator shares her journey to the front lines of recent protests — and the lessons she’s learned about the pace of change.

“Why Now, White People?” from Code Switch for NPR

<https://n.pr/3ifvvT5>

Hosts Gene Demby and Shereen Marisol Meraji discuss the influx in caring about social injustice by more white people now, following the murder of George Floyd and in the midst of a global pandemic.

