

How to Up Your Activism Game

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For some people, the thought of challenging systematic LGBTQ oppression is overwhelming and the task seems impregnable. There are so many issues that need addressing, reforms that need to take place and people to be helped, it can seem like jumping down a philosophical and activist rabbit hole. It begs the question of how much one person can really accomplish, and what difference can really be made. Can one person really do that much?

Liz Coleman, president of Bennington College in the 1990s, stated:

"You have a mind. And you have other people. Start with those, and change the world."



The first step in getting involved is knowing that you really can make a difference. We all have a mind, we all have other people, and we all have the ability to start conversations about issues we're passionate about. Activism can include the obvious signing petitions, calling legislators, and volunteering for a cause. What it can also include, however, is constructive conversations over coffee, educating family members and friends and being your authentic self.

In a discussion we had about activism, Thomas Alberts of [The New Civil Rights Movement](#) posited:

"One of the primary ways we've advanced as a people is by helping others outside of the community get to know us on a personal level by helping them with their causes. History shows that hearts and minds are changed about gay rights when people have close friends, family members, and colleagues who have come out to them. I personally have known people who opposed gay marriage when I first met them, but changed their minds about the issue when they got to know me and other gays and lesbians... One of the best things we can do as LGBTQ persons is to reach out to non - LGBTQ movements and organizations, which will then build bridges and make them more likely to support us in return."

The part of Alberts' thought that most resonates with me is people changing their minds about marriage equality once they get to know him. Coming out, being genuine, and discussing why certain rights are important to you can change minds. Activism can be as simple as talking with conservative family members about why you deserve the same rights as them.

In another discussion I had with my friend Greg Stevens, from The Daily Dot and Kernel Magazine, he said:

"Social media provides so many opportunities to connect with all kinds of

people literally all across the country and the world; you can make a difference even just on a one on one basis that people never could before."

How true. His thought supports the narrative of activism being much more organic than having to be picketing or calling elected officials: activism can be having continued conversations with your connections, in real life or online, about LGBTQ rights and why they matter to you as a person. If we reframe activism as something that everyone can access, we can help to normalize LGBTQ acceptance and equality.

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