



# SIX AREAS OF JUSTICE WORK



An Exploration of Activism Opportunities  
for the Highly Sensitive, Empathic, and Introverted

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## Author's Note

This reflection guide is designed as a companion to the book *Social Justice for the Sensitive Soul: How to Change the World in Quiet Ways*. It delves further into six areas of justice work that are introduced in the book and may be of particular interest to those who identify as highly sensitive, empathic, or introverted and who want to advocate for social change.

Like the book itself, this guide is not meant to be prescriptive. These reflections are primarily an exercise in consideration, inspiration, and imagination. This is only a starting point for figuring out where your heart (in all its passion and tenderness) may lead you in the social justice arena.

There is no one answer for how sensitive souls can better our communities. Perhaps several of these areas speak to you; perhaps none of them fit your interests and skills. Either way, I hope you'll continue seeking and wondering, exploring and experimenting, until you have discovered what it is you were meant to do.

Please also feel free to continue the conversation with me and others at [chengtozun.com](http://chengtozun.com) or in the "Social Justice for the Sensitive Soul" Facebook group.

Wishing you peace and grace in your journey,



Dorcas Cheng-Tozun

# CONNECTORS

## BASED ON CHAPTER 12



### The Big Idea

1. Based on your understanding, how would you describe the role of a “relational activist”?
2. What are the ways in which relational activism can be effective? What are the limitations of activism through relationships?
3. Think of a specific challenge that your neighborhood or community is facing. How might relational activism contribute to real, tangible progress?

#### Individuals and groups that pursue(d) social change through relationships:



- The Civil Conversations Project
- The Civility Project
- Daryl Davis
- Desmond Tutu
- Empathy Museum
- Howard Thurman
- Human Library
- Kal Turnball
- Mahatma Gandhi
- Roots of Empathy
- The Year of Civil Conversations Project

*\*Please note that not all individuals listed here would identify as highly sensitive.*

## Getting Personal

1. What appeals to you about relational activism? What particular strengths, skills, or experiences could you bring to relationship-building for the common good?
2. What concerns you most about this kind of social justice work?
3. What next steps could you consider in exploring relational activism? Perhaps you want to learn more through books or talking to someone. Perhaps you want to try it out with an acquaintance you've been wanting to get to know better. Or perhaps you're not interested in pursuing this form of activism; that's perfectly fine too!

## Additional Resources

"Becoming Unstuck with Relational Activism," *Stanford Social Innovation Review*. By Becca Dove and Tim Fisher.

RelationalActivism.com

Any novel, memoir, biography, or essay that centers characters who have a different background than yours.

*Bowling Alone: Revised and Updated: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*. By Robert D. Putnam.

*The Upswing: How America Came Together a Century Ago and How We Can Do It Again*. By Robert D. Putnam.

*The Power of Kindness: The Unexpected Benefits of Leading a Compassionate Life*. By Piero Ferrucci.

*Radical Friendship: Seven Ways to Love Yourself and Find Your People in an Unjust World*. By Kate Johnson.

*Purposeful Empathy: Tapping Our Hidden Superpower for Personal, Organizational, and Social Change*. By Anita Nowak.

*Brave Souls: Experiencing the Audacious Power of Empathy*. By Belinda Bauman.

*Friendship: The Evolution, Biology, and Extraordinary Power of Life's Fundamental Bond*. By Lydia Denworth.

# CREATIVES

## BASED ON CHAPTER 13



### The Big Idea

1. What are the different functions of art and artists within social movements?
2. Why do you think art is particularly effective at communicating hard truths? What are the limitations of art as a vehicle for social change?
3. Can you think of a work of art (a novel, painting, film, television show, sculpture, etc.) that changed how you understood a particular social issue? Why did it impact you in this way?

#### Individuals and groups that pursue(d) social change through art and creative works:



- Ai Weiwei
- Ali Ferzat
- bell hooks
- The Craftivist Collective
- El Teatro Campesino
- Elie Wiesel
- Frida Kahlo
- James Baldwin
- John Lennon
- JR
- Kehinde Wiley
- Keith Haring
- Langston Hughes
- LMNOPI
- Luis Valdez
- Mahalia Jackson
- Maya Angelou
- Nabil Shaban
- Paul Robeson
- Sarah P. Corbett
- Spike Lee
- Tony Kushner
- U2

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## Getting Personal

1. Dr. Elaine Aron states that all sensitive individuals are drawn to creative works—either as creatives themselves or as appreciators of art. What forms of art are you drawn to? Do you see yourself as a creator of art, an appreciator of art, or both?
2. If you are already engaged in some kind of social justice–related job or volunteer role, is there a small way you could incorporate creative art into your existing work? If you don't currently have such a role, would you be interested in seeking out something that involves the arts?
3. How might you support the work of other artists who are advocating for social change?

## Additional Resources

*A People's Art History of the United States: 250 Years of Activist Art and Artists Working in Social Justice Movements.* By Nicolas Lampert.

*The Art of Protest: Political Art and Activism.* Edited by gestalten, Francesca Gavin, and Alain Bieber.

*The Art of Protest: A Visual History of Dissent and Resistance.* By Jo Rippin.

*Signs of Resistance: A Visual History of Protest in America.* By Bonnie Siegler.

*Art Is Life: Icons and Iconoclasts, Visionaries and Vigilantes, and Flashes of Hope in the Night.* By Jerry Saltz.

*Writing to Change the World: An Inspiring Guide for Transforming the World with Words.* By Mary Pipher.

*How to Be a Craftivist: The Art of Gentle Protest.* By Sarah Corbett.

*The Artist's Way: A Spiritual Path to Higher Creativity.* By Julia Cameron.

*Poetry as Spiritual Practice: Reading, Writing, and Using Poetry in Your Daily Rituals, Aspirations, and Intentions.* By Robert McDowell.

# RECORD KEEPERS

BASED ON CHAPTER 14



## The Big Idea

1. Why is the work of record makers and record keepers critical in social justice efforts?
2. What resources do record makers and record keepers need in order to be effective? What are the most significant challenges they face in providing an accurate account of history?
3. In your own community, where do you see record makers and record keepers at work? How do you see them contributing to increased access, opportunity, and equity for those around you?

### Individuals and groups that pursue(d) social change through record keeping:



- Amnesty International
- Ava DuVernay
- Bob Woodward
- Christiane Amanpour
- Diedre Conkling
- Eric Neudel
- Human Rights Watch
- Iris Chang
- Jeffrey Ostler
- Michael Moore
- The National Memorial for Peace and Justice
- National Museum of the American Latino
- Nicholas Kristoff
- Octavia V. Rogers Albert
- Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
- Okwui Enwezor
- Philip Friedman
- Stop AAPI Hate
- Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada
- Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa
- William Still

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## Getting Personal

1. Of the many different kinds of roles that record keepers can take on (historian, documentarian, librarian, archivist, journalist, database manager, etc.), which sounds most appealing to you? What interests you about that role?
2. What skills, experiences, or passions do you have that might help you in the work of record making or record keeping (organization, photography, databases, etc.)? What about these kinds of roles would be challenging or uninteresting to you?
3. Is there an issue in your community that you care deeply about and that you could help document in some way? Perhaps you could take notes at government meetings, take photos of your neighborhood, or interview your neighbors. If this is of interest to you, give it a try and spend some time afterward reflecting on the experience.

## Additional Resources

Visit a museum or library, and observe its functions through the lens of social justice.

*Journalism as Activism: Recoding Media Power.* By Adrienne Russell.

*Archives, Recordkeeping and Social Justice.* Edited by David A. Wallace, Wendy M. Duff, Renée Saucier, Andrew Flinn.

*Archives Power: Memory, Accountability, and Social Justice.* By Randall C. Jimerson.

*The Violence of Organized Forgetting: Thinking Beyond America's Disimagination Machine.* By Henry A. Giroux.



# BUILDERS

## BASED ON CHAPTER 15



### The Big Idea

1. Why is empathy important for builders, inventors, product designers, and engineers who care about social change? What are the risks of designing products and programs without empathy?
2. Why do you think such limited resources go toward innovating for “the other 90 percent” in the world? What could help shift this?
3. What technological solutions exist in your community that have helped promote access, opportunity, or equality? Do you know how these solutions came about? If not, consider doing some research to find out.

#### Individuals and groups that pursue(d) social change through building and inventing:



- Amos Winter
- Ashoka
- Barefoot College
- Because International
- Bill Drayton
- charity: water
- d.light
- Echoing Green
- Engineers without Borders
- Grameen Bank
- Hasso Plattner Institute of Design, Stanford University
- IDEO
- International Development Enterprises
- Khushi Baby
- Kiva
- Muhammed Yunus
- Paul Polak
- ZanaAfrica

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## Getting Personal

1. As you think about the potential impact inventors, product designers, and engineers could have on increasing access, opportunity, and equity, what excites you most about the possibilities?
2. Think of one or two social issues that you care about. Are there technologies or products you can think of that could make a difference in addressing these issues? Consider doing some research to see if someone is already working on this and if there are ways you could support them.
3. If you see yourself as a builder, what specific skills and experiences do you have? How might you apply those skills to a social challenge or in a justice organization? Does this appeal to you? What worries you about doing this?

## Additional Resources

*Out of Poverty: What Works When Traditional Approaches Fail.* By Paul Polak.

*The Business Solution to Poverty: Designing Products and Services for Three Billion New Customers.* By Paul Polak and Mal Warwick.

*Building Social Business: The New Kind of Capitalism That Serves Humanity's Most Pressing Needs.* By Muhammed Yunus.

*How to Change the World: Social Entrepreneurs and the Power of New Ideas.* By David Bornstein.

*Rippling: How Social Entrepreneurs Spread Innovation Throughout the World.* By Beverly Schwartz.

*Brave Green World: How Science Can Save Our Planet.* By Chris Forman.

*Tech to Save the World: A Guide to How You Can Change the World.* By Ashley Nichols.

*The Solution Revolution: How Business, Government, and Social Enterprises Are Teaming Up to Solve Society's Toughest Problems.* By William D. Eggers and Paul Macmillan.

# EQUIPPERS

BASED ON CHAPTER 16



## The Big Idea

1. What kinds of skills and knowledge do social activists need to learn to be able to effectively advocate for justice?
2. What are the various forms and functions that equippers can take on? Which of these do you see at work around you? Which do you think we need more of?
3. What are the particular abilities and skills that sensitive souls can bring to teaching and mentoring others? What are the risks and challenges they need to be aware of?

### Individuals and groups that pursue(d) social change through teaching and mentoring:



- Bill Moyer
- Center for Contemplation and Action
- Center for Third World Organizing
- Chloé Valdary
- Class Action
- CT Center for Nonviolence
- Dolores Huerta
- Highlander Research and Education Center
- Hollaback!
- Myles Horton
- Septima Clark
- Sojourner Truth School for Social Change Leadership
- Susan B. Anthony
- Training for Change
- Trans Women of Color Collective

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## Getting Personal

1. Who has been a teacher or mentor to you in the area of social justice? (This could be someone you know personally or someone you learned from through books, lectures, etc.) What did you learn from this person?
2. What knowledge, skills, or experiences do you have that would be useful for fellow activists to learn about? Are there ways you could intentionally begin to share these with others?
3. At this point in your life and career, what would you like to learn that would support you in your social justice efforts? Which individual or organization could provide that knowledge to you?

## Additional Resources

[BeautifulTrouble.org](http://BeautifulTrouble.org)

*Digital Library of Nonviolent Resistance*, Rutgers International Institute for Peace

*We Make the Road by Walking: Conversations on Education and Social Change*. By Myles Horton and Paulo Freire; edited by Brenda Bell, John Gaventa, and John Peters.

*The Myles Horton Reader: Education for Social Change*. By Myles Horton; edited by Dale Jacobs.

*Letters to a Young Activist*. By Todd Gitlin.

*Blueprint for Revolution: How to Use Rice Pudding, Lego Men, and Other Nonviolent Techniques to Galvanize Communities, Overthrow Dictators, or Simply Change the World*. By Srdja Popovic.

*How to Be a Social Activist: How to Plan, Launch, and Support Social Change in your Community and Our World*. By Sophia Ruckriegel and Kilian Ruckriegel.

*How to Be an Activist: A Practical Guide to Organising, Campaigning and Making Change Happen*. By Vanessa Holburn.

# RESEARCHERS

BASED ON CHAPTER 17



## The Big Idea

1. What are the main contributions that highly sensitive and empathic people can bring to academia and other research efforts?
2. What is the cost to society when scientific research is stifled and ignored, or when it is conducted unethically, exclusively, or without scientific rigor? How can robust research support the development of more equitable and just societies?
3. Why do you think the vast majority of research findings are not communicated to the public? What could help change this?

### Individuals and groups that pursue(d) social change through research:

- American Institutes for Research
- Asian Americans Advancing Justice
- The Carr Center for Human Rights, Harvard Kennedy School
- Child Trends
- Disability Rights UK
- Education Development Center
- Evelyn Hooker
- Human Rights Campaign Foundation
- International Center for Research on Women
- International Society for Justice Research
- James Lawson Institute for the Research and Study of Nonviolent Movements, Vanderbilt University
- Justice Research and Statistics Association
- Kenneth and Mamie Phipps Clark
- National Institute of Health
- Research for Action
- Robert Bullard
- Social Justice Research Journal
- SRI International
- Stephen Schneider

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## Getting Personal

1. Is there any aspect about conducting research that is of particular interest to you? What aspects do not appeal to you?
2. Think about a social justice area that you have an interest in or have worked on. What questions do you have about the causes and impacts of injustice in that area? What kind of data would be helpful in answering those questions? Consider seeking out that data via a scholar or scholarly resources.
3. Organizations are constantly engaged in research: universities, think tanks, research nonprofits, government agencies, etc. Are there ways you might support these efforts (as a financial donor, a communicator of the information, etc.)?

## Additional Resources

“Academics Can Change the World—If They Stop Talking Only to Their Peers,” *The Conversation*. By Save Heleta .

*The Public Professor: How to Use Your Research to Change the World*. By M. V. Lee Badgett.

*Research Methods for Community Change: A Project-Based Approach*. By Randy A. Stoecker.

*Participatory Visual Methodologies: Social Change, Community and Policy*. By Claudia Mitchell, Naydene De Lange, and Relebohile Moletsane.

*Facilitating Community Research for Social Change: Case Studies in Qualitative, Arts-Based and Visual Research*. Edited by Casey Burkholder, Funké Aladejebi, and Joshua Schwab-Cartas.

*Dumping in Dixie: Race, Class, and Environmental Quality*. By Robert D. Bullard.

*Science as a Contact Sport: Inside the Battle to Save Earth’s Climate*. By Stephen H. Schneider.

*Nickel and Dimed: On (Not) Getting By in America*. By Barbara Ehrenreich.