

Do It Anyway: The New Generation of Activists

by

Courtney E. Martin



EBOOK DOWNLOAD

Synopsis

If you care about social change but hate feel-good platitudes, *Do It Anyway* is the book for you. Courtney Martin's rich profiles of the new generation of activists dig deep, to ask the questions that really matter: How do you create a meaningful life? Can one person even begin to make a difference in our hugely complex, globalized world?

Sort review

From Publishers Weekly Martin (*Perfect Girls*, *Starving Daughters*) attempts to galvanize a new generation of activists, exhorting them to abandon puffy "save the world" rhetoric in favor of action. A passionate champion for social justice work of all stripes, she profiles eight activists who have managed to "soothe the critics and pessimists in their own heads and act," among them Rachel Corrie, the young American crushed to death under an Israeli bulldozer while protesting the demolition of Palestinian homes. While Martin's intentions are good and the individuals she writes about are compelling and complex, there's a lingering naïveté and puzzling ahistoricism. She writes about the need for a new generation of activists without addressing what battles have been fought and how. Without an attention to the past, she cannot speak to the efficacy of certain tactics above others or how to tailor social justice work to be of maximum benefit to specific campaigns and communities. Nonetheless, Martin is successful in cheering on would-be activists to struggle and fail and struggle again. And while the book may raise more questions than it answers, it initiates a vital conversation at a time when the world and its challenges seem more intractable than ever. Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. Review "Courtney Martin's portraits of eight young activists reveal people who are flawed, scared, and human—which makes them all the more inspiring. An elegant, effortless read that confirms what we already know: young people continue to change the world."—Jennifer Baumgardner and Amy Richards, authors of *Manifesta* and *Grassroots* "Do It Anyway asks the most difficult question possible: how can I make my life meaningful? The answers are varied, transformational, and necessary for us all."—Jane Fonda "Courtney Martin is one of our most insightful culture critics and one of our finest young writers. She's written a lively, compelling, and very important book for people of every generation who want to be fully alive in and to the world. Take in what she says and you may find yourself turning to that impossible cause you care about and 'doing it anyway.'" —Parker J. Palmer, author of *Let Your Life Speak* "Unlike a lot of authors, Courtney Martin isn't trying to sell you activism and why you should (yawn) get involved. Instead, she goes deep into the stories and lived experience of eight individuals. *Do It Anyway* is a treasure and deeply affecting." —Billy Wimsatt, author of *Bomb the Suburbs* and *Please Don't Bomb the Suburbs* "Put this on your must read list! Courtney Martin, of *Feministing* and *Perfect Girls*, *Starving Daughters* fame, has just launched a new book. *Do It Anyway: The New Generation of Activists* profiles the work of

eight activists, doing what they can to make this world a better place.”- The Real Deal

About the Author Courtney E. Martin is a senior correspondent for the American Prospect and an editor of Feministing.com. A 2002 recipient of the Elie Wiesel Prize in Ethics, she is the author of *Perfect Girls*, *Starving Daughters* and coauthor of *The Naked Truth*. Her writing has appeared in *Mother Jones*, *Newsday*, the *Christian Science Monitor*, and on *Huffington Post* and *Alternet*, among other publications. She lives in Brooklyn.

Excerpt. © Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved.

Introduction Save the world. Where were you the first time you heard those three little words? It's a phrase that has slipped off the tongues of hippie parents and well-intentioned teachers with a sort of cruel ease for the last three decades. In Evangelical churches and Jewish summer camps, on *3-2-1 Contact* and *Dora the Explorer*, even on MTV, we (America's youth) have been charged with the vaguest and most ethically dangerous of responsibilities: save the world. But what does it really mean? What has it ever really meant—when uttered by moms and ministers, by zany aunts and debate coaches—to save the whole wildly complex, horrifically hypocritical, overwhelmingly beautiful world? I for one had no idea, but that didn't stop me from internalizing the message. I swallowed those three little words—a trio of radioactive seeds. They looked innocent enough when poured into my palm, but when swallowed, they buried themselves deep in my gut and started to grow. South African novelist J. M. Coetzee wrote, “All creatures come into the world bringing with them the memory of justice.” Shortly thereafter, if all is right, the world breeds in us an outrage over injustice. At first I engaged my outrage like a true-blue white girl from the suburbs. I sent letters to the managers of Arby's and Wendy's in my hometown, begging them to stop using Styrofoam cups in their establishments for the good of our Mother Earth. No response. I volunteered in an assisted living facility, screaming the letter-number combinations for a comatose game of bingo. Though the residents attempted to adjust their hearing aids, my voice was too high to register. They screamed, “What? What did that girl say?” to one another, but everyone just shrugged and smiled at me sympathetically. I worked at the local soup kitchen, dragging wet rags across Formica tables with my eyes diverted straight down, hoping none of the homeless people would actually speak to me. I was frightened by the ones that smelled, but even more frightened by the ones that didn't smell. The ones that looked like me and my mom. The ones that I'd seen walking around downtown and never even known I was supposed to save. I couldn't name it yet, but it was the first experience that called the conventional wisdom at the time—that there were savers and those to be saved, and that these were immutable categories—into question. When Sally Struthers commercials came on, featuring little African babies with distended bellies and flies hovering around their eyes, I felt as if I had been punched in the stomach. I took it personally. After all, I had been charged with saving the world, as had my friends and little bike-riding neighbors. The adults in our lives had drawn a line directly between the suffering of the world—the African babies, the growing hole in the ozone layer, the homeless guy who lay listlessly on the bench outside the library—and our own nascent sense of purpose. Once, agitated with one epiphany or another, I decided I would march around my neighborhood—middle class, suburban, white—and ask people for money for “the poor.” I

found an old glass jar in my playhouse, cleaned it fastidiously, and headed into the suburban wilderness for my first experience of fund-raising. It went pretty well, actually. I was cute at the time—frizzy hair permanently set in a side ponytail, big blue-green eyes with dark, thick eyelashes, and a pair of magenta Converse high-tops (it was the eighties). I think that the smiling neighbors, pried from their daily dose of Oprah, took one look at me, heard my half-formed rationale, and sympathized with the familiar ache in my heart. They dropped quarters, sometimes even dollars, into my jar and sent me on my way. I rounded the block, growing more and more excited about the efficiency of my tactic. By the time I returned to my playhouse, I had over ten dollars. But as I sat on the wooden planks, my legs splayed, and pushed the coins around with my fingertips, a bad feeling started to creep over me. I realized that I had no idea who “the poor” really were. I didn’t know if I had met them before. There were kids at my school with less trendy clothes than all the others, but did this really mean they were poor or just that their parents were strict or stingy? There were those little babies with the bloated bellies on the commercial, but would ten dollars really help them? It seemed like they needed much more. I could find some of the homeless guys near the library, but they might spend the money on drugs (by age eight, I’d already heard this warning many times). And how would I choose which people to give the money to anyway? Who was the most deserving? How could you predict that they’d use it for good? What if you gave money to someone and they were insulted—angry that you assumed they needed it? The questions washed over me like a tidal wave, and suddenly everything about my initial intention—so pure, so heartfelt—was murky. I piled the money back into the jar and stared at it disapprovingly. There is, perhaps, nothing more paralyzing than a good intention suddenly proven naive. I decided to bury the jar in the shadow of my playhouse until I knew what to do with it. If you go to 1718 North Tejon Street in Colorado Springs, you’ll find that it’s still buried there, along with my childhood illusion that “saving the world” is a simple or pure prospect. Read more

[Download to continue reading...](#)

Look inside the book

This is a sample. The number of pages displayed is limited. This is a sample. The number of pages displayed is limited. This is a sample. The number of pages displayed is limited.

[*Download to continue reading...*](#)

The Blue Sweater: Bridging the Gap Between Rich and Poor in an Interconnected World
Women's Movements in the Global Era: The Power of Local Feminisms
Let Your Life Speak: Listening for the Voice of Vocation
Criminal Law and Procedure
The American System of Criminal Justice

What people say about this book

Peter Prichard, "Inspiring individuals creating profoundly positive societal changes. This brilliant book is a must read for anybody who is despairing about the state of our world, looking for real examples of positive changes that are being made, interested in what those under 35 are doing to have a positive impact and finally, anybody who needs a comprehensive listing of organizations and resources that speak to these topics. A major advantage regarding how Courtney E. Martin has written this book is the fact that she is brutally honest about the realities we are facing and the challenges that confront anybody who endeavors to create positive change. This is no fairy tale about simply needing to envision change and it will happen; this is a hard-hitting book full of concrete examples about what real people are doing about real problems. The author states this focus quite clearly in her introduction, "Activism is a daily, even hourly, experiment in dedication, moral courage, and resilience. This book is an exploration of that effort." The author writes about eight individuals and the changes they are trying to make. The stories are quite different regarding the details of each act of activism since she is telling the true stories of a peace activist, prison reentry social worker, veterans' activist, filmmaker, radical philanthropist and others. Because of the diversity of individuals under thirty-five who are honored, each story is a deep learning experience. The author's concluding chapter provides the reader with well thought out ideas about how to move forward with "good failures" broken down into five ways of acting that are practical and relevant. The multiple pages of resources include organizations, readings and films that are comprehensive and diverse in their perspective about the realities of activism. Courtney E. Martin's closing statements were well written and thoughtful, including the following challenge, "Our charge is not to 'save the world,' after all; it is to live in it, flawed and fierce, loving and humble." This book energized me to think more deeply about how to do that in these times of compelling and terrifying change."

Wendy, "I am changed for the better. It was everything I didn't know I needed. My best friend got me this book because I was in a place of feeling that I needed to try and change the world. And it showed me how I can in my own way without being paralyzed by the thought of failing and not doing enough. - Acey (wendy's 24 year old daughter)"

veggielover, "Heartful, honest, invigorating. As someone who drank a lot of the "save the world" cool-aid as a kid in the 90s, and experienced major activist burn out after college, this was a great read. I particularly loved the wisdom shared in the last chapter, framed in a discussion of good failure (as opposed to some simplified list of recommended actions). Inspiring, truthful, wise and helpful book, especially for anyone overwhelmed by socio-econ-political realities."

JillSusan, "I love this book and this author!. I saw Courtney at a retreat in Boston and heard her speak about her inspiring story. I immediately bought the Kindle book and then ordered copies to give away to all my family for holiday gifts. I even "proposed" to her for my son, but darn it, she

has a boyfriend, so that's out. :-) Do yourself a favor. Buy and read this book. Then pass it on to a friend. Or buy them a copy, as I didn't want to part with mine. If you were ever thinking our world is going to hell in a handbasket, you'll find Courtney and her generation are hope for the future."

Manisha Thakor, "Yes You Can... Make The World A Better Place. If you have a nagging feeling inside of you that there are changes you want to see happening in the world... you **MUST** read this fantastic new book by Courtney Martin. One of the driving forces behind today's feminist movement and a committed champion for change - Courtney will literally unleash your inner activist. Her compelling, moving, and insightful portraits in this book of 8 modern day activists make you want to jump off the couch, head out the door, and say - "Enough with my armchair rantings. I'm going to **DO IT ANYWAY** and make a difference with my life!""

Jill, "inspirational and enlightening. Great read. It inspires you to do something and not just know what needs to be done. It was so inspiring to get to get a piece of everyones journey and how they are makeing a difference in so many people's lives."

Discriminating Shopper, "A good tool for your activist toolbox. It kicks into gear about half way through. Will be returning to this for inspiration when our collective problems seem too overwhelming."

The book by Courtney E. Martin has a rating of 5 out of 4.2. 53 people have provided feedback.

Front Cover Copyright Table of Contents First Pages Surprise Me!

Book Information

Language: English

File size: 10310 KB

Simultaneous device usage: Unlimited

Text-to-Speech: Enabled

Screen Reader: Supported

Enhanced typesetting: Enabled

X-Ray: Not Enabled

Word Wise: Enabled

Sticky notes: On Kindle Scribe

Print length: 157 pages

Paperback: 224 pages

Item Weight: 10.4 ounces

Dimensions: 5.5 x 0.6 x 8.5 inches

Hardcover: 964 pages

[DMCA](#)