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# It's Your World--If You Don't Like It, Change It: Activism For Teenagers



## Synopsis

You can change the world. Free Speech. Racism. The Environment. Gay Rights. Bullying and School Safety. Animal Welfare. War. Information about Safe Sex and Birth Control. Free Speech. HIV and AIDS. Women's Rights. These are the issues you care about -- and now you can do something about them. It's Your World will show you how to act on your beliefs, no matter what they are, and make a difference. The information inside includes: • The basics of activism • Activism projects and outreach ideas • The 5-minute activist • How to be an activist at home, at school, and in your community • Stories from teenagers who have taken on the world -- and won • Resources including books, movies, and Web sites • and much, much more Whether at home, in school, or in your community, you have the power and the ability to create change, even if you aren't old enough to vote. Don't wait until you're eighteen to flex your political muscles -- start right now!

## Book Information

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Age Range: 12 and up

Grade Level: 7 and up

## Customer Reviews

Grade 9 Up – Animal rights, racism, war protest, AIDS, school violence and bullying, women's rights, and promoting tolerance are among the topics covered here. Halpin provides basic information about each one and then makes myriad suggestions for action at home, in the community, the "five-minute activist," etc. The ideas are easy to implement. Each section is

accompanied by authentic accounts of student experiences, including successes as well as difficulties, in trying to change their school or community or influence a world issue, such as the war in Iraq. Many of the ideas are easily doable. In school violence the suggestion is made to set up "bully boxes" so that students can anonymously and comfortably report incidents of harassment. The discussions end with an annotated list of Web sites, books, and movies while the book concludes with a seven-page resource list for general activism. This is an important book that will empower any young adult who would like to make a difference.

Joanne K. Cecere,  
Monroe-Woodbury High School, Central Valley, NY Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

Gr. 7-12. With a wealth of practical detail and hands-on, up-to-date information, this chatty resource will be in demand by teens who want to become activists. The issues are of crucial interest, encompassing everything from the environment, war, civil liberties, and racism to gay rights, birth control, and women's rights. Each chapter includes how to get involved at home, at school, and in the community, and in compelling sidebars, individual teens speak out about their activism and, sometimes, about the harassment they experienced because of it. Halpin states clearly, "Don't get involved with anyone who is breaking the law," but she is just as adamant about the legal right to protest. Unfortunately, there's some careless editing (thet for they, etc.); the colloquial style occasionally seems to trivialize (Gandhi is "famous for his fasts and good works"); and sources for some crucial statistics are absent. But for the many teens who see basic rights under threat, this is an important resource. Halpin's suggestions, coupled with the Web sites and hotlines in each chapter, will help kids make a difference.

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"We can change the world, Rearrange the world, It's dying--To get better."--Graham Nash,  
"Chicago"

"Every year in America, more than four million companion animals are needlessly put to death in shelters." "A full-time working woman [in America] earns only seventy-three cents for every dollar earned by a man." "On average, an American high school student hears twenty-five anti-gay remarks every day." "Don't like something that's going on? Then change it!"

I was joyed to help ferry our budding tenth grade activist and a group of her peers out to the rugged ocean coast recently to take part in a Clean Up Day. There is nothing as a parent that I'd like more than to see my kids grow up to be people who are trying to make this place better. Katie is now the same age I was when I participated in a high school clean up project on the first Earth Day. And I was living back there on

the East coast when, on a summer Southampton morning in 1976, I wandered into Neil's house. Arthur was already there, and our favorite radio station, WPKN, was cranked up on the stereo. But when I walked in that morning, Arthur was all teary-eyed as he began blubbering over and over to me, "They just can't do that! They just can't do that!" It took twenty minutes of listening to 'PKN before they repeated the announcement that had unhinged my friend: The Board of Trustees of the University of Bridgeport had decided to take active control of "our" radio station and turn it into an NPR affiliate. Because I was (am, and forever shall remain) an activist/troublemaker/pain-in-the-butt, I told Arthur that he needed to immediately write letters in protest. And to this day I still cannot understand the response by Arthur which was to do absolutely nothing but moan and mourn. No matter what I said, I could not get him to write even one simple letter. But I did. I wrote to Congressman Otis Pike and told him that WPKN was a unique and vital source of alternative news and commentary for his constituents, and that the source was about to be silenced. A few days later the announcements of the impending change at the station ceased without fanfare or explanation. I then received a written response from Congressman Pike which included a copy of the letter sent to him by the head of the FCC who, at the Congressman's request, had inquired of the University what was going on with the radio station and was told that, oh no, nothing was going on. A year later, as an antinuclear activist, I had the opportunity to visit the WPKN studio to speak on the air about solar energy and conservation technologies. I brought along the letters that Congressman Pike had sent me, and was treated like a prince by the station manager when he saw that letter. He told me that he had never learned why the Trustees had abandoned their plans as abruptly as they had adopted them. And thus I learned that one young person can make all the difference. "Right now in the United States, twenty-six percent of the population is under eighteen. That's more than seventy million people. Imagine what it would be like if you and everyone around you got to tell the world what you think. Don't wait until you're old enough to vote to take action. Starting today, starting right now, you can make your voice heard on the issues that matter to you." IT'S YOUR WORLD--IF YOU DON'T LIKE IT, CHANGE IT is both a blueprint for creating massive numbers of teen pains-in-the-butt and a resource manual that provides the information teens need to go out and change the world. The book is compiled in a teen-friendly format with dozens of success stories penned by teen activists set on the outside edge of the right hand pages, side by side with the nuts and bolts (and websites) that provide the necessary tools for kids to instigate their own changes at their homes, in their schools, and out in the real world. The book is divided into sections on Helping Animals, Fighting Racism, Saving the Environment, Ending War, Fighting the Spread of HIV/AIDS, Stopping School Violence and Bullying, Defending Women's Rights, Protecting Civil Rights and Civil Liberty, and

Promoting Tolerance Toward Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Questioning Youth. There are annotated book lists, organization lists, and piles of ideas that can be utilized immediately. I don't expect that a large percentage of the book's young readers will grow up to be the nutjob that I've long become: A long-haired fanatic who'd happily tell preschoolers why he didn't eat "dead, chopped up animals," who always conned his own kids into choosing subjects like Ruby Bridges, Gandhi, and Rachel Carson when they had to do a report for school, who still stands his ground on drying clothes on a line in the sun and refuses to own a dryer, who has stood with a sign on a hundred street corners actively and vocally supporting peace, Project Billboard, alternative energy, gay marriage, Choice, gun control, affirmative action, school libraries, No Name Calling, a Skateboard Park for our community's kids, and probably has a decades-long FBI file to prove it all. (The book tells you how to obtain a copy of that file through the Freedom of Information Act. Yes, I'll be submitting my request shortly.) IT'S YOUR WORLD--IF YOU DON'T LIKE IT, CHANGE IT, ACTIVISM FOR TEENAGERS will be music to the ears of teens who are disturbed about the state of affairs that confront them in their lives, and are under the mistaken impression that there is nothing they can do about it. And since "Being a Teen" is more often than not synonymous with "Being Disturbed," this book theoretically has quite a large potential audience.

delivery on time receive it next day . For the affordable price, has a fine sharpness and durability to it! as a gift to my colleague, very good . very patient and helpful.

I'm glad to see a book like this available for teens, because it's never too early to teach Americans that they have the power, and duty, to resist. As an employee of the federal government, I know the devil very well. Big Brother whispers sweet lies in the ears of the people while scheming how to enslave them. For example, the IRS offers taxpayers faster refunds if they give their bank account number for direct deposit. Is this because Big Brother loves the people and wants them to have their money faster? Don't be naïve. The government wants people's banking information for levy sources, to seize their money right out of their accounts. And millions unwittingly complied to get their check a week faster. Never trust the government; if it seems to be helping you, you can bet you're being scammed! It's good that a book like this is targeting the next generation because mine is lost. We drank the poison, believed the lies, put the handcuffs on ourselves. The next generation has to be the one to fight back. Our banks, insurance companies, and auto industries have been nationalized in the past year. Energy and health care are up next. Is the government nationalizing health care because they love us? If you believe that, see the above IRS example. There is always

a sinister, self-serving motive behind everything Uncle Sam does. Read between the lies. The government wants to be everyone's insurance provider so it can have access to our medical records, to know every secret detail about you! Also, if they are responsible for paying your doctor bills, they can control your behavior. They have to protect their investment after all. What you eat, drink, how you spend your time can all be controlled because they have to pay to fix you if you damage yourself. No smoking-causes cancer, no drinking-bad for your liver, no fast food-causes obesity, no cell phones-cause brain cancer, no sports-too many injuries, no driving cars, or riding bikes and motorcycles-too many accidents...get the picture? Politicians (who are supposed to work for us) think you're too stupid to make your own life decisions, so they want to make them for you! If government totally controlling your life excites you, don't buy this book. What do you need to rebel against anyway? You're voluntarily enslaved already. But if you found the above paragraph chilling, I recommend you read this book and learn how to legally fight the government and protect their rights; because if you won't fight for them, the politicians will cheerfully take them away. Can we win, or will we be enslaved for our own good? Depends on how informed we are and if we're willing to fight back.

In a world filled with fear and uncertainty, teens need to get involved in stopping the violence, fear and global destruction. This wonderful book allows teens to get involved in saving their world step by step in a good, non-violent way.

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