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WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO CHANGE THE WORLD?

Grades: 5 and up

Time: 30-60 minutes

Materials: Black/white board & chalk/markers; sample story (see below); scrap paper & pens/pencils; “Power of One” film clip (see below); enough copies of Action Slips for each group (see below)

Relevant Subjects: Social Studies, Language Arts, and, with modifications, Science, History, and Health

Preparation: Write “What does it take to change the world?” on the black/white board.

1. Read or tell participants a story of one person who changed the world. (Be sure the story is appropriate to the age group. See suggestions and sample below.)
2. Pass out scrap paper to participants and ask them to answer the question written on the board. Collect their responses. Share sample responses.
3. Show participants the short film “The Power of One.” (www.oneearth.org)
4. Divide students into groups by general topics (examples: human rights, animals, environment, media influence, etc.). Give each group an Action Slip with the following on it:
 - A. List action ideas that you could do within your community to make a positive difference for this group or topic.
 - B. Create a story (like the one shared) in which the members of your group take action and change the world for the better.

Alternative: For the second item, you may wish to have **each person** write a fictional autobiography about how s/he changed the world.

5. Have each group present its list and stories.

6. Hand out the following quote to each person (preferably on something reused or recycled, always driving home the point of connectivity):

“The world needs dreamers and the world needs doers. But above all, the world needs dreamers who do.” – Sarah Ban Breathnach

Extension: Invite participants to learn more about their own community’s service needs. Provide them with resources for opportunities.

Sample Stories:

For younger participants, you might want to tell/read stories such as that of:

- Ruby Bridges
- Iqbal Masih
- Craig Kielburger

For older participants, you might want to tell/read stories such as that of:

- Julia Butterfly Hill
- Wangari Maathai
- Paul Rusesabagina
- Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Jr., and Mother Teresa are mentioned in the “Power of One” clip.

If you need additional ideas, you might also try:

Giraffe Heroes Project

http://www.giraffe.org/hero_list.html

My Hero Directory

<http://www.myhero.com/myhero/go/directory/index.asp>

Remember that the goal of the story is to demonstrate how one “regular” person was able to change the world for the better by taking action for what s/he believed in.

We’ve included a sample story below (most appropriate for older students):

There was “a young Irish woman, less than twenty, with no political background, who worked at the check-out counter in a large supermarket in Dublin. She was aware of the apartheid regime in South Africa, and the fact that the black people there had called on consumers not to buy South African products. Because her store carried South African fruit she decided to refuse to sell it. At work she rang up all the other goods but not the products from South Africa. Customers complained, managers came. She was fired. By the end of the day all the women in the store were refusing to sell South African fruit.

“The strife escalated, with threats of mass stand-downs and workers in other supermarkets coming out in support of the women who refused to sell the racist fruit. The issue was covered in the press and on television and many people in Ireland learn[ed] about the real cost of cheap apartheid fruit. Eventually the company agreed to stop selling South African fruit, the young woman got her job back and in the process, the whole community had learn[ed] about the power of one person’s commitment to act in solidarity with those who are oppressed.” – from Katrina Shields, “Making a Difference.” *In the Tiger’s Mouth*. New Society Publishers, 1994.

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