

The Power of One



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Welcome: Why What You Do Matters

Everyone makes an impact - whether they are acting intentionally or not. Everyone is always making an impact on one another. Your actions, my actions, and the actions of others are influencing the world. What you do matters in more ways than you may realize, and your efforts may create chaos or lead to grand achievements. The key is being intentional with your actions.

There is a principle of chaos theory called the ***Butterfly Effect***. It states that a minute first action can cause a reaction of epic proportions. The metaphorical example is that the simple movement of a butterfly's wings over time can cause a wave that results in a hurricane.

This is an illustration of how important even the smallest of actions are in the grand scheme of the world. As someone living on this planet, you too have an effect everywhere you go. What you do and how you do it matters. You matter. You are as vital to the success of the human race as the most powerful influencer you can imagine. Have you ever considered this?

The set of people and places where you make the most impact is called your ***sphere of influence***. This is the where your presence is felt the most. Your sphere likely includes your family, work, and the local community.

How are you making that impact? Consider this:

- How you parent your children makes an impact
- How you manage your marriage makes an impact
- How you engage as a son, daughter, sister, or brother makes an impact
- What you contribute to your workforce makes an impact
- What you create makes an impact
- Your wisdom makes an impact
- How you vote makes an impact
- How you spend your time and money makes an impact
- How you pour yourself into others makes an impact

I could go on and on, but you're starting to see my point. In all that you do, you matter. How you do things matters. It is all tied together. This may seem like a big responsibility - and it is - but it isn't too big when you break it down into manageable bits and pieces, in all the different areas of your life.

The most important thing to realize is that you have influence and impact wherever you go, and by being intentional, you can leave your mark on this world in a favorable and meaningful way.

Change Starts With You

Causing change and making a difference starts with one person and their behavior: You. That knowledge can feel both overwhelming and empowering. On one hand, putting your focus on yourself can feel easier than believing the whole world must change for something great to happen. On the other, it can feel like a huge mountain to climb all by yourself.

Take heart; it's great news to learn that the best and easiest way to make a change in the world is by making changes in yourself first. Being responsible for your own actions is plenty to manage on the way to influencing others.

When tragedy strikes, there are usually two reactions: depression, or an urge to make certain this doesn't happen again. Two people can face the same loss and have radically different reactions. One person may fall into deep depression and retreat from life, and the other may use their issue as a starting point for making a difference.

People tend to make their biggest impacts in areas that mean a lot to them. A child who struggled with not having enough food to eat growing up might work as an adult to end hunger. Someone who didn't have access to education might spend their time promoting literacy.

There are as many unique ways to make a change as there are people on this planet. Let's look at ways you can make an impact. Ask yourself these easy questions:

- What is something I feel strongly about?
- In what ways do I naturally give my time and my resources to help others?
- What am I gifting of myself in my relationship to my community?
- In what area of my character do I receive the most compliments?
- What events have happened in my life to create space for concern and empathy for others?
- What are the things I know how to do that can make life easier for others?

Asking yourself these simple questions will get you thinking about what matters to you, and what personal and unique experiences you have had that can help you make an impact. You will realize that you already have the tools in your

arsenal to do something, somewhere, that will ripple forth and make a change for the better. Move forward with confidence that you can make an impact, and that no matter how insignificant you feel in the grand scheme of things, you are vital and very much needed.

The Power of A Smile For A Stranger

In 1993, Jack Canfield and Mark Victor Hansen released the mega-hit Chicken Soup for The Soul. This book struck a nerve with a world that was hurting and needed to connect with stories that created hope for those who felt hopeless and nurtured people who were feeling lost and abandoned.

The book was a compilation of true and true-ish stories that inspired readers through accounts of people making a difference when it mattered most. One story was titled “A Simple Gesture”, penned by John W. Schlatter. In his story, he describes Bill and Mark. Bill was a nerdy guy who was often bullied. Mark encountered Bill on a day when Bill was planning to kill himself. Mark smiled at Bill, and that gesture helped Bill feel the compassion and sense of being seen that he needed in order to stop his plan and consider an alternative to suicide. All because of a smile.

When we encounter people for the first time, we have no idea what is going on in their lives - just as they have no idea what is going on in ours. One of the nicest things we can do for them is to simply smile at them. The act of smiling and giving out that social energy releases endorphins in our body designed to make us feel good. The experience of receiving a smile can change our mood, our perspectives, and our self-image.

What does a simple smile convey?

I see you.

You are accepted.

I like you.

You matter to me.

Smiling is one of the fundamental ways we bond as human beings. From birth, we use smiling as a way to connect with our babies. We also wait with anticipation to see that first real smile back, an indication we are making an impact on our children’s learning. To know that they see us, and they like what they see.

Try this exercise for a day, and see if you notice the impact it has on you and those around you.

Choose a day when you are going to be in your community, running errands or crossing paths with multiple people. Make a point to look each person you see in the eye and smile. Don't worry if they have their head down, just look at them and smile. Chances are, they will feel your energy and look up.

When you see a clerk in a store, smile at them. Wait for the smile back, and greet them pleasantly. For all you know, the person before you could have zapped their energy and left them feeling empty. Your attention and a pleasant smile can refuel and recharge them.

Notice how you feel when someone responds to your smile with one of their own. Notice how it feels when they don't. Chances are, once you feel the impact your smile has on others, it will become a regular part of your non-verbal communication skill set.

Let's Talk About The Ripple Effect

Have you ever thrown a pebble into a pond? Did you notice the ripples? One small plop in the pristine surface causes waves that get larger and larger and reach farther and farther.

It's the same with your impact. You may not think you make a big difference personally or affect a lot of people, but what you do ripples out from you. You touch the lives of a few people, who have their own impact on the lives of others, and so on.

We all exist as a combination of the many aspects of our lives. We are both parents and children; we are business owners, community members, and much more. In each area of our lives, we have opportunities to make a small impact that ripples outward. Doing small things creates big results, and those results can ripple back to us.

Here are some ideas for making a small impact that causes a ripple in different areas of your life:

Family- Doing small activities with your family members strengthens the bond between you and forms habits of togetherness. Taking your child on a parent-child date can go on to impact future generations as your child grows and passes on that tradition.

Business- Whether you own your own business or work for another company, you can create opportunities to give compliments to your staff or co-workers. Try leaving anonymous notes on their desk highlighting something positive that you've noticed about their performance. By lifting their spirits and helping them feel known, you can have an impact on their attitude at work and how they feel when they arrive home at the end of the day.

Community- Being a mentor in your community is an easy way to cause a ripple effect. Pouring your energy into a child or a young mother who could use your guidance can change not only their lives, but the lives of their children as well. You can be the reason they find solutions to their puzzles that otherwise wouldn't have happened without your support.

It's normal to feel like the world might so big and the amount of need so massive that we just can't make a difference, but it simply isn't so. Just like a little bit of invested money grows exponentially with compound interest, your small investment in someone else's life will yield great returns.

What small gestures can you make to cause a ripple in the lives of others? A tip for the barista? An appreciative note to your child's teacher on a Tuesday? Baked goods for your shy neighbor? Do something small, and watch the ripples grow wider and wider.

Become Aware Of The Impact You Have

Most of our lives we move around on autopilot, not knowing from moment to moment the impact we have on others. Did we say thank you to the barista when we went through the drive-through? Most of the time we simply aren't conscious of the impression we are making.

Becoming self-aware of our contributions to others is an important step in learning to maximize our impact, and to make doing great things possible - no matter where we are. Let's look at some ways we may already be making an impact that we haven't considered.

Influencing Others- People are always observing our behavior and listening to what we say. We are influencing those around us in ways we may not have considered. Your encouragement and positive comments can make an impact on the lives of the people in your sphere of influence.

Being Of Service- Doing things for others is part of being a member of a family or a community, but we may not realize how much our acts of service make an impact on others' lives. Helping someone in a time of need, or being a dependable person that others can count on, is not only admirable - it builds trust and boosts self-esteem for those we serve.

Providing Solutions- Are you the "Answer Man" in your family or business? Do you love solving problems, and finding a way through when things seem stuck? As a problem-solver, you can be a great resource to those who feel stuck in a situation.

Creating A Safe Place- Are you a comforter by nature? Are you able to be the calm in the storm? Creating a safe place for people when they are feeling out of sorts is an important way to help others. Having someone trustworthy to lean on in a time of need makes an unsurpassed impact on a person's wellbeing.

These are only a few of the ways that we can make an impact. There are countless others to discover, and there is a great way to find out how you make your best impact doing things that come naturally: *journaling*.

Journal your activities for two weeks and keep track of the ways you are making an impact on the people in your life. Pay close attention to your habits. Watch for

the evidence of your impact. Did you notice someone smile back at you today? Did you intervene when someone was being rude to the clerk in the store? What activities do you participate in weekly, and how much does your presence contribute to their success?

Your valuable contributions to the world around you are undeniable. You sometimes may not notice the influence you have, because you are so focused on living your life. Nonetheless, you are making an impact each and every day. With some deliberate intent, you can become aware of your impact and learn to recognize its value.

Can One Person Really Make A Difference?

In a word- Yes!

One solitary person can make a world of difference. The power of one is undeniable. Looking at history shows us a long list of men and women who single-handedly launched a movement, made a change, or took a stand in a way that made a difference that we feel today.

In this day and age of social media, blogging, Youtube, and much more, one person's voice can literally change the world. As a matter of fact, it has never been easier to create a platform to share your unique voice, start a movement, and rally others behind you.

Here are some influencers who single-handedly changed their world:

Joan of Arc helped lead France to its independence from English conquest.

Rosa Parks took a stand against segregation and made her impact on the civil rights movement when she refused to give up her seat on a Montgomery, Alabama bus.

Nelson Mandela was an unforgettable leader in the movement to end Apartheid in South Africa.

Princess Diana helped to destigmatize diseases like AIDS and became an influential force as a humanitarian.

Malala Yousafzai is a Pakistani activist for girls' right to receive an education.

Chances are if you could speak to each of these difference-makers you'd discover some things in common. Likely, none of them thought of themselves as "unique" or "out of the ordinary" when they were first called to the causes that they are known for. They might tell you that they didn't intend to make such a difference in the beginning, or that they never felt what they did was anything anyone else wouldn't do given the same options. They would be humble and passionate about their unique areas of interest and would share that they simply wanted to do their part to help.

When one person takes a stand, and steps out in faith, frustration, or whatever it is that motivates them, they don't know whether they will be successful. It isn't about betting on a sure thing. They simply do the next necessary thing, and the path unfolds before them. The resources they need, the connections, and the story all come together as they walk things through. What started with one person's actions becomes a community or tribe working together for the same cause.

Never doubt the ability of one person to make a difference. The difference you make may go totally unnoticed, or it can be front and center on the news. Either way, don't deny yourself - or the community you can create - the benefit of your impact. Take a leap and step out onto the path towards making your impact.

Looking Back – Who Have You Influenced Already?

Have you ever attended a retirement dinner or funeral? These events are marked by speeches, given by grateful people recalling the impact and influence the retiree or deceased person had on them. In the case of retirement speeches, the retiree gets to hear their accolades and the influence that they had on those around them. In the case of the deceased, there is hope that the stories of gratitude can transcend the here-and-now to be felt despite the separation of death.

Looking back, who have you influenced? Have you ever been told about the impact you had on someone else? Have you kept a record of the times you've volunteered, or actively tried to make a change - even in a small way?

You have likely had a greater impact than you realize. Take a moment and ask yourself some questions:

- Have you ever been honored by a group organization for your contributions?
- Have you been written about in a newspaper or magazine concerning your success in business or the community?
- Have you ever been interviewed about your work, your art, or your ministry?
- Do people refer to you as a good example of certain traits and values?
- Have you volunteered for your church, synagogue, or a community project?
- With whom have you shared your knowledge of a skill or trade?
- Have you ever received a personalized "thank you" for something you did for them that made an impact?
- Have you written a blog post, book, or other work that someone told you "changed their life"?
- Have you donated your time or resources to a cause that you felt led to support?

Chances are, you can think of times you've made a difference. Even if you later forgot about it, it still counts! Make a list of the times you can recall, and reflect on

how it felt to be able to have that experience. Think about the people you've had an impact on, and how they have benefited from you taking time for them. Even if you originally had no intention of making a difference, chances are that you did - and that should feel great.

You don't have to wait until you retire, or - heaven forbid - pass away, to discover that you've made an impact on the people around you. Own up to your greatness, and celebrate how your selfless actions and the Power of One can fulfill some of the world's many needs.

What You Do Can Have A Compound Effect

Did you know that investing a small amount of money in the bank at a young age could make you a millionaire by middle age? Yep. Through the power of compounding interest, your initial investment - though small - can eventually give you a return that far exceeds what you first put into it.

Making a difference is the same.

Your small and consistent contributions have a compounding effect that surpasses your initial effort to make a lasting and meaningful impact.

Let's look at some everyday people who took a step out in faith and in service to others to create a legacy that we enjoy today:

Eunice Kennedy Shriver is the founder of the Special Olympics. What started out in 1962 as a backyard summer camp for people with intellectual disabilities went on to become a global movement. Shriver's small contribution compounded over time to surpass her expectations and even her lifetime. Today, the foundation is over fifty years old and has touched the lives of thousands and thousands over multiple generations.

In 1985, colorectal surgeon Dr. Gordy Klatt wanted to raise awareness and funds for a local cancer charity. As a one-man team, he walked a track for 24 hours continuously, raising \$27,000.00 and the awareness of the need for cancer support. Since Dr. Klatt's inaugural fundraiser, Relay For Life has gone on to become the largest fundraising event for cancer in the world and is celebrated by over 4 million people in 20 countries.

At some point, these people, who had a heart for the developmentally disabled and those living with the effects of cancer, began to take action in a very small way. Their actions sparked interest and support, and eventually compounded to such an extent that foundations were born that employed people, served people, and filled a need. Isn't that amazing?

Ever heard of Ray Kroc? Though he wasn't the founder of McDonald's, he did bring the genius to the table that catapulted that small hamburger stand into a franchise that has served billions and billions since the 1950s.

How about Colonel Sanders? He founded Kentucky Fried Chicken with one recipe. The work of that one man with his one recipe grew exponentially until the KFC brand was known worldwide as "finger-lickin' good."

Both Kroc and Sanders took small steps from humble beginnings and triggered a compound effect that we enjoy today. Your favorite hamburger or chicken leg is proof that one person's actions can end up feeding people all over the world.

How Making A Difference Benefits You

There is no doubt that working to make a difference can benefit others. That's easy math for sure: one person making an effort + multiple people receiving the benefits of that effort = countless people who are now in a better situation.

While most people are initially motivated to help others for selfless reasons, there are undeniable benefits that come from the effort.

Helping others makes you feel happier and helps you live a fulfilling life. There are some who believe our purpose on Earth is to serve in a way that expands the Kingdom - or the universe depending on your perspective. Whether or not that is true, it feels wonderful to know that your actions caused something good to happen in the world. To know that, because of your effort, someone somewhere is now better off. Congratulations!

There are many types of motivation. Wanting positive reinforcement, avoiding negative consequences, our intrinsic motivation, and other forces work together to motivate us to act. No matter our reason for taking action, the benefits can be rewarding and more impactful than you may realize.

Here's how making a difference benefits you:

- **Creating a legacy-** Making a difference can oftentimes lead to an impact that creates a legacy in your name. People come to remember who you are and what you did in the name of the greater good. Pouring into something bigger than yourself or something you create that stems from you can make an impact on generations down the line.
- **Giving back-** Sometimes your way of making a difference comes from giving back when you have received. There is wonderful healing and satisfaction that comes from paying forward what you have received in your lifetime.
- **Restoring your faith-** When we have lost something precious, it feels good to regain our faith in God, humanity, or our community. Being able to make a difference can help you recover from that sense of loss or abandonment.

- **Easing depression-** When we are suffering greatly, we can refresh our energy by shifting our focus somewhere other than ourselves, and use impactful activity to surface from the depths of depression.
- **Memorializing someone you love-** Being able to perceive a message or a meaning in the lives of those we love and have lost is especially gratifying. Helping their legacy and memory live on is a wonderful benefit.
- **Creating opportunities-** Sometimes your efforts blossom to create an opportunity for you and for others to gain employment or resources that would not have been available without your contribution.

Choosing to make a difference is a win-win for everyone involved. Those who receive support from others are blessed, just as those who take the risk or step out and make a difference in their lives. Be assured that your efforts to serve others will come to result in great personal benefit.

The Power Of Leading By Example

One of the most profound areas of contribution is through leadership. Whether you are an army of one or commanding legions, someone must take the lead.

"We can't all be heroes, because someone has to sit on the curb and clap as they go by."- Will Rogers

It may seem this way sometimes, but in fact, we are all leaders to some extent or another. You may lead your family, lead a group activity, or lead a team at work. You might lead the way in innovation, or in teaching new generations the cultures of the past. In one way or another, you are a leader.

The biggest influence you have as a leader is the example you set for others. People pay less attention to what you say, and more attention to what you do. By example, you are making an impact all the time.

Think back on your school and work history. Who were the most influential teachers and bosses that you've had? Some influenced you by showing you what you don't want to be like as a leader, but the ones that made the biggest impact on you were likely the teachers and managers who brought out the best in you and taught you through their own example.

What are some character traits of a great leader?

- ✓ Compassionate
- ✓ Ethical
- ✓ Honest
- ✓ Dedicated
- ✓ Fair

What skills can great leaders teach through their example?

- ✓ Tactical skills
- ✓ Empowerment
- ✓ Dedication
- ✓ Mastery of a craft

How do great leaders lead through their example?

- ✓ Modeling appropriate behavior

- ✓ Teaching complex concepts
- ✓ Walking the walk
- ✓ Self-Sacrifice
- ✓ Championing their cause

Your example has great power to shape whatever situation you find yourself in. You have the power to influence those looking to you in ways you can't imagine. You can help build someone's character, teach them a skill, and encourage their self-worth just by doing what you do best.

A great rule of thumb to keep in mind is that we are never unobserved. The world is always responding to our presence. Do your best to act from a place of integrity, and think about your influence wherever you are. Do what you can to be mindful of the fact that someone, somewhere, is looking up to you and being influenced by your behavior. Even in the smallest of ways, your solitary existence is making an important impact on the world.

Whether you are the leader of a Fortune 500 company or the commander of your household, you are a leader and have influence wherever you go. Be a good example to those looking up to you, and walk with confidence knowing that you are helping to mold and shape those you lead as they watch you.

Mother Teresa – An Example Of The Power Of One

Mother Teresa, also known as *Saint Teresa of Calcutta*, was a Roman Catholic nun who dedicated her life in service to others. Born in Albania and living most of her life in India, she is widely known for her humanitarian efforts to care for people with HIV/AIDS, leprosy, and tuberculosis. She set up food kitchens and housing for the poor and the medically afflicted.

It won't take long to find a meme or a quote regarding Mother Teresa circulating social media that has inspired the masses. Her kindness and love for humanity has inspired nations. Quotes like "*Not all of us can do great things. But we can do small things with great love*" strike a chord and inspire others who wonder if one person or a small act of kindness can make an impact. Her example shows us that we can.

Mother Teresa lived a life of sacrifice as she worked to serve others. She moved from her homeland and never saw her mother again after the age of 18. She lived in foreign nations far from her familiar culture and forfeited most of the comforts that many people enjoyed. Her commitment was life-long, and impacted more people than we will ever truly know.

She was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1979, and Canonized at the 5th anniversary of her death in 2016. She is now recognized by the Catholic church as a Saint. *What a legacy!*

Despite her sole focus on others, she was not without her critics. She has been criticized for some of her methods, and the housing and services she provided were oftentimes considered below standard. Still, she persevered. She never let anything stand between her and her assignment to "love the unloved". Likely she responded to her critics with love, as evident in this quote: "*If you judge people, you have no time to love them.*"

Mother Teresa lived in service her whole life. She didn't retire and spend her golden years resting and living off her investments. Instead, she served alongside those who needed it, even when she became frail herself. She serves as a wonderful example of how one person can make an impact in a focused

area of need, and have that impact be recognized world-wide. Simply by caring, loving, and providing solace to those in need, she will be celebrated long after her death through the power of storytelling, social media, and her great example.

Gandhi – An Example Of The Power Of One

Gandhi is a man known for using methods of nonviolent civil disobedience to influence change. Born in 1869, in a time and place where oppressive rule and colonial taxes made it nearly impossible for his people to live, he rallied his countrymen and used peaceful protest to make change.

While living in occupied South Africa, he first used nonviolent civil disobedience to successfully petition for civil rights for the Indian community in that region. He later inspired nations with his tactics, and changed the ways other people influence change in their own nations.

He was the leader of the Indian Independence Movement, which ultimately led to the restoration of India's rulership to its people from occupation by Great Britain. One man with one goal led a force against a much larger government, and changed the course of governance forever.

Gandhi's life wasn't without trials for his efforts - he experienced poverty, imprisonment, and ultimately assassination - but throughout his life he was a sought-after man for his wisdom and world-wide influence.

Gandhi didn't limit his social impact to politics. He also had a passion for other topics related to his faith, like vegetarianism and health. He applied his passions to all his areas of interest in ways that could educate and serve. Whatever he knew, he made sure to teach. He was an author and a speaker, and could command a room despite his soft-spoken manner.

Gandhi, like Mother Teresa and other influencers, was one man with a passion that drove him to seek justice and live a life of leadership and influence. He also shared the things he loved that had little to do with social justice. He just shared information knowing this truth - when the student is ready, the teacher appears.

"Be the change you want to see in the world" is one of his most famous quotes. This should easily inspire us to simply focus on the areas of interest we naturally have and gives us a guidepost to where to focus our own influence. Do you love vegetarianism? Make an impact there. Do you want to see justice in society? Go for it! No matter your interest, you can be like Gandhi and make an impact.

Who Has Made A Difference In Your Life?

In large and small ways, many people have made a difference in your life. Our parents are our first influencers, and some of your earliest memories can be activities or moments you spent with your family. As you grew and integrated more into your community, a broader range of people made an impact on your life.

Over time, the range of people making an impact on your life likely comes to include people younger than you, as well as older. The expression “out of the mouth of babes” speaks to the ability of new generations to make a difference with their own brand of wisdom and influence.

Think of the people who’ve made an impact on you: often with just a small act of kindness, some words of wisdom, or a conversation they’ve long forgotten.

People like:

- Family
- Teachers
- Church members
- Mentors
- Managers
- Community members

Do you have a cherished memory of someone who affected you in a profound way? You have the capacity to make that same impact on someone else. Small gestures often have a bigger impact than you realize.

Consider this:

Statistics show that human connection is often a catalyst to end periods of depression. Humans are designed to be in relationship with one another. Despite this need, many people find themselves isolated and feeling alone. This disconnection can manifest in mental health and self-esteem issues. Even people who seem like they “have it all together” are often struggling in some area of their life.

Start a conversation with someone who sits alone at lunchtime in the staff room. Ask them about their family and their interests. Your attention and kindness could help bridge an important gap between their current situation and the hope they need to rise up from a difficult place. Simply showing interest in them can be all that it takes to combat the negativity in their lives.

Take a moment to think about the people who have made an impact on your life. Recall the different times that someone's actions really made a difference in your mood, or the outcome of the situation at hand. Did they do something grand, or something small and seemingly insignificant? Spending time reflecting on who has been important in your life and what they did for you will do a few things - including make you smile and encourage gratitude.

After your reflection, make a conscious decision to do small things for people in your life. Take your time to engage, uplift, help, or encourage those you love most.

- Take someone out for a meal and conversation
- Help an elderly neighbor with their lawn care
- Help a single mom with babysitting
- Teach a child to bake cookies
- Mentor
- Tutor

Thinking about the people who have made a difference in our lives helps remind us how easy it is to make an impact. Being in gratitude for their gestures, large and small, makes it easy to be of service to others with our own kindnesses.

You Don't Have To Make A Big Impact To Make A Difference

Everyone loves a grand gesture. On Social Media platforms, GoFundMe drives are shared that can raise insane amounts of money in a short amount of time. We've all seen reality shows that highlight men and women making a difference and reward them in grand style. There is no doubt that it's fun and amazing to be generous on a large scale - but that isn't the only way to make an impact.

You don't have to make a big impact to make a difference. You don't have to go broke giving, or occupy the spotlight. To do small things is valuable and vital in every way. The ability to make some progress filling a need, or to spend small bits of your time all matter. No matter who you are or what your limitations might be: you can affect change, be part of a solution, and do your part for a cause that matters to you.

Let's look at some practical ways you can use your time to make a difference:

- Walk dogs at a shelter
- Rock babies in the NICU at the hospital
- Work for a candidate whose platform you believe in during campaign season
- Provide free services for the elderly

Here are some small ways to invest in making a difference:

- Make small monthly contributions to a homeless shelter
- Buy food for an animal rescue program
- Pledge a missionary's overseas journey
- Support agencies that send items to troops

These are some great ways to use your talents in a small way:

- Tutor students and the community college
- Coach a sports team
- Teach a skill to elderly residents at a skilled nursing facility
- Volunteer your talent at the local community center

Small investments in time, money, or talent are easy and effective. It doesn't take much to leave your mark and lighten the load for a cause or need that is out

there. Be assured that not everyone can make large donations of time, money, and energy. Most organizations rely on people who have a wide variety of giving options. Even if your time and resources are limited, they are still in high demand.

Even when you are giving to your family, it isn't always about quantity. It's about the quality of your investment with them. Something as small as including a note in your child's lunch can make a positive impact on them. A voicemail on your spouse's phone can brighten their day. Sending a card to a dear friend for no reason could mean more than you may know.

Challenge yourself to do one small thing each day this week to make an impact, and witness how much reaction you get compared to your effort. Be someone who cares, take interest in those around you, and notice the impact you have.

Small Consistent Actions Add Up To Big Changes

When trying to build lean muscle, the best exercise plan is to use small weights consistently over time. These small muscle movements, repeated over time, create muscles that aren't bulky but have strength and beauty all their own.

In the same way, our consistent actions add up to big changes over time. Doing small things regularly will yield big results. The good news is, small things are easy to accomplish and take very little time or commitment. Some even require zero forethought and work together with what you already do every day.

Here are three types of action where consistency adds up:

Kindness- Make a gesture of love towards your spouse every day in front of your children. These small acts of kindness and affection will make an impact when they are making decisions about their own relationships. Your small daily example of how to love and be loved is an illustration of how easy it is to help shape the next generation through our actions.

Helpfulness- Find one thing that comes easily to you that is helpful to someone else. Do that one thing over and over until its influence is undeniable. In the office, you can bring in inexpensive grocery store flowers every week and make a beautiful statement. People will start to see you as the beautification go-to and remember the impact you made in their work environment.

Thoughtfulness- Pay attention to people. Discover what they love. Small things that don't cost much, but make an impact on their mood. Knowing someone's favorite coffee shop, candy bar, or sushi restaurant always comes in handy. Being able to give them a gift certificate or invite them on a date makes a big impression when the offer includes their favorite things. Paying attention to the likes and desires of others makes thoughtfulness easy, and is very effective in making an impact.

Giving- Try saving your small change in a jar at the end of each day. In a year's time, you can have enough money on hand to make a large donation to your

favorite charity or organization. Recruit your family or office to participate and multiply the fun. The small and consistent act of tossing your change into a bucket can yield big results.

It may seem odd that you can make a difference by doing these little things that feel like they should come naturally. The truth is, everyone isn't always kind, helpful, thoughtful, or generous. Flexing those muscles routinely will build a "lean and beautiful" image of your character to influence those in your everyday life.

Start Practicing Random Acts of Kindness

Random acts of kindness are spontaneous efforts that influence unsuspecting recipients. They are generally considered “random” because they aren’t usually planned ahead of time. They are a way of seizing an opportunity, in the moment, to do something kind for someone else. A random act of kindness means seeing a need and filling it at that moment, whether someone is looking or not.

You’ve certainly heard stories about people in the coffee-shop drive-thru paying for the drinks of the cars behind them. People who practice random acts of kindness are out to make a difference in the lives of people they likely don’t know personally. Their hope is to generate momentum and create a chain of kindness that continues to ripple forth.

Some people are intentional about being kind; though their activity seems random, it is in fact well thought out. They take effort ahead of time to prepare their kindness, usually by putting together trinkets or gestures that will make an impact for others.

One woman, who wanted to encourage healthy eating, hid \$10.00 bills in the produce section of her local grocery store. She wanted to reward and assist people who were looking to buy fresh, healthy food. Another woman kept gallon-sized bags in her car filled with socks, travel-size hygiene items, and a \$5.00 bill for when she encountered someone in need.

Each of these women had a passion for the well-being of others, and turned that passion into a way to share a kind act to make an impact in a space that mattered to them. All it took was some ingenuity and the desire to be an anonymous donor of kindness.

Other ways to share your kindness randomly:

- Leave coupons for discounts under certain items at the grocery store
- Pay for the meal of a young family in a restaurant
- Tuck a note of encouragement onto someone’s windshield
- Anonymously leave a coffee card for a new dad on his desk at work
- Offer to babysit for a single mom
- Send your child’s teacher a gift in the middle of the week for no reason

Whether calculated or spontaneous, acts of kindness are great ways to extend your grace, encouragement, and love. You never know when you might have the urge or the nudge to act to make someone's day. Go with it - and enjoy the impact you have. Make random acts of kindness part of your practice wherever you go. You never know, you might turn out to be the recipient of a random act of kindness yourself!

Making A Difference In Your Own Circle Of Influence

Nowadays, if you use any form of social media, you are inundated with ways to make a difference. From emotional videos highlighting world-wide causes, to the fundraising needs of nationally known organizations, you likely have access to unlimited ways to make a difference for people you may never know. Yet, you can also have a direct impact on your own circle of family, friends, acquaintances, church, etc.

Your circle of influence is directly tied to the people you see and engage with on a regular basis. These are the people you genuinely care about and have an investment in. There is a reciprocity that comes from supporting one another, and being there through thick and thin. You are never left wondering if you are truly making an impact on them or not, because the answer is self-evident.

Some people love seeing the direct results of their investment of time, money, and talents. It is far easier for them to work one on one or directly with a person, or a specific agency or organization. They feel a sense of belonging and satisfaction by being a part of the solution for someone or something that they care about.

Where can you make a difference in your sphere of influence?

Home- Starting in your own home, you can make a difference with your children and spouse. Teaching a talent, providing encouragement, and creating a safe place to be is a monumental way to make a difference.

Community- Your community needs you. No matter what your passion is, there is a way to connect it with a need in your community and make an impact. Pay attention to the pleas for assistance and general needs of your hometown, and plug into the systems they have for providing support. If you see a need that isn't being filled, consider taking steps to organize a way to close that gap and serve your community.

Business- Are you a business owner? Do you work for a company? Either way, you can make a big impact in the marketplace. Simply acting as a stable and

eager-to-serve teammate can set you apart in a work environment. Many career-minded people enjoy participating in service clubs to engage and make a difference while at work.

Church- If you attend a church, there are unlimited ways to contribute time, talent, and resources. From helping in the nursery to leading a home group, there are as many ways to make a difference as you can imagine.

Whether your mindset is focused on your home, community, or business, you can make a difference within your personal sphere of influence in any number of ways. Being able to personally witness the impact you have on those around you can be incredibly rewarding and encourage you to keep on making a difference.

Start Making A Difference At Home

*“If you want to bring happiness to the world, go home and love your family”-
Mother Teresa*

The easiest place in the world to make a difference is in your own home. What better place to influence the people who mean the most to you in ways that have the most direct impact? Your influence in your own home not only makes an impact, it literally shapes the future.

The seemingly insignificant actions you may take for granted can be some of the most important acts of kindness and love there are.

Consider these small acts you may feel are insignificant but are actually vital:

- Making meals
- Sharing conversations at the dinner table
- Helping with homework
- Spending time at home with your children
- Hosting your children’s friends in your home
- Doing chores with your kids
- Having family game night

These things may seem routine - and that’s a good thing - but it’s important to realize that not all families engage in this way on their own. Depending on how you were brought up, these concepts may feel either normal or foreign.

Make A Difference With Your Love Language

Every one of your family members has a love language: a way that they prefer to give and receive love. Gary Chapman is the author of *The 5 Love Languages*, which highlights his philosophies and the list of love preferences: receiving gifts, words of affirmation, quality time, acts of service, and physical touch. These expressions of love are directly tied to our esteem and personal satisfaction in the relationships that mean the most to us.

Determining your own love language makes it possible for you to share how you enjoy being loved, and knowing the language of your loved ones is an excellent way to make a difference in your home.

Here are some fun tips for pouring into your family through their love language:

Receiving gifts- Leave your child's favorite snack-sized candy on their pillowcase as a quiet reminder you are thinking of them.

Words of affirmation- At family mealtime, ask your family what they loved about their day and verbally reward them with compliments for their contributions to school, work, and their community.

Quality time- Have a date night with your spouse on a regular basis. Ban electronics and engage in meaningful conversations to use the time to reconnect with each other and rejuvenate your marriage.

Acts of service- Help your child prepare for their busy day by placing their backpack and any sports gear or miscellaneous items next to the front door to allow for an easy and effortless time in the morning.

Physical touch- Sit side-by-side with your spouse during television time or other downtime. Hold hands, or simply rest your hand on their leg. Give hugs and touch your family member on the shoulder when speaking to them.

Just as airlines teach us to put the oxygen mask on our own faces before helping our family, we should put effort into making a difference in our homes before branching out too far and becoming stretched too thin. Celebrate your family, and take the time to see the ways you are making a difference for them.

Yes, You Can Make A Difference At Work

Fitting in at work is an important goal for anyone who wants to enjoy their time spent away from their family, earning income. There are protocols and standard operating procedures that have been created specifically to promote teamwork and efficiency. Your goal may be to get in and get along without drawing much attention to yourself, but your workplace is an excellent place to make an impact and a difference.

We all have personality traits that are expressed in unique ways. Some of us are intellectually focused and prefer contemplating possibilities, some of us are “doers” who jump right into action, and some love being a part of a team working towards a goal. Some of us love to bake treats and/or tend to shared space, which can help close the gap between on- and off-duty comforts in the workplace. We all matter, and we can all make an impact.

Management can be a difficult element of workplace culture. Sometimes, staff members don't realize the pressures facing management that demand successful outcomes. These pressures are magnified when working with unhappy or inefficient staff, who may be feeling burned out or experiencing personality conflicts that make them difficult to motivate or manage. Actively trying to be part of the solution when your colleagues clash is a simple and highly effective way to stand out in the workplace.

Here are the three P's for making a difference at work:

Personality- Your personality is an excellent tool to use at work. Having a great attitude is worth so much to those around you. Studies show that expressing a consistent mood is one of the easiest ways to be promoted and viewed as an asset to your company. Choosing to leave your worries at the door and putting your focus on your work environment can make a huge impact at work.

Performance- Staying on task and being a meaningful contributor to your office is a major way to make an impact. Don't be afraid to initiate changes or suggest improvements. Make a difference by being supportive of your team members, colleagues, customers, etc.

Presence- Far and away, the highest accolades in a workplace go to the staff who are dependable. Being at work when you are scheduled to be, and being emotionally and mentally present, are cornerstones of a good work ethic. If you want to effortlessly be a contributor to your workplace, show up on time and be focused in your work.

Making a difference at work begins with personality, performance, and presence. From there, things only get better. Infuse your personal style into your workplace and engage your co-workers and customers with your unique personality and character.

The Power Of One In The Age Of Social Media

Prior to platforms like Facebook, iTunes, and Youtube, it took an infusion of cash and a whole production team to create content that could make a widespread impact. The very nature of the industry made it nearly impossible for one person to make a difference without an agent and a crew.

Nowadays, that is no longer the case. One person with an iPhone can make a huge difference with minimal cost. Case in point: Nusier Yassin, or Nas, as he is known on Facebook.

Beginning in 2017, Nas started posting a one-minute video to Facebook every day. Every. Single. Day. His page, Nas Daily, currently has over 110 million views and growing every day. He has traveled non-stop for a year and created content that has led him to be dubbed a social media influencer.

In his life, this translates to being comped rooms, airline tickets, and more. It also means people are paying attention to what he says. His messages are of hope, community, and love. A Harvard graduate who, at 25, was working for Venmo, he realized his life was “32%” over and decided to make sure that he didn't spend the rest of his life sitting at a desk.

His personal goal is to make one million friends on Facebook, and make one million dollars before he is thirty. He is already well on his way.

Social media gives each one of us more influence and power than ever before, and with that power comes responsibility. Nas and others like him are making a difference and using their influence to shift the collective mindset world-wide. Nas has shot video in over 25 countries now, including Japan, Italy, and Thailand. He has brought attention to important issues and worked to break down barriers. His simple one-minute commentary is broadening minds and closing gaps that divide people.

Social media is a platform for anyone, anywhere, to be heard on matters that mean the most to them. A common phrase heard repeated around the world is

“Youtube and Google know everything”. This means you can be a part of the collective conscious that shares their knowledge and know how.

No matter your communication preference or your message, there is a platform for you. Don't like to speak? Try using Instagram. Love to chat, but hate video? Become a podcaster. Enjoy being front and center stage? A Youtube channel may be just the thing. Any way you go, get ready to influence others and make a lasting difference.

Focus Your Time and Efforts To Make An Impact

Are you a naturally disorganized person? Do you find yourself running late and feel like you have a dozen half-done projects going at any given time? If you said yes, chances are you might have trouble with focus and effort.

Focus is the ability to give undivided attention to something that matters or is necessary. Effort is the action that goes into that focus. They rely on one another to create the momentum to see things through to completion. If I asked you to rate yourself from 1-10, where would you put yourself on the “focus and effort” scale?

Sometimes, getting clarity on your experience of focus and effort is all it takes to start making big improvements in your personal, professional, and communal success. Learning to master the art of “getting stuff done” is a crown jewel in the personal development crown.

When you want to make an impact or a difference, your focus is key. Effort follows that focus and they merge together, making an impact easier and more effectively. The best part is: how you do anything is how you do everything. If you can master focus and effort in one area of your life, you can master it in all areas. Good habits are contagious!

Here are three tips for creating focus and improving your efforts to make a difference:

- **Have a plan-** Flying by the seat of your pants is great at times, but not smart when trying to maintain focus. Knowing what you want and mapping out how to achieve it is the best way to go. Make a plan and stick to it without deviation, and you will stay focused.

- **Have a team-** One person can make an impact, but having a team for support makes it easier to stay focused and make an effort. Having a team to help you with non-related things like babysitting, chores, or other support can help you stay focused and direct your efforts.
- **Make wise choices-** Don't spread yourself too thin. Choose your goals wisely so that your focus and effort makes a big impact.

It may seem like you don't have the time to contribute to making a difference, but that's just not so. You can create time and make a true impact by being focused and maximizing your effort in powerful ways. Having a plan, getting support, and making wise choices make it possible for even the busiest person to make an impact.

Simple, Everyday Things You Can Do To Make A Difference

Some people simply don't enjoy being in the spotlight. A crowd can be a nightmare for an introvert, and even the most social people eventually run short on time and energy. Sometimes adding a new activity to the schedule to make an impact feels like too much work or too much effort.

The truth is, you can make an impact doing everyday things that are already on your schedule. Simply look around you and see how you can improve current situations.

Small things, like helping an elderly neighbor or babysitting for a friend with small kids can make a big difference for them. Even simpler, smiling and being kind to the person who waits on you or rings up your purchase. Let someone out in traffic, return a grocery cart, help lift groceries into the car, etc.

The key is to pay attention to your surroundings. What do you see? **Ask yourself these questions:**

Is there a need that I can fill in this moment? Whether it's being kind to someone who looks down or offering to reach an item for an elderly person on a high shelf in the store, you can do something that will make a difference. Making simple conversation and acknowledging someone while you are out doing errands is not adding to your workload, it is enhancing it.

Is there someone who I can encourage today? We all spend time waiting. Waiting in line. Waiting in the reception area. Waiting at the DMV. Use this time to make a difference. Send a picture of your new grandchild to a friend from your smartphone. Let someone know you are thinking of them and give them a call from your hands-free device in your car while you commute. Use your downtime to make an impact while you wait.

Is there a need near me? Do you live in a neighborhood? Do you know your neighbors? Pay attention to the needs of those right next to you. Take the trash cans to or from the curb for your neighbor. Offer to walk their dog or make them dinner once per week to give them a break. Offer to fix something you see broken, or make a small effort to improve their personal space.

How can I be kind to the people I see? You don't need to go out of your way to find people to be kind to. Just be kind to those who cross your path naturally. Give up the open parking space to someone else. Let someone go before you in the checkout line. Pay for the car behind you in the drive-thru. Smile or give a compliment as you pass someone by. Focus on the people in front of you and make an impact effortlessly.

Making an impact is as simple as doing the everyday things you are already out doing. Pay attention to your surroundings and you will find unlimited ways to make an impact.

Do Your Homework Before Making Financial Contributions

Financial contributions are a primary way that people make an impact. Supporting an infrastructure that already exists is easy, productive, and creates an instant impact when the money changes hands. Why wait to create a chance to make a difference when you can plug into something that is already up and running? Professional organizations have mastered the path to making an impact and can continue to do so with your small and large contributions pooled together with others.

As social media has evolved, so has reporting. Now more than ever, it's possible to read reviews of nonprofits and agencies that rely on donated dollars and fundraising to balance their budgets. It takes much more than a good sales pitch to get into someone's pocketbook. Unscrupulous tactics can be exposed more readily today, making it easier to verify the validity of the places we support.

Care needs to be taken to do a little research and verify the mission and activities of an agency before making a financial commitment. Doing your homework is easy and helps you to see where even a small donation can have a big impact.

How do you begin to narrow down the wide range of options to ensure you financially support a good cause? People generally want to help those who have a pain point similar to their own. Consider what you have overcome or what burdens you have had to bear. Then seek out organizations and groups that target those same issues. Once you've selected, do some research and determine what sort of track record they have for making a difference and using their funds wisely.

Things to look at before making financial contributions:

What is the mission of the organization? The organization's mission should be available to the public and match the activities that they engage in.

Is the organization public or private? This isn't a deal breaker, but public entities generally have a more diverse board of directors and public meetings, or produce annual reports for review.

Do they have bad press for a reason? Some organizations have been spotlighted for shady practices or for not managing their donations in a forthright manner. Some of the most mainstream nonprofits have been criticized for mismanagement of funds.

Does their mission align with yours? If the organization's mission matches yours, you are far more likely to stay connected and donate over a length of time. This alignment creates a sense of community and sustains the giving relationship.

Does too much income go to support administrative costs? Sadly, some of the biggest agencies suffer from having too many administrative costs that erode the income brought in through donations. It is vital to determine what percentage of donated dollars go to making a direct impact. Many organizations make a point of highlighting how much of your donation goes directly to the cause.

Is your donation one-time or ongoing? Can you become a partner for life or just a one-time supporter? Consider the programs, places, and companies you use consistently. Since you are already engaged with these organizations, it makes practical sense to spend your dollars on their long-term success. Consider making smaller, consistent contributions rather than one big one.

Are there opportunities for other forms of involvement? One of the best ways to keep a long-term commitment and see the difference is to become involved outside of purely financial contributions. See if there is a way to participate in other areas of the organization and become more familiar with how your dollars are making an impact.

Being a financial supporter is an excellent way to make an impact when your time and energy are a limited commodity. You can easily find an organization that fits your personal mission and passion. Do your homework, and enjoy making a difference through donation.

Mentorship Is A Great Way To Make A Difference

*“To the world, you may be one person; but to one person you may be the world”-
Dr. Seuss*

Dr. Seuss undoubtedly touched millions and millions with his books and art. He made an impact on the large scale for sure. What if he hadn't broken out and set a worldwide literary standard? What if he had only made an impact on one child who wanted to learn to read, write, or draw? Would that have been enough? Absolutely!

Chances are, if we met those closest to Dr. Seuss, we would discover that he not only had a global impact during his career, he likely had a very personal impact on others as a mentor. A mentor is an experienced and trustworthy advisor who gives their knowledge to someone in a student-teacher fashion. They give their time, their attention, and their expertise to help someone else become better at the same skill.

There are many wonderful benefits to mentoring, aside from passing down information and skills. Things like:

- ✓ Being a mentor is rewarding and affirms the breadth of knowledge that you have accumulated over time.
- ✓ Mentoring is a form of giving back and sharing the blessings and fruit that have come from your own personal journey.
- ✓ A mentor is truly an expert in their career, talent, or whatever it is they are teaching. They are a blessing and a resource.

Mentoring is an excellent way to make a difference without expending a large amount of time or resources. Usually, mentors spend time side-by-side with their mentee and the experience creates a deep and meaningful bond. The building of trust and sharing of talents lasts a lifetime. A mentor usually becomes a life-long resource and is heavily invested in the mentee's success.

Whether you are teaching a baking skill, a technical skill-set, or giving the inside scoop on how to do something better, your mentorship can make all the difference. It can help launch a career, open doors, and collapse a learning curve. You can make a lasting impact simply by sharing what comes naturally to you from your personal wellspring.

Mentorships can be formal or informal. They can be career-based, gender-based, or tied to any other natural partnership. They can be one-on-one or in small groups. They can be in-person or carried out remotely. The key is connecting a willing mentor and mentee who are compatible and equally interested in teaching and learning from one another.

Who can you mentor and how will that help the other person? Seek to share your talents and skills with just one person and watch them flourish, and you'll grow inside from making such a profound impact on someone else.

Become Aware Of How Your Behavior Impacts Others

There is a theory in behavioral science called the *Law of Attribution*, or the *Attribution Theory*. This theory states that most often when we observe others, we attribute their behavior to their character - whereas we attribute our own behavior to our circumstances. This logic applies negative assumptions as to why someone else behaves badly, but cuts ourselves slack for our own poor behaviors.

An example would be encountering a sales clerk that appears to be rude and disinterested in helping us. We attribute that behavior to the nature of their character. We decide they are a mean person and shouldn't be in a helping profession. We then, in turn, are rude to that sales clerk and feel justified, because we have determined they are "innately rude," whereas we are just mirroring their behavior and would be kinder to them if they weren't so awful.

We blame them for their behavior and justify our own.

In another scenario, we have just received very bad news and are so distracted, we forget an important meeting and leave someone high and dry who was waiting for us. Without apology, we move on to the rest of our day knowing that the news we received was shocking and terrible, and our actions weren't purposefully irresponsible; they were just due to our circumstances. Later that week, someone drops the ball and forgets to do something vital for a work project, causing the team to be late for a deadline. Incensed, we shoot off a heated email casting blame, believing our coworker doesn't have a good work ethic or standards of behavior.

In each case, we attribute our behavior to our circumstances, and the other person's behavior to their character. This simply isn't fair.

No matter what the reason may be, it is never acceptable to impact someone in an inappropriate way. Our agitation may be justified due to difficult circumstances, but it is no reason to cause pain to others.

When you're angry or unkind to another person, it impacts them in a negative way. Pay attention and try to change your behavior so that it reflects how you want to impact and treat those around you. If you are in a crisis or in a particularly bad spot, be transparent about your struggle with those around you so they have a chance to offer their support.

If you are in so much pain that you can't be civil, consider staying in to take a mental health day and doing self-care to help get yourself back on track. Taking care of your emotional health is the number one goal, so you can set a healthy example for those in your sphere of influence.

Don't Use This As An Excuse To Stop Trying To Make A Difference

Winnie-the-Pooh is a loveable children's character who has delighted all ages for generations. Together with his friends Christopher Robin, Piglet, and Tigger, he experiences life with a sense of wonder and delight. He and his gang solve problems and face everyday situations, finding the silver lining wherever they go. Except for one: Eeyore. A sleepy and pessimistic grey donkey, Eeyore is usually the first one to find fault and lose hope in a situation. His typical response to an experience is negative, and he is defeated before anything begins.

"It won't make a difference" is a common thought to have when looking at our abilities as opposed to the magnitude of needs in the world. Imagining that your effort makes an impact feels like trying to capture a drop of wind - impossible. Take heart; all our actions matter in one way or another.

Eeyore struggles with negative self-talk. He has attached a negative meaning to everything. In reality, all things are neutral until we attach a meaning to them. To say this a different way, everything simply **is**, until we interpret its meaning. Nothing is fundamentally either good or bad until we decide so. When a tree falls in the forest, a conservationist sees the loss of natural resources, while a logger sees dollar signs.

Your beliefs about your impact determine the nature of that impact. If you diminish your belief that you can make an impact, you will likely end up doing very little - or nothing at all. You will see your opportunities through a lens of lack, loss, hopelessness, and helplessness. This certainly won't inspire you to focus your efforts and take action; it's a massive deterrent.

What you look for, you will find. If you look at the ways that others have made a difference as an individual or against the odds, you can be inspired and see the proof that small actions can generate big results. Here are two ways to get inspired and change your mindset about making a difference all by yourself:

Read biographies- Biographies are an excellent way to be amazed by the human spirit and how one person can make an impact. Some of the world's greatest leaders have biographies. Learning that they were normal people who took action is inspiring and provides a roadmap for taking your own action.

Watch Documentaries- Documentaries are like biographies and cover individuals, companies, and movements that have made an impact on the world. Watching the “behind the scenes” information is always illuminating and inspiring.

“It won’t make a difference” ... no, that’s just an easy out. Go make some changes in your mindset and do your part to make an impact on the world.

Who Can You Inspire And Motivate Today?

There are two types of people in the world- planners, and people who love spontaneity. Planners *love* planning. They love laying out their goals and objectives and working backward to determine every necessary detail. They study, review, and revise their plans over and over again, making small changes and tweaks along the way.

Spontaneous people like to fly by the seat of their pants. They are quick on their feet, and can create their own parachute on the way down after jumping from the plane. They work best in the moment, relying on their wits and energy in the here-and-now.

Spontaneous people live in the present and pay attention to what is going on around them. They are the perfect personality type to motivate and encourage people anywhere they are. They don't need a plan to make an impact, they can wing it and inspire and motivate in the moment.

Are you spontaneous? Do you fit into the category of people who sees a situation that needs a personal touch and is able to pour into it right then and there? Are you aware of, and alert to, the needs unfolding in front of you? Who can you inspire and motivate today?

This is as easy as asking yourself "what am I doing today?" Where are you going? Who will you see? In one day's time, you are likely to engage with well over ten people. Make a point of making a personal connection with everyone who crosses your path.

Here are some out of the box ways to inspire and motivated today:

- Say hello to someone at the gas pump and compliment them.
- Leave a note of encouragement in a library book for the next reader.
- Leave a coupon for a pizza in a movie rental kiosk for the next family to enjoy.
- Bring your hairdresser a coffee when you come in for your appointment.
- Smile at every person you pass walking in and out of the parking lot.
- Leave post-it notes on your children's doors reminding them that you love them.
- Pick up trash in your neighborhood while walking your dog.
- Send a note in the mail to three friends for no particular reason.

- Ask your child to pick the theme for dinner and make the night special, even on a Wednesday.

Making a difference, inspiring, and motivating doesn't have to be large scale. You can inspire one person every day just by taking action spontaneously. Seize the opportunity and pour into someone simply because they are right there where you are. There's no easier way to make an unplanned impact.

Stop Trying To Fix The World – Make A Difference One Person and One Act At A Time

Ever hear the term “quality over quantity”? This idiom expresses the belief that it is better to have a single, high-quality experience than to have a great number of average experiences. Or that it is better to have one thing that is amazing, instead of multiple things that are mediocre. Would you agree?

Using this mindset, it is easy to imagine making an impact that is focused on quality rather than quantity, helping and making a difference one person and one act at a time, rather than trying to fix the whole world.

You can easily do this by:

- Mentoring a local mentee
- Volunteering at a local nonprofit
- Financially supporting a local nonprofit
- Participating in an annual fundraiser

Sometimes sticking close to home is the best way to make an impact. There are needs right in your own backyard that you can pour into and serve directly with quality rather than watered-down in great quantity.

Mentoring a local mentee- Mentoring is an act of teaching your skills and sharing your resources with someone up and coming in your field of interest or career. You can mentor a college student for a semester, a new mother for her child’s first year, or a brand-new apprentice at your office.

Volunteering at a local nonprofit- Instead of becoming part of the web of services stemming from a nation-wide nonprofit, consider lending your expertise and time to a local organization where the hands and feet are all in one location. You may have a bigger and better impact on decision-makers, and your time and money will likely go directly to the community you are serving.

Financially supporting a local nonprofit- Like volunteering, your financial support is converted easily to the local setting. You may have a voice about where your money goes and what area of the budget you want to support. You may be able to make a direct donation of goods or services and ensure your passion is represented and makes an impact.

Participating in an annual fundraiser- Many organizations or chapters of nonprofits hold annual fundraising events. You can get behind one event and pour your energy and efforts into one “big bang” of a moment. This keeps you from burning out and makes it possible for you to give quality time instead of large quantities of it.

High quality stands out in areas like wine, chocolate, and cheese. Small doses of a great thing far outweigh large doses of an average thing. Condense your focus, and offer your quality impact in a small area, and be blessed in the process.

Staying Motivated To Make A Difference

The initial excitement that comes from wanting to make a difference can start to wane as the hard work of making that difference becomes apparent. The glorious feeling that comes from doing something new and meaningful fades when the effort expended exceeds your enthusiasm. What can you do to stay motivated when what you're doing doesn't seem to make a big enough difference?

First- *Remember why you began.* Remember what motivated you to be a power of one in the first place. What happened? What caused you to take action and make an impact in this brand-new way?

Second- *Keep track of your actions.* Keep a journal or start a blog. Write about your experiences and preserve them somewhere. When you need a reminder of why you are stepping out and making a difference, you can review your journey to feel encouraged and refreshed.

Third- *Keep your vision in front of you.* Keep visual reminders front and center of why you are doing what you're doing. Pictures of the people you hope to impact, memorabilia from events or encounters you have had, thank you notes, letters; all the tangible things that have come from your impact are good options.

Fourth- *Share the impact.* You may be a private person, but your impact is important. To whatever extent it is appropriate or comfortable to share, you should be an example to others who may have a heart for what you are doing. You may be the nudge they need to get out there and start making a difference themselves.

Fifth- *Leave a legacy.* Your acts of service and how you make a difference is going to leave a legacy. No matter how small or how large of an impact, no matter how known or anonymous you are, your inner circle and your family are going to be impacted by your generosity, your sense of purpose - and that is going to be part of the legacy you leave behind.

All things can start to feel heavy over time. Responsibilities, chores, even giving and making an impact. Keep yourself motivated and engaged, and you'll end up making a difference and leaving an important legacy.

Wrap Up And Where To Go From Here

Let's take a quick walk down memory lane and browse through all the different topics we covered over the past 29 days. Here's a quick rundown:

- Welcome And Why What You Do Matters
- Change Starts With You
- The Power of A Smile For A Stranger
- Let's Talk About The Ripple Effect
- Become Aware Of The Impact You Have
- Can One Person Really Make A Difference?
- Looking Back – Who Have You Influenced Already?
- What You Do Can Have A Compound Effect
- How Making A Difference Benefits You
- The Power Of Leading By Example
- Mother Teresa – An Example Of The Power Of One
- Gandhi – An Example Of The Power Of One
- Who Has Made A Difference In Your Life?
- You Don't Have To Make A Big Impact To Make A Difference
- Small Consistent Actions Add Up To Big Changes
- Start Practicing Random Acts of Kindness
- Making A Difference In Your Own Circle Of Influence
- Start Making A Difference At Home
- Yes, You Can Make A Difference At Work
- The Power Of One In The Age Of Social Media
- Focus Your Time and Efforts To Make An Impact
- Simple, Everyday Things You Can Do To Make A Difference
- Do Your Homework Before Making Financial Contributions
- Mentorship Is A Great Way To Make A Difference
- Become Aware Of How Your Behavior Impacts Others
- Don't Use This As An Excuse To Stop Trying To Make A Difference
- Who Can You Inspire And Motivate Today?
- Stop Trying To Fix The World – Make A Difference One Person and One Act At A Time
- Staying Motivated To Make A Difference

What has had the biggest impact on you? What tips and ideas have you found the most helpful? Those are the posts that you want to come back to again and again.

Take a few minutes today to reflect on not only how far you've come, but more importantly, how this simple 30-day challenge has influenced you and changed you for the better. What positive experiences have you had as a result of taking these actions? How have you experienced your impact on others? Has someone made an impact on you?

Being in a space of giving and making a difference is a game changer from the inside out, and you've likely begun to feel the change in your bones. Enjoy the giving of your time, your effort, and your resources for both those who can and can't do anything in return. Your efforts are making an impact. The power of one is undeniable, and you have proven the theory perfectly.