

We Are The Change



By: Harry Belafonte

Topics: What it means to be an American citizen, Rights and responsibilities, Student voices, Constitution

Genre: Quote collections, Grades 4 and above

***We Are The Change* is a collection of quotes from leaders of both past and present. They inspire us with their words and actions. As you read the quotes below, think about how they relate to the challenges we are facing today. Focus on how these words inspire you to become a change agent who makes your world a better place. Concentrate on the deliberate choice of words, images and position of these words.**

Before the Read Aloud:

What is one short saying or expression friends or family have shared with you, which stays with you or inspires you in your everyday life? For example: get dressed up and leave home with the idea you can make the day a joy. Or: helping others makes you feel worthwhile and your life happier, no matter what your problems are.

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During the Read Aloud:

1. The first quote we look at is from former President Barack Obama. President Obama has inspired many people with the following words:

“Change will not come
if we wait for some other
person or some other time.

We are the ones
We’ve been waiting for.

We are the change
That we seek.”

Think about your school district, school, classroom and/or community. Now think about something you would like to see changed in order to make that place better for everyone. What is that change? What would you do to help make that change occur?

2. The following quote is from Helen Keller. She was an American author and activist who faced many challenges. She was both deaf and blind, but had a strong team behind her to help her on her path. Helen Keller’s words give us something to think about:

Alone we can do so little:

Together we can do so much.

Do you agree with Helen Keller’s quote? Be prepared to share why or why not. What would you do to get a group together to support an idea that you would like to put into action?

For example, imagine that you would like to organize a group to take a vacant lot in your neighborhood and turn it into a community garden/playground. How would you get others from your community, both kids and adults, to join you in this effort?

What idea do you have to make your school and/or community better? Maybe you would distribute flyers about your idea. Create a flyer that you think would bring lots of community support for your idea.

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3. This next quote is from Nina Simone, a singer/songwriter and famous Civil Rights activist. Nina Simone wrote many songs that reflect the vision of the Black Lives Matter movement.

*I'll tell you what freedom is to me:
No fear.*

The First Amendment to the Constitution lists freedoms that all of us are entitled to have. Think about the list below. Which of these five freedoms do you think has the greatest impact on your life now?

Freedom of Speech - allows each of us to speak our ideas and opinions.

Freedom of Religion - allows each of us to establish and practice our religion freely.

Freedom of the Press - gives the press the right to publish the news and ideas.

The Right to Assemble - protects the rights of citizens to hold meetings and gatherings.

The Right to Petition the Government – gives every citizen the right to make a complaint to or ask for assistance from local, state or national government without fear of being punished.

Now...write your own quote by finishing Nina Simone's quote with you own words:

I'll tell you what freedom is to me.....

