

What can we do?

It's a dark time. It seems that everything we treasure is under attack. America's leader is a pathological liar who is juvenile, ignorant, and self-centered. The rest of the world is appalled. His handlers have now consolidated their grip on the country, and his wrecking crew is working to quickly dismantle our democracy. We have entered a period of chaos and trauma, and facing a possible descent into fascism.

When the well-being of ourselves, those close to us, people throughout the world, and our nonhuman kin, is being destroyed, we have no choice but to dive in and do what we can to derail this train. To remain a spectator is to passively endorse Trumpism and allow the poison to spread.

Trump is a corporate creature. We're dealing with not only Trump and his gang, but also the corporate powers that they are assisting. Corporations now control most of our politics, media, and economy. Corporations are robot-like; they have only one driving force: PROFIT. Human rights, or even the survival of our world, are not their concern unless profits are affected.

The corporate and political elite have power and money, but we have numbers. We have agility and creativity. And we have truth - we don't have to spin things. Further, we resonate with basic human values like fairness, kindness, and decency.

Public awareness and outrage are growing worldwide. Momentum is building, and we keep evolving creative new tactics. Still, it can be discouraging: our efforts often seem futile. But even when it seems hopeless, persistence often pays off - sometimes when least expected, and sometimes in surprising ways.

What can we as individuals do? Here are three suggestions:

First, we can join and support some of the many local and national efforts now underway to politically block the efforts of the Trump wrecking crew. We can work to elect better people to office, or run for office ourselves, even if we have never been politically active.

Second, we can join others in taking direct action, nonviolently disrupting malicious plans through noncooperation. Forceful pushback and defiance are necessary - being polite and obedient won't work. Put sand in their gears.

Third, we can add our bit to counter the poison in the air by spreading the opposite. America is full of kind, decent people, but we are experiencing a rising tide of meanness, self-centeredness, and hatefulness - in our leaders and often in each other. We don't need to add to that ample supply; instead we can counter it by relating to others with kindness, compassion, generosity, and courtesy. That's healing for ourselves and others, and it provides a model for others to emulate.

In summary, we need to (a) actively oppose and disrupt these destructive efforts, and (b) bring kindness and compassion into this toxic mix.

Some further thoughts:

We don't have the luxury of wasting energy bickering with each other over details about the best way to do this – everyone has their own way. We just need to join together and resist.

We have more influence at the local and state level than we do in Washington and we can successfully block Trump's agenda state by state.

Change is best achieved by nonviolent disruptive noncooperation. Political change is unlikely to succeed without it.

To build momentum, start with an issue that you are likely to win.

Go on the offensive. Act, don't just react. Don't just defend, don't just resist, don't just play catch-up. Take the initiative and escalate your actions.

Know your enemy. Crawl inside their heads - understand their motives, fears, dreams. Talk to staff, listen to supporters, read their journals and websites. This helps to anticipate their tactics and prepare effective counter-actions in advance.

Have a strong vision - a positive goal. Phrase it clearly, together with a good buzz phrase. That's what you're fighting for.

Narrow your focus. Rather than trying to address everything at once, hammer on a single point repeatedly and relentlessly until it can no longer be ignored. It's like focusing sunlight with a magnifying glass. A win in one small area can be the door-opener for more wins.

Act unexpectedly. Find creative new actions. Our thinking needs to be dramatic, unexpected, outside the box. It can be a creative new tactic, an unexpected response, or an unexpectedly quick response. Attack when or where your opponent doesn't expect it.

Practice breaking the rules. Don't get too used to doing what you're told. Practice rebellion.

Limit your intake of bad news and social media. Too much exposure to awfulness leads to depression and burnout.

Detach yourself from the results of your efforts. Make the commitment, do the work, follow through as needed, and then let go. Let the universe make of it what it will. Do it simply because it's the right thing to do. This is a lighter, freer, and more effective way.

Even if your effort fails, it's still very much worth doing, because (1) you may be planting seeds that will bear fruit much later, (2) you'll be touching other lives in ways you may never know - inspiring, providing a role model - which can lead to action by someone else, (3) you're learning and honing your skills, and (4) it's the right thing to do.

Be tenacious. Be stubborn. Be patient. You may be accomplishing more than you think. Keep coming back, perhaps with a new approach or with a different slant on the old approach. Remember the tipping point concept: major changes often develop as undercurrents with little visible indication. But if one keeps pushing, things can reach a critical point and abruptly shift in the desired direction, seemingly out of nowhere.

Gandhi said this about persistence:

First they ignore you.

Then they laugh at you.

Then they fight you.

Then you win."

We're now at number three.

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