

SOCIAL JUSTICE

<https://www.earthspiritpath.org/social-justice.html>

(IN NO PARTICULAR ORDER)

Keep in mind that change takes time to incorporate into your daily life. Biting off too much at one time will often lead to feelings of overwhelm or failure. Even small changes need time to find their place your daily routine. You are more likely to succeed when you choose a project that feels timely and authentic. Choose something that you relate to, and give it time to become a habit before picking the next thing.

Listen: First and foremost, we must practice listening with the intention to learn and understand rather than preparing to reply. This is especially true if we come from a dominant group or class. In order to truly understand an issue that may not affect us, we need to be open to hearing the other's perspective. While listening, it is important to set aside potential feelings of defensiveness or guilt as these are both about how we feel and not about the other person's experience.

Be Kind: How we behave is infectious. We do not have to agree with or even respect a person to be kind. Kindness does not include taking responsibility for the other's feelings, desires, or needs. It is simply one human recognizing the humanity of another. Finding authentic ways to be kind is an act of peace.

Find Ways to Express Your Perspective in the Positive: The simple act of stating a solution or a hope rather than a problem or a grievance can be very powerful. Many problems do require discussion, but it is all too easy to fall into negative loops that are self-defeating rather than productive. Even when there is no obvious solution, we can still create a vision for the future.

Try on Other's Perspective: We will not like or agree with all people. Some of them may in

fact be part of the problem. But understanding their perspective can go a long way to helping formulate a more useful response to them. It can also help us see any prejudices or misconceptions within our own perspective.

Vote: Yes, the system has some problems. Yes, the party platforms and the candidates can be uninspiring. But change happens only when everyone gets involved. Support candidates that you believe in. Even when your candidate has no chance of winning, your support allows them to shape the conversation. This will, in turn, help shift the party's opinions and policies. Change is slow, be patient.

Vote with your Dollar: How we spend our money is a statement about how we want the world to be. Big box stores might feel easy and convenient, but it is often a default vote against locally owned businesses and livable wages. Our budgets may not allow us to buy everything local, so it is important to find the items that will have the biggest impact.

Support Fair and Honest News Sources: As a society, we are not always good at understanding the difference between discussing a subject from a chosen perspective vs. supporting a fake narrative. Much of the fake news produced is intended to be divisive and inflammatory. This fear based news perpetuates societal trauma. The middle road may not feel as compelling as the far left or far right, but that is simply because truth is often much less dramatic than fiction.

Support Minority Causes: Supporting minority causes of any kind is part of building a just society. When all people have equal access to resources and opportunity, society is happier and more prosperous. Supporting a minority cause begins with listening. This is not our cause, it is important to first understand if we are welcome and then to following their lead.

Support Young People: As we age it is easy to get entrenched in our understanding of the

world. What was revolutionary and cutting edge back in the day, may be outdated today. Young people are often the visionaries of a society. There are many great community and school programs that empower them to building a better future.

Support the Elderly: Many older people are lonely and/or stuck at home. They may need practical support like food or rides, and there are many great organizations that offer these services that could use our support. It is also important to take the time to listen to their stories. Young people might be our visionaries, but our elders carry the wisdom that got us this far.

Support Local Shelters and Housing First Projects: Hearth and home is a universal need, yet there are many who are unhoused. Shelters offer both a safe place to sleep and they can connect those in need to social programs that offer long-term solutions. The most straightforward of these long-term solutions is the housing first movement. They offer shelter and services without conditions like religious conversion or proof of sobriety.

Support Local Food banks: Local food banks provide food for shelters as well as families living in poverty. People, especially children, who do not have enough to eat struggle to learn and function. Food Security for all is both needed support in the present and an investment in the future.

Support Women's Reproductive Rights: Studies have shown that supporting women's reproductive rights is the most effective tool in promoting equality. Empowered women tend to build safer and more collaborative communities. There are several global non-profit organizations whose sole mission is reproductive rights.

Support Water Rights: One of the biggest, often overlooked, issue of our times is the right to clean drinking water. There are many corporations like Nestle that are working to undermine these rights. And just like women's reproductive rights, access to clean drinking water, helps

create a healthier, more equitable society.

Support and/or Make Art: Art, music, and poetry are often the mirrors of society. It is a great way to express what we love and what we fear. It inspires and heals us at the same time that it is a tool for discussing the issues of our time.

Travel Wisely: Traveling to exotic places can be a great experience, if we are open to learning and understanding the culture we are visiting. Read up on cultural do's and don'ts before traveling. Choose locally run inns rather than the all-inclusive resorts. Those large resorts rob the local economy in the same way that a Walmart ends up putting all the local shops out of business, leaving the population with poverty wages.

Avoiding Products Made in Sweatshops: We may not always have access to the information or the financial means to make other choices. But whenever we can, avoid supporting sweatshops here and abroad. They offer small short-term payments to underrepresented populations, while taking from them the ability to build sustainable communities.