

Courage+Strategy+Execution=HOPE

November 2025

We have power. Let's own it!

Although the political picture looks grim, we must remember how potent we are *together*. Authoritarianism experts report that [once 3.5% of the population joins together](#) in active ongoing resistance, past regimes have crumbled. From Tesla Takedowns to Know Your Rights trainings, people of all races and places, backgrounds and genders are standing up, and refusing cooperation with this regime. Join them and become a hero of democracy. We can do this!

In this document you will find resources for self-care, creating a community of support for your civic action, as well as recommended organizations and thought-leaders who offer effective ways to take action. But first...

CORE Principles for sustainable and joyful political action, starring you!

1. Know that **YOU MATTER**. Engaging and taking action makes a difference. Disengagement is toxic to a democracy (or any social system.)
2. **BE ONE OF THE 3.5%**. Be a DEMOCRACY HERO. Think of yourself in these terms. You matter! Compelling research by **Erica Chenoweth**, a political scientist at Harvard University, confirms that civil disobedience is not only the moral choice; it is also the most powerful way of shaping world politics – by a long way. Although the exact dynamics will depend on many factors, she has shown it takes around [3.5% of the population actively organizing resistance ensures serious political change](#).
3. **KNOW YOU ARE NOT ALONE**. It may seem that many people are checked out, but [people who care are stepping up all over the country](#). Find them and connect. Many are on Substack and Bluesky. They may also be your neighbors; they may be your friends, some may not know they are a democracy hero yet, but you can change that: which brings me to....
4. **DO NOT ATTEMPT THIS ALONE**. CREATE AFFINITY GROUPS: ([Choose Democracy](#) also recommends this. See below for their recommendations). Hold a potluck, invite folks in and let them know this will be a positive, empowering gathering, have some fun, and share these resources for what you can do. Support each other in doing some of it, and celebrate your actions. DO NOT DEBATE AND ARGUE.
5. **CHOOSE ONE THING**: You cannot save the world, and you don't need to. Follow the example of nature and do your part in creating a strong and positively evolving social ecosystem by doing what you can do from right where you are.

Explore what lights you up, and engage around that issue. Focus 80% of your attention on what you can do and only 20% on what's going wrong.

6. **STRATEGY, STRATEGY, STRATEGY:** *Before I get into this, I want to say: Do whatever you can and **celebrate your efforts, no matter how large or small.** And, for those who really want to create powerful leverage for change, take a cue from your “worthy opponents” (those pesky extremists tearing everything apart have been playing the long game): Look for organizations that have a long-range effective strategy. I will do my best to list them here. Or, if you want to lead: Figure out what needs to change, think analytically, dream big, create a strategy, fill it out with details based on intelligent facts, build a team, and seek those who can help you. Lots of ideas below and more will be coming!*
7. **TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF:** *Engaging to create a system that works for all is not a sprint, it is not even a marathon, it is a way of life. Have sound practices for nourishing your nervous system and replenishing your personal resources. (**See below for suggestions**) Do not overextend yourself for long periods of time. You will burn out. Recruit others to engage and know that you can step away from time to time and others will step into the breach.*

*Now is the moment to know who we are and take action. We can create a future built for the benefit of all. All it takes is you and me. Choose something, **one thing**, and engage it with joy. There are mountains of resources here to inspire you. Enjoy.*

Action Websites/Substacks (Resources below will be regularly updated)

If you only have 5-minutes a day:

If you are just beginning to engage, starting with small steps practiced everyday is highly recommended. Transforming into a democracy hero requires unlearning many patterns and learning new empowering behaviors. Your system will resist. It's habit and it's natural. Insist on small steps and celebrate everything new thing you do. Soon you'll have capacity to do more.

[Chop Wood. Carry Water](#) Substack by Jessica Craven.

She offers timely directives for taking strategic action, and her emails are designed to offer you about **5-7 minutes of action to take each weekday** to effectively resist, and to help build a better democracy. She has many state specific actions on her Substack channel that are updated regularly. You'll get call scripts for your reps, Resistbot scripts, and a way to find an election somewhere that you can help out (postcarding, calling, phone banking, textbanking)

From Jessica: *“Believe in our power. Our job is to not quit while it’s hard. They want us to. They’re counting on it. They literally think we’re snowflakes. They think their orgy of destruction will force us to walk away in exhaustion.*

They’re going to find out that they’re very wrong.

Breathe in strength. Breathe out fear. I’m not downplaying the danger. It’s real. I simply believe in our power more than I fear their malevolence. You should too. Now let’s get to work.”

[5 Calls App](#) **5 Calls** is the easiest and most effective way for U.S. constituents to make a political impact. They provide a list of important issues and pieces of legislation being proposed, context for why these matters and a call script. The numbers for your reps are provided front and center and all you have to do is find 5 minutes to do it.

[Resistbot](#): Resistbot is a chatbot that turns your texts into faxes, postal mail, or emails to your representatives in minutes. Chat with **Resistbot**. This is **The Easiest Way to Be Heard**. Send the word resist to Resistbot on Apple Messages, Messenger, Instagram, Telegram, or by **text to 50409** and answer the questions texted back.

If you have more than 5-minutes:

[INDIVISIBLE](#): Is still the go to platform for targeted and strategic information about how to effect change in Congress. If you want to feel the current of the rushing political waters and get some expert political coaching from former Congressional staffers, Ezra Levin and Leah Greenberg, their **Weekly Thursday National “[What’s the Plan](#)”** Zoom calls are not to be missed. Huge numbers of citizens attend (and growing every week) and there isn’t a minute to waste: after a whirlwind recap of the past week’s madness, they open the floor to questions and breathlessly attempt to answer as many questions as they possibly can. Register at [Indivisible.org](#)

Their website offers terrific support for creating local political actions that have leverage. Find a group in your area or start one yourself.

After the June 14 **No Kings** day of action, they offered this inspiring online event with their organizing partners to answer: [What’s Next?](#) Scroll down the video recording and enjoy this hour-long presentation that is sure to inspire. Over 20,000 joined in the online event, so you know are not alone in trying to answer this critical question..

[Red Wine and Blue](#) Red Wine and Blue is a national community of over **750,000** diverse suburban women working together to **defeat extremism, one friend at a time**. They

train and connect women from across the country of all political backgrounds – including many who have never been political before – to “**get sh*t done and have fun along the way.**” And, their [Trouble Nation](#) is where you can go to get resources and support for starting a local group of badass women who can get sh*t done!

Their field guide dropped on June 26, 2025.

[160 ways to change the world without losing you sh*t!](#)

[Red Wine and Blue APP](#) was released in August 2025. This took some serious work and it will make your work of saving democracy one friendship at a time that much easier.

[Swing Left:](#) **COMMITTED TO LONG-TERM, YEAR-ROUND ORGANIZING** targeting districts races that are very tight and could be swung left through a variety of people-centered tactics, like canvassing, calling, texting and postcard/letter writing.

[Swing Left's Five Organizing Principles for the Future of the Democratic Party:](#)

In 2024, 95% of their House targets, and 100% of their Senate targets, were decided by single-digit margins—and they won the *majority* of those races. Where the Swing Left community invested time and money, Democrats performed better. Their target races saw *a significantly smaller rightward shift than the national average*. Grassroots action matters.

[Vote Forward](#) is a 501(c)(4) nonprofit organization that empowers grassroots volunteers to send handwritten letters encouraging fellow Americans to vote. The majority of their letter-writing campaigns are nonpartisan get out the vote campaigns.

[Choose Democracy:](#) **These folks were preparing for Trump 2.0!** This site is CHOCK FULL OF INSPIRING AND BRILLIANT WAYS TO TAKE ACTION. Grab some friends, jump in and just start! “*We can’t put everything you could do in here — including ways to **ground yourself in these times** — but we supply brilliant starting points on how to orient and **help fight the coup.**”*”

[DEFIANCE.org](#) Called a “club for courageous Americans.” I spent a good hour checking this organization out. Their founders are Miles Taylor and Xander Schultz. Taylor was the insider Trump official who wrote the ground shaking 2018 New York Times Op-Ed blowing the whistle on the chaos inside the Trump Administration. Miles Taylor identified himself as *Anonymous* at that time. He held important positions with the Department of Homeland Security.

[WALK THE WALK USA](#) A **SF Bay Area** based group high on strategy. Walk the Walk USA moves strategic funding to initiatives that utilize the most effective voter

engagement tactics, in the most competitive geographies, supporting the most impactful voters. They fundraise and make grants to *local grassroots organizations run by people from the communities they serve*. These groups use research-proven tactics to engage communities to win. They promote Democratic issues in historically disenfranchised communities of color, and they are hard at work right now engaging voters.

Research shows that typical political fundraising is *not* the most effective way to win. Registering, empowering, and relationally mobilizing voters, especially those of color, who form the base of the Democratic party -- rather than contributing to big TV ad buys, or even top of the ticket candidates -- is a much more powerful approach.

[10 ways to be prepared and grounded now that Trump has won](#) by Daniel Hunter. This is a superb article full of resources to help you stay centered in trying times. ***“The key to taking effective action in a Trump world is to avoid perpetuating the autocrat’s goals of fear, isolation, exhaustion and disorientation.”***

[Waging Non-Violence](#) an excellent site providing inspiration and resources for those who wish to apply their spirited leadership on behalf of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

[Run for Something!](#) Political power starts at the local level and builds upwards. Shockingly, **60% of local races run unopposed**. Get people with solid values into any and every elected position possible. This organization offers strategy and support. Note: They are looking to invest in youngish people in order to build a political base that will last.

[Every Library](#) This organization is dynamite! **If you want to support something effective at mobilizing communities (including yours) and achieving real, tangible results, here it is.**

Libraries and librarians are under serious threat at the state and federal level. Every Library works with citizen groups around the country to help them be effective supporters for their libraries on Election Day. They are pro-bono consultants and advisors, working to fill in knowledge and skills gaps to get people to Vote YES for their library. **Trump has frozen all grant funding to libraries, archives and museums, the effects on libraries will be significant.**

Here is just one recent example of what they can effect:

March 24, 2025: Without warning or stakeholder input, this draconian budget proposal would have **shut down the oldest state library in America**, gutting support for every local library in the state. But within 90 minutes, EveryLibrary launched a

full-scale rapid response campaign—and **within 24 hours, lawmakers reversed course.** [Click here for full story...](#)

[Fight for the First](#) WORKING AGAINST BOOK BANS specifically.

A number of states are introducing proposed laws that would allow for **civil and criminal prosecution of librarians if a community member disliked the content of a book on the shelf. Don't let them get away with bullying our librarians, most of whom our middle-aged women, often single. They need our support.**

HOW COURAGEOUS is your California State representative? [COURAGE SCORE](#)

Courage Score is a tool that helps Californians hold their elected representatives in the State Assembly and Senate accountable. We do this by increasing transparency on how they vote on important bills and by helping constituents better understand the degree to which big money infects our political process.

[Climate Change Makers](#): **ONE HOUR PER WEEK** is all you need to make a real difference.

A fabulous group started by climate scientists driving no-brainer U.S. climate policy solutions forward year-round. Through sustained, high-impact civic engagement and timely, strategic campaigns, they hold elected officials accountable for climate action — and get results. They offer weekly Monday and Friday action hours in which they guide you through an issue and then you take action together right then and there. **What to expect?** A friendly host and facilitator who will provide everything you need to accomplish meaningful action *within* the hour. You'll be in the good company of climate-concerned people like you, mostly fellow busy (productive!) professionals juggling work, school, pets, kids, and happy hours. Show up when you can, take breaks when you need, and always feel better at the end of the hour! New to civic action? So is 60% of the Climate Changemakers network! You'll accomplish something timely and productive—zero prep or experience needed—just show up!

[Citizens Climate Lobby](#): **A Climate Change Organization.**

CCL is full of the people who were likely the kids we admired in school. This organization is intelligent, strategic and nonpartisan.

Their solution to climate change? Democracy. And they need you on the team. Citizens' Climate Lobby empowers people to understand their political power. They train you in how to approach your legislators as a team, lobby for quality climate legislation they have created (through extensive research) and shift the political narrative toward a liveable world. Their consistently respectful, nonpartisan approach to climate education is designed to create a broad, sustainable foundation to drive climate action across all

geographic regions and political inclinations. By building upon shared values rather than partisan divides, and empowering their supporters to work in keeping with the concerns of their local communities, they work towards the adoption of fair, effective, and sustainable climate change solutions.

[NY Times article about these impressive CCL folks!](#)

[GARRETT BUCKS Substack](#): A great guy from the midwest trying to make the world a better place. I just really enjoy what he posts. Reading it is a combination of empowerment and self-care. He re-stacks some terrific democracy heroes, so he is also a terrific resource. Here is one of his entries on taking action that I found delightful:

[*Thirty lonely but beautiful actions you can take right now which probably won't magically catalyze a mass movement against Trump but that are still wildly important. Why? Because others will see you do them, and it will make it easier for them to take their own \(slightly less lonely but equally beautiful\) action by your side*](#)

GET CREATIVE

Book and Website: [The Art of Activism: Making the Impossible Possible](#) by Patti Digh
Patti is a co-founder of [Center for Artistic Activism](#)

“Because all successful activism has been artistic activism”

The Art of Activism is an all-purpose guide to artistic activism, combining the creative power of the arts to move us emotionally with the strategic planning of activism necessary to bring about social change. With contemporary case studies and historical examples, chapters on cultural and cognitive theory, sections on what can be learned from unlikely sources like popular culture and marketing techniques, along with investigations into ethics and evaluation, explorations of the creative process and the importance of utopian thinking, and an attached workbook with over fifty exercises to practice, the co-founders of the [Center for Artistic Activism](#) take readers step-by-step through the process of becoming, or becoming even better, artistic activists.

CHANGE SOMEONE'S MIND

[ASO Communications](#): A story well told is the most powerful way to shift forward the minds of the others. **Know what to say and why it works.**

Anat Shenkar Osario is a political communications superhero. She is passionate and brilliant. And she offers the **tools we need to communicate powerfully** in ways that

shift the dial towards progressive political outcomes (aka: a world that works for all). **Seizing back the political narrative** (in my opinion) **is our #1 priority**. Combating the tsunami of lies polluting our culture and polarizing our communities is destroying our nation. ASO communications empowers us to speak effectively about what matters, and they offer tons of resources! Follow these links, study them and become a real change agent. You Will Make a Difference.

To experience what becomes possible when we know what to say and how, listen to Anat's podcast series [Words to Win By](#). *Words to Win By, formerly called Brave New Words, takes listeners on a journey around the globe with renowned communications researcher and campaign advisor Anat Shenker-Osorio as she unpacks real-world narrative shifts that led to real-world victories.*

Here are the basics:

1. **Lead with values, such as freedom and equality**, naming that they're shared **across races, classes, abilities, and backgrounds**.
2. **Name the culprits** and their motivations in perpetuating harms and scapegoating Black, brown, disabled and LGBTQ+ Americans.
3. **Combat cynicism by highlighting past and recent victories** we've achieved through collective action and unity.
4. **Close with a vision for a better future** that we will achieve.
5. **DO NOT repeat the opposition's claims** in order to refute them. Statements like "DEI is not to blame" or "having more diversity does not weaken our workforce" merely help cement the opposition's narrative.

ASO Communications Toolkits:

[Freedom over Fascism Toolkit](#): This feels almost like a book. So be prepared to dig in with some focus.

Focused Communication Tools (these are awesome!)

[Liberty and Justice for All: Confronting MAGA's Anti-DEI efforts to resegregate our country](#). Having seized control of the federal government, MAGA Republicans and their billionaire backers are trying to resegregate our country. They have made DEI – Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion – their latest bogeyman and pretext to purge a wide range of institutions.

[Freedom to be ourselves: Defeating MAGA's Anti-Trans Attacks](#)

MAGA Republicans and their billionaire backers have scapegoated and harmed transgender people as part of a broader attempt to seize power and take away our freedoms.

[Here to Stay: How to talk about MAGA's authoritarian agenda on immigration](#) (c4)

From the violent seizure of Native land to Jim Crow segregation to MAGA's ascendancy, a powerful few have always tried to control the many by selecting a scapegoat to shame and blame.

CREATE AN AFFINITY GROUP

Community creates the conditions for courage and courage is a contagion we need to spread.

For inspiration start with this film: [Join or Die: A Film About Why You Should Join a Club \(And Why the Fate of America depends on it!\)](#) Available on Netflix and based on the work of Robert Putnam and his groundbreaking book: [Bowling Alone. The Collapse and Revival of American Community](#).

[Choose Democracy](#) reports that in Chile under a repressive regime, the “affinity group” model was a way to help keep people safe as they took risky actions. The process is simple enough: gather some people together who share your concerns and are ready to act together. Whether your actions are high-risk or low — you’ll benefit from the support!

[Good instructions on creating an affinity group here.](#)

[Democracy Forward](#), the dynamite legal network leading the charge against the Trump administration’s dismantling of our institutions is encouraging folks to hold [Dinners for Democracy](#). Sign up and they’ll give you their free toolkit.

Red, Wine and Blue’s [Trouble Nation](#) is where you can go to get resources and support for starting a local group of badass women who can get sh*t done!

Books

We are in for a long haul. Educating ourselves on what works to bring down authoritarian regimes is empowering. One thing is clear: The most effective path is non-violent resistance and acts of non-cooperation. (Forgive me that these links are to Amazon. I like the reviews there and you can always look for these books at your local booksellers, always a great option!)

George Lakoff's [Little Blue Book](#): “Republicans offer values. Democrats offer policies. Guess what? Values often win, even when the policies are more popular. It’s about time Democrats learned how to talk (and think) in terms of the underlying values that make them Democrats -- values that are more widely shared by Americans than the values Republicans espouse. Here’s the essential handbook for thinking and talking Democratic – must reading not only for every Democrat but for every responsible citizen.” —Robert B. Reich, Chancellor’s Professor of Public Policy, University of California, Berkeley.

[How We Win by George Lakey](#) Beginning as a trainer in the civil rights movement of the 1960s, George Lakey has spent decades helping direct action tactics flourish and succeed on the front lines of social change. Now, in this timely and down-to-earth guide, he passes the torch to a new generation of activists. Lakey looks to successful campaigns across the world to help us see what has worked, what hasn’t, and why: from choosing the right target to designing a creative campaign; from avoiding burnout within your group to building a movement of movements to achieve real progressive victories.

Enjoy this **podcast** with George describing some these ideas: [39 Ways to Non-Violently Overthrow a Dictator](#)

[Civil Resistance by Erica Chenoweth](#) In *Civil Resistance: What Everyone Needs to Know*, Erica Chenoweth—one of the world's leading scholars on the topic—explains what civil resistance is, how it works, why it sometimes fails, how violence and repression affect it, and the long-term impacts of such resistance.

SELF CARE RESOURCES:

The power to regulate your nervous system is golden. It is **the key** to resilience and your capacity to keep going forward, rather than curling into the fetal position. Luckily, we live in a golden age of resources for self care. We need to use these resources. So, ask yourself this question: Do you have the ability to stop, pause, and choose something delicious for your being? If not, then please consider making this capacity to pause and choose well-being your highest priority.

All resources I recommend are FREE.

Core practices to help you on a daily basis are available through apps, like [Insight Timer](#) which is so richly populated with helpful offerings it is a universe unto itself. Check it out for meditation, mindfulness, breathwork and more. Choose something short and doable to begin with and you are more likely to do it again and maintain a practice.

Breathwork is one of the most powerful ways to stop the dopamine looping during times of uncertainty or doomscrolling. Check out [Insight Timer](#) (**Bree Melanson's** "Breathwork for Transformation" is a great one). Also the [Othership Breathwork App*](#) dedicated to providing excellent guided breathwork sessions. Your breath and emotions are strongly connected in the brain. Change your breath even for 4 minutes, and you'll change your state of being. *(Othership offers a number of free breathwork sessions for you to try and enjoy. If you want to go deeper into their offerings there is a paywall.)

Yoga Nidra: Yoga Nidra is a guided body-based awareness practice that has been shown to be effective for treating PTSD in veterans. Some vets claim it was the only thing to help them stop the racing in their traumatized nervous systems. People practice all over the world and guided sessions can be found, again, at [Insight Timer](#). (I highly recommend **Jennifer Piercy**) This YouTube channel is full of Yoga Nidra sessions: [Ally Boothroyd/Sarovara Yoga](#). Do a search and you are likely to find many others.

Music: When was the last time you just listened to music for pure joy of it? If you already do, good for you! But, many have forgotten this easily accessible gift from the muses. Tune in, turn on, and feel your energy shift.

Meditation reboot for free: At [Dhamma.org](#) you can register for 10-day Vipassana meditation trainings. It is **free, including food and lodging**.

Laugh: [Dry Bar Comedy](#) is a platform and YouTube channel whose mission it is to offer comedy for everyone in the family.

More coming...keep checking back.

Questions or comments? You can reach me at **Christine@KSQD.org**

