

Chapter 1 The Movement for Good

I grew up in a town of 1,000 people in southern Illinois. As the saying goes, “everyone knows everyone,” and the people who reside there believe in the importance of looking out for one’s neighbor. You support them when times are tough—maybe not always with money, but with time, emotional support, food, and whatever else you can offer.

In the area where I grew up, the belief in helping someone close to you was rooted in deep tradition. You stand up for people in need. You know them personally, you care deeply, and you build relationships with the people surrounding the families. There is something to be said about rural philanthropy and contributing to a community when you know the beneficiary personally.

This is how I grew up. This was my perception of philanthropy and the way the world worked. If someone needed help, you stepped in. If someone experienced a tragedy, you were on call.

As I grew up and left this small town in Illinois, I noticed things were slightly different in the rest of the world.

I traveled to cities and took jobs in philanthropy. To my surprise, people would help those they *didn’t* necessarily know personally. They would react to a story, a symbol, and a dream of what life could be. Not someone they knew.

Early into my first job in fundraising I realized I was taking on the role of storyteller—the one conveying the hurt to those able to make it

possible. I was the one who made the issue, the need, the pain come to life. And I was responsible for getting people to act. Whether it was a \$10 donation or a \$10,000 donation, I was the one who made the story of need relevant.

As an analytical person, at times I would ask myself: *How is it possible that someone can react and be a part of something when they don't know the people involved?*

How is it that thousands of people can be moved when a call comes out about an issue or a family or even an injustice when they weren't a part of it?

It is an interesting point to think about. Do you ever wonder how so many people could participate with a group of people they don't know, had never met, and had little experience with the issue?

It took me a while, but I finally figured it out. These individuals, including myself at times, would participate in efforts that we will call *movements* because those who can't stand up for themselves need the voices of strangers to be there for them. We as individuals are tied to the emotional need and support of such a group of people that it is necessary for those who will never experience the cause or touch the hand of a person in need to rise above and be vocal on their behalf. Because they believed in the power of adding their voice, action, and support to the cause, all in the hope that someone, somewhere will hear it. And because of their action, the unknown and the uneducated will hear, act, and ultimately attach themselves to the same cause.

Some would say this seems like wishful thinking. But in reality it is the thinking of a powerful citizenry that's ready to make the plight of others known, and take meaningful action.

That is the power of social movements for good.

We forget at times how rational we are, how we are humans.

We are a race of humans and emotions. Seeking to validate, participate, and lift up those who we think need such actions.

Social movements for good is a defining moment in time in which people, beyond those affected, believe in the power of the issue that affects those who need a voice. They rise up with others to build the awareness and the clout necessary to transform an issue into a cause and a cause into a moment of inspiration.

Social movements for good are created because of the beneficiary *and* the need for the participant to fulfill their personal passion—a dual

motivation that yields a powerful mechanism when leveraged among so many individuals.

I mention all of this because it is a belief that has been rooted in the way I perceive human and philanthropic behavior today.

In the preface to this book, I shared my personal experience with Hands Across America. I had no idea what I was doing or what holding hands meant for so many others. It was just a weird thing to me. A concept of showing, as my mom said to me, support for an issue I should care about. In fact, I don't even remember what the issue was.

This by far, was one of my first experiences growing up and participating in a social movement. Looking back now, 30 years later, I am still astonished at the power this social movement had on so many others and how my action that day meant something.

So what do these social movements say about us?

It's an interesting take on the role movements like these have for us. Some will say these movements build momentum. Others will say it is a flash in the dark for so many issues and causes to be had. Then why do we participate? Why do we gather, tell stories, and organize around a symbol or a sign of commitment?

That's what this book is about.

This book explores the reasons why we pour ice on our heads to show support for ALS, put a red nose on our face to fight hunger, or carry a puzzle piece with us to show our support for autism research.

It's the reason my mom told me to join hands with 6.5 million other people to make a difference.

Social movements are at the core of who we are as a society. Each year, we witness new emerging movements. Some take off, while others will die shortly, without a breath of air.

Before exploring social movements for good, let's explore what defines a movement.

DEFINING MOVEMENTS

The concept of a movement can take many forms. Some might say that the organization they work for is creating a movement to help people overcome a specific issue. Others will say the movement they are creating is more conceptual and doesn't need an organization to champion the work.

Although any injustice-, challenge-, or awareness-building effort can gain some traction, not all will reach the movement stage and reach a mass audience. Did you know that approximately 3,000 events and rallies occur at the National Mall in Washington, D.C. every year?¹ Given the amount of potential interests in issues and policies, every person who rallies and participates hopes that their participation in the movement they believe in will get the notoriety of media and the public. But not all do.

A movement is a group of people working together for a common social, political, or cultural goal. At times, the movement's focus can be an injustice, an opportunity for change, and even a promotion of a theory or concept. The movement requires a key element to make it move from an idea of a few to an idea of many: people. People play an important role in the movement building of today. People are needed to spread the word of the movement's success, recruit others to create a larger group, and build the infrastructure to maintain the movement over a period of time.

But that is where the movement begins to either grow into social movement status or wither. If you look at the most successful movements, the movement builders (leaders who are masterminds behind social organizing) create a movement that builds in importance for the public at large, a narrative of belief for the general public, and an onset of relevant and timely stories for the media to pay attention to. The unsuccessful movements of our time lack the relevancy for the general public to care, a broader story of challenge, a need to overcome that the media can report beyond a niche community facing struggle, and, most importantly, the felt need that the time for change is now. Therefore, the movement, while important, doesn't reach the mass scale of other social movements and will eventually fade as the impassioned organizers begin to see little traction beyond the initial phases of organization.

The term "social movement" was introduced in 1848 by the German sociologist Lorenz von Stein in his book *Socialist and Communist Movements since the Third French Revolution* (1848). Noted sociologists and scholars such as Charles Tilly define social movements as a series of contentious performances, displays, and campaigns by which ordinary people make collective claims on others. Another scholar, Sidney Tarrow, defines social movements as *collective challenges*

¹<http://dc.about.com/od/specialevents/tp/National-Mall-Events.htm>.

[to elites, authorities, other groups, or cultural codes] by people with common purposes and solidarity in sustained interactions with elites, opponents, and authorities.

These definitions help us understand that social movements require a collective power beyond small-group organizing to build and sustain a long-term goal of change for an issue. The collective power must come from groups of people—those affected and those caring for those affected—who demonstrate to leaders, as well as those who believe otherwise at the local or federal level that change is necessary. This includes a large audience who is calling on those who have the power to act to, then, act.

SOCIAL MOVEMENTS VERSUS SOCIAL MOVEMENTS FOR GOOD

Some will wonder how a “social movement” and a “social movement for good” really differ. When does a social movement become a social movement for good?

In looking at how social movements are defined, most movements (not all) begin by a group of people noticing an issue they believe needs attention. As explained in Figure 1.1, social movements for good, the concept, is based on raising the awareness of an issue to generate support for the benefit of an aggrieved group. Support for this group grows until change is achieved. This won’t happen, though, until society has stepped forward with the public’s interest and support for the issue.

Social movements for good are also rooted in the idea of a group of people combining resources to make an issue more apparent and noteworthy, even though the outcome may not be realized through policy change, but rather through further individual support. Take the Movember movement, for example. The purpose of Movember is to increase the public’s awareness of prostate cancer, to urge people to take personal action to detect prostate cancer, and ultimately change the discourse on the issue. Although policy change may be a long-term goal, the movement’s purpose didn’t start out with driving policy change, but rather individual change as a result of the movement generating viral attention.

Social movements for good create a narrative of action that can go beyond protest and awareness building. Social movements for good provide an opportunity for people to organize around the issue, volunteer in local communities where that issue may be prevalent, and draw

	Social Movements	Social Movements for Good
Goal	Generate policy or cultural change.	Generate awareness about an issue or population in need of support and resources.
Disruption	Disrupting public discourse in an effort to generate awareness.	Disrupting current behavior in an effort to take personal action onto themselves or for a group of people.
Time frame	Public attitudes and cultural change can be affected overnight and may take years to be realized.	Issues in social movements for good are long-term and require sustained action and support beyond years of awareness and activity.
Participants	Individuals who are inspired to action on behalf of a group of people like themselves or a disparate group that lacks the rights and abilities the participants have been afforded.	Individuals who see how personal action can change a course for themselves or someone else. As a result of their personal action, they are affected or the population they want to help is affected because of their resources and support.
Narrative	Story of inequality, lack of resources, or social standing due to an injustice. The story is based on a population that is rising or of significance and lacks the potential rights afforded the majority.	Story of general knowledge and relevance based on a lack of understanding of an issue and the people affected. Through awareness and personal support through various actions, an issue can be prevented or supported by the participant.

FIGURE 1.1 Comparison of Social Movements and Social Movements for Good

upon their own resources to affect change. Action to help the oppressed or those represented by the movement doesn't need a policy to change *per se*, but rather the attention and interest of a new group of people who were unaware the challenges were present and not that far removed from them.

Social movements for good help the individual realize the relevancy of an issue and how acting through several means can change the course of an affected individual. In contrast to social movements focused solely on injustice and policy change in the immediate term, social movements for good establish a platform of awareness, individual action, outcomes, and sustainable change beyond initial participation and triumph. A social movement for good is a long-term educational and action-driving platform that can withstand policy issues and builds the army necessary for support through time, talent, and resources.

WHY DO SOCIAL MOVEMENTS FOR GOOD MATTER?

Social movements for good establish a mass platform of action for a population. The social movement for good platform for an issue helps inform and cultivate the awareness necessary to help prevent an issue from affecting more people. Social movements for good have the power to generate awareness to produce results in areas such as public policy and healthcare. The social movement for good space is necessary to drive the preventable measures that help the general population live longer, productive, happier lives. For example, movements on drug prevention, cancer screenings, or tobacco cessation all provide a sense of preventable measures that the general public, once aware, can overcome. Taken in the form of public service announcements (PSAs), media engagement, and small personal actions, this type of social movement is based on individual awareness and personal action—potentially toward themselves or people close to them.

Social movements for good support the interests of a community whose lives are affected by an issue. This group of people is often unable to overcome this issue without the additional support of dedicated community activists and donors. These social movements bring attention to an issue because it concerns a mass of people so great they are hard to ignore. These people need support systems and resources they are

unable to provide by themselves and have therefore created institutions built through public support. This type of movement aims to build research funds, fund schools, and support workforce education. In this case, the individuals themselves may not be personally affected, but they are drawn to the issue because of relevant messages and resonance with the people affected.

FOUR PHASES OF SOCIAL MOVEMENTS FOR GOOD

Social movements for good take a substantial amount of human capital to generate interest from the onset or gather people who share already established common interests. Typically, these movements begin to develop a starter audience or group of early adopters. This group then inspires additional followers to join the movement in fighting for an issue, generating awareness, or helping a population. From there, the group begins to accelerate through a sequence of public tools that build mass awareness and ultimately drive viral participation in an action or activity. This is the peak of the movement and what generates the general public's interest.

From here, the movement ideally maintains its positioning and sustains ongoing actions through awareness efforts, activities, and messages that detail the ever-growing success of the movement itself. Over time, the movement sustains its performance as an annual tool to generate further headway on the issue or support for the people. Benchmarks, as defined by the movement builder or leader, become achieved and the movement moves into a formal and sustained phase of development as a long-term solution of the issue and people affected. The final outcome is a cycle of generating and building interest, heightened participation, and sustained long-term growth. This is conceptually displayed in the four phases of how social movements for good develop and sustain over time.

Phase 1: Building and Gathering a Group of Believers

The first step in social good movement building is about creating a group of believers. This initial group of believers typically represents the following groups: early adopters, those already affected, small groups already organized for the cause, and immediate circles of influence represented

by close friends, family, and peers. The social movement for good in the early phase is essentially a shell and structure for the already converted to convene for a common theme and concept of action.

At times, this phase can be very challenging for the movement builder. If various groups are being convened, they may represent common yet disparate views on the issue. The movement builder creates a major concept and theme, but must understand the smaller issues that niche audiences may have a particular interest in exploiting.

This happens when the issue may be broad, with specialized challenges affecting various populations within the issue. For example, autism involves a spectrum. Within that spectrum, there are certain behaviors and signs that develop in some people that do not display in others. Asperger's Syndrome, which falls on the spectrum, does not describe everyone with autism. This group of concerned advocates and parents may want to ensure that their story within the autism narrative is particularly highlighted to help them generate awareness and understanding.

Phase 2: Letting the People Take Action with One Another

In this phase, movement builders have developed the tools and resources needed to help those who are involved with the movement to get organized. Through actions like signing a petition, fundraising, and volunteering, the populace of the movement can take the crucial step to generate awareness and solicit the support of their peers.

At this phase, we begin to see small-group organizing take shape. Small groups begin to form geographically and through shared connections to the issue. In addition, we begin to see the formations of leadership take shape within communities. These leaders, whether through formal or informal roles, begin to focus their energy on supporting the various groups forming around the issue. They will provide institutional and organizational support to each small group, become a bridge for the movement builder, and craft the localized message or approach for the movement in the niche group they represent.

Localized goals and outcomes that support the larger national benchmarks are beginning to take shape. The movement's outcomes as defined by a combination of support from the local and national efforts

are determined through leaders working with various small groups and creating easily identifiable and achievable actions. In the end, goals and benchmarks once seen as unattainable are now closer and closer to the broad goal of mass awareness and participation.

During this phase, individuals begin to help spread the word through the use of online tools and advocacy efforts. Platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, and Change.org attract followers and help ignite the beginning of a social movement. Through organized activities, local groups and organizers help the unconverted understand how the issue affects them personally and locally, draw that attention to take an action, and spread the message.

Phase 3: The Pinnacle Action

After gathering like-minded individuals, people close to and affected by the issue as well as movement builders create a pinnacle action to draw viral participation by the general public. Although momentum for the issue is growing, a notable awareness builder along with meaningful action is still necessary to draw in the vast majority of the general public that has yet to hear or understand the issue.

The pinnacle action is a concerted action taken by the mass public to show support for the social movement for good. This action, either done personally or in concert with others, allows networks to share in the expression all while delivering an educational sign to others that the issue matters to them and should be of the utmost importance to those around them.

The pinnacle action can take many forms. These forms can represent symbols, actions, activities, and events. Each one, in and of itself, helps the community become aware of the issue. The social movements for good that have built a viral audience tend to rally around a symbol or activity that is performed by oneself so as to stand out from the crowd. Whether it is wearing a shirt, changing a profile image in social media, or deciding to grow facial hair, all actions are outwardly focused to networks and groups of people in an effort to drive attention to the outlier.

Once the converted and small groups perform the action, what next needs to be done is to go viral through social media to elevate and deliver the narrative to those that have not yet been exposed to the story. The media takes the story of the few who are working for a social movement for good to the public and drives ongoing action by others. This is supported by social media sharing, storytelling through new small groups, and nontraditional media such as blogs and personal platforms. The result is a new mass of individuals intentionally acting on behalf of those affected or themselves. The social movement for good is born and now has reached a level of importance in everyday interests.

Phase 4: Sustaining the Movement

After the pinnacle action and the story in the media is beginning to dwindle, the movement builders focus on the sustained importance of the social movement for good. This means the movement needs to move from one-time actions to consistent actions for the population served. Movement builders at this phase create platforms to move from initial action taken in the pinnacle action phase to ongoing sustained support. This is done through a series of various activism and fundraising approaches.

Movement builders will create steps for activism to convert cause enthusiasts to sustained cause supporters. These steps increase in intensity but offer the individual a chance to elevate their knowledge while also taking actions for the betterment of the population served. The steps can range from taking online activist support such as “liking” and sharing to offline engagements like organizing local events and meeting with local leaders and stakeholders. Each activism step gets the individual closer and closer to the issue while making them feel the movement is closer to achieving its said goal.

Movement builders also create steps to show and raise support for the issue. After the pinnacle action is created, the individual is brought through a series of communications to show how small gifts can lead to demonstrable change for the individual. A common tactic is to bring the individual in at small levels to show how such dollars can provide

tangible goods and services to the ones affected, resulting in small giving by the participant. By showing how financial support and fundraising dollars can make an additional impact beyond activism, the movement builder creates a story of the need to take holistic action for the issue and thus funds are now needed to sustain the movement in the long term. At this stage, a case for support is created with a relevant narrative that will inform the individual of how each and every dollar can affect the individual and keep the movement going. By building a new story each time the individual provides financial support, the movement builder is able to carry on a message of hope and change and how both the action and financial resources of the movement participant have affected individual people.

In the sustaining phase, the movement builder begins to create ongoing campaigns that may draw in new audiences and actions. These annual campaigns, both fundraising and activism, provide a mechanism to reignite the interest of the past participants. Through marketing campaigns, individuals who initially reacted are educated on where the issue is today and how important it is to continue contributing. Through fundraising campaigns, past pinnacle action participants witness the collective power of dollars raised on a group of people and how their support can make the difference in just one individual. Each of these campaigns grows on each other and builds on the narrative delivered at the beginning of the social movement—take action and awareness for oneself and others—in the spirit of making a difference.

SOCIAL MOVEMENTS FOR GOOD—A NEW GENERATION OF ACTIVISM

Creating today's social movements is different from what it was like in the past. Today's social movements require narratives that can be easily shared—personally and digitally. Today's social movements are more challenged than ever to get to the viral stage given the rise in mass media outlets and the onslaught of shorter messages than ever before.

But what is exciting is that a new generation of activists in the United States is equipped with the interests and tools to join the movement builders of today. This generation of Millennials, born after 1980, have been supporting through their actions of giving their time, talent,

and financial resources to causes they care about at astounding rates. Specifically, here are some facts from the Millennial Impact Project and Reports from 2010 to 2015 that speak to the power of this generation to participate in social movements:

- 93 percent of Millennials gave to nonprofit organizations in 2010, with 21 percent giving \$1,000 or more during the course of the year, but the bulk of giving was distributed in small increments to many organizations (Millennial 2011).
- 85 percent of Millennials are motivated to give by a compelling mission or cause, and 56 percent by a personal connection or trust in the leadership of the organization (2011).
- Millennials are influenced by the decisions and behaviors of their peers.
- Millennials support issues rather than organizations.
- Nearly 70 percent of Millennials surveyed are willing to raise money on behalf of a nonprofit they care about (2013).
- By a margin of more than two to one, Millennials who volunteer for nonprofits are more likely to make donations (2012).
- 87 percent felt encouraged to volunteer or participate in their company's cause work and community initiatives (2014).
- In the past year, respondents took one or more of the following actions as a result of an email request: signed a petition or pledge (52 percent), donated (52 percent), and shared or forwarded news or updates (49 percent) (2013).
- Nearly three-quarters of respondents said they would tell Facebook friends about great nonprofit events, 68 percent said they would tell friends about impressive statistics about a cause or issue, and 65 percent said they would promote a nonprofit's great story or accomplishment. In addition, 61 percent said they would use Facebook to alert friends to volunteering opportunities and needs (2012).

Today, we have the population ready, so now more than ever is the right time for movement builders to build momentum, make their mark in history, and sustain the issue with the general public. This book will help those who have just created institutions, have formulated ideas, and have organized a group of people around a common purpose understand how social movements for good have been created and sustained in the eyes of the general public.

This book will share stories from both sides—the movement builders and the participants. It is a collection of observations from these two important social movement pillars. This book discusses the intention, strategy, and outcome the movement builders were able to create with their social movements for good. We will also highlight the stories of regular people participating in the movements. We will showcase what they think about the movement, the message, the meaning, and where they are now in the movement's phases of growth.

Now is the time to create, act, and move—what better way to create the social movements of tomorrow than by understanding the success of yesterday's social movements for good. It is time to build and to start a social movement for good.