



Name _____

Date _____

Doing Something

Let's say you want to see some change in your community, your nation, or the world. How does one little person make an impact? Well, let's use Dr. Martin Luther King's six steps as guides to developing your plan of action.

1. Information gathering: *Collect and analyze information. What is the history of the problem? Who is involved? What are their interests and values? Try to see the problem from as many sides as possible. Make sure that your position makes sense in light of the research that you've done.*

Where will you go to research information on your issue? How will you be sure that you get information about all perspectives of the issue?

2. Education: The easiest way to begin working for change is to educate people about the problem you're trying to address. Remember the "power" to change someone else's mind can come in the form of cooperation (hugs), persuasion (carrots), and threats (sticks). As part of this unit you will use your information to write a persuasive essay for the purpose of educating people about your cause. What else can you do?

How can you present your educational materials in the form of cooperation and persuasion, so that people will genuinely consider your perspective? Who will you educate and how?

3. Personal commitment: *To protest bus segregation in Montgomery, African Americans walked, carpooled, and biked to work despite the inconvenience. For that year, their lives were much more difficult, but their commitment resulted in a great step forward in the American Civil Rights Movement.*

What things can you do personally to address the problem? What choices, however small, might help the cause or inspire others?

4. Negotiations: <i>Discussion is an important part of conflict resolution.</i>
With whom can you speak about the issue? Write down the levels of authority that you can appeal to for discussion and change. (For example: parent, teacher, principle, school board, superintendent, etc).
5. Direct Action: <i>During the Civil Rights Movement, students both black and white, sat together at lunch counters that refused blacks service. Waitresses would try to get them to move, shop owners would try to throw them out, and onlookers would even throw things at them or hit them. They remained in their seats without responding to insults or violence. The result was that people all over the United States began to question segregation.</i>
You probably won't have to get to this step for your cause. However, if negotiations fail, if the superintendent refuses to help you, what would you do?
6. Reconciliation: <i>Even when civil rights activists were breaking laws, their goal was always to forge connections with their adversaries, not resentment and anger.</i>
How can you work to build connections with those on the other side of the argument?