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Do It Anyway: The New Generation Of Activists



Synopsis

If you care about social change but hate feel-good platitudes, *Do It Anyway* is the book for you. Courtney Martin's rich profiles of the new generation of activists dig deep, to ask the questions that really matter: How do you create a meaningful life? Can one person even begin to make a difference in our hugely complex, globalized world?

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Courtney Martin provides the reader with revealing profiles of eight young activists. Martin digs behind the actions to uncover what motivates these young people to devote themselves to making a difference in the world. Most of the activists portrayed are not seeking to change the world on a grand scale. Instead they are taking action within their communities to have an impact where they live. The portraits reveal each person's struggle to find and live his or her calling. Martin describes the false starts many of the individuals experienced on their way to finding their cause. Even then, many continue to wrestle with doubt. This is not a book on how to become an activist or how to do community organizing. It is a volume of human stories of people who care about how they use their lives for the common good. Martin's profiles assure us that there are young people who deeply care about their fellow humans. The book may be most useful to other young adults who are searching how to make a difference in their communities. Martin avoids romanticizing the activists she profiles. She reveals the struggles, doubts, and faults of those she writes about while also holding up their gifts, commitment, and courage. The book is well written. The people profiled are portrayed in their

humanness and, as a result, can simultaneously evoke admiration and annoyance in the reader. Do not expect an activist manual. Do expect insight into the difficulty of becoming an activist. Then be inspired to do it anyway.

I devoured Martin's latest work of non fiction, "Do It Anyway," because of her accuracy and the way it speaks to my generation. I truly admire her work because she is a social activist in her own right--choosing to write 200 pages about other activists is social change in itself. She uses her power and privilege in order to bring attention to some serious issues at hand. It is a wake up call for all of us. I also admire the idealism within this work. I think that idealism can often be described as naive (as said by Publisher's Weekly), but it's actually not something to be ashamed of. Idealism means hoping for the best outcome and owning feelings of optimism--which is exactly what we need in our country right now. Thanks, Ms. Martin!

The author challenges us to do something vs. nothing, to know we can't save everyone yet to make a difference anyway. This same wisdom has been hard earned in my own life but the alternatives are despair or moral failure or sheer self-indulgence. I also came away appreciating her generation more.

Courtney's book makes it seem possible to change the world one person at a time. Through inspiring stories of real people fulfilling their own need to do something and meeting the need they see in the world Courtney lights a fire in all of us. This book is a great read for teens and adults, who want to know what it actually looks like to make change happen. The book is beautifully written, heartfelt and smart -- and, will get under your skin - pushing you just a little, to do something!

Do It Anyway: The New Generation Of Activists by Courtney E. Martin is a book I received through the Early Reviewers program on LibraryThing. Ms. Martin wrote the book because of the desperation she felt in her own activist life. She wanted to look at and write about what activism meant for her generation, so she sought out and interviewed eight young men and women to learn about what they do and why they do it. Each profile makes up one chapter of the book. The book begins on a somber note with the tale of Rachel Corrie, the Washingtonian peace activist who sacrificed herself in Israel to protect Palestinians whose house was to be demolished. Martin uses Corrie's story as a jumping off point, saying that "we must not envy that end, but turn to 'live people' for our inspiration..." Ms. Martin does just that by talking to people like Raul Diaz, a prison reentry

social worker in Los Angeles; Nia Martin-Robinson, an environmental justice activist in DC; and Tyrone Boucher, a radical philanthropist in Philadelphia. I really like Ms. Martin's style of writing and her ability to share these individuals' stories and their struggles. Martin also calls out the problems with bureaucracy and mainstream solutions that each of them have to deal with. I was especially taken by the point she makes that foundations and other nonprofits perpetuate the problems that they're trying to solve by not questioning the system that they're a part of as much as they probably could. I was also pleased to learn about young people of privilege who are uncomfortable with that and want to do something about it. In this post-Reagan era of greed and selfishness, it was refreshing to read about. In general, I found the book refreshing and inspiring. The mainstream media seems to take great pleasure in looking down on younger generations. It has always done this, and it has always been wrong.

As someone who drank a lot of the "save the world" cool-aid as a kid in the 90s, and experienced major activist burn out after college, this was a great read. I particularly loved the wisdom shared in the last chapter, framed in a discussion of good failure (as opposed to some simplified list of recommended actions). Inspiring, truthful, wise and helpful book, especially for anyone overwhelmed by socio-econ-political realities.

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