

The Activist's Bottom Line

by Angela Smith, HEAL National Coordinator/Co-Founder

Regardless of the cause(s) you support, to what extent is your activism reasonable versus emotional? For myself, I am moved by mercy and compassion while committed to truth and justice. I've found many causes can or do find ways to pull at my heartstrings but when I ask questions they are not prepared to answer often they respond with hostility. And, this leads me to doing my own independent research to determine the answers to the questions I posed and finding discrepancies in claims made regarding many causes of interest. Then, I tend to tweet my findings and show sisterly or brotherly love to the cause(s) where discrepancies are found. And, I would keep asking questions to the nonprofits or activist groups that lead me to question more, but, have found that those unwilling to answer questions, or refuse to have honest critical thinking discussions while citing sources in context, are more like cults and likely cults who use emotional cues and manipulation to encourage donations and volunteer (unpaid labor) support.

So, HEAL is always willing to answer questions. We also ask questions and research to get answers where not otherwise provided. We provide multiple platforms and ways for those with opposing views to discuss or debate any topic we cover and we are willing to take either side of any issue we cover in any debate. So, we also do a lot of research and focus primarily on addressing issues that involve abandoned humans who due to misfortune, disability, or reputation have been discarded to segregated congregate care where contact with the outside world is restricted and reporting any human trafficking, abuse, or other issues is often permitted to be done solely in-house without notifying legitimate law enforcement agencies. And, as a result, we have an epidemic of victims who believe this is intentional because it seems so widespread. But, I don't believe the government is intentionally doing that in most cases, but, understand why some people feel that way.

So, I think you have a group of activists who want to protect all the children everywhere from domestic violence. And, I think that group demands and lobbies to get laws passed to take children away from violent homes. Then, I think that group doesn't pony up to offer their own homes up to the children now displaced and needing a loving home. And, then that group demands the government solve the problem of the foster care crisis. And, then I think the government looks for any bed available and considers cost as a primary consideration because we need to be frugal or fiscally conservative. And, then sometimes the most unscrupulous horrifying people see it as an opportunity and open a group home or boarding school in Arizona where such can operate without any oversight legally. Then, they write all the social service placement agencies (public and private) and let them know they have beds available and a discount for government wards. And, then they hold the kids incommunicado and often "home-school" with questionable materials without the kids often even knowing what to do about it. So, it is likely better if the kids had stayed with their families or the violent offender was removed and the children stayed with family. Nobody is perfect and I'd take the freedom of living at home over the hell of segregated congregate care in the USA every time. I prefer the devil(s) I know and knowing the terrain with access to dial 911 or report to a public school

administrator if I'm being abused and I'd like kids to be informed about the real options before taking them away from their families. They should get to choose and if a kid doesn't want to leave the parent that some in society feel is unfit then don't separate them unless there is a better parent ready and able to do the job.

But, that's all just one example. And, the bottom line is if you want to change laws, be reasonable and consider as many factors as possible in a reasonable manner that respects the opposition enough to consider their potential objections and how to kindly address them. And, if lobbying or legislative activism isn't right for you, direct care and service is the way to go. This means actually providing food, shelter, clothing, and other services to those in need who might otherwise end up in segregated congregate care or euthanized depending on species.

And, if you just like emotional appeals and feeling good about yourself because you donated to any charity whatsoever without looking into how they spend the money or what they consider a successful campaign record, you are likely a narcissist. If you truly cared about the cause, you'd make sure your money was well spent to address the issue you care about and if you do not know then you are doing it solely for some gratification or undeserved ego-boost because you can get a nice thank you doing something just for yourself too if a purchase is involved. So, legitimate activists who are able to be reasonable and appreciate that controversy comes with debate which requires considering divergent variables to best address a specific issue or cause, we welcome you even if we all disagree. And, HEAL's supporters and volunteers are ecumenical and politically diverse.

If a victim of crime, report it. If a witness to a crime, report it and know you won't know anything until arrests are made. Law enforcement appreciates tips but doesn't keep those reporting in the loop if not a victim or perpetrator. And, when activists report crimes police take it with a grain of salt because we all have an agenda which could impede proving the crime occurred beyond a reasonable doubt depending on what the cops were doing in the whole OJ case because that blew the whole deal. So, we're all imperfect and if we report criminal activity as consumer advocates or activists and state that we are that proudly and that's how we know or why our opinions should be respected then we need to remember the government shows the same respect to those we report they show to us. And, unless we are being reasonable with reliable facts and evidence then it will seem as if it is theatrical or a publicity stunt rather than an actual police or regulatory matter. So, keep that in mind and maybe when reporting crime leave your socio-political views out of it. The same goes for regulatory violations. That's the bottom line on how to be an effective activist.