



THE UNFINISHED SOCIAL ENTREPRENEUR



Bruised

a chapter from

The Unfinished Social Entrepreneur

Jonathan C. Lewis

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THE UNFINISHED SOCIAL ENTREPRENEUR

BY JONATHAN C. LEWIS

red press

PRAISE FOR THE UNFINISHED SOCIAL ENTREPRENEUR

“This book is fucking incredible. What a pleasure to read. Required reading. I think this will be one of the most important books in social entrepreneurship. I don’t actually know how Jonathan managed to capture this much nuance, wisdom, leadership and other things and never let it get boring. I read the whole thing in a day. I couldn’t put it down.”

—*Saul Garlick, Founder and Chairman, ThinkImpact*

“A book for our times. A witty, must-read primer for every social entrepreneur and every changemaker. Practical, hard-hitting advice coupled to important ethical questions confronting our field. A refreshing, unique look at the field of social entrepreneurship. Jonathan gives us the pragmatic guideposts we all need. The book I wish I had read in college.”

—*Premal Shah, President and Co-Founder, KIVA*

“Buckle up! From the Bolivian Andes to the California lowlands, Jonathan takes you for a ride that will shake your inner radical free. By turns erudite and irreverent, angry and inspiring, this riveting, remarkable book nails what it means to be a social entrepreneur. On Lewis’s rollicking road to enlightenment, you’ll laugh out loud and be moved to tears. You’ll meet an unforgettable cast of characters who have shaped one self-proclaimed “unfinished” social entrepreneur in his life’s quest to right all that’s wrong in the world. Read this book to rekindle your passion, re-right your compass, and restore your belief in what human beings can achieve. Read this book to renew your soul.”

—*Sally Osberg, President and CEO, Skoll Foundation*

“*The Unfinished Social Entrepreneur* is certainly a call to action, but it is equally a call to reflection, to celebration, to accountability. Jonathan’s voice is exuberant; ebullient; authentic. He is irreverent toward the current orthodoxies of social entrepreneurship and unapologetically seeks to reorient his reader to root motivations—

to be honestly engaged in demanding work that aligns our own needs with the core social and environmental challenges of our times. His is a wide-ranging, eclectic, inclusive mind. His vision is both grand and gritty, inspirational and everyday, inviting us to bridge and meld lofty ambition with practical reality.”

–*Tony Sheldon, Executive Director, Program on Social Enterprise, Yale School of Management*

“Lewis will make you laugh, cry or get angry, and then act! An impassioned plea to do change-making: citizen-get-off-your-ass. This is a good book! Saul Alinsky meets Dave Barry. Mandela meets Chris Rock.”

– *Michael Gordon, Arthur F. Thurnau Professor of Social Entrepreneurial Studies; Faculty Director, Center for Social Impact, Ross School of Business, University of Michigan*

“Jonathan humanizes social entrepreneurship. He talks to us in a straightforward way, illustrating with personal experience the ups and downs of a social change career. He reminds seasoned social entrepreneurs of the importance of a moral compass, of remembering whose side we’re on, and of deciding which enemies are worth making. Funny; engaging; deep. The book I wish I’d read when I was 18.”

–*Martin Burt, Founder and CEO, Fundación Paraguaya*

“You had me at the book jacket... I don’t even need to read this book to know that it’s amazing. I mean, its Jonathan Lewis writing about social entrepreneurship. There will be hot dogs, bad puns and sage advice. And you won’t be able to put it down...”

–*Randall Kempner, Executive Director, Aspen Network of Development Entrepreneurs (ANDE)*

“Jonathan’s chapter on whiteness and privilege is stunning. It is one of the best pieces written by a white person I’ve ever read. He is humble, thoughtful and brave as he describes his lived experience of navigating the delicate dynamics of race. Beautifully written; deeply heartfelt.”

–*Akaya Windwood, President, Rockwood Leadership Institute*

“I love the line: ‘What is social entrepreneurship if not a love affair with justice?’ Well-said.”

–*Roshan Paul, Co-Founder and CEO, Amani Institute,
(Brazil and Kenya)*

“Jonathan captures the feelings we don’t dare share openly. Stunning and engaging. I found myself nodding, laughing and at times tearful.”

–*Chingwell Mutombu, Managing Director, Women Rising*

“I am going buy a copy for my daughter to read when she turns 18. She is 12 now and repeatedly tells me she wants to be an activist when she grows up. We live in Lagos, Nigeria, a case study in inequality! From Jonathan’s book, I can see my daughter at 18 finding the bearings she needs to chart her cause.”

–*Amara Kyna Agbim, Founder/CEO, The Nanny Academy (Nigeria)*

“Jonathan Lewis has risked trying and learning changemaking, and shares that journey in a light-footed style that treats the reader like a family member.”

–*Bill Drayton, CEO, Ashoka: Everyone a Changemaker*

“I want to underscore just how valuable this book is. There’s a wealth of experience, insight, and wisdom in these pages. There are some lines that hit you in the gut, others that stab you in the heart, and others that blow your mind. It’s a visceral experience, an emotional read, and a thought-provoking analysis.”

–*Alexandra McGee, Community Power Organizer, MCE*

“Jonathan pairs honest, vulnerable experiences with incredible proven insight. A great read and guide for anyone wanting to be a social entrepreneur.”

–*Sara Minkara, Founder and CEO, Empowerment
through Integration (Lebanon)*

“Required reading for anyone developing the head and the heart necessary to run a game-changing social enterprise.”

–*Chid Liberty, Founder and CEO, Liberty & Justice (Liberia)*

“Jonathan’s blend of stories, wisdom and poetic prose stirs emotions. His words invite deep reflection about this complicated, beautiful journey. I’m reminded that I am not alone.”

–Amy Paulson, *Co-Founder and CEO, Global Gratitude Alliance*

“I love this book. Jonathan includes us on his life journey – and joins us on ours. He seems to know that we will ignore him at times, but our motives (more or less) are pure and our devotion inevitable. Through story-telling, witty delivery and Socratic questioning, Jonathan shows us how to turn self-doubt into an asset. This book is approachable, welcoming, soulful, truthful and personal.”

–Rosalinga Sanquiche, *Founder and CEO, Well Written Consulting; Former Executive Director, Ethical Markets Media*

“Jonathan humanizes the bold journey of the social entrepreneur and empowers us to find mastery in being vulnerable, authentic and powerfully imperfect.”

–Tiffany Persons, *Founder and CEO, Shine On Sierra Leone*

“Just about the best explanation of social entrepreneurship that I have ever read. Honestly.”

–Sam Vaghar, *Executive Director, Millennium Campus Network*

“With honesty and delightful wit, Jonathan shares the inside picture of how he started and maintained his social entrepreneurship. We are learning from the master.”

–Babita Patel, *Founder and CEO, KIOO Project*

“Jonathan’s writing is beautiful, important and unique, vulnerable and honest, thought-provoking and funny, encouraging and realistic. Urgently important and universally inspirational. Made my insides say *Yes!* or giggle.”

–Holly McKenna, *Poet and Cacao Social Entrepreneur*

Red Press
The Unfinished Social Entrepreneur
Jonathan C. Lewis

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*In the way he lived his life, my father Louis A. Lewis
showed me that kindness is strength.*

*California State Senator Nicholas C. Petris,
my first employer, taught me to make justice a verb.*

ABOUT JONATHAN C. LEWIS

Jonathan C. Lewis is a life-long social justice activist and an accomplished social entrepreneur. He founded MCE Social Capital, an innovative social venture that leverages millions of dollars of private capital to finance tiny business loans to deeply-impooverished people, mostly women, throughout the developing world. MCE, a rarity in the nonprofit sector, is entirely self-financing without donations, government grants or direct impact investments.

He is Founder and President of the Opportunity Collaboration, an annual strategic business retreat for 450 senior-level anti-poverty leaders from around the globe. Tagged an *un-conference conference*, the event is self-sustaining without corporate underwriting or other external financing.

Jonathan also co-founded Copia Global, an Amazon-like consumer catalog serving the base of the economic pyramid in Kenya. Jonathan serves as a General Partner of Dev Equity, a social impact investment fund in Latin America.

Jonathan has taught courses on social entrepreneurship at New York University, the University of California (Berkeley), and has lectured at universities around the world. He is a recipient of the Social Venture Network Innovation Award. He is a Trustee of the Swift Foundation.

During his eclectic career, Jonathan has served as the Founder and CEO of a global business knowledge company in the healthcare sector; Chief Budget Adviser to the President of the California State Senate (who, in public debate in the Senate, said to his colleagues, “if the Senate has a resident genius, it’s Jonathan Lewis”); Founder and CEO of an urban real estate development company; and owner of a contemporary art gallery.

Jonathan is on a search to find the tastiest hot dog at the wackiest hot dog stand in the world. He lives near San Francisco with his wife of 45 years. His son Aaron and daughter-in-law Michaela are the parents of Miles Lewis which, by all accounts, makes Jonathan a new grandfather.

ABOUT THE COMMUNITY CONVERSATION GUIDE

What can you expect from the *Community Conversation Guide* that accompanies this book? Well, let's start off with what it's not. Much like the book itself, it is *not* riddled with sector-specific language that requires a Google search just to sift through each sentence. It's not tied to academic benchmarks, designed to test your knowledge of the material. And it's not a how-to guide that tees things up step-by-step.

The *Community Conversation Guide* is a tool that friends, clubs, classmates, and colleagues can use to bring their own experiences and perspectives into the fold, digging deeper into the ideas presented in the book. We want you to transform the written words in *The Unfinished Social Entrepreneur* into something that means something to you, that helps move important conversations from the shadows to the center. The guide is designed to support social entrepreneurs in taking ownership over and applying the ideas presented in *The Unfinished Social Entrepreneur* to the daily practice of change-making.

Whether you've read the book in its entirety or not, the Guide will provide key insights from each essay. We've teased apart each essay and crafted a handful of questions for your group to get things rolling, designed simple activities to that keep things engaging, and compiled reading lists for those of you who want more of the good stuff. We've also pulled Jonathan's most interesting excerpts for sharing on social media, because who doesn't love a shout out? (And, if you haven't read the book, you can at least pretend like you have.)

All that we ask is that you have fun with it. Wherever you are on your social justice journey, we hope that the Guide proves useful. We highly recommend that you pair it with snacks and beverages, and that you post yourself on a cushy sofa or swaying hammock.

Head to www.jonathanclewis.com to download the Guide.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

JUSTICE

1

“When you and I really think about it, when we burrow into our souls, we both know that, at its core, social entrepreneurship is a love affair. Our life partner is justice.”

STARTING

10

“Enroll in the university-without-walls around you. It’s hard to invent a more lifelike classroom for understanding inequality than inequality itself.”

TOUCH

22

“Powering up my social justice career means powering down my laptop. Experiential learning replaces someone else’s filter with our own.”

PASSION

36

“Whose side are we on? What enemies are we willing to make?”

PREPARED

47

“Compassion and conviction are not the same as competency.”

RESCUED

60

“When it dawns on us that our work, and indeed the remainder of our lives, impacts real people, a transcendent sense of responsibility sets in.”

LISTENERSHIP

71

“Listening is the industrial spying of social change.”

WORDS

82

“When I fail my cause with crappy communications, I feel the opposite of awesome. I’ve let myself down, and I’ve let down what and who I care about.”

CONNECTIONS**91**

“The professional classes call the act of meeting people networking. I call it making friends.”

MENTORED**103**

“Mentors come in two basic categories: dead and not dead. The dead ones eternally have your back. They might not love you, but they’ll never stiff you.”

FAILURE**115**

“Failure is not contagious. You don’t get it from toilet seats. It’s not transmitted by airborne pathogens. You don’t catch it from talking about it.”

ABANDONMENT**127**

“A commitment to community empowerment means being there when you’re needed—and stepping aside when you’re not.”

BRUISED**137**

“Social entrepreneurs are midwives—birthing new opportunities for greater economic, environmental and social justice. At the same time, we are hospice workers—helping old paradigms to die. In the clinic of social change, our bedside manner can lose its mojo.”

MISGIVINGS**149**

“So much of what we do is a matter of judgment and nuance, of balancing competing priorities and concerns. Doing one thing in one place, and something else in another.”

PLURALISM**166**

“I’m an economic bi-sexual. I favor capitalism, and I favor socialism. My policy instincts are socialist. My tools are capitalist.”

BYSTANDER**179**

“The lesser of two evils is less evil. Voting for the lesser of two evils is a shitload better than giving power to the more evil of the two evil options. I’m in favor of less evil.”

POWER**191**

“The first power of social entrepreneurship is the power to raise hell.”

HEGEMONY**203**

“I’m a proselytizing missionary, preaching a gospel of progressive ideals about economic, environmental, racial, gender, and social justice.”

WHITE**215**

“If we coddle racists or rationalize away their hate speech, then racists might, mistakenly, think that they are normal human beings.”

GLOBALIZATION**228**

“Every social entrepreneur carries the globalization gene. Unabashedly, we are globe-trotting change agents. We love our passport stamps. They document our willingness to open our minds to new ideas.”

LIFEBLOOD**239**

“Social entrepreneurs do not exist without anchoring relationships. I am who I care about. I am who I fight for.”

CONFESSIONS**245****CREDITS**

WELCOME

*Welcome to *The Unfinished Social Entrepreneur*. My name is Jonathan Lewis.*

This book is about powering up your social justice career. Maybe you've already found your social justice job. Maybe you haven't. Either way—in the pages ahead, know that we are colleagues, and friends. At this moment in your life, maybe a job in social entrepreneurship isn't for you, and that's totally cool. You alone will decide when you're ready for the serious, soaring work of improving the world.

Regardless of when and where you start—we are kindred spirits. We belong to a global community of ordinary citizens, activists, social entrepreneurs, businesspeople, students, artists, philanthropists, scholars, scientists and policy-makers. We all work in concert, in our own way, and at our own pace, to combat the disgrace of grinding poverty, social injustice and environmental pollution.

Before I forget, I want to mention that I'm using the word 'you' in the first-person singular. I didn't write this book for your roommate, your best friend, your hair stylist, the other members of your book club or, for that matter, anyone else. Just you. Social entrepreneurship is a collection of individuals, of ones—of you and of me. Social change starts with one person.

Even when our all-too-human imperfections are evident, social entrepreneurs possess a calming strength that flows from understanding our life purpose. On most days, we are empowered, empowering and powerful in our professional lives.

That's not all. We also tell better jokes; make more friends; get the best tables in restaurants. At movies, our popcorn is fluffier and more buttery. When we travel, our flights are always on time, and the pilot personally shows us to our seats. When we overeat, we don't gain

weight. Our lottery tickets always pay off. (Okay, *okay*. The part about the fluffier popcorn isn't true.)

Social entrepreneurship is a career of mind-blowing satisfactions and mind-boggling self-doubt. At some point in our social entrepreneurship – actually, at many points – we each wonder if we fit in, if we are doing enough, if we are worthy. No matter how small or insignificant you might feel on any given day; even if you are just getting your career underway; even if a hurtful defeat has set you back—your unique life perspective matters, but not uniquely. Everyone matters.

ABOUT ME

It's human nature to group people, to make assumptions based on appearances and first impressions. When we agree with the characterization, we speak of tribes and identities. When we don't, we speak of prejudice and bias. If it helps you unpack my writing, you might want to know the following about me.

I'm writing this book in my 68th year. I am a Caucasian male born in the United States, the only child of two working-class parents. My parents married during the Depression; on their wedding day, they had \$15 between them. I grew up in liberal San Francisco during the tumultuous Sixties, where I gravitated towards antiwar and civil rights activism. All my life, I've lived in Northern California. It was here that I met my wife of 44 years, and helped raise my son (now a 32 year-old public interest lawyer). Here too, I'm a new grandfather.

My social sector biography is a collage of governmental service, nonprofit work and social impact investing. About a decade ago, I founded MCE Social Capital, a nonprofit social venture that has leveraged private capital to finance over 400,000 microloans for deeply-impoverished businesswomen in 33 countries throughout the developing world. I am the Founder and President of the Opportunity Collaboration, an annual strategic business retreat for 450 senior-level anti-poverty leaders from around the globe. I'm also am the Co-Founder of Copia Global, an Amazon-like consumer catalog company serving the base of the economic pyramid in Kenya.

Having no other choice than to be me, the book is framed (and limited) by my personal experience, and my particular perspective,

as an American social entrepreneur. I wish I could have written about social entrepreneurship as the global phenomenon it is becoming, or from the point of view of indigenous activists, but I can only write what I've lived.

Depending on your viewpoint, the book is further informed, or distorted, by my lifelong Type A entrepreneurial problem-solving approach. Knowing this, you should moderate my take on things to fit your own personality, talents and life history.

I do want you to know that I've written the best book that I can. It might not be the book you deserve, but it's the best that I can do. In these pages, I've been as honest as my inhibitions allowed me to be. I've tried to be a truth-teller, sharing what I'm thinking and questioning.

At times, especially late into the night, alone with my qualms, I felt vulnerable in the certain knowledge that, no matter how carefully I crafted a sentence, no matter how thoughtfully I chose my words, the received wisdom of the cynical and the self-righteous would critique and judge me. Perhaps even harshly. I had to resist the cowardly urge to self-censor.

As I wrote, I tightly embraced the thinking of journalist Bill Moyers (quoted in *The 100 Greatest Americans of the 20th Century*). He states: "When I left the White House, I had to learn that what matters in journalism is not how close you are to power, but how close you are to the truth." While writing, I discovered my own jarring inconsistencies, infirmities, contradictions and hypocrisies—as well as amazing optimisms. I decided to trust that what mattered most was not how firmly I held on to my convictions, but how much I was willing to doubt them.

TIPS FOR USING THE BOOK

Let's talk about the heart-mending, heart-ripping, heart-happy joy of social entrepreneurship, social change and social justice. Let's talk about the issues, the challenges, the topics of greatest concern to us.

Read the essays in any order you like. I wrote them as stand-alone pieces. Read them as and when they are relevant to your social entrepreneurship, and read them again when you need to. Some are

about getting your social justice career started. Others raise questions and challenges that, together as colleagues, we face throughout our careers.

Each essay tees up a canard or challenge—a provocation, if you will. Each is a reflection, almost a meditation, on a topic of disquiet for me. In many parts of this book, I'm unable to offer answers. You might find that frustrating; unsatisfying; alarming. No one has all the answers, so at the end of the day, no social entrepreneur is released from the responsibility (and the fun) of independent exploration and critical thinking. Some days, I'm not even asking the right questions. It's a cause for humility, not for halting.

This book is neither a comprehensive overview of the social sector, nor a compendium of all the operational advice that a social entrepreneur should know. It's also not yet another well-researched book about the deplorable disgrace of global poverty, or the stupidity of environmental desecration. I will die happy if I never read another numbing policy analysis detailing a heart-breaking, and solvable, societal disgrace.

This is not a how-to manual, because the written word is an intrinsically stingy medium for teaching good judgment, leadership and wisdom—or for explaining the character, compassion, commitment and courage that every social entrepreneur needs by the bucketful. In apprenticeship, and in solidarity, with the communities we serve, the life-essential qualities of the social entrepreneur are acquired over time. Like kissing and like cooking, we master the mechanics of social change work with practice.

If I missed talking about something important, if I speak of a subject in a way that aggravates you, or if you find yourself sputtering out a rebuttal—I hope you will share your views, openly and widely, in a public forum so that other changemakers can learn from you. Maybe you will write your own book, post a blog, or tweet your opinion. I'd love to read what you think. Really. Let's make each other better.

Because *social* entrepreneurship is not called *solo* entrepreneurship, I asked colleagues to supplement my words:

1. At the close of every essay, under the title *Take Two*, you will read a commentary from a change agent whose life experience differs fundamentally from my own. These commentaries were curated and edited by the Co-Founder of Strength of Doves, Lissa Piercy. Each individual was selected because they are a fierce and fearless defender of their community or cause—and more importantly, willing to express themselves without kowtowing to my sensibilities. In fact, to create more space for their candor, I promised not to read or edit any of their commentaries; I'm reading them for the first time along with you. I've come to think of them as small gems of insight, much like a late-into-the-night email from a thoughtful colleague; a fleeting moment of intellectual intimacy in a taxi ride; or the good friend who calls out your bullshit but still has your back.
2. On my website, check out the *Community Conversation Guide*. It's written by Jen Gurecki, the Co-Founder of Kenya-based Zawadisha. This is your free companion guide to the book. Essay by essay—the guide includes questions and activities to help you take the book's insights to the next level; it also includes short and accessible readings for further exploration. Educators, book clubs, student groups, and community activists alike will find it a helpful time-saver. As long as you credit *The Unfinished Social Entrepreneur*, download and distribute the *Community Conversation Guide* as much as you like.

ABOUT LANGUAGE CHOICES

In this book, I use the terms *social entrepreneur*, *changemaker*, *change agent*, *political activist*, *community organizer* and *social innovator* almost as virtual synonyms. A tight definition of social entrepreneurship is not, by any measure, the most significant challenge confronting the world, or our social justice careers. We can get started doing good work before we define our terms.

Some manuscript reviewers urged me to simplify my terminology. They argued that, if I know a word that you don't, you might be too lazy to look it up on your smartphone dictionary app. As colleagues who respect each other, I argued that, if I dumbed down my vocabulary, you would resent it.

One essay – entitled *White* – is meant to spark a conversation among changemakers with melanin deficits. Everyone is welcome to read it, but bear in mind that I wrote it for a very narrow audience of Caucasian social entrepreneurs. This essay is me, being the white person that I am, asking other white people to take action to make certain that our sector is as diverse as our inclusive rhetoric calls for.

In a linguistically-perfect world, we would all appreciate that the term 'American' applies to every single person living in both North, Central and South America. Following the common custom, I use 'American' to mean citizens of the United States of America.

Also, around the edges of an in-person conversation, you and I may have different shades of meaning for certain nouns, pronouns, words and phrases. In person, a smile or a concerned look helps to smooth over these minor miscommunications. The printed page can't smile, so the choice is yours: we can arm wrestle over the perfect way to say something, or we can roll up our sleeves and attack the problem itself.

When I write about social justice, I'm prone to sanctimony. And why not? The world feels so screwed up, so unfair, so unnecessarily mean, so *Trumpian*. It makes me livid. Sometimes, my anger sounds preachy. I don't see why I should apologize, but I also hope you're not put off.

You should also know that I am on a quest to find the tastiest hot dog at the silliest hot dog stand in the world. As a result, I scat-

ter frivolous hot dog references throughout the book. Vegans and vegetarians: stand aside.

Some of my closest friends and colleagues have questioned my sense of humor and, in particular, my cringe-worthy puns and snarky quips. These critics, obviously lacking in comic judgment, are manifestly mistaken.

AN UNFINISHED WORD

The decision to write a book unfolds slowly. This book took me a lifetime to start. Often, I thought it would take me a lifetime to finish. Throughout my social change career, well-wishers flattered me by saying ‘you should write a book’ or insisting that ‘I had a book in me’. This latter point frequently brought to mind those science-fiction movies in which an otherwise perfectly-normal person is host to an alien life-form (an apprehension I can now, with hindsight, confirm). In any case, flattery doesn’t write a book any more than good intentions create social change.

I was also assured that authorship defines you as a person of consequence. A book bestows *gravitas*. It might even get you invited to speak at an important conference, or interviewed by Oprah. I was unmoved by all of this. To me, ‘gravitas’ sounds like paving material.

For most of my life, the idea of *writing* about social entrepreneurship has paled in comparison to *doing* social entrepreneurship. Then, while I was reading *Essays in Love* by the social philosopher Alain de Botton, one sentence pushed me towards my computer: “Certain things are said, not because they will be heard, but because it is important to speak them.” He was writing about romantic relationships, but what is social entrepreneurship if not a love affair with justice?

In any case, after years of protestations and procrastination, I started this book as an untidy, private journey to explain to myself what it means to be a change agent. I wanted to better understand my place in the world. I discovered writing as one way to think harder about social entrepreneurship and social justice, to catalog my reflections and missteps, to collect my joys and concerns.

The Unfinished Social Entrepreneur

This book is a book of conviction, but I did not write it to lecture you about our global humanity or shared challenges. If your conscience doesn't move you to action—nothing else can or will. Even so, 'social entrepreneurship' is a career term proudly owned by changemakers with progressive views. In the places where I hang out—the verb 'to social entrepreneur' means fighting sexism, homophobia, xenophobia, racism, militarism, environmental degradation and economic exploitation. And, it means building social ventures that both serve communities and create jobs. It means inclusiveness and diversity. It means human dignity, civil liberties and human rights. It means participatory democracy, transparent government and freedom of thought. It means peace and prosperity. That's certainly what it means to me.

Writing allowed me to imagine the world as I would like it to be. The more I wrote, the closer I stood to my moral imagination; to my life's unfinished mission; to the unfinished work of social justice.

BRUISED

Social entrepreneurs are midwives—birthing new opportunities for greater economic, environmental and social justice. At the same time, we are hospice workers—helping old paradigms to die. In the clinic of social change, our bedside manner can lose its mojo.

Social entrepreneurship is not always awesome. Not every day is a good day. Some days are bruising. Some days, feeling isolated and broken, devastated or angry—I just want to cry.

As social entrepreneurs, you and I have chosen causes and careers that, day in and day out, place us in the crevice between humankind's most noble aspirations and its most ignoble behaviors. We watch horrible, hideous, staggering, unspeakable and entirely preventable sorrows unfold. The human instinct is to look away.

Bearing witness to meanness, misery and malice burns the human heart. It leaves scar tissue. Ernest Hemingway observed, "The best people possess a feeling for beauty, the courage to take risks, the discipline to tell the truth, the capacity for sacrifice. Ironically, their virtues make them vulnerable; they are often wounded, sometimes destroyed." You could be one of those best people. You probably are.

Social entrepreneurs are also bruised by working interminable hours, sapping stress and recurring disappointment. We are worn thin by the pressure to sell solutions and pitch programs. To be the hot new idea—or at least pretend to be. To be super-human.

Because managing a social enterprise means handling competing crises with a chronic shortage of resources, it's hard to achieve a sense of stability. For sub-par pay, we pursue picture-perfect

mission statements. It's true for the well-funded. Even more true for the under-funded.

In some fundamental ways, social entrepreneurs are just regular entrepreneurs running in the rat race. Whether we are leading a start-up or mid-level-managing an established social venture, whenever and wherever we fully commit ourselves, changemakers can become Type-A workaholics in drag—cross-dressing as humanitarian agents for justice.

Living a fast-paced, change-the-world 'suitcase career' feels no different than any other pressure-cooker job. Working long hours, we have less time for savoring life's pleasures: tending relationships; pursuing hobbies; extracurricular reading; rambling walks; relaxed meals; lingering kisses. Eventually and inevitably, personal relationships fray.

The secret insecurity of every social entrepreneur is that we might fall short, prove unworthy of our loftiest ideals.

Sometimes, social sector jobs are further complicated by the twin burdens of internalized oppression and societal expectation. When she stepped away from an exalted job title, a large operating budget and great pay in the private sector to run the *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, Regina Starr Ridley questioned her decision, recalling, "Sometimes I felt like I'd let other women down." The weight of class, gender and racial 'tribal representation' is heavy.

The secret insecurity of every social entrepreneur is that we might fall short, prove unworthy of our loftiest ideals, or let down the causes and people that we care about. No surprise then, that social sector performance anxiety sets in.

If you believe that injustice disfigures our planet; if you believe that the responsibility for fixing it belongs to each one of us; then the cliché 'don't take it personally' is pure gaslighting. Even while my head is rationalizing phrases like 'it's just business' or 'we received many worthy proposals', my heart only hears shattering rejection. The result is a sense of increased vulnerability and exaggerated fragility.

Bruises are just part of the job. That's because every change agent worth a damn is in the business of undermining the status quo. Our social change workday is defined by asking uncomfortable questions,

exposing hypocrisies, forcing institutional change, and pushing back against the powerful. People don't instinctively invite disruption into their lives, and so negativity and hostility are inescapable. As social entrepreneurs—we know that we are pains in the ass; agent provocateurs; pariahs at the party. We also know that enervating isolation is part of the social entrepreneurial lifestyle.

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Social entrepreneurs are midwives—birthing new opportunities for greater economic, environmental, racial, gender and social justice. At the same time, we are hospice workers—helping old paradigms to die. In the clinic of social change, our bedside manner can lose its mojo.

As gratifying as fighting the good fight is (and it is, it is!), I can't count all the times my wonderful, glorious, uplifting, satisfying, spectacular social change career has felt wobbly and worrying. I'm not alone. Listen to five reports from the field:

1. "I [left school] vibrating with grand notions of what it meant to live an ethical, examined life... Just five years later, I felt extinguished. The real world was not a place of perfect forms and pat answers. It was messy, bureaucratic, painful." –Courtney Martin in *Do It Anyway: The New Generation of Activists*
2. "A sense of isolation would envelop me, and there were nights that ended in tears of tiredness and sadness for a world that didn't seem to want to see the possibilities right there in front of it." –Jacqueline Novogratz in *The Blue Sweater*
3. "I'm... freaking the fuck out about how I'm going to meet my budget shortfall, how tired I am, how much I crave making a difference. I'm wrestling with hope and despair." –Nonprofit Executive Director (in a private email to me)

4. “There is a point in an entrepreneurial venture when the adrenaline starts to run out. Burnout is incredibly common [for] social entrepreneurs... [from] the constant feeling that much of the world’s problems are bearing down on their shoulders.” –Marina Kim (Co-Founder, Ashoka U) in ‘The Burnout Phenomenon’
5. “Lately, I’ve been feeling a lot like checking out. The stress of my job is really getting to me. I’m not sure if I am just putting pressure on myself or if I just want so bad for this venture to succeed... or if I am frustrated seeing colleagues the same age as myself making three times my income... I feel like I lack the courage to swim upstream these days.” –Marketing Director of a social enterprise (in a private email to me)

They’re not the only ones. When I was a young activist, naïvely convinced of my invincibility, I thought I could ‘win’ by working harder, and then harder still. In the 1970s, when I accepted responsibility for leading a public interest organization called the California Tax Reform Association (CTRA), I learned differently.

CTRA had the audacious mission of campaigning for tax justice and, in particular, closing corporate tax loopholes. Then and now, anti-government forces abused tax reduction rhetoric to advance a tax code that redistributed wealth and income *upwards*. Regardless of how small or how large you might like your government, to my way of thinking, it seems right and reasonable that we should all pay our fair share for it. No loopholes. No free riders. No exploiting the underclasses.

Fighting against an unfair tax system – zealously guarded by fat cat beneficiaries and corporate welfare recipients – battered me. Confronted with plenty of legislative and political setbacks, my mind was constantly churning, often late into the night. Almost every afternoon, to stave off stress headaches, I was swallowing aspirin. After work, too exhausted to eat dinner, I passed out on my sofa. While traveling, often staying in a cheap hotel to save a few bucks, I’d wake up in the middle of the night and rush to the bathroom to vomit away the tension. I started grinding my teeth. My driving got faster

and more reckless. One night at 2am, driving northbound along the California coast, the highway patrol clocked me at close to 100mph.

When I took over leadership of CTRA, it had 70 citizen-members and a total asset base consisting of one roll of postage stamps. Three years later, we had 4,000 dues-paying members. Elected officials, labor unions, senior citizen organizations, local governments, social service agencies and the media routinely turned to us for trusted commentary about fair and equitable tax policy. A decent accomplishment, and I'm proud of it, but it came at a bruising personal price.

CTRA became my identity. When it lost a fight, I felt it personally. And we lost spectacularly, and often. With the wisdom of time, I've learned that workplace martyrs make lousy social entrepreneurs. Today, the tax code is still a golden playground for the richly undeserving. It still pisses me off, but I've stopped taking it out on myself.

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Once you get to know a few social entrepreneurs, you start to discover we are defective and flawed in all the standard ways. We can be heedless, feckless, insensitive, insecure, self-centered—the usual range of human infirmities. Some of us spend unproductive hours watching junk TV, over-eating and not exercising. Some of us obsess about 'fixing' our life partners. Some of us even forget to put down the toilet seat.

The notion that any social entrepreneur needs to be super-human, super-smart, super-clever or super-innovative is not only wrong, but also super-unhelpful. By fantasizing ourselves into superhero cult status, we inadvertently discourage what the world needs most: every ordinary non-hero doing heroic things.

Social entrepreneurs talk with enthusiasm about financial and institutional sustainability, but less often (and less loudly), do we talk about *personal* sustainability. In 'Decelerate to Accelerate' Michel Bachmann and Roshan Paul of the Amani Institute (a global social entrepreneurship training program) observe, "It's ironic that the people who seek to create a more sustainable world often live the

The idea that we need to be super-human, super-clever or super-innovative is not only wrong, it's super-unhelpful.

The Unfinished Social Entrepreneur

most unsustainable lives of all, sacrificing their finances, their relationships, and sometimes even their health to pursue a broader social mission.”

A life well-lived has its own markings. There’s a time to learn. A time to take risks for our convictions. A time to become a social entrepreneur. A time to rest and replenish the soul. A time to nest with our families. When you and I embrace personal accountability for economic justice and for human rights, for earth stewardship and for global peace, our work is never done. We need to pace ourselves.

Personal development underpins both having the social justice career you want, and becoming the mindful change agent the world needs. When fissures and flaws in our social entrepreneurial lives appear—take a break; stand down; take responsibility for a bit of self-care. When you’re feeling in top form again, the world’s troubles will still be here, waiting for you.



Social change takes time. Winning hearts, minds and imaginations takes time. Overcoming entrenched political and economic interests takes time. On the other hand, no one should ever be asked, or forced, to wait for political or economic justice. In the words of the potent legal truism, *justice delayed is justice denied*. Holding these two truths in my brain simultaneously gives me a headache.

The worst feeling for any social entrepreneur is the sinking sense that history is not on your side. Nothing sucks our energy more than the depressing feeling that we are losing, that justice is lurching backwards.

It’s perfectly reasonable for social entrepreneurs to think that our time – if not the worst of times – is far from the best of times. Consider America’s sidewalks—where stray bullets, gang bullets, and police bullets terrorize our families. Consider the one in five people in the world who can’t affordably drink clean water. Consider the one in three women – very likely, a woman in your immediate social circle – who has experienced physical or sexual violence. Consider the many irreplaceable species moving towards extinction, even as the human species is moving to kill itself.

When badness outweighs goodness, when pessimism engulfs optimism—I console myself by comparing the present day with 1948, my birth year. It was a time of hopeful progress and menacing new threats. Of change, and resistance to change. Of things to laud, and things to lament.

Countries acted with high-mindedness, malice, or both. 1948 was the first year of racial apartheid in South Africa. 1948 was also the first year of universal health care in Great Britain.

Across the world, the forces of self-determination and colonialism, freedom and fascism, war and peace, competed for the future. The Berlin airlift answered the Soviet Union's Berlin blockade. Korea split into two and, soon after, went to war with itself. A massive American taxpayer-financed act of compassion, the Marshall Plan, began to rehabilitate war-ravaged Europe. The term 'cold war' was used for the first time. In elementary school, I practiced ducking under my flimsy wooden desk in case of a nuclear attack.

American society took a few more small steps towards being more inclusive. President Truman issued an executive order ending racial segregation in the military. The California Supreme Court declared interracial marriage a protected constitutional right. The first African-American played in the US Tennis Open. The first woman was promoted to permanent military rank. The Supreme Court declared that public-school religious instruction was unconstitutional.

A sense of global citizenship took root. The Organization of American States, the World Council of Churches and the World Health Organization were each established. The International Court of Justice began hearing cases. The United Nations adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Alexandra McGee, a community organizer at MCE (a clean energy program in California) and a member of the millennial generation, observes that "the underlying question is the issue of time. Of impatience with things not changing fast enough, versus seeing things in historical perspective. Of the short-sightedness of humans in the angst of living in the present tense, especially for millennials who have a smaller scope of living history."

In the end, we can only do what we can do. "When I consider how long I sometimes take to learn a new lesson, I have greater compassion

for humans writ large,” reflects Akaya Windwood, President of the Rockwood Leadership Institute. “No one of us is in charge of the pace of change. We are only in charge of our piece of it.”

“Although the problems are urgent and so important, I need to have more patience,” concludes Jessamyn Shams-Lau, CEO of the Peery Foundation. “I’m not going to solve problems on my own. You’re not going to solve them. I’m an apprentice in life. I’m an apprentice in [social justice] problem-solving.”

For my part, I’m reassured, even encouraged, when I remember we have more social justice today than we did 100 years ago, 50 years ago—even 25 years ago. We are entitled to celebrate without becoming complacent. And, as changemakers, you and I can fortify ourselves with the certain knowledge that, whether it’s 1948 or 2017, every time is the perfect time to fight for what we believe in.



When I’m emotionally black and blue, in addition to shoving my face into a pint of ice cream or escaping into an espionage novel, I pick from the following mix-and-match options:

Create high-five moments. Windwood, in her article ‘Celebration’, rejoices: “We celebrate because it satisfies our souls and increases the overall happiness in the world. This is not about denying our pressing difficulties or putting our collective heads in the sand... Humans need the solace and comfort of remembering and honoring the magnificent things of which we are capable.”

Accept being you. Human contradictions characterize most change agents. “I accept being mediocre. I am not perfect. Even if I focused on just one or two things, I still would not be perfect at them,” claims Wanjiru Kamau-Rutenberg, Director of Kenya-based African Women in Agricultural Research and Development. With a giant grin, she adds, “I spend all day running an organization empowering women, and relax at night by reading romance novels about women who get carted off into the sunset by burly men.”

Stay focused. “There are a million causes I support. I fully recognize the inter-relatedness of racism, sexism, environmentalism, classism, capitalism, ageism, etc... As activists, we have a really hard time figuring out where to begin and how to best expend our

energies,” writes Natasha Thomas-Jackson in ‘6 Things I Need Activists to Stop Doing Now’. “Global change is achieved by hitting one mark at a time. Scattering energies and shifting agendas only create confusion and disillusionment.”

Trust individual-level change. When I was growing up, in my all-boys high school, homophobia was an unchecked social norm. Shamefully, I used hurtful language, told immature jokes and behaved with callous prejudice. Today, that kind of crap is unacceptable to me. If I can learn and grow, others can too. If others can, so can society as a whole.

Find a hammock. Or, Saul Alinsky writes in *Rules for Radicals*, go to jail. “The revolutionary... must, now and then, have an opportunity to reflect and synthesize his thoughts. To gain that privacy... the most convenient and accessible solution is jail. It is here that he is emancipated from the slavery of action.” Personally, I’m going with the hammock option.

Validate a colleague. I’m strengthened by the people who lead by courageous example, who loan themselves to social justice work and, therefore, loan themselves to me. When I tell my colleagues, peers and role models that I’m grateful for their acts of decency, kindness, and compassion—it cheers me up.

Find your tribe. “Finding a tribe of people who are making similar life choices is critical for sustaining your energy... There is tremendous value in being with people who understand where you are coming from, and rejoice in seeing you grow,” write Bachmann and Paul.

Don’t multiply the bad moments. One lousy experience or rejection is not predictive. In psychological terms, don’t let your mind anchor your negative experience. In military terms, don’t fight the last war. In human terms, don’t prejudice your next potential ally.

When I’m feeling beaten up; when I feel like stepping off the endless treadmill of tragedies; when I’m septic with issue fatigue—acknowledging my bruises helps. That’s why connecting with a colleague, confiding a weakness, admitting insecurity or sharing a dumb joke are non-negotiable parts of my social change work. In those moments, perhaps the bravest sentence we can use (quoted by Courtney Martin in *Do It Anyway*) comes from a female change agent

struggling to reclaim her self-worth and personal power. She simply says: “I think I need to talk.”



Change agents, like everyone else, have interior lives and hidden histories. The ranks of social entrepreneurs are populated with trauma survivors, people with unseen physical and mental health challenges, and changemakers in the process of burning out. We’re not robots.

At the extreme end of depression and despair, suicide is a human instinct so desolate that you might think that life-affirming social entrepreneurs are immune from it. Think again. It’s entirely possible for a social entrepreneur with good friends, a supportive family, a measure of financial security and a brilliant social enterprise to also harbor private thoughts of suicide.

My first experience with a friend committing suicide involved an older white male (the highest suicide rate demographic). He was rich, civically-active, gregarious, popular and fun-loving. In his swank condo overlooking Chicago’s Lake Michigan, he ended his life with a shotgun in his mouth.

My second experience was triggered after a charity banquet of mediocre food and elongated speeches. As a social sector colleague and I searched in the parking lot for our respective cars, we multi-tasked by trash-talking the event and sharing updates from our lives. As the sky dulled into dusk, as the moody darkness enveloped us, my friend – a single mom – blurted out, “I’d be worth more to my kids dead than alive.” Without another word, she stepped into her car and drove off.

Unnerved, I hurried home to study suicide prevention websites, all of which urged me to take any talk of suicide seriously. Intent on communicating my concern, I unleashed a hailstorm of emails and phone messages. A few weeks later, my colleague nonchalantly mentioned that she was, in anticipation of wearing a bathing suit poolside at the Opportunity Collaboration, exercising more. Realizing that she wasn’t really considering suicide, I felt more than a little sheepish about my panicked response. Nevertheless, why take

a chance with anyone's life—especially the life of a fellow social entrepreneur whom you like and respect?

No social entrepreneur walks alone. If you're sinking, or know someone who is, call the US National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 800-273-8255 (or your national equivalent).

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Even as our hearts are enlarged by the humanity of our social justice work, the crushing enormity of social injustice can make us feel small and insignificant. It's a lousy trade-off.

You and I don't run away because, no matter how stressed, frustrated, ineffective or trivial we might temporarily feel, fighting for justice and a healthy planet is beyond awesome. We don't run because our social change work defines us, and we can't run away from who we are.

A changemaker career blurs the traditional line between work and the rest of our lives. Describing the holistic social entrepreneurial personality, David Bornstein, author of *How to Change the World* and Founder of Solutions Journalism, observes that “although it is probably impossible to fully explain why people become social entrepreneurs, it is certainly possible to identify them. Every decision – whom to marry, where to live, what books to read – passes through the prism of their ideas.”

While it's undeniably true that social entrepreneurship comes with its share of heartaches, it's equally true that watching small bits of progress happen in front of us, maybe even with our help, mends our fractured hearts. Even more, when we're fully engaged in our social justice careers: cynicism, fatalism and despair are replaced with aspiration, purpose and connection. I'm affirmed. I'm happy.

On the days when I feel like screaming at the world, a powerful cathartic is the work itself. To be sure, it's a counterintuitive paradox. You and I can – and must – attack injustice like the furies and then, when needed and necessary, we should take sanctuary to replenish, re-energize and restore ourselves.

Being a social entrepreneur doesn't make me a better person. Being a better person makes me a better social entrepreneur.

Take Two: Bruised

Amy Paulson, 40, is Co-Founder of the Global Gratitude Alliance. She works at the intersection of healing and social justice, transforming cycles of intergenerational trauma into legacies of healing and resilience. Hometown: San Francisco. Favorite pastime: eating spicy food. Guilty pleasure: dancing to 80s music.

“In the world of social justice, our incessant drive is led by the myth of the martyr activist. If we sacrifice our lives for the cause, we are praised as heroes. If we only work ten hours a day, we aren’t committed enough. Others struggle every day. So must we.

“Living from that place of scarcity during the first 30-odd years of life led me to depression, anxiety, repeated burnouts, and a prediction that I’d die before I turned 40. When my physician muttered that it would be from suicide, I was deeply offended. Then it hit me. Not caring for myself was akin to a slow suicide.

“These days, there are tools and apps targeted at (recovering) overachievers like me, helping us ‘hack’ self-care. But, the truth is, we already know what to do: sleep, exercise, eat well, spend time in nature, and cultivate joy, gratitude, and connection to community. These simple things build the resiliency needed for a lifetime of activism. So, how do we overcome the guilt that prevents us from prioritizing our own well-being?

“I’ve learned that the secret isn’t about bubble baths or massages (though I recommend both). It’s about remembering to put on our own oxygen masks first. It’s about breaking cycles of harm, including those against ourselves. And, it’s about building a new paradigm for activism, rooted in radical love, for others and ourselves.

“So, when I’m grumpy about going to morning yoga, or stressed about squeezing in an evening with friends, I remind myself that these are ‘oxygen mask moments’. They are bold actions of self-love.

“I’m happy to say that I made it to 40. And, by nourishing my mind, body, and heart, I may just double my lifespan. Because no doubt, the world of social justice will still be calling.”

CONFESSIONS

I confess. I have expectations of you. Now that you've read this book, I hope you kick injustice in the ass. More than once, and really hard.

I've told a few stories in this book. But the real story – the only story worth telling – is the one you will write for yourself.

After engorging ourselves on textbooks, magazines, lectures, blogs, newspapers, conferences, social media, policy papers, podcasts, memos and government findings—you and I want to do something, to complete our good consciences with good deeds. In the compelling phrase from Harvard economist and Nobel Laureate Amartya Sen in *Development as Freedom*, you and I have a case of 'constructive impatience'.

We are called to the big challenges of our time. Unquestionably, we're each privileged to answer that call differently, but we *are* called. In a world plagued by injustice, there's always plenty to do.

I confess. I have expectations of you. Now that you've read this book, I hope you kick injustice in the ass. More than once, and really hard.

Obviously, at this point, I'm assuming that you the think this book has value, and that other changemakers should know about it. As Miriam Kleynerman, a politics student at New York University wrote me: "While I can't imagine not making some kind of meaningful change, I'm not sure where to turn for help, or even what idea to pursue. I want equally-excited, passionate and caring people surrounding me to help me to think and plan my next steps. By opening up a dialogue, by *talking about your book* [emphasis mine], I can connect to other social entrepreneurs or even people who didn't realize they are social entrepreneurs."

I've crowdsourced a list of actionable, skill-building ideas for you to play around with, and included them here. Use the ones that fit your personality, interests and circumstances.

Also, let's agree, between us, to the following: On my side, I agree to apply book sale profits to causes that we both care about (and which, to my great shock, doesn't include the Jonathan C. Lewis Bahamas Retirement Fund). By now, you know my values. On your side, avoid promoting the book for its own sake. Instead, focus on the issues and questions inside the book.

If some of these ideas seem small or trivial, almost too easy, here's what I've finally figured out: each small thing we do builds career momentum. Every social action project hones our skills for when the stakes are higher, and harder. Social change work is also infectious. When you and I take action, it signals that social justice work is a thing—and that we are committed to it.

1. ***Organize a community roundtable discussion.*** Be sure to invite everyone, especially people who might not feel welcome because of the hue of their skin, their religious faith or their sexual orientation. Good venues include libraries, book clubs, campus centers, social impact hubs, social enterprise incubators and social venture training institutes. Use our free *Community Conversation Guide* (online at www.JonathanCLewis.com).
2. ***Write a book review.*** Potential outlets include your campus or local newspaper, online social change publications (too numerous to catalog, but easy to research), organizational newsletters or magazines. And, don't forget Amazon Customer Reviews because everyone, including their surprisingly-literate dogs and cats, reads them. After reading this book, if you think I'm full of shit—say so. Whatever you do, don't be silent. Silence is non-social entrepreneurship.

3. **Show your social entrepreneurial pride.** Wear *The Unfinished Social Entrepreneur* t-shirt, drink from our coffee mug, or carry the tote bag. We don't make or sell any of that stuff, so good luck.
4. **Become an expert.** Take any issue that you care about (or a question raised in the book) and learn more about it. Then (and this is the critical part), publish or share what you learn with others. Provoke others to think while you accumulate bylines and credits for your résumé. It's a devilishly fine way to spend an afternoon.
5. **Share the love.** Take a smiling, frowning or funny selfie with the book and post it on Facebook, Twitter or Instagram (tag it #UnFinSocEnt). If your friends don't even know the book exists, they can't decide for themselves whether or not to read it. Photo tip: Everyone looks smarter while eating a hot dog.
6. **Tweet it out.** I promise to read and react to your tweeted thoughts. My twitter handle: @SocentClinic. Follow me, and I will follow you so we can stay in touch.
7. **Shop fair trade.** Expand your personal market power by organizing a fair trade purchasing club. Go a step further and mount a community campaign to get local merchants to stock fair trade merchandise, eco-friendly goods, etc.
8. **Register to vote.** If your jurisdiction bans voting multiple times, then register your friends to vote. Throw a voter registration party. If that doesn't work, throw a fit.
9. **Be a guest.** Offer to be interviewed on a local radio, television or podcast show about whatever cause, campaign or project moves your heart. Lots of local

talk shows are looking for new voices. If you have a heartbeat, you may have a moment of hesitation or nervousness. I always do. Managing stage fright is a good skill to learn early in our changemaker careers.

10. ***Be a listener.*** Work on listening to the voices in your neighborhood that you normally don't hear (or see). Join a group outside your comfort zone. Prepare to be shocked at how many people live in the shadows.
11. ***Reduce your carbon footprint.*** Stuck for ideas on how? Wear a sweater. Watch less TV. Install energy efficient windows. Take public transportation. Read in the dark. Shower with a friend.
12. ***Weaponize your talents.*** While earning your MBA or accounting degree, volunteer to balance the books at a Planned Parenthood clinic. While studying the law, set up a legal clinic for undocumented workers. While majoring in agricultural sciences, help an inner-city community garden feed the homeless. While studying journalism, start muckraking. You get the idea.
13. ***Invite me to speak.*** Your campus or conference, a speakers' series or local bookstore, any podcast or radio show are all potential venues. Use the contact form at my website.
14. ***Be a grunt worker.*** Check out the local chapter of whatever national organization moves your soul. Volunteer, intern, go to meetings, join rallies, picket, protest, march for justice. Do whatever grunt work is needed because it is needed.
15. ***Hug your local librarian.*** Not everyone can afford to buy books, so ask your local library to stock *The Unfinished Social Entrepreneur*. If the librarian refuses, write a ranting press release to denounce socialized knowledge

paid for by over-taxed taxpayers who, if taxes were lower, would have more money in their pockets to buy more guns or gum. Don't actually send the press release. You don't want people to accidentally mistake you for a conservative.

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A single book, or even entire library of books, whether skimmed or studied, can only story-tell about the fulfilling joy of justice-making. Beyond the covers of *this* book, you and I can experience passion and purpose in our lives by the actual doing of it.

Moreover, nothing good happens in this world without persistence, dedication and extended commitment. A single blog post won't overturn racist, sexist, xenophobic, homophobic practices. A tweet, even a couple of retweets, won't rebalance society's unjust power dynamics. The environment is not nearly clean enough after one protest march. Start with small things. Aim for large ones.

You and I can't innovate social change or produce workable solutions alone. We need each other to build the world we want. We need each other to kick injustice in the ass.

The Unfinished Social Entrepreneur is finished. Our work is not.

CREDITS

Like social entrepreneurship, books are collaborations. My name is printed on the cover of this book, but the names of others are imprinted on me.

As this book became a reality, a loyal group of pro bono editorial advisors, friends, family members, business partners, fellow change agents and near-strangers read my chapters in their rawest stages of disorganization. When I doubted the book's worth (which was often), their margin notes, persistent commentary, loving support and relentless enthusiasm kept me going. Despite all evidence to the contrary, these colleagues and friends never stopped believing in the writer they thought I was: Karen Ansara, Lorene Arey, Gary Carrier, Darlene Daggett, Gary Ford, Michael Gordon, Jen Gurecki, Sara Hall, Amanda Hayden, Tracie Hudgins, Holly McKenna, Alexandra McGee, Chingwell Mutombu, Sally Osberg, Jan Piercy, Lissa Piercy, Clemens Pietzner, Ananya Roy, Rosalinda Sanquiche, David Sonnenberg, Tracey Turner, Akaya Windwood. With any luck, by now, they will have recovered from the experience. Then there are my wife Jeanette, and son Aaron who, by living their lives with decency, widen my moral vision.

If you are contemplating writing a book, an early measure of your connection to reality is the selection of an editor. My thought partner and editorial therapist has been the incomparable Katherine Knotts, Founder of Red Press. Some say that your toughest critic is yourself, but Katherine proved that bromide incorrect. She taught me to write a book and for that I am truly grateful.

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Some people will scratch their heads, wondering why they are listed at all. Others, who live in my heart, are entitled to wonder why the book is not dedicated to them. Someday, I hope you have the good fortune to spend time with the amazing people who have been my editorial allies, role models, voices of encouragement, inspirational confidants and collaborating critics.

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