

The Triumph of the Commons Thought Trap Examples

Thought Trap	Flip It
<p>“That’s just the way the world is.”</p>	<p>How would the world be different today if people throughout history had resigned themselves to the challenges of their time? Consider slavery; the right to vote for women & African Americans; building access for people in wheelchairs...</p> <p>A better world is always possible – what’s your vision? How might you contribute to making it a reality?</p>
<p>“It’s not my responsibility.”</p>	<p>With ability comes responsibility. Each of us contributes to air pollution, climate change, voter turnout, over-consumption of unnecessary and wasteful consumer products...</p>
<p>“I’m only one person...”</p>	<p>So you can make one person’s difference – no more, no less. You have the power to perpetuate the world’s problems, OR to work for a better world. The way you live your life sends a message about who you are and how the world could be.</p>
<p>“The problems are so huge and overwhelming.”</p>	<p>You don’t have to take responsibility for all of the world’s problems; just take on the challenge of doing your part. It’s not an all-or-nothing proposition.</p>
<p>“I don’t have the time or the energy to get involved.”</p>	<p>Actually, living in integrity with your values and engaging in meaningful pursuits – especially in the company of like-minded others – <i>gives</i> you energy.</p>
<p>“I’m not a saint.”</p>	<p>You don’t have to try to be the next Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. or Mahatma Gandhi; the point is to balance your personal, family’s, and community’s needs. Forgive yourself when you don’t live up to your own expectations. Strive to live a life of passion and power.</p>
<p>“I don’t know enough about the issues.”</p>	<p>There will always be more to learn, but taking action can help inform you about the issues you care about, including by connecting with others.</p>

“I don’t know where to begin.”	Start where you feel comfortable, perhaps an area where you’re already involved, a group project, or something that seems fun. Work up to actions that are more challenging. Choose your battles. Strive for balance so you don’t get overwhelmed or burn out.
“I’m not an activist.”	Activism simply means taking action – including voting, being a responsible consumer, and taking a stand against unethical behavior. Just be yourself, forge your own unique path, and translate commitment into action in your own way.

Reference

Jones, E., R. Haenfler, and B. Johnson. 2007. The Better World Handbook, Gabriola Island, BC: New Society Publishers.