

How to Start a Movement

1. Show people how to get things they want.
2. Show them how to feel good about themselves for getting those things.

People desire possessions, pleasure, power, and perfection, but even with the most coveted object, they are constrained or encouraged by socially inspired feelings of shame or self-respect. Any belief system, be it personal views, philosophy, cultural ideas, or religion, must use both the above tenets to grow and survive. Fulfilling desires gives the motivation, and a positive self-image the environment in which a belief system can grow.

In this world, many people are frozen by conflict, unable to enjoy their desires. Their days pass without vitality or pleasure. They could live more fully by creating a personal philosophy that honestly reconciled their wants with their relationship with life. Unfortunately, such an exercise of courage and thought is quite rare. Hence, most people are inclined to adopt one of the belief systems around them, giving successful ones many potential followers.

If these systems just made people happy and socially responsible, life would be much simpler. As it is, people want to fulfill their desires and feel good about themselves, but most care more about feeling good, than if they should feel good. They readily accept justifications for why they can do no wrong, or why any wrong they do is easily forgiven. History is replete with examples of destructive belief systems and the nightmares they conjured. How many times have humans coveted their neighbors' money, land, or women, taken what they wanted, and justified it in the name of a religious crusade, manifest destiny, or the sub-humanness of those from whom they steal?

To help ourselves and others lead more vital, less conflicted lives can be a noble pursuit. However, we must always be vigilant that the inspiration for our vitality truly is the betterment of ourselves and the world, and not a pleasing, but poisonous self-serving delusion.