

## How Do I Channel My Anger and Sense of Powerlessness at Structural Violence and Injustice?

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Sometimes processing trauma experiences can help us become more aware of our own disappointment in and anger towards the societal systems that allow violence and trauma to happen. Racism, poverty, homophobia, discrimination, gender bias, unjust laws, terrorism, and broken social systems can seem like intractable problems. We are left with doubts, questions, anxiety, and frustration when trying to confront such deep-seated issues and make sense of how to live justly in a broken world. The following suggestions might help you find ways to channel your anger and powerlessness after you have worked through some of your own healing.

- Get involved with persons or organizations focused on working to end institutional violence.
- Find a specific area of social justice that is your passion and act on it ... by giving your time, treasure, and talent to local, national, or international organizations working on that issue.
- Find a concrete way to channel your feeling of helplessness—such as volunteering at a women’s shelter, joining an advocacy group, or starting a neighborhood organization.
- Identify ways to protest structural violence that fit with your values, such as: (1) boycotting the products of companies with unjust practices; (2) participating in rallies, petitions, or write-in campaigns against unjust practices; (3) not participating in the process of production and/or consumption of goods and services of organizations that perpetuate violence and trauma.
- Raise consciousness about structural violence by talking about it among your family, friends, and co-workers and suggesting some of the ideas listed here.
- Follow Gandhi’s advice to “Be the change you wish to see in the world.” Act in the small ways that you can every day to live out your beliefs and values.
- Reflect on structural injustice from a faith perspective: God’s reign is a long-term project. Sin and evil are very powerful. Death and destruction are followed by some form of new life or transformation. Human beings are inherently good. We are all called to do our part to make a difference. Goodness is stronger than evil. Love is stronger than hate.
- Recognize (1) that the spirit of evil is real and personified in the person or group committing the violence or injustice; (2) that one way to counter evil is through awareness of the ways in which we and others embody goodness in the world; (3) another way to resist evil is through the spirit of God through prayer—express to God a desire to heal and overcome the evil.
- Keep in mind the motto of the Christophers—it is better to light one candle than to curse the darkness. How can you light a candle for nonviolence now?
- Study nonviolence through reading, workshops, and volunteer work. Teach it by example wherever you are. St. Francis said it best: “Preach the Gospel always; if necessary, use words.”

These ideas were provided by participants in a **From Mission to Mission** Re-entry Workshop.