

**Lesson 6 Handout**

**How Do People Change the World?**

Instructions: read the excerpt from the book *This Changes Everything* below, then respond to the questions.

Excerpt from *This Changes Everything*, by Naomi Klein:

“...There are certainly lessons to learn from the transformative movements of the past. One such lesson is that when major shifts in the economic balance of power take place, they are invariably the result of extraordinary levels of social mobilization. At those junctures, activism becomes something that is not performed by a small tribe within a culture, whether a vanguard of radicals or a subcategory of slick professionals (though each play their part), but becomes an entirely normal activity throughout society—it’s rent payers associations, women’s auxiliaries, gardening clubs, neighborhood assemblies, trade unions, professional groups, sports teams, youth leagues, and on and on. During extraordinary historical moments—both world wars, the aftermath of the Great Depression, or the peak of the civil rights era—the usual categories dividing “activists” and “regular people” became meaningless because the project of changing society was so deeply woven into the project of life. Activists were, quite simply, everyone.” (pg. 459)

Questions:

1. What does “transformative” mean?

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2. According to the text, what is the key to success for any transformative movement?

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3. What is an "activist"?

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4. Choose an example of a transformative movement (i.e., abolition, suffrage, labor rights, civil rights, etc.). What would have happened if citizens had not chosen to speak up about issues of importance to them or to work to make things better in the community?

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