Solutions: 28 Things I Can Do to Make a Difference

“INSTEAD OF GIVING MYSELF REASONS WHY I CAN’T, I GIVE MYSELF REASONS WHY I CAN.”

~ Unknown
#1: Watch 13th on Netflix
#2: Go to Families Serving Time website and DO Something!!!

#2b: Go to Milwaukee Fatherhood Initiative website and get involved!

http://www.milwaukeefatherhood.com/
2c: Support organizations like Clean Slate Milwaukee

http://www.cleanslatemke.org/
#3: Engage in Open, Honest Conversations about Race & Racism

“We have avoided in recent years talking openly and honestly about race out of fear that it will alienate and polarize. In my own view, it’s our refusal to deal openly and honestly with race that leads us to keep repeating these cycles of exclusion and division, and rebirthing a caste-like system that we claim we’ve left behind.”

~Michelle Alexander~
#4 – Examine the Companies You Support’s Business Practices

Corporations Are Making Millions From Mass Incarceration
#5 – Read the **New Jim Crow Book: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness** by Michelle Alexander

Michelle Alexander is a highly acclaimed civil rights lawyer, advocate, and legal scholar. In recent years, she has taught at a number of universities, including Stanford Law School, where she was an associate professor of law and directed the Civil Rights Clinics. In 2005, she won a Soros Justice Fellowship, which supported the writing of *The New Jim Crow*, and that same year she accepted a joint appointment at the Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity and the Moritz College of Law at The Ohio State University.
#6 – Understand the Connection between Poverty, Unemployment, Greed, Racism & Incarceration

“I am convinced that imprisonment is a way of pretending to solve the problem of crime...It is a cruel and useless substitute for the elimination of those conditions--poverty, unemployment, homelessness, desperation, racism, greed--which are at the root of most punished crime. The crimes of the rich and powerful go mostly unpunished.”

~ Howard Zinn ~
“As a society, our decision to heap shame and contempt upon those who struggle and fail in a system designed to keep them locked up and locked out says far more about ourselves than it does about them.”

~Michelle Alexander ~
#7 – Read **Just Mercy** by Bryan Stevenson

“Each of us is more than the worst thing we’ve ever done.”

~ Bryan Stevenson ~

BRYAN STEVENSON is the executive director of the Equal Justice Initiative in Montgomery, Alabama, and a professor of law at New York University School of Law. He has won relief for dozens of condemned prisoners, argued five times before the Supreme Court, and won national acclaim for his work challenging bias against the poor and people of color. He has received numerous awards, including the MacArthur Foundation “Genius” Grant.
#8 – Change hiring practices if you have the power to do so

Eliminate the check-off box for felony convictions from all applications (i.e. job, college, housing).

A FAIR CHANCE FOR ALL
REDUCE BARRIERS: BAN THE BOX

• Read more: http://nationswell.com/states-reduce-crime-rate-by-removing-check-off-box-on-job-applications/#ixzz4eS3YHyWd
#9 – Support Ban the Box Movement

• “Ban the Box” was started by All of Us or None (a group founded by formerly incarcerated people that had difficulty finding work) in 2003.

• 12 states have removed this question from job applications.

• Employers can still conduct criminal background checks, but by the time they get that far in the hiring process, they’ve usually had a chance to study the applicant’s other qualifications.

• Common App and Colleges and Universities are considering whether to remove this question.

#10 – Examine the Connection between Recidivism and Unemployment

70% of people released from prison commit another crime within three years, and part of this recidivism rate is due in part to how difficult it is for them to find a job.

• Read more: http://nationswell.com/states-reduce-crime-rate-by-removing-check-off-box-on-job-applications/#ixzz4eS5doA5g
Michael O’Hear is a professor of law at Marquette University. He is an editor of the journal *Federal Sentencing Reporter* and has published many articles on sentencing law, criminal procedure, and public opinion about the criminal justice system.
#12 Advocate for Higher Prison Wages

• Privately-run prisons, $.017 cents per hour = Max. of 6 hours per day OR Equivalent of $20 per month.
• The highest-paying private prison pays $.050 cents per hour for what they call “highly skilled positions.”
• Federal pay rate $1.25 an hour and work eight hours a day, and sometimes overtime.
• They can send home $200-$300 per month.
#13 – Fund Prevention & Educational System - School to Prison Pipeline
We must build a movement for education, not incarceration. A movement for jobs, not jails. A movement that will end all forms of discrimination against people released from prison - discrimination that denies them basic human rights to work, shelter and food.

— Michelle Alexander —
#14 – Bring jobs, transportation, business back to the community – Invest in communities

“What happens in a society when jobs disappear, along with programs designed to provide aid to those who have fallen on hard times...a “surplus population” is created, made up of people without employment, access to health care and education. The whole educational system begins to deteriorate...And so prisons pop up.”

~ Angela Davis ~
“You have educated a public deliberately over years, over decades to believe that black men in particular and black people in general are criminals. It is not just white people that believe this, black people also believe this and are terrified of our own selves.”

~ Malkia Cyril ~
#16 – Understand that we are not just punishing men and women, but their families.
#17 – Understand that the US social issues have been delegated to the criminal justice system

**America's New Mental Institutions**

In the 1950's, about 500,000 people with serious mental illnesses were treated in publicly funded psychiatric hospitals.

Today, the numbers are quite different.

- **108,000** Receive Treatment
- **200,000** Are Left Homeless
- **356,000** End Up In Prison
- **34,000** Commit Suicide
#18 – Charitable Giving

- **Charitable Giving** - One way we can contribute to social justice movements is by donating money or other goods to community organizations with goals related to the following:

  - strengthening children, youth, and families
  - criminal justice reform
  - community reentry following incarceration
#19 – Individual Advocacy
Fight to repeal that laws in States that excludes individuals’ right to vote.
STATE FELONY VOTING LAWS

• 10 states lose vote permanently
• 20 states **vote restored after terms of incarceration + parole + probation** have been completed. **WISCONSIN**
• 4 states vote restored after terms of incarceration + parole
• 14 states & DC vote restored after terms of incarceration
• Only two states — Maine and Vermont — allow those currently in prison on felony charges to vote by absentee ballot while in prison.
• Eight states even ban inmates with misdemeanors (Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Michigan, Missouri, South Carolina, and South Dakota).

#20 – Service & Volunteerism

- **Service & Volunteerism** Opportunities for social justice through service and volunteerism are endless (locate agencies through 211, the United Way of Greater Milwaukee, [http://www.volunteermilwaukee.org/](http://www.volunteermilwaukee.org/)).
#21 – Get Involved Politically!!!

- Vote for candidates that support social justice
- Join organizations whose focus is to promote social justice
- Hold elected officials accountable
- Organize and help people get to voting polls
- RUN for office
- Use social media to impact people
#22 – Understand that LOCAL politics has more impact on your day-to-day lives than DC politics


#23 – Get Informed!!!!!

- Share information about important social issues using social media

- Sign up for their email communication to stay abreast of the issues and organizational initiatives

- Become a regular reader or listener of reliable news sources such as:
  - National Public Radio (NPR)
  - Public Broadcasting Service television (PBS)
  - New York Times
  - Washington Post
  - Aljazeera
  - Milwaukee Journal Sentinel
  - British Broadcasting (BBC)
  - Professional journals with a social justice focus
#24 – Learn more about trauma and how it is connected to mass incarceration


FEMALE INMATES ARE MORE LIKELY TO RECEIVE MENTAL HEALTH TREATMENT & REPORT TRAUMA...

66% of women in the NH prison system are receiving ongoing treatment, compared to 35% of men

As many as 90% of women behind bars have histories of sexual & domestic abuse

...& CHILDHOOD ABUSE

Childhood abuse is reported by 6% to 24% of incarcerated men nationally and by 25% to 50% of their female counterparts

Abuse in childhood is strongly correlated with adult victimization, substance abuse & criminality
#25: Understand that there is a connection between wage discrimination and mass incarceration
#26 – Get to Know Your Neighbors

"The main challenge in community building is just getting the nerve to say hello to your neighbor."

-Leela Gill

12 WAYS TO BUILD COMMUNITY

1. Know your Neighbors
2. Turn off your TV
3. Greet people
4. Buy locally
5. Share what you have
6. Help a lost dog
7. Garden together
8. Fix it even if you didn't break it
9. Pick up litter
10. Barter for your goods
11. Bake extra and share
12. Ask for help when you need it

© Share Inspire Quotes - http://shareinspirequotes.blogspot.com/
#27 – Understanding that once all Black lives matter, everyone’s life will matter...

It is said that no one truly knows a nation until one has been inside its jails. A nation should not be judged by how it treats its highest citizens, but its lowest ones.

— Nelson Mandela —
#28 – Understand that the OPPOSITE of CRIMINALIZATION is HUMANIZATION!!!!!