

**Junior Essay
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Don't Try

Why try? Why try to accomplish something? Why try to help people? Why *try* to do anything; when you can just go and *do* it?

The realization of the true significance of *doing* rather than *trying* came from an unlikely friend of mine. His name is Lydell, and though he may be homeless, he is one of the nicest people I have ever met. Our first encounter was when I was walking to the grocery store. I noticed him across the street from me and crossed over to him. He had his arm in a cast and seemed friendly when I asked him his name and what happened to his arm. He replied that he broke it at work and couldn't work as long as it was healing. Then he'd fallen into hardship because of the hospital bill. I told him I could help him when I came back. After picking up the groceries, I walked back over to him and gave him my change. He thanked me and asked me for my name. I shared my name and left after saying, "God bless you" to him. I have seen Lydell several times since that first meeting, and each time he remembered me. I wasn't 'just another person' to him, just as he isn't a stranger anymore to me.

One day, a week or so after Christmas, I put together a bag of essentials for Lydell, including soap, food, water, and socks. I went to deliver it to him, and he said that he had gotten into a shelter, which made my heart leap, and how grateful he was for the gift. He told me that people like me made the world a better place, to which I replied, "I try." Immediately, he corrected me, "No, don't try. Just do. God has a plan for you." I left after a few more exchanges, still puzzled by his words. It took me nearly a month to understand their deep hidden meaning.

When we *try* something, we may have to force ourselves to attempt it, or we may just see what will happen before we commit to it. But if we *do* something, we are setting a pattern, an example for our future self. We are telling ourselves that this is the way that things will be now. So if we merely *try* to help someone, then it may end up as a one-time experience, an anomaly. If we *try* to help someone, then we force ourselves to feel compassion for others. And compassion is something that must come naturally.

Sadly, however, humanity has been plagued by a lack of compassion throughout its history. An example may be the events of the Holocaust, when many Germans may have thought about trying to stop what they must have known to be wrong. However, very few did, for a variety of reasons. Tragically, the willingness to try means nothing unless it is followed by the drive to *do*. Those who found that drive are the real heroes. Among those are the people of the Czech Republic who, as the Jews were being sent on forced marches to their deaths, left whatever food they could spare along the side of the road so that the Jews could keep going, keep surviving, and hopefully survive long enough to be freed.

This one simple action, doing something, anything, saved many lives. This begs the question, what would our world be like if more people didn't try, but instead did? Would there still be poverty, or would the rich bring themselves to help the less fortunate? Would there still be hunger, or would there be enough people donating food to the hungry? What kind of amazing society would we live in if everyone thought not about trying, but simply about doing? There is only one way to find out.

Each of us must understand that *trying* is an extension of standing by, just dipping our toes into the realm of being an upstander. *Doing* is the beginning of

becoming an upstander. When we are upstanders, we set an example for others, who may go on to become helpers themselves, and set an example for even more people. And becoming an upstander is a change not easily reversed, resulting in a chain reaction of compassion. Imagine what can be achieved with one simple change. If we were to just *try* less, we could *do* so much more.