

Don't be an activist

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Don't be that dirty A word: Activist
Like a viral disease
It always starts in college
took that sociology or ethnic studies class
joined that outreach recruitment center for
underrepresented youth of color
you wanted to hold it down for the struggle
at that rally for undocumented student rights
and then it happens
you become an activist
the symptoms will kick in fast and heavy

Your parents will tell you to get a real job
Fox news will tell you you're unpatriotic
Your friends will call you too sensitive
Your family will call you too liberal
Your community will call you too communist

You'll work at non-profit organization
cause you said you want to make difference
cause you certainly aren't making any money
even though your official job title is just Program Coordinator
you're really also the organization's social media director
youth outreach manager
office technician
staff personnel therapist
grant writer
program assessment evaluator
and in-house cultural competency trainer
You'll wonder how many top ramen will it take before you give up
on your close to impoverished 50 hours a week
\$800 AmeriCorps monthly living stipend
You will buy extra lip balm for all the future ass kissing

you will do to potential grantees and funders
all in the name of community
.....and to keep you job
.....Cause your grant contract ends by the 2017 fiscal cycle
way to stick to the man

You'll feel guilty for listening main stream hip-hop
and that your favorite song is Tyga's Rack City
even though that song represents everything that you stand against
misogyny, male patriarchy
the commodification
hypersexualization
and dehumanization of women
that beat is still so damn good
Rack City, Rack Rack City
I mean Sac City, Sac sac City...ssstitch

Don't be an activist because you'll just be angry
angry because you learned that everything evil in this world is rooted
from colonialism, white patriarchy and capitalism

Paulo Friere called it
when they made the matrix
once become conscious, you can never go back
with liberation comes burden
and that burden still sits heavy like asthma

Ignorance must really be bliss
because it's exhausting
looking through Facebook newsfeed
without saying "goddamit this shit is fucked up"
without seeing white people throw peace signs and make squinty eyes in pictures
with the #asianpose
without having another the "conversation" with your
well-intentioned but racist ass friend
who commented on your scholarly post on

“microaggressions in the classrooms”
without seeing another fraternity throw another
Cinco de Drinko “cross the border” party
without seeing another newscaster blame the rape victim
and defend the rapist
without another black body being shot
by another gunman named officer

and feeling
like you can never do anything
Ironically enough
you have to brush it off
so you can procrastinate on your 8 page sociology paper
on institutionalized racism in the California prison system

It will hurt
it will hurt because
it will come from your own people
they tell you, you too cocky
That you’re an opportunistic
left South Sacramento for a job at UC Davis
and that you a sell out
and so you buy into their thinking
and they said you were NEVER really down
so you tell yourself that you’re never REALLY down
and they called out for saying something problematic
so you think of yourself as a problem
you didn’t get enough petition signatures
You didn’t stay long enough at the town hall meetings
You didn’t mentor enough youth
you weren’t there for your community when they needed it most
and so you question everything that you are
everything that you stand for
you hit this point of confusion
of what it all means

you succumb to self-doubt
and burn out
You get tired
of being tired
and you tell yourself
“I just want to be normal
just like everyone else”

That heavy anxiety sitting on shoulders
makes you scratch your skin off
but then you realize
normal
normal is that bystander effect
that MNC chokehold that stops you from raising your voice
and forces you to turn your head away from injustice
just to face down at your iphone screens
Normal is making it easier for you
to keep up with Kardarisians
than to keep up with the sake of humanity
Normal is that basic shit
Normal is that stuff that makes people cynical
cause being cynical is always easier than critical
Normal is making society a status quota
number of soldiers pulled out
the dowe jones is down
unemployment is up
climate change doesn't exist
Racist republicans still do

and so we confused normal
for this substance that cynicism made ugly
validation, acceptance, love

And you finally realize that it was never about you
and it wasn't about them
but it was about everybody

It was about humanness- Ubuntu
a justice that institutions are incapable of achieving
so you've been forced to dream
you check your privilege for low paychecks
to implement your change
be monkey wrench in the machine

activism is not a sprint
it is a lifelong marathon
and your most crucial asset in your run
is not the power in your legs
but the strength of your heart
so you must protect it
You must pace yourself to give it resiliency
you will be your biggest critic
the minute you look far too much
in your own steps
you will lose vision
so you must keep your head upright
never lose sight of your finish line

You were meant to be different
only then,
can we make this world
different

The world does not need normal
it needs relentless unafraid pursuit of compassion
every action or inaction
disrupts or perpetuates that powers of oppression
but you choose
to upset the set up
disrupt the corrupt
stand against the standardization
hunger strike for the hungry

you are greater than Normal
you are more than an activist
you are deeply and truly necessary