YOUNG HEROES!

A Learner's Guide to Changing the World

ABOLISH SLAVERY EDITION

By Kurt Hoffman
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Foreword by Dr. Kevin Bales.

Brighter Books Publishing House dedicates this book to the memory of our talented, funny and kind young editor, Kelly Berthelot, whose journey on this Earth ended far too soon. This is the last Brighter Books project Kelly completed; she poured her soul into it, as with everything she touched. We hope this book helps many people, and that it becomes a changing force, as she believed it could be.

We miss you, Kelly.

Printed and bound in the USA on acid-free paper that contains no material from old-growth forests, using ink that is safe for children.
One tree has been planted for this book.
In Memory of my beloved Grandpa and Aunt Sharon.

For Grandma. Your questions about life and God have moved me to seek answers.
YOUNG HEROES MANIFESTO

1. We live the examined life; by examining our beliefs, values, and cultural norms we ensure they are objectively good for us.

2. We are humbly teachable at all times; we seek and submit to truth above all else.

3. We are always honest with others and with ourselves working diligently to not self-deceive.

4. We live simply and consume thoughtfully.

5. We develop our talents and serve others with them.

6. In all, we are holistically conscious justice-seekers, dedicated to fighting for equality and fairness everywhere at all times.
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The focus of Young Heroes: A Learner's Guide to Changing the World - Abolish Slavery Edition is to educate, empower, and inspire young people to help abolish modern-day slavery. Though we hope readers of all ages will benefit from this book, it has been specifically developed for readers between the ages of 13 and 18, an ideal age for gaining awareness of social issues. We want to build a foundation that will help eradicate injustices in the world while challenging readers to examine their deepest selves. This is not a book designed to tell readers how and what to think, but instead one that presents an array of ideas and invitations for readers to think critically and live life to its fullest.

Young people in developed countries have some amazing and historically unique gifts. Today, they are more mobile and independent than any other generation, having been globally connected from a young age through technologies such as the Internet, cell phones, and airplanes. They possess the unique potential to celebrate diversity, having grown up in classrooms mixed by gender, ethnicity, and culture. Topping that, today's youth are also said to be uniquely self-motivated, willing to break molds, take roads less traveled, and fight for noble causes.

Human trafficking, on the other hand, is a complex global problem, and violates every bit of human rights. To overcome such evil, we need people who are innovative, appreciate human diversity, and are in tune with the world's newest technologies; it is clear, when considering the strengths of our youth, that with the right guidance they are best equipped to eventually abolish slavery and human trafficking.
While some young people might say they are confused, and others are finding their way, all are full of awesome potential. By combining education, self-awareness, and empowerment, this curriculum is designed to reach youth where they are, while also calling them to something higher. It is our goal to counteract pop culture’s misdirection and youth’s confusion by harnessing their strengths. By focusing on a common goal we can promote unity.

Abolishing slavery is a tough job, but someone has to do it. Whether you are a parent, teacher, or a young person reading this, please know today’s youth are unique, powerful, and have what it takes. To all: listen, learn, and question everything—not just because you want to raise contradiction, but for the sake of finding the right answers. Let’s work together and go big. Let’s help our children reach their potential as people, and bring to life our hope to abolish slavery once and for all. Let’s prepare for the future and prepare our Young Heroes.

**The Attitude of a Young Hero**

*Young Heroes: A Learner’s Guide to Changing the World* works from a unique perspective. A young hero does not come from the political left or right; a young hero has no hidden agendas. Rather, your aim must be to bring forth nothing more or less than the truth in every area of life—to know how things really are, not just how you want them to be or how you assume them to be. Further, young heroes must seek to be fully alive, active, and always engaging with the good and evil in the world and within themselves.

Life is a journey, and we are all pilgrims. While you know some things, you do not know all things; you must always be teachable. As learners in this process known as the human experience, you must believe that life’s complexities can be sorted out. You must know that life’s most important things can be determined. Further, you also must trust that all humans have a common ground and that unity is an achievable goal. Our lives and our world are destined to get better and better, not worse and worse, or to remain stagnant. This should be your attitude, and how you choose to carry yourself. Never settle for less.

As humans, we are not perfect, but we should not use this as an excuse to slack off or ignore the suffering in our world. Rather, despite our imperfections, we should be able to acknowledge the needs of others as well as our need for others. In our interconnected world, we all need each other—not only those alive today, but also those in the generations to come, as well as the ones before us, who we can learn so much from. Summed up, changing the world begins with changing yourself.

**Goals For Young Heroes**

The goal for this edition of *Young Heroes* can be summed up in two words: Abolish slavery. We should recognize slavery comes in many forms and is not an isolated issue; however, this is no simple task. This is why the goals for our readers also include increasing self-awareness and the ability to self-examine, while also increasing awareness of the world and basic elements of human nature. On a bigger scale, our hope is for millions of today’s young people joining together in the common pursuit for truth and justice by finding a life of thoughtfulness and integrity.
Values For Young Heroes

**Thoughtfulness** is critical if you are to leave a positive legacy in this world. Be willing to self-examine, turn from bad ideas, and think critically about social norms—you must promote questions, not run from them.

**Integrity** means consistency between what you say and do. If you begin by searching for consistency, you can then thoughtfully gain integrity. A lack of integrity is one of the reasons why slavery exists, so it is no small thing. While it is hard to be consistent, if you make it a habit you will grow more and more into a person of integrity.

**Humility** means you can see where you stop and the world begins. Each of us knows some things, but no human knows all things; remember to listen. You are to be humble, realize how little you know, and live aware of how much you depend on others.

**Knowledge** is the key to a meaningful life. The better you understand the world you live in and how you fit into it, the better your life will be. By the same token, the better you understand human nature and the human condition, the better you will know and advocate for truth over falsehood. So you must always be ready to learn, and be willing to self-examine. This means you must also be willing to admit what you don’t know or understand, and always ask lots of questions.

**Discernment** is a virtue often lost. You must value this because it is a vital skill, as it allows you to see the difference between what’s meaningful and meaningless, true and false, good and evil, as well as right and wrong.

**Community** is the sense you have of belonging to a place based on its ideas, location, and the people around you. No person is an island; your community provides a safe place for you to have a voice, participate in decisions, contribute, and experience heartfelt connections with others. Being a part of your community means that you can share your ideas and educate people about social issues. In a community, the voice of one can quickly become the voice of many.

**Empowerment** gives your voice strength to speak out against injustices and the evil you see in the world. We all need strength, awareness, and confidence to reach our potential and to achieve our goals. Becoming empowered usually happens with the help of others, through encouragement and consistency. True empowerment must be both personal and community-wide; there is much more power in numbers.

**Support** is foundational to any person trying to change the status quo, or trying to right a wrong. Giving and receiving support is essential to any community. It is necessary if you are to grow and endure hardships, and it also helps you see life from diverse angles. Life cannot be lived alone; we need one another. Through support, your talents and strengths are shared, and you can accomplish much more than you could ever do alone.

**Responsibility** acknowledges that at the end of every day you are accountable for your beliefs, values, choices, feelings, and actions. Mistakes that you make must be accounted for, and corrected; by the same token, your good deeds are also your responsibility. As a human being you have rights that others should respect, and you must acknowledge your responsibility to treat others the same way.

**Innovation** allows for new ideas, individual creativity, and imagination to flourish. Being innovative, seizing opportunities, and thinking big is critical for you to reach your goals. By recognizing that many of your fellow humans
lack opportunities to be innovative and improve things, you begin to value the opportunities that you are given, and can commit to being good stewards of these opportunities.

**Equality** is a very important reality for you to uphold. Equality should be honored while diversity is celebrated. Each of our journeys tells a story, and therefore has value. Affirming human equality invites each member to contribute, which invariably brings unity.

**Trust** is built through the group's openness and by living with integrity. It involves having faith in one another, and in your ability to fulfill your potential. Trust rejects indifference while promoting confidentiality and privacy. Focus on being honest in words and actions, because this is necessary for dialogue and building lasting relationships. It reflects respect for yourself and others.

**Self-Awareness** is seen as critical for the young hero. To say you are aware of the world when you are not yet aware of yourself leads to a dangerous path; lack of self-awareness causes one to only follow others' thoughts, or react to others' actions. By cultivating self-awareness, you can choose the thoughts you have, and ensure that they are consistent with the things you say and the actions you take.

**Self-examination** and a young hero go together like peanut butter and jelly. By becoming aware of your strengths and weaknesses, you may find things about yourself that need to be developed, strengthened, and even changed. Be it ideas, beliefs, desires, behaviors, habits, lifestyle, culture, feelings, friends, or anything else inside you, self-examination will help you figure out where your strengths lie, and how to use these strengths to become the change you want to see in the world.

**Serving others** is not only a choice you make, but it is also a way of life. Whether directly or indirectly, you must seek to ease your fellow person's burden. It is your responsibility to serve others with your talents, and it should also be your joy.

**Being Accountable** is something many people seek to avoid. You, however, must recognize how quickly you can change, which is why you should find people who can hold you to your word and not let you fall short of your potential. Respect the opinion of your parents or guardians, and always try to follow the correct path towards the truly good life.

**Flexibility** is a value because everyone's situation and circumstances differ. We must each be flexible with ourselves and with each other, as some will catch on quicker than others within any given part of Young Heroes. Be ready to adapt and change things along the way; keeping in mind learning and growing are always the main goals.

**Human Dignity** must be upheld. At the most basic level, you should value all people because all deserve the same love and respect. Regardless of any differences they may present from your culture, sex, skin color, country of birth, or even preferences, all humans deserve dignity. Remember to respect yourself and your body through the choices you make; you must uphold the human dignity of everyone around you, starting with yourself.

**Gratitude** is a positive attitude all of us must seek to have. While people remain imperfect and the world suffers injustice, you must still remain positive and grateful for all that is good, true, and beautiful in your life, in others, and in your world. Evil exists, but so does good, and for that you should be thoroughly grateful.
Directions for Young Heroes

*Young Heroes* is a creative and interactive piece attempting to reach across cultures and school popularity lines to tap into your strengths and talents. You will find throughout each chapter written portions geared to inform and challenge your intellect in different ways. You will become familiar with the many types of learning, and this will give you a chance to discover your natural learning style and harness your individual strengths.

This edition of *Young Heroes* is designed to be a flexible resource for young people, but is appropriate for all ages. Within each of the sixteen chapters you will find different learning features aimed to increase your understanding of human trafficking, of yourself, and of the world at large. The more seriously you take these academic features, the more you will benefit from *Young Heroes* and the better you can help make the world a better place.

**Themes** are different for each chapter. Look out for unique quotations, images, pictures of abolitionists, and art styles to bring the message home. If you are a visual learner, use the graphics as discussion topics or to journal about.

**Questions** are asked to get you to think about each topic. In each chapter you will find five multiple-choice, true/false, or essay questions. Be sure to answer them. Some will be related to what you have just learned, while others are more personal and opinion based. In both cases, shoot for the most honest answer.

**Key Words** will be **bolded** throughout each chapter. You will have to define these words using a dictionary or the Internet. Be sure to write down the definitions on the journal pages at the end of each chapter. This will help you become more used to seeking for the meaning of things. Do this also with any other words you come across and don't understand.

**Creation Tanks** are designed to engage your creative side, benefit from web-based resources, and encourage the examination of pop-culture. Ranging from listening to music and speeches, to watching videos and movies, specific directions will be offered in each chapter.

**Think Tanks** challenge you by offering deeper ideas, promoting critical thinking on each chapter. For homework, each Think Tank assigns you a task that will be a lot of fun: you must hunt down and locate at least one new resource that discusses the topic given. It can be a book, something from the Internet, or a person you talk to, but you should write down what it is and where you found it. Reflecting on the topic, finish by journaling your thoughts about the given subject. Your reflection should be at least five sentences in length and have at least one reference to the resource you found.

**Field Journaling** will help you develop your skills in reflection and grow in knowledge. Using the journal pages provided in the end of each chapter, write down thoughts and feelings that come up as you go. Feel comfortable to agree or disagree with what you read, take notes on what you don't understand, or make additional observations. Your thoughts matter, so pour your heart out; express yourself through writing, poetry or drawings. This section is like two for the price of one: it will also help you get comfy with living a young hero's life, so be sure to take note of convictions or beliefs you hold as well.

**The Memoirs of a Young Hero** section creates room for self-exploration and self-examination. You can respond to the questions in a journaling format. Also, there
is a 1–10 scale for you to rate yourself on how well you support or live out the concepts discussed within the chapters. At the end of the book, reread all of your Memoir entries, along with the rest of your journal. Rewriting this as a self-narrative will make it easier to know yourself better, including your talents and how to serve others with them.

**Young Heroes Leadership Academy** applies to groups working on Young Heroes together. If you are not reading this book in a group, then you can organize one yourself by getting your friends and family involved in the projects. Remember, the more the merrier! Whether you’re at home, at school, at a community center, at church, or some other organization, your instructions are the same. At each meeting, a different young person is given time to lead the discussion using one of the first seven academic features. Make sure everyone takes his or her turn. Which academic feature you focus on is your choice, so go ahead and choose whichever one you are most comfortable with. Be sure to reflect on what you learned and have others contribute as well. Whether you like it or not, you will be called to lead something someday, so the earlier you start practicing, the better.

**Abolitionists Research**: A name and picture of a notable abolitionist are given at the beginning of each chapter. While the details of these people could have been provided too, it is more beneficial for you to research them and jot down some facts about each one. Let it be a meaningful journey into the lives of another, and practice putting yourself into their shoes. Journal about what it would have been like to live their lives.

**Tips for Facilitators**

Some intentional benefits of Young Heroes are that it is portable, adaptable, and flexible. While we offer a variety of ideas and options for both individual and group work, please feel free to be creative. You know your specific audience better than we do, so come up with your own exercises and feel free to have students create assignments or complete only some – it’s your call. The most important thing is that your students gain two primary cornerstones: a greater knowledge about slavery and human trafficking, and learn to be challenged intellectually about their potential greatness, personal values and goals in life. Yes, these are big and even touchy topics but also critical for young minds. The choices all of us adults made as young people affect us today, for better or worse; the same is true for today’s young people. This is why the more they get to know what they are as a group, who they are as individuals, and what they are capable of as a generation, the better off our whole world will be.

Much of the information in Young Heroes and the academic angles it works from may be foreign to you as well. If not, great; but if so, don’t sweat it. Consider working through it yourself before the students do, take advantage of all related resources, and then just do the best you can – which, for sure, will be pretty dang great! Lastly and most importantly, a deep heartfelt thanks for using this curriculum!

A facilitator’s guide is available for download at www.brighterbooks.com, under the Young Heroes page.
Knowledge is our goal.

The definition of knowledge is *that which is believed, true, and justifiable*. Having opinions, beliefs, or unexamined ideas alone, therefore, are not necessarily knowledge. Your ability to discern and grow in knowledge of the world around you—your family, your community, your country—is how you, as a single person, connect to the universe and all the creatures in it.

This is why to do anything well, whether it be music, art, science, or family, we must have *knowledge* of it first. Some might even say that to know and to be known is our deepest longing as humans. In light of our nature, this makes sense. But have you ever wondered how you know anything? And how do you know that you know?

Once, people claimed to *know* that the world was flat, when in reality it was not true; they only *believed* it. Even though they sought to justify their beliefs via *common sense logic*, this belief was eventually proven false. As we now know, the world is not flat, but round! In this example, you can see how the quickest way to limit human potential is to think that you have true knowledge of something when in fact you do not. The same is true for every one of us; this is the reason why you should seek real knowledge about the world, about human nature, and about yourself. You must search for *truth*, not mere opinions or theories. So saddle up and get ready!