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C.T.Vivian It's in the Action

What is your Movement and what is your Weapon?

A Movement activates the will and capacity of people and organizations to work in solidarity toward a vision they all share. This is a core component of changing culture and policy. Movement building vests its power in people and organizations so they can take the work wherever it needs to go. Because movement building is rooted in values and an analysis of power, it is often broader than any single issue, identity, or institution-based group, meaning movements typically bring together multi-issue, multi-racial and multi-sector groupings.

A weapon is a device, instrument, material, or substance, whether animate or inanimate, that, in the manner, it is used, or intended to be used, is capable of producing a change, defeat, or destroying something.

What is your movement and what is your weapon?

Dr. King did not tell you to get involved, they inspired you to get involved. Dr. King did not wait for other clergies to get involved he put his dream into action. He started a movement. Dr. King also said a great leader does not search for consensus but is a molder of consensus. When you start your movement, remember that Dr. King is telling you in order to be leaders, we need to lead—that is, we need to develop ideas and convince others of their merit. A leader doesn't figure out where everyone is going and then jump to the front of the line. Dr. King was a molder of leadership. Dr. King used his ability to mold consensus as his weapon for the Movement.

Dr. Vivian did not lead from the front, he was side by side with the people. He empowered them to go and make their own movement by having an action plan. Dr. Vivian said People do not choose Rebellion. It is forced upon them. A revolution is always an Act of Self-Defense. Dr. Vivian also said Leadership is found in the action to defeat that which would defeat you - You are made by the struggles you choose. Dr. Vivian used his pulpit as his weapon for the Movement.

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Diane Nash was a young student making life-threatening decisions in her movement. She said Freedom is people realizing they are their own leaders. It was clear to me that if we allowed the Freedom Ride to stop at that point. Just after so much violence had been inflicted, the message would have been sent that all you have to do so to stop a nonviolence campaign is inflict massive

violence. As a leader, she had a strategy to push forward for the overall good of everyone in the movement. Neither was she afraid to use her voice to challenge the media, men both black and white, and other authority figures. Ms. Nash said We presented Southern white racists with a new set of options. Kill us or desegregate. Ms. Nash used her intellect, uncompromising relentlessness to concede to defeat, and strategic abilities as a weapon.

We all know Congressman John Lewis in those pictures where he was beaten several times fighting for the fundamental rights that we were promised in the constitution at all men are create equal. Congressman Lewis famously told us to never, ever be afraid to make some noise and get in good trouble, necessary trouble. He was not afraid to die for the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. His conviction to die was his weapon.

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Will you get bitten by dogs, Will you have cigarette smoke blown in your face, will you sit with an elderly person and help them to register to vote or to understand why their vote matters.

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Daniella Frazier was 17 years old when she took to social media and showed the world that George Floyd was being murdered by the police right in the face of many people. She used Social Media as her weapon.

Mamie Till lost her son to murderers in Mississippi in 1955. She used her son's murder as a weapon to show the world was happening in Mississippi United States. She said God told me, "I have taken one from you, but I will give you thousands."
"I wanted the world to see what they did to my boy."

Fannie Lou Hamer went to the Democratic Convention in 1964 and challenged the White Democratic slate of delegates before the National Convention. She spoke about her voting rights and the torture she endured for attempting to register. She took a risk by being televised. She used the media as her weapon.

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Photography is my weapon says Gordon Parks. He said, "The guy who takes a chance, who walks the line between the known and unknown, who is unafraid of failure, will succeed." Parks used photography to create the history of the movement and that was his weapon.

"I will not take 'but' for an answer. Negroes have been looking at democracy's 'but' too long."
Langston Hughes. He used his art in writing as his weapon.

James Baldwin was an activist and a writer. He used his skills as a writer as his weapon. He said “Not everything that is faced can be changed, but nothing can be changed until it is faced.”
What will you face for your movement?

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Elizabeth Catlett said I have always wanted my art to service my people - to reflect us, to relate to us, to stimulate us, to make us aware of our potential. We have to create art for liberation and for life. Ms. Catlett is letting us know that we need to take action by using our talents to take action whatever your movement may be.

Nina Simone sang to us for us to take action in a movement. She risked her livelihood as a singer to create a message of action. She said “ I’ll tell you what Freedom is to me. NO FEAR.

Lorraine Hansberry died at an early age. Before she left to be with the Lord, she told us how important it is to be young, gifted, and black. Use your creativeness to bring about change or a movement. Writing about the life of original Black folk was her weapon.

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Colin Kaepernick lost his income as a Professional Football player. When asked why would he risk his ability to earn a living and lose a career where so many people would want to have his career. His response was “Where there’s a significant change - and I feel like that flag represents what it’s supposed to represent, and this country is representing people the way it’s supposed to — I’ll stand. Kaepernick used his status as a Professional Footballer to kneel respectfully during the pledge of allegiance. Kneeling was his weapon.

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Malala Yousafzai is a young activist that wanted to get an education in her native land of Pakistan. She was shot in the face, disfigured and left to die. She survived, She uses her pen as a weapon. She stood before the United Nations and wrote a speech about her life as a young woman in Pakistan. She said they thought bullets would silence us. They were wrong. She survived. She said let us empower ourselves with the weapon of knowledge.

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The bible in 2 Timothy 1:7 For God hath not given us the spirit of fear’ but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind. Go and make your Movement and chose your Weapon.

Matthew 5:6 “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied. Go and make your Movement and chose your Weapon.

Lastly, remember what Sidney Harman says “The skills required to conquer adversity and emerge stronger and more committed than ever are the same ones that make for extraordinary leaders”

Now go and find your Crucible and Weapon and make a Movement.... I found mine in fighting for equity in communities of color whether in a board room serving on the advisory board of the DUI/Drug court in my county; whether that is educating my community on environmental injustices, voting injustices, and civil rights issues. My weapon is the ability to organize, empower, and motivate a community into action.