

Be the Change



Authors:
Arun Gandhi, Bethany Hegedus

Illustrator:
Evan Turk

Awards

Notable Social Studies Trade Book for Young People, World History and Cultural Selection, 2017

Green Earth Book Award, Honor, 2017

Junior Library Guild Selections, Character Building Selection, 2016

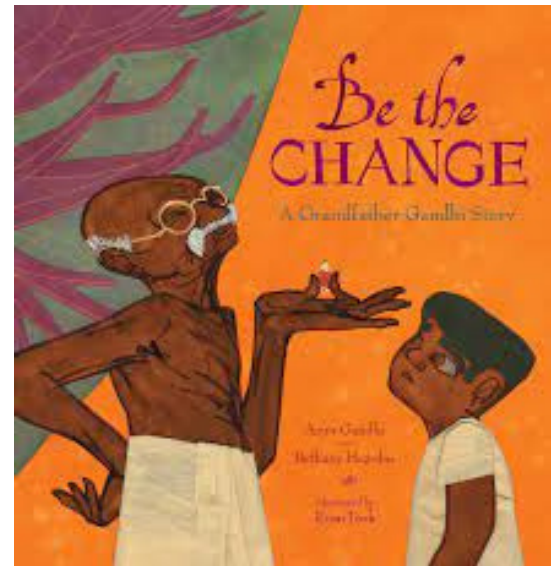
Vocabulary

self-discipline, resources, sprouted, service

Reviews

[Kirkus Reviews](#)

[Publishers Weekly](#)



Summary

In this picture book memoir set in an ashram in India, Arun Gandhi recalls learning a powerful life lesson from his grandfather, Mahatma Gandhi.

FAIR Standard

US.3-5.13 I grow and make better decisions because I am willing to do the hard work of finding evidence and admitting when I am wrong.

Discussion

1. What important lesson did Arun learn from his grandfather? Is there an important lesson that you have learned from one of your relatives?
2. "The purpose of ashram life was to live simply and non-violently." What do you think that looks like? Sounds like? Feels like?
3. When Grandfather made Arun go look for the pencil, he said, "It is not the pencil, but you, that is important." Why was it important for Arun to search for the pencil?

Discussion

4. Arun's grandfather said to him, "Before you act, think how it would affect others. Who would it hurt? You? Someone else? The earth?" Can you think of an example of an action that would hurt you, someone else or the earth?
5. At the end of the book, Arun realized that to change the world, he needed to change himself. What is one way you could change yourself in order to make a positive change in the world?

Activities

1. Arun and Grandfather made a tree of violence and pasted thoughts and actions on it. Choose a positive concept like love, nonviolence, or kindness. Make a tree trunk, and cut leaves and flowers from colored paper. Write on them thoughts and actions that will help grow that positive concept in the world. Glue the leaves and flowers on the tree. You can do this all at once or make the tree "grow" slowly over time.



2. Arun learned that our actions can affect others. What are some good actions that have a chain reaction? Create a peace chain by cutting strips of paper and linking them together. On each strip write down a word or phrase that can affect others in a peaceful way (e.g. smiling, forgiving, holding the door, saying 'please', etc.)

3. Arun found new growth in himself when he learned he was responsible for his thoughts and actions as well as those of the world. He said, "To change the world, I needed to change myself." Make a print of your hand dipped in paint or traced. On each finger write one thing you can do to change yourself that will make a positive change in the world.

Challenge option: Evan Turk, the illustrator, added sewing to many pictures. If you'd like to try this technique, trace your hand on a piece of cloth, stitch around its outline, and use fabric markers or paint for your writing.

