

## Students Helping Students

# Lesson Plans

### **Social Entrepreneurship Lesson #2: One to the Infinite Power**

*If not me, then who?*

#### **Overview**

Individuals are often the catalyst for big ideas and big impact. This lesson focuses on the significant impact one person can have, whether by coming up with a powerful idea, leading support for a project, or simply raising awareness. Students learn about the many individuals who have made a difference, and discover the potential for changing the world. Various writing activities are suggested, dependent on the grade and readiness of students. (Note, the previous lesson plan, “*What is Social Entrepreneurship?*”, offers insight into social entrepreneurship and those who make it powerful. It helps set the stage for this lesson.)

**Subject:** Language Arts

**Grades:** 4-12

**Time:** One to two 50-minute class periods

**Materials:** Computer connected to the Internet and to a digital projector, screen (or use of a connected computer lab).

#### **Learning Goals**

- Students will learn about individuals who have made a difference and what inspired them to take action
- Students will learn strategies for taking action and making a difference.
- Students will gain a deeper understanding of global challenges.
- Students will practice narrative writing (Writing options are provided such as writing an article, story, interview, letter, or résumé – choices should be based on grade and ability).

## Introduction

Currently, many people are working toward improving the living conditions of others—whether they are working to cleaning up the environment, creating healthy food and clean water, or helping nurture small businesses for those in poverty. These efforts are almost always initiated by one person with a powerful idea, and the will to make it a reality. This lesson begins with one individual who has taken a major step toward improving the conditions for others: John Wood, founder of Room to Read. The lesson shares other examples of individuals who are currently working in the world today. Students will write about them by choosing a purposeful writing activity (selection of activity depends on grade).

## Key Concepts and Vocabulary

- Critical sense of what's important
- Gut sense that something must be done – if not me, then who?
- Force of will
- Power of a single idea
- Cumulative, exponential impact
- Selflessness
- Inspiration

## Additional Resources and Learning Connections

- [Interview with John Wood](#), founder of Room to Read
  - Read more about the results of his single, powerful idea  
[http://www.roomtoread.org/see\\_work.html](http://www.roomtoread.org/see_work.html)
- Profiles of people who have made a difference through their individual effort.
  - Profiles of *The New Heroes*  
<http://www.pbs.org/opb/thenewheroes/meet/>
  - Schwab Foundation's Profiles of Social Entrepreneurs  
[http://schwabfound.org/schwabentrepreneurs\\_new.htm](http://schwabfound.org/schwabentrepreneurs_new.htm)
  - Ashoka Fellows  
[http://www.ashoka.org/fellows/ashoka\\_fellows1.cfm](http://www.ashoka.org/fellows/ashoka_fellows1.cfm)
  - *How to Change the World: Social Entrepreneurs and the Power of New Ideas* by David Bornstein
- Also, please see the additional lessons in this set for more ideas, projects, and resources.

## Instructional Procedures

1. Prompt students as a class to think of individuals who have made a difference, whether historical or contemporary. The Resources section above offers many profiles. If there is access to a web-connected computer, a few examples could be shared with the whole class. After review, ask the students: *What defines a person who cares?* Discuss the criteria for defining someone who stands out as having taken on an issue and worked tirelessly to solve it. How do you know a person is truly working on making a difference for others? Ask the class to create criteria for “A Person Who Makes a Difference.” Post on chart-pak or the board.

2. Provide the students with the interview of John Wood, founder of *Room to Read* (or share it as homework reading). Provide time to read.

3. Ask the students to answer the following key questions. Discuss.

- *What was the focus of John's story?*
- *What inspired him to act?*
- *What makes John different from any visitor trekking in Nepal?*

Ask if any of the students have similar stories – moments in their lives where they were moved to act. Discuss the impact that experiences like this often have on the decisions we make throughout life.

4. Share with students: As an adult, John Wood had the means and ability to initiate a program that built on his idea. Ask students to brainstorm: *What kind of impact can young people have? What are the limitations? What are the benefits?* Make a class list of the pros and cons of trying to make a difference as a young person. (One Web site that focuses on the efforts of young people exclusively is YouthVenture – found at [www.youthventure.org](http://www.youthventure.org) . Many examples of young people making a difference can be found there.) This discussion is intended to provide context for the students' thinking. [should we link to the other lesson plans involving kids – i.e. the wristband lesson plans?] Sure, please add the links once they are up. Thanks

5. Begin the writing activity, making a selection from the list below. Depending on the grade and abilities of the students, suggested writing activities include the following:

- a. Ask younger students to write a description of a social or environmental problem they see as critical, and in need of fixing. (Try to avoid saving specific animals, and get them to focus on human issues.) If necessary, brainstorm as a class and come up with a list of possible topics and issues. Discuss the difference between local and global issues.
- b. Middle grade students could write an article for a local or school paper about an individual they have read about, creating an interesting profile of someone who has made a difference. Describe the journalistic style of writing for a newspaper, helping students to review the Web sites for appropriate material. The focus is to interest the reader in the project this person has started.
- c. Older students could be asked to do a creative writing piece on what happens when no one steps in to help. They could choose a current issue (AIDS, homelessness, poor sanitation, lack of clean water, etc.), or imagine an issue from history. Natural disasters like floods tend to be short-term and dramatic nature, though providing help may be a part of a longer term strategy. Students would imagine and write about the likely results when help does not arrive.

d. Ask older students to create an imaginary résumé for one of the individuals profiled in the Resource websites, or for John Wood. What are this person's probable qualities and experiences? How would a résumé represent his or her successes, changes in life direction, and current projects?

6. After the writing activity, students should share their work through some form of pair-and-share or peer editing. (We assume teachers engage their students in various writing process techniques, so we will focus on the topic and not on teaching writing.)

7. As a final activity, ask students to project themselves into the future and imagine what major local or global issues might exist. Ask students to write about whether they feel like they might make a difference sometime in their future, and what kinds of problems they might want to solve.

### **Extensions**

The following are possible extensions for this lesson – suggestions for allowing students to continue learning and thinking about making a difference.

- **Career studies project:** How would you prepare to become the kind of person who changes the world? What sort of education, training, and life experiences would help you prepare? What can you do in the near future to start gaining these skills?
- **Interview an expert:** Invite a person who had made a difference in your community to come talk with students. In advance of the visit, have students conduct research about what this person or organization has accomplished. As a class or in small groups, brainstorm interview questions.
- **Documentary:** If you have access to a video camera and editing equipment, have students produce a short documentary about a person in their community who has made a difference.
- **Web publishing:** If you have a class website, publish student writing from the activities suggested above. As part of the publishing process, students could review their peers' writing, evaluate it using criteria you create as a class, and then select a few pieces they choose to publish on the website.

These teacher resources were developed by the [Learning Innovation and Technology Consortium \(LITC\)](#). LITC develops educational programs and materials in support of problem solving, innovation, and social entrepreneurship.