

# **We Can Create a Good Society Let's Do It!**

Imagine a society free of terrorism and war. Imagine a society where no one lives in poverty. Imagine a society where it is safe to walk city streets at any hour of the day or night. Imagine a society where rape, murder, and domestic violence are extremely rare occurrences. Imagine a society where racism, sexism, and other irrational hatreds are virtually unknown. Imagine a society where people laugh freely, openly, and often.

***If you wanted to create such a genuinely good society, what would you do?  
What resources would you need?  
How would you go about it?***

These are the questions progressive activist Randy Schutt addresses and answers in this unique and remarkable book. Drawing on his many years of social change experience and his study of scholarly and activist literature, Schutt details the five main obstacles that hinder current change efforts. He then describes a way to overcome these obstacles democratically and nonviolently by means of mass education and powerful social change movements.

*Inciting Democracy* depicts an uplifting process in which various grassroots movements work together to transform society over eighty years. It specifies a practical way to build and sustain these movements by means of an education and support program that greatly increases the knowledge, skills, and strength of goodhearted people working for positive change. It also lays out a realistic plan for implementing this education and support program.

**This visionary and inspiring book will convince you it is possible to create a good society, and it will show you a way to bring it into existence.**

*Sensible, pragmatic, and hopeful, **Inciting Democracy** is essential reading for activists who work for positive change, scholars who study social movements, and anyone who yearns for a fair and compassionate society.*

"Here's a tackle box, a tool belt, a veritable Leatherman for doing the big job that needs doing: redeeming our society. Sure it's an optimistic vision — but that may be just what we need."

— Bill McKibben, author of *The Age of Missing Information*, *The End of Nature*, and *Hope, Human and Wild*.

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For more information on the book and the Vernal Education Project, see  
<<http://www.vernalproject.org>>

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# **Inciting Democracy**

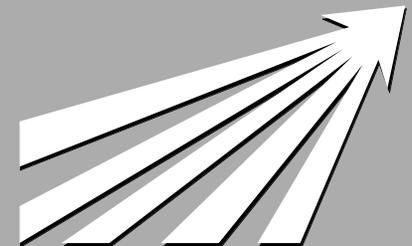
**A Practical Proposal  
for Creating  
a Good Society**

*How we can develop and sustain a powerful, grassroots social change movement*

**by Randy Schutt**

## **Inciting Democracy**

**A Practical Proposal  
for Creating a Good Society**



*How we can develop and sustain a powerful, grassroots social change movement*

**Randy  
Schutt**

*Inciting Democracy* offers a vision of what a good society might look like and explores how we can overcome five key obstacles to creating such a society. It offers a practical way to develop a large, decentralized education and support program — the Vernal Education Project — that would bolster grassroots movements so that people of goodwill can democratically and nonviolently transform society.

“Randy Schutt’s *Inciting Democracy* is an exciting, page-turning book describing a new, attainable Eden. Once I started reading it, I couldn’t stop — I had to know how it was going to work. I wish I were 40 years younger so I could see it all happen.”  
— Doris (GrannyD) Haddock

*Inciting Democracy* defines a “good society” as one where no one is oppressed and where people treat each other the way they would like to be treated — a safe, fair, democratic, compassionate, and environmentally sustainable society. It then identifies the five primary obstacles to creating such a society:

- **An adverse power structure** that entices and coerces us all to support inhumane institutions.
- **Cultural conditioning** that makes us accept destructive social norms (such as individualism, materialism, militarism, racism, sexism, classism, homophobia).
- **Dysfunctional emotional conditioning** that makes it hard for us to work together (due to depression, low self-esteem, rigidity, addictions, etc.).
- **Widespread ignorance** of positive alternatives and social change methods.

“Randy Schutt has written the book that we in the progressive social change movement have been waiting for. *Inciting Democracy* offers an inspiring vision and concrete action plan for pursuing effective progressive social change. It also provides a constructive critique of where we have been and an easily accessible analytical framework for understanding what we face. The book is destined to become a core and comprehensive guide for those seeking a better society, and it will make an excellent main textbook for any course on citizen advocacy. Thank you, Randy, for leading us to the next level of effectiveness and organizing.”

— Abigail Abrash, Program Director, New Hampshire Citizens Alliance; Instructor, Antioch New England Graduate School

- **A scarcity of resources** (information, money, and emotional support) among people of goodwill working for change.

The book next skeptically evaluates a variety of social change strategies and processes, exploring what has worked and what has not. This analysis suggests that we can create a truly good society only by using democratic and nonviolent methods that prefigure a good society — in particular, through an extensive education process and through massive, broadly based social change movements. We need at least a million progressive activists working for fundamental change for decades.

*Inciting Democracy* then details a practical strategy for transformation in which goodhearted people would take several steps:

- Form supportive communities with other people of goodwill.
- Educate themselves and others to overcome their ignorance, hopelessness, and limitations.
- Learn to work together and practice change skills.
- Teach these skills to others and support and inspire others to work for positive change.

- Build powerful, grassroots social change organizations.
- Challenge the domination of the power elite and destructive cultural norms in all realms of society.
- Create alternative institutions that can meet everyone’s true needs.

To implement this strategy, the book outlines a project consisting of an education and support system that could, over time, generate a force of about a million skilled and dedicated people working simultaneously for progressive change in communities all across the United States. The last section details a plan for implementing this project — the Vernal Education Project — beginning with a decentralized education program for dedicated activists.

*We have it in our power to begin the world over again.*  
— Thomas Paine

“Randy Schutt’s *Inciting Democracy: A Practical Proposal for Creating a Good Society* addresses the urgent civic question of how to best go about developing and sustaining a powerful and effective grassroots based social change movement. Schutt offers a compelling vision of what a “good society” might look like and how ordinary citizens can overcome five key obstacles to creating such a social order. Very highly recommended and informative reading for social activists and political reformers, the engaging and provocative text is enhanced with 71 figures, 44 sidebars, 270 quotations, 166 detailed endnotes, 233 annotated references, a bibliography of 110 cited works, and a comprehensive index.”

— **Midwest Book Review**, published in the August issues of **Wisconsin Bookwatch**, (p. 8, col. 2) and **Internet Bookwatch** <[http://www.execpc.com/~mbr/bookwatch/i bw/aug\\_01.htm#politicalscience](http://www.execpc.com/~mbr/bookwatch/i bw/aug_01.htm#politicalscience)>