

How Movements Succeed  
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One way to be successful is to learn from the successes of others. Three successful movements in recent decades have been the civil rights, feminist, and gay rights movements. Let's take a look at how they succeeded and see if there are any lessons for those who are concerned about the future of white people. [This was published March 22, 2017 in *American Renaissance*, a white interests webzine.]

All three of those movements went straight for the center—the mainstream of American life—where they knew the action was; they didn't appear as fringe movements. They were careful about how they presented themselves. They used language, arguments, and approaches that appealed to the public. The people who were front and center in the civil rights, feminist, and gay rights movements were mature, appealing, reasonable, credible, accessible, comforting, and likable.

These successful movements were careful to stay away from self-labeling that might cause problems. There was never anything like, "I'm a Communist, but don't let that bother you, just listen to my good ideas." Hubert Humphrey was a proud, self-avowed liberal and it got him the vice-presidency and a presidential nomination, but the people in these three movements shunned that label. The term "Left" doesn't play well with most people (nor does "Right"), so they avoided it. Martin Luther King didn't say, "As a representative of the Left, I call for racial integration in America." Feminism didn't bill itself as a leftist movement, and gay marriage wasn't pitched as a left-wing idea either. In fact, these successful movements didn't take on any explicitly political identity.

Nor did they present themselves as an alternative. They were not left, and most certainly not *alt*-left, or alternative anything. They claimed to be *the* true, decent, fair, equitable, just, good, and

moral thing. It was the right thing, the *only* thing, if you wanted to be respectable.

These successful movements associated themselves with attractive, convincing, and emotion-laden images—they could be called memes in today’s parlance. The civil rights movement got a lot of mileage out of the image of four little black girls who were killed in the 1963 KKK church bombing in Birmingham. Homosexuals had Ryan White, an Indiana teenager who became HIV/AIDS infected from a contaminated blood treatment—that is to say, he wasn’t gay. Americans watched Ryan die and it tore at their heartstrings. The gay movement also has had the casts of “Will & Grace” and “Transparent,” who personalized and humanized its arguments. Which is to say, they did not have Pepe the Frog; to the general public, that kind of thing is menacing.

All three of these successful movements did have radical, in-your-face elements. The black movement had H. Rap Brown, Stokely Carmichael and the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), Huey Newton and the Black Panthers, and Malcolm X and the Nation of Islam. There were radical feminists. The gays had ACT UP. These groups had powerful and appealing symbols or memes—clenched fists and so on—that appealed at least to some people.

Hard-edged people and organizations contributed to the cause, but they would not have been successful alone. Anyone with a reputation to maintain—and that includes politicians—would have kept his distance from them and what they represented. There would not have been a voting rights act or public accommodations law if, in the public perception, the black civil rights movement had only been the Black Panthers. Martin Luther King and others like him had to be part of it and in the forefront.

It’s worth noting that what we can call the more respectable elements did not openly embrace or identify with the radicals, nor did they condemn or expel them. The respectable elements stayed clear of their rough-and-tumble compatriots and made their own appeals. Martin Luther King, for example, spoke for himself

and his organization, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference—nothing more.

These successful movements avoided identifying themselves with, or linking their fates to, individual politicians or a political party. They kept the focus on the cause, not politics. Martin Luther King didn't talk about Lyndon Johnson; he talked about civil rights for black people. The gay rights movement didn't associate itself with, say, Bill Clinton to the point that if Bill Clinton wasn't your man you might think that gay rights wasn't your cause. The women's movement kept the attention on women's interests, not the Democratic Party, and if you were on their side, your politics didn't matter: Welcome aboard. Individuals within these movements were politically active, but the movements as movements—and their leaders—stayed on message.

Maybe there are lessons for us here.