

*Jane Addams' Twenty Years at Hull-
House: Every Woman's Bible*

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I. Jane Addams Matters Today

Twenty Years at Hull-House, written by Jane Addams, and published in 1910, is Addams' account of what she and her colleagues learned in the course of serving Chicago (and America) while working and living at Hull-House, America's greatest settlement.

Since I first read the book in college, it has guided my course as a social justice activist, equal rights advocate and public leader. I turn to it constantly. I believe others should, too.

In this talk, I will tell you about Addams life and share favorite passages from *Twenty Years At Hull-House*, I think instructive for today's women who seek to be social justice advocates and public leaders.

I want to thank Dorothy Sinson for inviting me to give this talk. Her belief that International Women's Day should be recognized by the Caxton Club is one I applaud.

Working with Dorothy to plan for this talk, I learned from her that Jane Addams spoke *here* in 1903. Dorothy sent me a copy of Addams' speech, given on the occasion of a celebration of George Washington.

I was pleased to find a section in Addams' remarks that day, expressing beliefs that make her such a hero to me and relate to my talk today.

Addams asked her audience: "What did (George Washington) write in his last correspondence? He wrote that he felt very unhappy on the subject of slavery. We know that he neither bought nor sold slaves himself, and that he freed his own slaves in his will. That was a century ago. A man who a century ago could do that, would he, do you think, be indifferent now to the great questions of social maladjustment which we feel all around us? His letters breathe a yearning for a better condition..." Just as Addams letters (and books and actions) did too. Just as mine do, albeit on a much lesser plain.

I come to this presentation with some bonafides. By the time I began my graduate study in American history at the University of Illinois at Chicago, the campus created by destroying the Hull-House complex, I had read *Twenty Years at Hull-House* and knew I wanted to study Addams. Somehow, I can't remember how, I made my way to the remaining buildings, the original Charles Hull mansion (built in 1856 in a "suburb" of Chicago), and the adjoining refectory, which had become the Hull-House Museum, and got myself a job, giving house tours and doing clerical work for two Caxtonians, Mary Lynn McCree and Mary Ann Johnson. At the same time, and with their counsel, I wrote my masters' thesis on the relationships among the women at Hull-House, specifically about the partnership of Addams and Mary Rozet Smith, Addams closest friend after she and Hull-House co-founder and college classmate, Ellen Gates Starr, broke-up.

I think that during the time I worked at Hull-House, I can't remember how, (do you, Mary Ann?), I met Florence Scala, Addams' neighbor who unsuccessfully fought Richard J. Daley's plan to tear down Hull-House, as well as 800 other neighborhood homes and 200 neighborhood businesses, in order to create the new campus. (I gathered this information from Scala's *Chicago Tribune* obituary.)

I had learned about Scala when I read Studs' Terkel's *Division Street: America*, published in 1967. Scala's story is the book's prologue. Her account of Chicago then reads like an account of Chicago now.

"I don't think we realized the stakes involved in this whole urban renewal system," she said to Studs. "the money it brings in..." she muses. Talking to Studs, Scala mentioned that the new university campus was built in a style walling-it-off from the neighborhood. She noted: "It wasn't the way Jane Addams saw (the neighborhood)...*She* believed in a neighborhood with all

kinds of people, who lived together with some little hostility, sure, but nevertheless lived together. In peace."

Scala wondered whether this Addams' belief could be adopted worldwide. In closing, she said to Studs: "Either Jane Addams brought something to the world or she didn't."

Scala put her finger on it. Addams brought something amazing to the world, neither diminished eighty-five years later by the failure of Richard J. Daley to appreciate it, nor by the failure of too many historians, philosophers and politicians to give Addams her due.

While I was writing my master's thesis, Mary Lynn introduced me to Allen Davis, author of the then just-published Addams biography: *American Heroine: The Life and Legend of Jane Addams*, also Mary Lynn's co-author of *Eighty Years at Hull-House*.

I realized, as I re-read Davis in preparation for writing this paper, that he wrote with great wisdom about the two aspects of Addams' wisdom I discuss today: a) deciding to become a public leader, and b) building a career of public leadership in an ever-widening sphere of influence. I'm indebted to Davis, as well as to Mary Lynn and Mary Ann, for my understanding of Addams.

II. How Jane Addams Became Jane Addams

A prolific author, Addams wrote twelve books. She recorded and shared her experiences in the public square. Then, she drew lessons and shared opinions based on that experience, about US foreign, as well as domestic, public policy. In 1910, *Twenty Years at Hull-House* was published.

In 1930, nearing the end of her writing career, and in the year before she won the Nobel Peace Prize (sharing it with Nicholas Murray Butler, a president of Columbia University and head of the international section of the Carnegie Endowment for Peace), *The Second Twenty Years at Hull-House* was published, elucidating the final chapters of Addams' revolutionary life.

Yes, revolutionary, though, if Addams is thought of today at all – other than by students of women's or Chicago history, or of social work – she is typically characterized otherwise, as just another one of those Progressive Era lady do-gooders, feathered hat and useful goodies in hand.

How wrong-headed is this image? Let me count the ways, in order to share with you my view of why Addams is a valuable role-model for any American woman who desires to make the world a better place.

Parenthetically, I want you to know that I share my view of Addams with the Hull-House Museum staff. Make a trip to the museum, if you haven't yet, or haven't recently. It tells the story of Jane Addams, revolutionary, beautifully.

Yes, when you read *Twenty Years at Hull-House*, you read a *revolutionary's* words.

Yes, the language is mild and courtly, and, yes, the author's biography — up until the moment she decided to found Hull House — is mild, too. But *Twenty Years at Hull-House* is in

no way an account of some mild-mannered, gracious Chicago woman bearing gifts for the poor, and then, gifts bestowed, retreating to her Astor Street mansion.

It is an account of a gracious, but strong-willed woman, who lived her life *among and for the poor*, who described her revolutionary purpose this way: "...our endeavor (was) to make social intercourse express the growing sense of the economic unity of society and to add the social function to democracy...Hull-House was soberly opened on the theory that the dependence of classes on each other is reciprocal and that as the social relation is essentially a reciprocal relation, (the settlement) gives a form of expression that has peculiar value."

It is an account of a gracious, but strong-willed woman, who brooked the establishment, writing about "the general defects of the system," while, at the same time, convincing its leaders to champion her cause and see things her way.

This habit began early on: in college she was part of a group that wanted to make changes to the college magazine the head of the college disapproved of. Apparently, this was a big deal-- Allen Davis noting that one classmate wrote to Addams: "You are *progressive* Jane, or you would not have joined the revolutionaries."

Here is Addams in *Twenty Years at Hull-House* on this point: "The history of these (government) bureaus demonstrates the tendency we all have to consider a legal enactment in itself an achievement and to grow careless in regard to its administration and actual results; for an investigation into the situation ten years later discovered that immigrants were still shamefully imposed upon." This quotation is excerpted from a section of the book about men recruited in Chicago to work in Arkansas and Oklahoma without being given any information about whether there was even work to be had. A "defect in the system," indeed.

It is an account of a gracious, but strong-willed woman, who believed, in that gilded age so like our own, that democracy -- *and the opportunity it presumes* -- is for all, not just for the monied class. Here is Addams: "Doubtless the heaviest burden of our contemporaries is a consciousness of a divergence between our democratic theory on the one hand, that working people have a right to the intellectual resources of society, and the actual fact on the other hand, that thousands of them are so overburdened with toil that there is no leisure nor energy left for the cultivation of the mind (and, my words: the economic opportunity and participation in public life that would result from that "cultivation of the mind").

It is an account of a gracious, but strong-willed woman, who sympathized with the *cri de coeur* for justice, emanating from the tenements of Halsted Street. "During those first years on Halsted Street nothing was more painfully clear than the fact that pliable human nature is relentlessly pressed upon by its physical environment." (Sound familiar?)

It is an account of a gracious, but strong-willed woman, who revolutionized first Halsted Street, then Chicago, then the world; a parable of revolutionary change—whose locus is the west side of Chicago —written the minute the revolutionary could — because she knew it would matter not just to Halsted Street, but to everywhere.

Twenty Years at Hull-House also reflects the spirit and survival instincts of a woman who -- having been considered "a saint" -- in the two decades after publication was ostracized because she was a pacifist. Organizer of the Women's Peace Party in 1915, and founding president of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom in 1919, during this period, even the University of Chicago -- where she had been an adjunct lecturer, had helped found its school of social service administration, and trained the school's first directors, Hull-

House residents Sophonisba Breckinridge and Edith Abbott, refused to give her an honorary degree. Only after her redemption did it relent.

Redemption came in 1931 when Addams won the Nobel Peace Prize (after having been nominated many times), but that recognition did not in any way undermine her revolutionary credentials. To the contrary, receiving the award so belatedly, and having to share it, only bore witness to the terror the male-run establishment had at fully recognizing the importance of her work. (She was only the second woman to win the Prize, following Austrian pacifist Bertha von Suttner's award in 1905.)

In case you doubt my take on Addams, here are the assessments of two history professors. Katherine Joslin, who wrote *Jane Addams: A Writer's Life*, published in 2004 by the University of Illinois Press, characterized Addams -- and her beliefs as described in *Twenty Years at Hull-House* -- in the same way I do -- as part of her description of Addams's' book, *New Ideals of Peace*, published in 1907: (page 43). Joslin writes: "Addams argues--and this is the heart of her radicalism--that 'the idealism fitted to our industrial democracy will be evolved in crowded sewer ditches and in noisy factories'...."!

Then, there is *famous* American historian Henry Steele Commager (1902-1998), who wrote the foreword to the Signet Classic edition of *Twenty Years at Hull-House*, which is the one I read as a college student and still keep close to me.

Commager wrote that the "...Daughters of the American Revolution 'stigmatized' (Addams)." According to Commager, "...in the DAR's view, (Addams) was a factor in a movement to destroy civilization and Christianity." Revolutionary, but not of their kind, apparently. Thank goodness for that.

But before Jane Addams was lionized, and then disparaged, and then lionized again, Jane Addams had to become Jane Addams. Here is that story.

First, the would-be leader has to decide she wants to “put things to rights,” as Addams coined it.

In *Twenty Years at Hull-House* she wrote: "I think that up to this time I was still filled with the sense... that somewhere in Church or State are a body of authoritative people who will put things to rights as soon as they really know what is wrong."

But since there were no such "authoritative people" to be had, she could wonder: Where is the larger purpose that can be mine? Where is my opportunity to catalyze good -- bigger and more important to others -- than the good I create for myself? Where is the place to do this good? Where can I find the people with whom I can share this dream of mine to do good?

Jane Addams believed that *every one of us* has the desire to "put things to rights." She wrote: “There is a heritage of noble obligation which young people accept and long to perpetuate. The desire for action, the wish to right wrong, and alleviate suffering, haunts them daily. Society smiles at it indulgently instead of making it of value to itself. The wrong to them begins even farther back, when we restrain the first childish desires for 'doing good,' and tell them that they must wait until they are older and better fitted. We intimate that social obligation begins at a fixed date, forgetting that it begins at birth itself.”

Caught in what she termed so vividly “the snare of preparation,” Addams wandered pretty much aimlessly for almost a decade after finishing college -- (“...we have in America a fast-growing number of cultivated young people who have no recognized outlet for their active faculties,” Addams wrote. (Sound familiar?) -- until her realization that she possessed this “heritage of noble obligation” meant she could create Hull-House.

"I gradually reached a conviction that the first generation of college women (Addams graduated from Rockford College in 1881; Smith, which Addams wanted to attend, only opened in 1872)) had taken their learning too quickly, had departed too suddenly from the active, emotional life led by their grandmothers and great-grandmothers; that the contemporary education of young women had developed too exclusively the power of acquiring knowledge and of merely receiving impressions; that somewhere in the process of 'being educated' they had lost that simple and almost automatic response to the human appeal, that old healthful reaction resulting in activity from the mere presence of suffering or of helplessness..."

"It is hard to tell just when the very simple plan which afterward developed into the Settlement began to form itself in my mind. It may have been even before I went to Europe for the second time, but I gradually became convinced that it would be a good thing to rent a house in a part of the city where many primitive and actual needs are found, in which young women who had been given over too exclusively to study might restore a balance of activity along traditional lines and learn of life from life itself; where they might try out some of the things they had been taught and put truth to *'the ultimate test of the conduct it dictates or inspires.'*"

Commager accounted for Addams' creation of Hull-House this way: "During her (first) visit to Europe, while in London, (Addams) had heard of an experiment going on in the East End. Young men, most of them from Oxford, were trying to solve the problems that had bedeviled her. She returned to London... charged with a new spirit. She soon arranged a letter of introduction to Canon Samuel Barnett, who was living and working in the first settlement house, Toynbee Hall (with his wife, Henrietta, a fact I only discovered reading a children's book about Addams). There she (also) toured the People's Palace, which held meeting rooms, a gymnasium, and space for clubs and people to work at crafts. It would become the model for Hull-House."

Commager described this American life, at the time Addams and Starr founded Hull-House, this way: "It was an America familiar to us in the novels of Theodore Dreiser and Upton Sinclair, an America that accepted uncritically the grim doctrines of Social Darwinism that promised success to the strong and the ruthless, and remorselessly condemned the weak and the helpless to defeat." (Sound familiar?)

And then there was Chicago. Commager wrote: "As for Chicago,...all the evils and vices of American life seemed to be exaggerated there. Certainly, no farmer or labor organization in our history ever displayed the contempt for law, the brutality toward women and children, the prejudice against aliens, the ferocity toward those who stood in their way, that corporate wealth displayed in the Chicago...that Miss Addams describes in these tragic pages."

Still not finished with Chicago, Commager turned to Lincoln Steffens, muckraking reporter and author of *The Shame of the Cities*, published in 1904 to sum-up: "It was 'first in violence, deepest in dirt; loud, lawless, unlovely, ill-smelling, new; ...the teeming tough among cities.'"

Addams realized her settlement could do for this "teeming tough among cities" what Toynbee Hall and the People's Palace were doing for London, for Chicago, too, was teeming with poor people with only the bleakest of futures.

In a chapter of *Twenty Years at Hull-House* mildly titled, "Civic Cooperation," Addams summed-up her plan: "So far as a Settlement can discern and bring to local consciousness neighborhood needs which are common needs, and can give vigorous help to the municipal measures through which such needs shall be met, it fulfills its most valuable function."

At the same time as I read *Twenty Years at Hull-House*, I read Saul Alinsky's *Rules for Radicals*, published in 1971. It, too, is an account of a coming of age, a theorist's treatise, and a guidebook to civic engagement and social change.

Perhaps, I read these two books while living and studying in Chicago. (My dog-eared copy of *Twenty Years at Hull-House* only notes my parents' home address at the time.) Around the time of my reading, I had moved to Chicago to participate in the Associated Colleges of the Midwest "urban studies program," sponsored at my alma mater, Carleton College, by then professor (and my advisor), later US Senator, Paul Wellstone.

Like Addams, Alinsky, who inspired Wellstone to seek a public career, came of age and chose his calling in Chicago. His purpose and work were right in line with hers: live in the city; become a neighbor and colleague of those who suffer; learn about urban problems; solve them.

On my return to the Carleton campus in Fall 1971, I met Alinsky when he spoke there. After the speech, Professor Wellstone had invited the campus trouble makers to share coffee with Alinsky. I can still see that gathering in my mind's-eye 42 years later.

It seemed Alinsky had also been caught-up in the "snare of preparation." As a student at the University of Chicago, during the time Addams was living and working at Hull-House, Alinsky had planned to become an archaeologist. That changed with the advent of the Great Depression. Ever flippant, as well as brutally honest, Alinsky explained the reason for his change of mind and heart: "Archaeologists were in about as much demand as horses and buggies. All the guys who funded the field trips were being scraped off Wall Street sidewalks." In the event, Alinsky dropped-out of graduate school and became an organizer for the CIO, and then a neighborhood community organizer, forming the Back of the Yards Organization, The Woodlawn Organization, and numerous other neighborhood-serving social change projects.

At the time I was reading Addams and Alinsky, the "snare of preparation" had caught me, too. I knew I was in college because that's what people from families like mine did. I knew I was studying about government and urban life because I grew up in a family that while one remove from the city, still valued metropolitan life and doing public good. But why, *really*, was I in college?

In my distress (I also missed Steve), I graduated Carleton early. Better to get out into the world and just do something. I moved to Cambridge to live with Steve until he graduated. After a trip to England later that year, during which Steve and I went to East London, Toynbee Hall, and Kelmscott House (home of William Morris, another great British social change activist, as well as great bookman), Steve and I moved to Chicago. For, ever so fortunately, Addams and Alinsky had shown me the road map to life, by giving me the road map to Chicago.

I, too, could imagine and help create a *people's* palace. I, too, could surround it, within and without, with art and culture. I, too, could fight for the streets around it to be safe. I, too, could be vocal, even loud-mouthed, and this would be a reason for honor, not condemnation. I, too, could engage with others in charitable causes, without having to be religious. I, too, could be no kind of saint -- as Alinsky surely wasn't -- nor Addams (publicity to the contrary), as I happily learned.

For instance, Addams had prejudices. A passage in *Twenty Years at Hull-House* I underlined forty years ago -- perhaps because Steve and I grew up among so many "South Italians" -- makes this clear: "Possibly the South Italians more than any other immigrants represent the pathetic stupidity of agricultural people crowded into city tenements, and we were much gratified when thirty peasant families were induced to move upon the land which they

knew so well how to cultivate." Why, one could even be prejudiced, but still do -- amazing -- good!

While I worked at Hull-House, and studied Addams life, I learned that Addams didn't work and stay there *all* the time. She traveled abroad. She had a summer home. She had a personal relationship she cherished and spent time on. She had dinner in nice places. She wore nice clothes.

(Once, another hero of mine, civil rights leader Addie Wyatt, born in rural Mississippi, factory worker in Chicago, and later, international labor leader), summed up the proper social change activist's view of clothing, when I commented on her floor-length mink coat: "Rebecca: Nothing is too good for the working class." Addie, also considered a saint by many, would be working and wearing that fur coat, just as Addams had, and just as I would, too.

At a formative age, Addams and Alinsky taught me we are all best judged by the measure of what we actually do for others, not by beliefs we *espouse but do nothing about*. This was revolutionary: just get out there, and do something that shakes'-up the status quo. Then, keep doing it. Revolution wasn't only at the point of a gun, as some of those I met while in the urban studies program had insisted.

Today is International Women's Day. Originally proposed and celebrated by socialists of Addams era, now it is, typically, a more mild-mannered and more widely celebrated holiday. Often, it is a non-ideological commemoration of women's progress and achievements; sometimes heralding individual women of achievement, even when they've done nothing for others. Nevertheless, behind those achievements is usually some instructive lesson, say: work hard; be honest; be kind.

In Addams' childhood, *these* sorts of lessons were in a “chapbook.” Today at the Caxton Club, we celebrate International Women’s Day by studying – and celebrating –Addams' chapbook: *Twenty Years at Hull-House*-- to be sure, chock full of lessons on how to achieve, but, more importantly, chock full of lessons on how to be an agent of revolutionary change in service of the public good.

Here is the story of how *Twenty Years at Hull-House* came to be published.

Addams wrote the essay, "The Subjective Necessity for Social Settlements," for the book, *Philanthropy and Social Progress*, by Thomas Y. Cromwell, published in 1893. The essay became chapter six of *Twenty Years at Hull-House*. It laid-out Addams' unchanged rationale for Hull-House.

Around the time she wrote this essay, according to Katherine Joslin, Addams also "organized a Settlement Congress during the (Women's Columbian) Exposition to expose the dire poverty exacerbated by the economic depressions" of that time. She was making her case.

Several years later, in 1897, Addams and Mary Rozet Smith made a pilgrimage to Europe where they were "...feted by the socialists at the (London) home of Eleanor Aveling, the daughter of Karl Marx... and then traveled to Russia to meet Leo Tolstoy, thinking they might learn something of value to their work." pp49

However, according to Joslin, Tolstoy couldn't hear what Addams had to say, having "...convinced himself that philanthropy was fraudulent and that the transformation of society depended on individual will alone." p51 Continuing, Joslin writes: "He took little note of the fact that the young woman before him (Addams was 36 at the time) had been living among the

poor for seven years and had managed through *mutual* effort to effect significant change in her *Halsted Street* neighborhood. "

In 1907's, *New Ideals of Peace*, Addams reiterated her belief in the value of what Joslin terms "mutual" effort of rich and poor, privileged and bereft.

In 1909, *The Spirit of Youth and the City Streets* was published. In it, Addams takes another walk down Halsted Street, telling stories about the residents of her neighborhood.

By that time, Addams was ready to write *Twenty Years at Hull-House*, which she then wrote during the summer and fall of 1910 at the summer home she and Mary Rozet Smith shared in Bar Harbor, Maine.

As I was reviewing the chain of events that led to the publication of *Twenty Years At Hull-House*, I was thunder-struck by a fact I just love and am not sure I ever knew previously: According to Joslin, American writer and muckraker Ida Tarbell was "the... godmother" of *Twenty Years at Hull-House*. p102.

Those of you who attended the Caxton Club December 2012 revels may recall that John Blew donated to the auction Tarbell's classic work, *History of the Standard Oil Company*, published by Macmillan in 1904, and a groundbreaking study of unfair business practices. p103. (I wasn't smart enough to keep bidding.)

Tarbell was an editor at *The American Magazine*, which serialized *Twenty Years at Hull-House* when the book was first published.

These excerpts were set-up by a series of articles by Tarbell on "The American Woman" Joslin says "traced the story of female achievement from 1776 through the years of the Civil War

and makes the case for female involvement in the public sphere, including the natural right to ...political power." (Tarbell knew what she was getting from Addams.)

While Addams and Tarbell exchanged a warm and intimate correspondence, Addams telling Tarbell "...nothing you can do will ever shake your standing at H.H. where you have made an abiding place for yourself," Tarbell and her colleagues, and, later Joslin, note that *Twenty Years at Hull-House* begins as autobiography, but then: "Just as her readers settle comfortably into the story of (Addams') private life, she slips away, leaving us, book in hand, with very little trace of the writer."p109

Historians have pondered this truth. Did Addams switch gears because she didn't want to share the story of her intimacy (of whatever sort) with Ellen Gates Starr and -- later -- with Mary Rozet Smith? Who knows? And who cares, really?

For what's most important in the book *are those early chapters* --where Addams ever so frankly describes her state-of-mind -- and how it led her to revolutionary acts. It *is* in those chapters, for instance, that the book's value resides for young people looking for a way, graduating college 140 years hence.

I have used excerpts from those chapters in my college teaching, most recently in a course on "women in public leadership" for the Harris School of Public Policy Studies at the University of Chicago. As I prepare, I find I usually re-read up to about chapter six, "the subjective necessity of social settlements," and then I find myself paying less attention. My underlining in the book forty years ago substantiates this observation. Indeed, today, even though at a very different age and stage of life, the book remains a chapbook: a rule book (for

radicals), for women who want to "put to rights" what is wrong, becoming a public leader and achieving Tarbell's vaunted political power in the process.

III. Jane Addams' Strategic Imperatives

The chapbook, *Twenty Years at Hull-House*, contains lessons falling into two categories:

--how to arrive at the decision to be a public leader, and

--how to maintain and expand that role over the course of a lifetime.

I've organized my thoughts, and excerpts from *Twenty Years at Hull-House* on these two topics, into the following categories:

- Choose a public mission everyone understands
- Do the work as part of multiple groups
- Select an institutional context that advances systemic change
- Choose a course in politics -- not due to a desire for power, or to make money -- but to fulfill a life in service to others, (to improve the “democracy,” as Addams would term it)
- Live a life that has meaning because it is lived in part in service to others **AND**
- Think about work and personal life as one unbroken thread, weaving one whole cloth for one whole life

Choose a public mission everyone understands

Allen Davis describes the organizing process Addams and Starr undertook. "Jane went from the Woman's Club to the anarchist Sunday school, from elegant receptions in

the palatial townhouses of Chicago's Gold Coast to (travels) through ... slums, from lecturing to some of the wealthiest women (at the Fortnightly Club, for instance) in the city to teaching poor and dirty children how to model in clay..."p58. According to Davis, she even joined Fourth Presbyterian so that she could meet "leaders in philanthropy." (Sound familiar?) p54.

Once Hull-House was established, Addams continued to associate with these establishment supporters, even when -- especially when -- she opposed their actions.

Here is Addams, in *Twenty Years at Hull-House*, recounting an incident when she went to the defense of a supposed anarchist: "... as the final police authority rests in the mayor, with a friend who was equally disturbed over the situation, I repaired to (the mayor's) house on Sunday morning to appeal to him in the interest of a law and order that should not yield to panic. We contended that to the anarchist above all men it must be demonstrated that law is impartial and stands the test of every strain. The mayor heard us through with the ready sympathy of the successful politician."

On the one hand, Addams defended anarchists. On the other, she maintained a good enough relationship with Chicago's mayor that she could make this defense to him at home on the weekend.

Do the work as part of multiple groups

Here is Addams on *this* point:"At any rate the residents at Hull-House discovered that while their first impact with city poverty allied them to groups given over to discussion of social theories, their sober efforts to heal neighborhood ills allied them to general public movements which were without (such) challenging creeds. But while we discovered that we most easily secured the smallest of much-needed improvements by attaching our efforts to those

of organized bodies, nevertheless these very organizations would have been impossible, had not the public conscience been aroused and the community sensibility quickened by these same ardent theorists."

And, foreshadowing Saul Alinsky: "We also quickly discovered that nothing brought us so absolutely into comradeship with our neighbors as mutual and sustained effort such as the paving of a street, the closing of a gambling house, or the restoration of a veteran police sergeant."

Select an institutional context that advances systemic change

As I've described, Addams didn't find it easy to determine which institution to join to fulfill her goal of "putting things to rights." She tried medical school (and got sick); teaching (according to Allen Davis, "she went to a sewing school for poor children," but she wrote about the experience: "I found I couldn't make button holes very well..."), and other charitable work of a traditional sort, before founding Hull House. None satisfied.

She admitted to us, her readers: "I was absolutely at sea so far as any moral purpose was concerned, clinging only to the desire to live in a really living world and refusing to be content with a shadowy intellectual or aesthetic reflection of it."

Then, she realized: "We do not like to acknowledge that Americans are divided into two nations.... We are not willing, openly and professedly, to assume that American citizens are broken up into classes, even if we make that assumption the preface to a plea that the superior class has duties to the inferior."

She continued: "Those who believe that Justice (with a capital "j") is but a poetical longing within us, the enthusiast who thinks it will come in the form of a millennium, those who

see it established by the strong arm of a hero, are not those who have comprehended the vast truths of life. The actual Justice must come by trained intelligence, by broadened sympathies toward the individual man or woman who crosses our path; one item added to another is the only method by which to build up a conception lofty enough to be of use in the world." Calling this her "...schoolgirl recipe," she baked the cake that was the institution Hull-House.

Choose a course in politics — not due to a desire for power, or to make money, but to fulfill a life in service to others (to improve the “democracy” as Addams would term it)

Lest you find this lesson hard to swallow in today's political climate, here is Addams on its importance: "One of the first lessons we learned at Hull-House was that private beneficence is totally inadequate to deal with the vast numbers of the city's disinherited." To Addams, this meant one has to build a government that cares for the "disinherited," and that means ongoing political engagement.

In 1905, Addams put this lesson into action. She was appointed to the Chicago Board of Education. She found the experience frustrating.

"Before my School Board experience, I thought that life had taught me at least one hard-earned lesson, that existing arrangements and the hoped for improvements must be mediated and reconciled to each other, that the new must be dovetailed into the old..., if it were to endure; but on the School Board I discerned that all such efforts were looked upon as compromising and unworthy, by both partisans." Nevertheless, she stuck with it, describing a period when the board and teachers were arguing over salary levels, and how teacher competency would be measured!

"The whole situation between the superintendent supported by a majority of the Board and the Teachers' Federation had become an epitome of the struggle between efficiency and democracy; on one side a well-intentioned expression of the bureaucracy necessary in a large system but which under pressure had become unnecessarily self-assertive, and on the other side a fairly militant demand for self-government made in the name of freedom." (Sound familiar?)

Here is one more instance of Addams engaging in politics, albeit holding her nose. In order to pass ..."the first factory law of Illinois, regulating the sanitary conditions of the sweatshop and fixing fourteen as the age at which a child might be employed...a little group of us addressed the open meetings of trades-unions and of benefit societies, church organizations, and social clubs literally every evening for three months. The Hull-House residents that winter had their first experience in lobbying."

Live a life that has meaning because it is lived in part in service to others

Addams wrote: "I wanted to believe that this transcendence could happen...that the things that make men (and women) alike are finer and better than the things that keep them apart, and that these basic likenesses, if they are properly accentuated, easily transcend the less essential differences of race, language, creed, and tradition."

Here is Addams on why the settlement house approach was the ideal way to serve others: "(An experience)...perhaps unconsciously illustrated the difference between the relief-station relation to the poor and the Settlement ("S" in caps) in relation to its neighbors, the latter wishing to know them through all the varying conditions of life, to stand by when they are in distress, but by no means to drop intercourse with them when normal prosperity has returned, enabling the relation to become more social and free from economic disturbance."

Think about work and personal life as one unbroken thread, weaving one whole cloth for one whole life

Addams wanted "...to share the race life."

At the same time, ever the polemicist and social justice advocate, as a requisite, she connected living a fulfilling personal life to creating opportunity for others to do the same. "If in a democratic country nothing can be permanently achieved save through the masses of the people, it will be impossible to establish a higher political life than the people themselves crave; ... it is difficult to see how the notion of a higher civic life can be fostered save through common intercourse; ... the blessings which we associate with a life of refinement and cultivation can be made universal and must be made universal, if they are to be permanent; *the good we secure for ourselves is precarious and uncertain, is floating in mid-air, until it is secured for all of us and incorporated into our common life...*"

IV. Conclusion

"...that the good we secure for ourselves is precarious and uncertain, is floating in mid-air, until it is secured for all of us and incorporated into our common life..."

May we share this common life in this Women's History Month and in every month.

Thank you.

