

# Democracy Matters 7

## **Lesson Thirteen: Practice corporeal politics.**

The powerful want you at home, on the couch, binge-watching Netflix. That is, they want you distracted.

Get outside. Put your body in unfamiliar places with unfamiliar people. Make new friends and, if they have a cause you can get behind, march with them.

For people-driven change to succeed, two things have to happen. First, ideas about change have to engage a range of people who might not otherwise find themselves in agreement. Second, people must put themselves in places that are not their homes and among people who were not previously their friends.

Protests can be organized through social media, but nothing is real that does not end on the streets. If those in power feel no consequences for their actions in the non-virtual world, nothing will change.

## **Lesson Fourteen: Establish a private life.**

We are only free insofar as we exercise control over what people know about us and how they know it. Whoever can pierce your privacy can embarrass you and disrupt your relationships at will.

So scrub your computer of malware on a regular basis and remember that email and social media are always more public than they seem. Resolve any legal trouble. Make sure you have personal exchanges in person. Support organizations that are concerned with protecting human rights.

Think carefully before allowing parts of your life to be made public. Ask yourself: are you really comfortable with anyone knowing this thing about you? Will you still be comfortable with it being a public part of your life in 10, 20, and 30 years' time? When in doubt, always err on the side of keeping things private. This choice is easier to unmake than its opposite.

(Adapted from Snyder, Timothy. *On Tyranny: Twenty Lessons from the Twentieth Century*.  
Vintage Digital, 2017.)