

What is *Speaking Truth to Youth*?

AWTT artist Robert Shetterly says,

“Good art takes time.... It was my determination that slowly building a community, portrait by portrait, of Americans who have fought for racial, economic, social and environmental justice would be the most persuasive and educationally useful thing I could do. Their power may be their invitation to a moment of contemplation, the permission they give viewers to stop and think, to agree or disagree, at the same time requiring that they acknowledge the humanity of the person represented before them. If the art can embody the truth of the person, the viewer may be willing to consider the truth of the subject’s words.

These *Speaking Truth to Youth* videos reflect AWTT's belief that our portrait subjects are not superheroes but real people whose work is driven by moral courage and a passion for truth and justice. In these interviews, we hope to capture them in that spirit - sitting at home, sharing their thoughts in conversation. They are intentionally unpolished and authentic. We hope you enjoy a window into the lives of these models of courageous citizenship and realize that you, too, can be an activist – someone with the courage to act for social, economic, and environmental fairness. It’s your moment!

<https://www.americanswhotellthetruth.org/speaking-truth-to-youth>

Introductory Lesson for *Speaking Truth to Youth* (STTY)

Open your activist mind! Check out three or four (or all) of these videos. Consider the following questions as you get to know these AWTT portraits as real people:

First, consider the art!

1. Before you watch a *Speaking Truth to Youth* video, do the following for each video you select.
 - i. Look at the portrait; it’s linked from the person’s name in the text beneath the video.
 - ii. Make a chart to record your impressions of the portrait and the video.
 - iii. Record your impressions of each portrait in your chart:

Portrait	Expressions	Colors Used	My Impressions
E.g. Maulian Dana	Kind, but serious	Green, purple, dark hair	Approachable, warm, ready to inform me

- a) Facial expression
- b) Colors used
- c) What is this person saying to you

2. Watch the video.

3. Compare your reactions to the video to your earlier reactions to the portrait:

- i. How are they similar?
- ii. How are they different?

4. What qualities of the person did the artist capture in the portrait?

5. Why are these people called truth tellers?

- a) Does speaking the truth make you an activist? Why or why not?
- b) How did the artist capture the spirit of activism?

Find the Common and Unique Sources of Inspiration.

1. What events or people in their youth do these portrait subjects have in common as motivators to become activists?
2. What common ideas or behaviors continue to guide them?
3. What is something unique about each one?

Art Inspiring Action – It's Your Turn!

1. Which piece of advice speaks to you? Why?
2. Which issue speaks to you? Why?
 - a) Climate change
 - b) Racial justice and equity
 - c) Workers' rights
 - d) LGBTQ rights
 - e) Equity in education
 - f) Equity in athletics
 - g) Something else...

3. What problems do you see that need a solution?
4. Choose a problem/s to address.
5. What are some potential paths to solutions?
6. What is your first step?