

## ***They matter . . .***

It seemed like such a simple idea. Pick ten pop songs that inspire people who are seeking social justice.

Right.

Then I started scrolling through my iTunes cache, asking friends for suggestions, jotting down song titles, and chasing after performances on YouTube.

Ten? Are you kidding me?

So this is *my* list. Forty songs, not ten, listed chronologically by their release dates. Some will be on your list as well -- and many will not. But they all have one thing in common: They matter. They quicken the blood. They unleash our emotions, our hopes, our dreams for a better world. When we lie awake at night, we hear their lyrics, feel their rhythms. When we sleep, they invade our dreams. So many of us are seeking social justice in so many different ways -- it's folly to imagine a list of ten pop songs that would satisfy us all.

Each of the songs on my list has touched me personally at important moments in my life. I've included the names of the performers who caught my attention, excerpts from the lyrics, and links to the songs themselves. I hope you listen to them again (you know most of them) and let them play upon your heart whenever you need them.

As I winnowed my choices from more than 100 possibilities, it became increasingly clear that each generation builds its own social justice playlist. Not surprisingly, most of the titles on mine were released before the mid-'70s -- songs I heard during the first 30 years of my life that have stayed with me since.

If I've left out one or more of your favorites, feel free to roll your eyes. But please don't stop there. Send me a note and tell me about them!

1. [Where Have All the Flowers Gone](#) (The Kingston Trio, 1961)

*And where have all the soldiers gone, long time passing?  
Where have all the soldiers gone, a long long time ago?  
Where have all the soldiers gone?  
Gone to graveyards, every one  
When will they ever learn, when will they ever learn?*

2. [Stand By Me](#) (Ben E. King, 1961)  
*When the night has come  
And the land is dark  
And the moon is the only light we'll see  
No, I won't be afraid  
Oh, I won't be afraid  
Just as long as you stand, stand by me*
  
3. [Last Night I Had the Strangest Dream](#) (The Chad Mitchell Trio, 1962)  
*Last night I had the strangest dream  
I never dreamed before  
I dreamed the world had all agreed  
To put an end to war*
  
4. [If I Had a Hammer](#) (Peter, Paul and Mary, 1962)  
*It's the hammer of justice  
It's the bell of freedom  
It's a song about love between my brothers and my sisters  
all over this land*
  
5. [Tobacco Road](#) (Lou Rawls, 1963)  
*Save my money and get rich I know  
And bring it back to Tobacco Road  
Bring dynamite and a crane  
Blow it up and start all over again*
  
6. [Blowin' in the Wind](#) (Bob Dylan, 1963)  
*Yes, an' how many years can some people exist  
Before they're allowed to be free?  
Yes, an' how many times must a man turn his head  
An' pretend that he just doesn't see?*
  
7. [Little Boxes](#) (Pete Seeger, 1963)  
*There's a green one and a pink one  
And a blue one and a yellow one  
And they're all made out of ticky tacky  
And they all look just the same*
  
8. [Keep Your Eyes on the Prize](#) (Pete Seeger, 1963)  
*Well, the only chains that we can stand  
Are the chains of hand in hand  
Keep your eyes on the prize, hold on*
  
9. [A Change is Gonna Come](#) (Sam Cooke, 1964)  
*I was born by the river in a little tent  
Oh and just like the river I've been running ev'r since  
It's been a long time, a long time coming  
But I know a change gonna come, oh yes it will*
  
10. [The Times They Are a Changin'](#) (Bob Dylan, 1964)

*You better start swimmin'  
Or you'll sink like a stone  
For the times they are a-changin'*

11. [You'll Never Walk Alone](#) (The Righteous Brothers, 1965)  
*Walk on, walk on, with hope in your heart  
And you'll never walk alone  
You'll never walk alone*
  
12. [The Impossible Dream](#) (Richard Kiley, 1965)  
*This is my quest, to follow that star ...  
No matter how hopeless, no matter how far ...  
To fight for the right, without question or pause ...  
To be willing to march into Hell, for a Heavenly cause ...  
And the world will be better for this:  
That one man, scorned and covered with scars,  
Still strove, with his last ounce of courage,  
To reach ... the unreachable star ...*
  
13. [Climb Every Mountain](#) (Peggy Wood, *The Sound of Music*, 1965)  
*Climb every mountain,  
Ford every stream,  
Follow every rainbow,  
'Till you find your dream.  
A dream that will need  
All the love you can give,  
Every day of your life  
For as long as you live.*
  
14. [For What It's Worth](#) (Buffalo Springfield, 1966)  
*There's somethin' happenin' here  
What it is ain't exactly clear  
There's a man with a gun, over there  
Tellin' me I got to beware  
(I think it's time we)  
Stop, children, what's that sound?  
Everybody look – what's goin' down?*
  
15. [Abraham, Martin & John](#) (Dion DiMucci, 1968)  
*Anybody here seen my old friend Martin?  
Can you tell me where he's gone?  
He freed a lot of people,  
But it seems the good they die young.  
I just looked 'round and he's gone.*
  
16. [Revolution](#) (The Beatles, 1968)  
*You say you want a revolution  
Well, you know we all want to change the world  
You tell me that it's evolution  
Well, you know we all want to change the world  
But when you talk about destruction  
Don't you know that you can count me out*
  
17. [Those Were the Days](#) (Mary Hopkin, 1968)

*Those were the days my friend  
We thought they'd never end  
We'd sing and dance forever and a day  
We'd live the life we choose  
We'd fight and never lose  
For we were young and sure to have our way*

18. [And When I Die](#) (Blood, Sweat & Tears, featuring David Clayton Thomas, 1968)

*And when I die, and when I'm gone  
There'll be one child born  
In this world to carry on, to carry on*

19. [Sing a Simple Song of Freedom](#) (Bobby Darin, 1969)

*Seven hundred million are you listening?  
Most of what you read is made of lies  
But speaking one to one, ain't it everybody's sun  
To wake to in the morning when we rise?*

20. [Everybody's Talkin' At Me](#) (Harry Nilsson, 1969)

*I'm going where the sun keeps shining  
Through the pouring rain ...  
Banking off the north east wind  
Sailing on summer breeze  
And skipping over the ocean like a stone*

21. [Please, Don't Pass Me By](#) (Leonard Cohen, 1970)

*Oh, please don't pass me by,  
For I am blind, yes I am blind, oh but you can see,  
Yes, I've been blinded totally,  
Oh, please don't pass me by.*

22. [Teach Your Children](#) (Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young, 1970)

*Teach your children well . . .  
And feed them on your dreams  
The one they pick's, the one you'll know by  
Don't you ever ask them why  
If they told you, you would cry  
So just look at them and sigh  
And know they love you*

23. [Bridge Over Troubled Waters](#) (Simon & Garfunkel, 1970)

*When you're down and out  
When you're on the street,  
When evening falls so hard  
Well, I will comfort you*

24. [Big Yellow Taxi](#) (Joni Mitchell, 1970)

*Don't it always seem to go  
That you don't know what you've got 'til it's gone?  
They paved paradise  
Put up a parking lot*

25. [Imagine](#) (John Lennon, 1971)

*You may say I'm a dreamer  
But I'm not the only one*

*I hope someday you will join us  
And the world will be as one*

26. [What's Going On](#) (Marvin Gaye, 1971)

*Mother, mother  
There's too many of you crying  
Brother, brother, brother  
There's far too many of you dying*

27. [You've Got a Friend](#) (James Taylor, 1971)

*You just call out my name, and you know where ever I am  
I'll come running to see you again.  
Winter, spring, summer, or fall, all you've got to do is call and I'll be there, yeah, yeah, now  
you've got a friend.*

28. [American Pie](#) (Don McLean, 1971)

*And in the streets the children screamed  
The lovers cried, and the poets dreamed  
But not a word was spoken  
The church bells all were broken ...  
And the three men I admire most  
The Father, Son, and the Holy Ghost  
They caught the last train for the coast*

29. [Won't Get Fooled Again](#) (The Who, 1971)

*I'll tip my hat to the new constitution  
Take a bow for the new revolution  
Smile and grin at the change all around  
Pick up my guitar and play, just like yesterday  
Then I'll get on my knees and pray  
We don't get fooled again*

30. [Lean on Me](#) (Bill Withers, 1972)

*Lean on me when you're not strong  
And I'll be your friend, I'll help you carry on  
For it won't be long  
'Til I'm gonna need somebody to lean on*

31. [Dream Weaver](#) (Gary Wright, 1972)

*I have just closed my eyes again  
Climbed aboard the Dream Weaver train  
Driver take away my worries of today  
And leave tomorrow behind  
Dream Weaver, I believe you can get me through the night  
Dream Weaver, I believe we can reach the morning light*

32. [Song Sung Blue](#) (Neil Diamond, 1972)

*Me and you are subject to the blues now and then  
But when you take the blues and make a song  
You sing 'em out again . . .  
Funny thing, but you can sing it with a cry in your voice  
And before you know it get to feelin' good  
You simply got no choice*

33. [Garden Party](#) (Rick Nelson and the Stone Canyon Band, 1972)

*When I got to the garden party, they all knew my name  
No one recognized me, I didn't look the same  
But it's all right now, I learned my lesson well  
You see, ya can't please everyone, so ya got to please yourself*

34. [Cat's in the Cradle](#) (Harry Chapin, 1974)

*And the cat's in the cradle and the silver spoon  
Little boy blue and the man in the moon  
When you comin' home son?  
I don't know when, but we'll get together then son  
You know we'll have a good time then*

35. [Take it to the Limit](#) (The Eagles, 1975)

*And when you're looking for your freedom  
(Nobody seems to care)  
And you can't find the door  
(Can't find it anywhere)  
When there's nothing to believe in  
Still you're coming back, you're running back  
You're coming back for more  
So put me on a highway  
And show me a sign  
And take it to the limit  
One more time*

36. [Another Brick in the Wall](#) (Pink Floyd, 1979)

*We don't need no education  
We don't need no thought control  
No dark sarcasms in the classroom  
Teachers leave them kids alone  
Hey! teachers! leave the kids alone!  
All in all you're just another brick in the wall.*

37. [Hallelujah](#) (Leonard Cohen, 1984)

*And even though it all went wrong  
I'll stand before the Lord of Song  
With nothing on my tongue but Hallelujah*

38. [Everybody Hurts](#) (Joe Cocker, 2004)

*When the day is long and the night, the night is yours alone  
When you're sure you've had enough of this life, well hang on  
Don't let yourself go, 'cos everybody cries  
And everybody hurts sometimes*

39. [I Will Rise Up / Ain't No More Cane](#) (Lyle Lovett, 2007)

*In the darkest hour  
In the dead of night  
As the storm clouds are gathered  
And the lightin' strikes  
And the thunder rolls  
And the cold rain goes  
The future it holds what God only knows (what God only knows)  
And I will rise up and I will rise up  
Though I be a dead man, I said, yes and amen  
And I will stand tall and I will stand tall  
Until I meet my end, until I meet my end*

40. [Don't You Wish it Was True](#) (John Fogerty, 2007)

*He said, "The world's gonna change  
And it's starting today  
There'll be no more armies  
No more hate"  
Don't you wish it was true,  
Lord, don't you wish it was true*

**And one bonus track, just for entrepreneurs:**

[The Roses of Success](#) (Anton Rodgers, *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang*, 2002)

*Every bursted bubble has a glory!  
Each abysmal failure makes a point!  
Every glowing path that goes astray,  
Shows you how to find a better way.  
So every time you stumble never grumble.  
Next time you'll bumble even less!  
For up from the ashes, up from the ashes, grow the roses of success!*