

10 THINGS

Everyone Should Know About

HUMAN TRAFFICKING

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The terms “**human trafficking**,” “**trafficking in persons**,” and “**modern slavery**” are umbrella terms that cover a range of criminal conduct. Although different groups use slightly different definitions, **human trafficking is compelling someone to engage in a commercial sex act or forced labor**. It impacts communities and individuals around the world. Here are ten things that everyone should know about human trafficking:

1 THE PROBLEM OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING IS HUGE

When most people hear about human trafficking, their minds go back to the trans-Atlantic slave trade or images of ancient armies capturing defeated foes and forcing them to work. The world has a long and sordid history with human trafficking, which continues to exist today. The United Nations estimates that there are currently **27.6 million victims in the world**, more than at any other point in human history. **Trafficking victims lack basic freedoms. Someone else decides when they wake up, where they work, and who touches their bodies. Traffickers steal the fruit of their victims’ labor and stunt their professional and personal growth. The problem is enormous.**

2 HUMAN TRAFFICKING IS ILLEGAL

It might seem obvious that trafficking is illegal. However, the shift in legal perspective is relatively recent. For most of recorded history’s four thousand years, some sort of human trafficking has been acceptable in the eyes of the law. Often, it has been democratically approved, religiously endorsed, and culturally accepted. It wasn’t until 1807 that Britain banned the slave trade, later emancipating its slaves in 1833.

The United States followed suit in 1808 and 1865, respectively. Since 2000, every country in the world has passed some sort of law banning human trafficking. In the last 220 years, the world transitioned from universal acceptance of human trafficking to near-universal rejection of this crime. **This is a massive historic hinge, and the door of freedom is poised to swing wide.**

3 TRAFFICKING IS ABOUT COERCION NOT MOVEMENT

Many people assume that trafficking involves moving victims from one place to another, perhaps even from one country another country. However, legally, human trafficking is not defined by geographical movement. There are certain movement-based crimes, such as human smuggling. However, unlike smuggling, human trafficking is a crime of coercion: a trafficker compels a person in commerce, regardless of whether movement occurs. Many trafficking victims remain unidentified by authorities because people wrongly assume that the law requires transportation or movement.

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4 FORCED LABOR IS HUMAN TRAFFICKING TOO

Most of the reported cases of human trafficking involve traffickers compelling people to engage in commercial sex acts. These stories are emotional and powerful. Sex trafficking is a significant problem around the world. However, although sex trafficking dominates the headlines, **most of the world's human trafficking victims are trafficked for forced labor.**

Traffickers force victims to work in agricultural fields, manufacturing facilities, fishing vessels, nursing homes, cleaning crews, restaurants, hotels, mines, begging, or in their own homes providing childcare or other domestic work. Traffickers can force people to work in any industry or location. The produce, parts, and products that human trafficking victims make often end up in the supply chains of items consumers purchase each day. Although other forms of human trafficking exist (such as state-sanctioned forced labor where the government itself is acting as the trafficker), the two most common forms of human trafficking are forced labor and sex trafficking.

5 TRAFFICKERS GENERALLY TARGET VULNERABLE PEOPLE

Traffickers are economically motivated criminals. They want to exert the least amount of effort to maximize their profits. They believe it is easier to target vulnerable people who have less power, scarcer resources, or fewer community bonds. Traffickers target vulnerable individuals including foster children, runaways, refugees, migrant workers, addicts, the undocumented, poor, disabled, victims of prior trauma, or people who are otherwise struggling.

Underlying vulnerabilities do not cause human trafficking, but they do provide important insight in helping understand why traffickers target certain individuals. As we work to identify more victims, we should place a special emphasis on vulnerable people. We should also think carefully about ending the demand for sex trafficking and the commercial sexual exploitation of children, which disproportionately affects the most vulnerable.

6 TRAFFICKERS USE DIFFERENT "MEANS" TO CONTROL VICTIMS

Chains, locks, and cages are common images that come to mind when discussing human trafficking. Although traffickers often use violence to restrain and control victims, **many traffickers have shifted to using nonviolent methods to coerce victims.** Traffickers use fraud, manipulation, isolation, debt, shame, immigration status, fear of the authorities, or love for others to compel their victims. For instance, knowing that a victim loves her younger cousin, a trafficker might say, "If you don't earn your quota, your cousin will have to do it for you." Without any physical violence, the trafficker manipulates the victim's loving desire to protect her cousin as a means of coercion. The United Nations anti-trafficking protocol and the United States' 2000 trafficking law addressed the realities of how modern traffickers operate. These new laws recognized that traffickers employ numerous forms of nonviolent coercion. Traffickers will use any type of coercion that works.

7 SURVIVOR LEADERSHIP IS VITAL

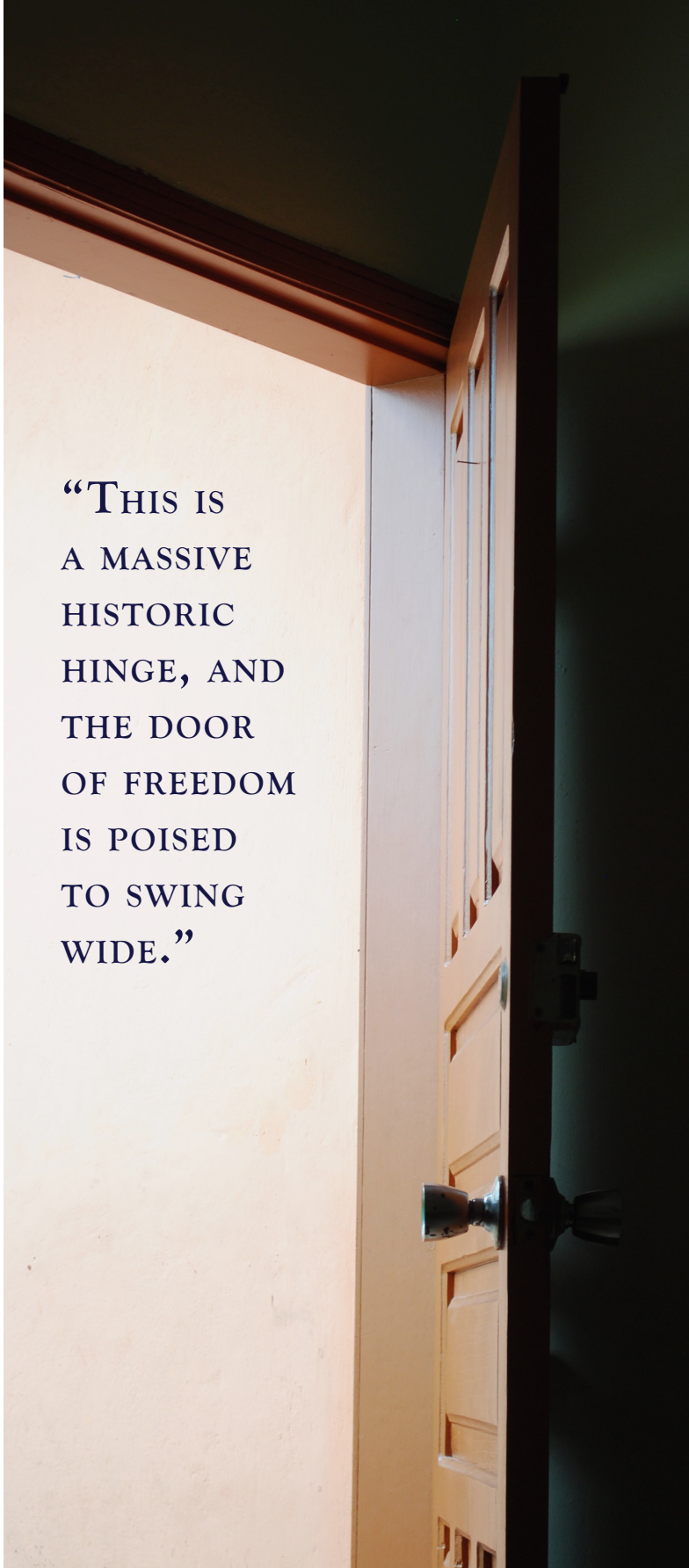
Experiences often generate unique insights. Survivors come from a multitude of perspectives and have different opinions about how governments, nonprofits, and individuals can improve their efforts to stop human trafficking. Creating space to hear from a variety of survivors is a necessity and, ultimately, a powerful tool. More and more survivors are taking up leadership positions in organizations. Beyond sharing their powerful stories of trauma and recovery, they are also addressing important topics like legislation, funding priorities, law enforcement, and training.

8 PROSECUTION, PROTECTION, AND PREVENTION

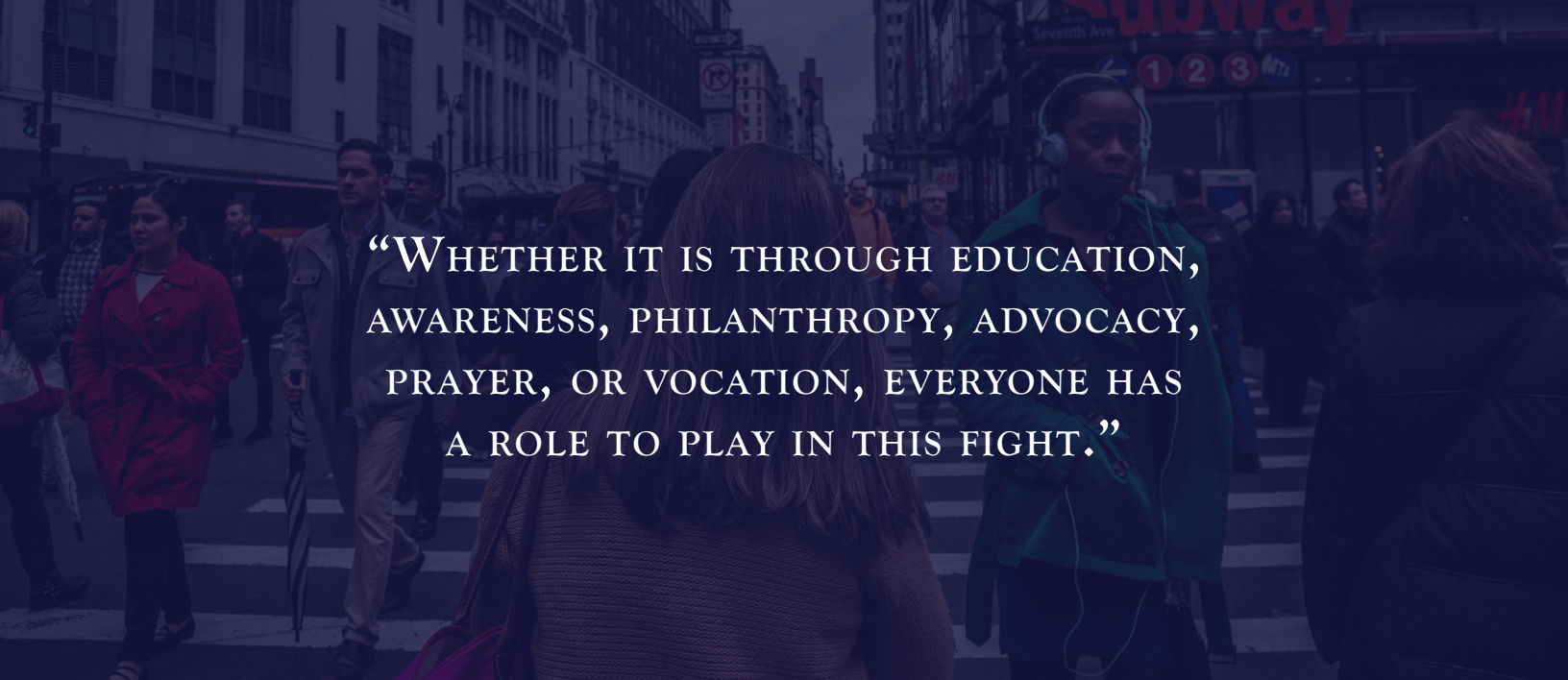
The movement to combat human trafficking has been guided by the *Three P Paradigm*: prosecution, protection, and prevention.

- **We must prosecute traffickers.** Governments must hold traffickers accountable for harming current victims and restrain them from trafficking others in the future.
- **We must protect victims.** The journey away from the trafficker and into freedom can be a long and painful road. Thoughtful, individualized, trauma-informed protection services are necessary to care for victims.
- **We must prevent trafficking before it ever happens.** Prevention efforts focus on changing systems and patterns that make it easier for trafficking to operate.

The three P's must operate in concert with one another. They are inextricably intertwined and mutually reinforcing. Any efforts to diminish or delete any of the P's will ultimately do more harm than good. Partnership is what unites these ideas. **Collaborating for the purpose of fighting human trafficking is essential for success.**



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9 EVERYONE HAS A ROLE TO PLAY

Human trafficking might seem like an overwhelming problem. Many people are disillusioned by “awareness fatigue”—they are aware of a problem, but unsure of what to do. Governments have an essential role to play. They are the only entity that has the power to arrest, prosecute, and convict traffickers. We can continue to advocate for governments to do more. **Businesses** also have a responsibility to vet their global supply chains to ensure that vendors are not using forced labor. In turn, **customers** should be aware of whether their purchases inadvertently fuel forced labor around the world, and they should seek to support companies whose supply chains are free from forced labor.

It is impossible for governments and businesses to do this work without the global support of faith communities, nonprofits, and individuals. Together, we can help identify cases, recommend changes, and care for survivors. People should consider joining the fight professionally by being excellent at their craft. The fight needs accountants, advocates, data analysts, creatives, coders, writers, social workers, trauma-informed therapists, federal agents, prosecutors, or diplomats. Talented, hard-working, people are needed. Whether it is through education, awareness, philanthropy, advocacy, prayer, or vocation, everyone has a role to play in this fight.

10 WHY HUMAN TRAFFICKING IS WRONG

The “why” matters. The reason human trafficking is reprehensible provides the fuel to persevere in the fight for freedom. Human trafficking has always been wrong. Even when it was legal, it was wrong. Even when educated elites justified it with logic, it was wrong. Even when people used sacred religious texts to support it, it was wrong. Human trafficking is fundamentally wrong because every person has inherent value. Individuals of every race, color, creed, ability, age, gender, personality, or orientation have value. They all matter. **Human dignity** is at stake when traffickers treat valuable people as disposable commodities. By combating human trafficking, people of goodwill honor the inherent value of all individuals. **Freedom matters because people matter.**

Human trafficking is not a naturally occurring phenomenon, and we are not powerless to stop it. By learning more about human trafficking from a variety of perspectives and engaging in strategic action, people of goodwill can **stop traffickers, care for survivors, and work to prevent this crime.**