
BECOMING WAVEMAKERS

INSPIRING CHANGE IN YOUR CHURCH OR ORGANIZATION

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YOU KNOW CHANGE IS NEEDED BUT DO YOU HAVE WHAT IT TAKES TO BE A WAVEMAKER?

INTRODUCTION

Some individuals with the noblest intentions “flame out” when they enthusiastically attempt to improve their organizations. Flaming out implies failure, resulting in bad feelings and expired energy. The personal casualties can include the loss of relationships, reputation, or positions in addition to workplace or church morale for peers who become caught in the middle. The good news is that there are plenty of success stories of wavemakers who successfully brought about change in society, workplace, and religion. They teach us about motivations, character, self-reflection, and roadmaps.

Steve presents measures for forging institutional change, regardless of one's rank, title, or status in society. Through self-awareness, respect, best communication practices, and roadmaps for collaboration, we can avoid 'us and them' pitfalls. The format will include TED-style talks, interactive lessons, and discussions. Topics include Lessons Learned in Making Waves, A New Glossary of Change, and Co-Developing Roadmaps.

LESSONS LEARNED IN MAKING WAVES

Snapshots of several men and women who inspired changes that rippled throughout their communities

You meet four kinds of people on the ocean of life. **Those who drift** just go with the flow. The wind and the waves control their speed and direction. The drifter quietly floats along and says, “Whatever.” **Those who surf** are always riding a wave, the next big thing. They stay excited until the wave fades away, then they scan the

“**THE WINDS AND THE WAVES ARE ALWAYS ON THE SIDE OF THE ABLEST NAVIGATORS.**”
EDWARD GIBBON

horizon for something new. Surfers don't usually get anywhere, but they make a lot of noise and put on a good show. **Those who drown** seem to stay in the center of a storm. It doesn't matter how often you rescue them, they'll soon be in another crisis, crying, “Help me, save me, it's been the worst week of my life. I don't know what I'm going to do.” **Those who sail** are navigating toward a fixed point. They counteract the wind and waves

by adjusting the rudder and shifting the sails to stay on course. But without an immovable, fixed point in your life, there can be no sailing. There's nothing for you but drift, surf, or drown.”¹

ICONIC WAVEMAKERS

The following men and women made waves in the arenas of government or medicine. The dates represent the most significant event or events that made them noteworthy.

I. DANIEL (BABYLON, 606-604 BC) ... PLEASING GOD

- Entered the city and the palace of a famous king Nebuchadnezzar as a captive Hebrew servant
- He possessed resolve and cleverly brought positive changes in palace guidelines (1:8-16)
- Was appointed for the royal court, as a province ruler, overseeing the wise men (Dan. 1:1-2:49).
- Became a statesman in a historically hostile city and influenced its kings at critical moments
- KEY: *be prayerful, principled, and respectful towards the officials and local culture*

II. FREDERICK DOUGLASS (EAST COAST US, 1836-1865) ... ABOLITIONIST

- Born in a slave family and was sold multiple times, as well as failed multiple escapes due to recapture
- Edward Covey, a reputed "slave-breaker" failed in a physical confrontation with Douglass
- He learned to read out of defiance of his owners
- Wrote the best known of all slave narratives, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*
- Escaped and became the prominent figurehead of the abolitionist movement to end slavery. As a speaker and author, he had the ear of presidents, notably including Abraham Lincoln
- After the Civil War he continued for woman's rights, reconciled with one of his previous owners, and was appointed to various political posts
- KEY: *possess a fearless determination to learn, understand, be understood, and speak out against injustices*

¹ Mike Metzger, president of Clapham Institute, Monday Morning Memo, 4 September 2007

III. IGNAZ SEMMELWEIS (VIENNA, 1847) ... SAVING LIVES

- A Hungarian physician in a hospital
- The disease now called avian flu was a “was a rampant, insidious killer in Western hospitals, targeting mothers of newborn children and often threatening to turn those cherubic babies into motherless orphans just days after their birth.”²
- He noted that women were statistically much safer having babies at home and that doctors who delivered babies had not cleaned their hands after handling cadavers
- Ordered changes in hygiene that dropped mortality rate for new mothers from 35% to less than 1%
- He was ridiculed by his peers because he couldn’t explain why hygiene mattered.
- He became outraged in his attempt to persuade the medical establishment and ended up in an asylum, where he was straightjacketed, and died from gangrene after beatings from guards
- After his death the French chemist Louis Pasteur, pioneering microbiologist, and British surgeon Joseph Lister that developed germ theory, confirmed the findings of Semmelweis, and leveraged the knowledge for greater safety in healthcare
- KEY: be observant, practical, and persistent, but beware of the costs of excessive outrage

IV. CONNIE RICE (LOS ANGELES, NUMEROUS BETWEEN 1991-2002) ... CIVIL RIGHTS

- Cousin of Condoleezza Rice, grew up with interracial parents, being two-fifths black, and from a home of privilege Connie become upset that others of African descent did not receive her opportunities
- Worked as an attorney for the NAACP Legal Defense Fund
- Was considered a pariah and nemesis of the LAPD beginning in 1990 when, she confronted the Los Angeles Police Department’s “centurion-warrior model of policing” brutality which rivaled the gangs
- Gang violence was out of control, but the community never turned against the gangs and their violence because the LAPD itself was so violent, lawless, and alienating
- Her first big contest in 1991 with the LAPD was over the harm caused by the K9 unit with a 47 percent hospital rate of alleged offenders. Sixteen handlers were putting more people in the hospital than the entire police force. Her efforts brought it down to less than 5%
- Through the early 2000s she would not go away, leading 100s of lawsuits against the LAPD
- In 2002 she was asked by a new police commissioner to partner with him and others in an investigation into a large number of scandals. A turnaround occurred due to role changes, and bringing in diverse perspective to teams (lens changes) which allowed for a holistic look at the problems
- Authored, *Power Concedes Nothing: One Women’s Quest for Social Justice in America*. The book signing in 2012 was hosted by LAPD Chief Charlie Beck with guests including police and city officials as well as former gang members and long-time critics of the LAPD
- KEY: Rice thoroughly investigated, was reasonable, respectful, respectable and on the right side

V. CARMEN MEDINA (CIA, 2001-2010) ... NATIONAL SECURITY

- CIA analyst, pressed for intelligence sharing between security agencies in the mid-late 1990s
- Encountered institutional resistance and flamed out (blew up). Nearly lost job. Marginalized
- 9/11 happened, sounding an alarm. Soon she was vindicated and moved up the ranks to Deputy Directory of Intelligence, began CIA’s Lessons Learned program, led the agency’s first effort to engage with challenges posed by social networks and to envision the revolutionary *Intellipediai* (govt. sharing)
- Observation from her colleague Adam Grant—“To land that (CIA Deputy Director) position, she needed to learn to communicate differently—to speak up in ways that won credibility instead of losing it.”³
- Co-authored *Rebels at Work: A Handbook for Leading Change from Within*
- KEY: self-awareness, earning the credibility, developing relationships along with being right

² Spiegelman & Berrett, *Patients Come Second: Leading Change by Changing the Way You Lead*

³ Adam Grant, *Originals: How Non-Conformists Move the World*

VI. HEATHER BROOKE (ENGLAND, 2004-2009) ... GOVERNMENTAL TRANSPARENCY

- Dual citizen of US and England, a crime and political reporter and more well known in Europe
- Formerly associated with Julian Assange, but broke ranks with him over principles and issues related to his unsavory character ... and exposed him
- She led a five-year dogged investigation into the UK's Members of Parliament (MP) using the Freedom of Information Act, began as a quest to see why MPs could write large covert checks to themselves
- This matter was pursued in High Court and Parliament was forced to comply, culminating in the resignation of House of Commons Speaker Michael Martin as well as policy changes
- Inspires nations and organizations to operate by robust transparency
- Author of *Your Right to Know: A Citizen's Guide to Freedom of Information* (2006), and *The Revolution Will Be Digitised* (2011)
- KEY: persistent investigation, use of existing channels, unpaid service of the public's interests

The following individuals inspired major waves in the workplace environment:

Florence Nightingale

Edwards T. Deming

Mary Parker Follett

The following individuals and teams brought spiritual waves in their communities or their churches:

Esther & Mordecai

Stephen

Nehemiah & Ezra

Justin Martyr

Samaritan Woman

Irenaeus

Paul of Tarsus

Erasmus

COMMON EXPRESSIONS INDICATING STUCKNESS

I. IN THE CHURCH

"We are not reaching entire demographics of our city with the gospel because of ..."]

"My visitors are not returning. When I ask them why I regularly hear ... "

"People don't volunteer as much as they used to and I am overwhelmed" (Children's Ministry Leader)

"I don't share the views of authority and direction of your generation which I perceive to be ..."

"The vision of our congregation sounds very 1970s-ish but I would be more inspired by ..."

II. IN AN ORGANIZATION

"Our employees would be more productive for the company's vision if we/they could work from home."

"I think I know why there is a low morale in my department."

"We are not making full use of our resources skills to be more effective."

"We are having significant turnover with talented people. I may be the next to leave."

"I feel micromanaged, which is draining my energies, but I really believe in our product."

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

I. MENTORING

“A smart man makes a mistake, learns from it, and never makes that mistake again. But a wise man finds a smart man and learns from him how to avoid the mistake altogether.”

— Roy H. Williams

II. RESPECT

“The more prepared, gracious, and respectful you are toward people who don’t share your views, the more you establish your reputation as a credible professional to be taken seriously. As rebels, we can spend too much time thinking about our ideas and not enough time planning how to discuss them productively, especially when things get uncomfortable or heated.”⁴

—Lois Kelly & Carmen Medina

III. PROACTIVITY

“Be a problem solver, not just a problem pointer. When you notice flaws, mistakes, or weaknesses, don’t just point them out; offer detailed solutions with your observations. Be proactive in seeking out potential issues and creating solutions.”⁵

—Lois Kelly & Carmen Medina

IV. PROCESSES

“The more we understand how things work at work, the more likely we will figure out the best way to get support for our ideas and make them a reality. We can’t change the culture and its associated politics and cultural norms. We can, however, learn the organizational environment well enough to navigate through it to increase our chances of success.”⁶

—Chris Brady

V. BE THE CHANGE

“We welcome dissatisfaction as the source of craving for the good. But we never accept whining or criticizing of others or critiques of society. If you don’t like it, go fix it; go create a world, a community, a subculture in which your ideals can be instantiated, realized, in which you can show us what your vision of beauty and nobility looks like. Create a new social reality, so that I can see your dreams come true. ... Criticize by creating.”⁷

—Michael Strong

⁴ Lois Kelly and Carmen Medina, *Rebels at Work: A Handbook for Leading Change from Within*

⁵ Chris Brady, *Wavemakers: How Small Acts of Courage Can Change the World*

⁶ Lois Kelly and Carmen Medina, *Rebels at Work: A Handbook for Leading Change from Within*

⁷ Michael Strong, *Be the Solution: How Entrepreneurs and Conscious Capitalists Can Solve All the World’s Problems*

A NEW GLOSSARY OF CHANGE

“ Before you tell me how to do it better, before you lay out your big plans for changing, fixing, and improving me, before you teach me how to pick myself up and dust myself off so that I can be shiny and successful— know this: I’ve heard it before. I’ve been graded, rated, and ranked. Coached, screened, and scored. I’ve been picked first, picked last, and not picked at all. And that was just kindergarten.”⁸

This glossary was put together for settings where shared meaning and relationships are vital, such as nonprofit, church, hospital, education or any other venture where people sense their calling.

As with any important endeavor we run into impediments to progress and dynamic conversations become the cornerstone for expressing, hearing, sorting, accepting, rejecting, and integrating ideas. When terms are misused they can be show-stopping rather than game changing.

These following terms are used for small group discussion.

Critical Thinking

Culture

Dissent

Dysfunction

Hierarchy* (different than you think)

Holistic / Wholistic

Homeostasis vs. Status Quo

Keystone

Linear vs. Systems Thinking

Old School vs. New School

Organic

Outside the Box

Paradigm Shift

Pendulum Swing

Wineskins

⁸ Stone, Douglas; Heen, Sheila *Thanks for the Feedback: The Science and Art of Receiving Feedback Well*

CO-DEVELOPING ROADMAPS

PREPARATION

Self-Evaluation—Your reputation, strengths and weaknesses, time with the organization, as well as legacy from experience, education, roles served, and successes. These questions are not meant to discourage moving forward with a great idea but to help you be aware of the factors that help an idea get traction.

Statement of Clarity—Draft a brief 2-3 paragraph statement that contains the initial needs that prompted you to start the wave, the kernel of the idea for addressing it, your understanding of hurdles, some promising worth-it advantages for moving forward, and possible next steps (pilot a concept, the creation of a task force). Acknowledge the value of having other stakeholders involved for enlightening the picture and shaping any outcome.

Be Mindful of Previous Efforts. “One way is to ask good questions, of ourselves and of people we respect in the organization: What’s beneath what’s going on here? What has foiled previous change efforts like this one? What can I learn from those? Should I continue to try to advance this idea? What might happen if I let it go? What approaches would make a difference in getting this idea back on track? Am I making assumptions that just aren’t true? Who else could help make this idea happen? Who could I talk with to get some fresh perspectives?”⁹

Initial Inquiry—Strive to learn and appreciate the current issues that absorb the attention of leadership in the establishment. The insight might affect both the timing and packaging of your concerns or idea.

ROADMAP

Process—(1) Determine who should be initially consulted, (2) what formats that they initially prefer, such as email, letter, conversation, or meeting, and (3) what other groups comprise the further levels of vetting and decision-making. If it is unclear, then be ready to propose a communication process. Document this process and plan to stick to it.

Conversation—Begin with a conversation because the voice can best convey respect and intended tonality, even if it’s a brief comment at an opportune moment such as “I’d like to provide you a brief sketch of an idea I have about achieving a goal that I believe we both care about. Should I just send it to you by email or some other means?”

First Message—Provide your prepared statement, along with a warm opener and a closing comment about the follow up in the already determined process.

Initial Feedback—The feedback of each stage in the previously determined process may inform you of (1) new insights such as strengths and weaknesses of your statement, (2) resistance and possible reasons, (3) risks and benefits of continuing, (4) the resilience of the stated process as well as (5) your own standing or rapport. Determine if you should go back to Preparation, or an earlier step on the Roadmap, or if you can proceed.

Proceed—Based on the process and the response you received you will be better informed on the step most likely to ingratiate hearers and gain traction: (a) an executive summary of a forthcoming proposal, (b) the proposal with an executive summary, (c) a meeting to deliberate on the contents of your statement, etcetera or (d) an improved version of your initial statement.

Loops—Even if “the wave” is getting traction it is wise to expect some steps in the roadmap to be repeated because more people get looped in. Expect even a great proposal to be reshaped by this organic cycle.

Representation Based Vetting—Even the best roadmaps reach forks with more options for moving forward than initially perceived. If the situation seems positive determine if vetting of the proposals involves representation of those who see the matter most clearly, who have skin in the matter, and those who can bring about change

Decision—The degree of collaboration and rank-determined outcomes varies in organizations. Protect your own emotions if the outcome was not as you intended or hoped, or if you are not given a substantial role in its roll out. Ask yourself, “How much further down the field did we move the goal?” and “Were there other gains?”

This best practices roadmap does not consider messaging out, or what to do about conflict and resistance but it contains crucial measures for the wavemaker to mindfully manage themselves.

⁹ Lois Kelly and Carmen Medina, *Rebels at Work: A Handbook for Leading Change from Within*

RECOMMENDED READING

FOR WAVEMAKER LEADERS

Lois Kelly and Carmen Medina, *When You're Managing Rebels and Mavericks*, Forbes, January 6, 2015

Patrick M. Lencioni, *The Ideal Team Player: How to Recognize and Cultivate The Three Essential Virtues*

FOR WAVEMAKERS WITHIN

Lois Kelly and Carmen Medina, *Rebels at Work: A Handbook for Leading Change from Within*

Adam Grant, *Originals: How Non-Conformists Move the World*

FOR EVERY WAVEMAKER

Douglas Stone and Sheila Heen, *Thanks for the Feedback: The Science and Art of Receiving Feedback Well (even when it is off base, unfair, poorly delivered, and, frankly, you're not in the mood)*

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