



COMMUNITY FOR CHANGE

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Foundational Ideas

MAKING LASTING CHANGE



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Making Lasting Change

Community for Change: Foundational Ideas Series



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EIGHT ELEMENTS FOR EFFECTIVE CHANGE

1. DIVERSITY:

It is important to keep in mind that everyone is tied to a different mindset, and may not see or understand your view or where you're coming from. As a teacher, it is vital to be student-minded, and understand and include various viewpoints, mindsets, and backgrounds. **Diversity** is important, as it helps us to be more understanding towards others and ourselves. To create change, you must encourage diversity and welcome differing viewpoints. As explained in Mindsets, people are tied to their mindsets and do not like it when people try to take them away, as it may act as their safeguard. So, to create change, one cannot be one-sided or minded. He/she must be open and understand people come from different places and experiences. He/she cannot be stubborn, and instead allow others to feel free to share their thoughts, opinions, and/or views.

2. ENVIRONMENT:

When creating change and when I am teaching, I think it is super important to think about the **environment** engulfing everyone. When pushing for effective change and inspiring yourself and others to thrive and learn, the environment and surroundings must be considered and planned out. The setting should be comfortable and inviting. It should have a welcoming feeling and a sense of openness. It should be warm and homey! The conditions should give off a feeling of intimacy, and a connection to others and the natural world (with windows letting in natural light). This kind of encompassment could help foster a sense of community and elevate mood and spirits, therefore inspiring everyone to be open to learn, make changes, and create a better, happier future. I came up with this realization and idea as I've worked in both the Seaport Office and the office at Pip's house. Both environments are very pleasant and homey. There are no cubicles or feelings of division. Instead, there are comfortable chairs that one would find in a home. There is a sense of relaxation but also productivity. It facilitates learning



and communicating with one another. Everyone feels comfortable and calm in their own little space, in one BIG space! This environment that does not give off a feeling of strictness actually serves to give more order and productivity.

3. GROUP WORK PLUS INDIVIDUAL WORK:

As I read in *Mindsets*, **group work plus individual work** creates result generation. When creating change, more specifically in the classroom, as a teacher it is important to have students work both alone and in small groups with one other. Working with other people allows diversity to come into play and allows us to be more open to different mindsets, backgrounds, views, and perspectives. Also, when working and interacting with others, a setting is created for asking questions. When talking about a topic with one another during group work, questions and collaborations are encouraged. As I've learned in *The Change Function*, people tend to have a fear of asking questions due to the fear of feeling left behind or unintelligent. However, with group work, people learn more about others, feel closer to them, and therefore are more comfortable asking for answers and clarity. Collaborating with others actually encourages people to ask questions, because others' thoughts, opinions, views, feelings, etc. may make one think and ponder. At the same time, kids should also spend some time working individually. This can concede them to feel more connected with themselves and feel a sense of personal achievement. It also pushes for a time of reflection, and considerations for what one has learned that week. It is important to have this mix of individual and group collaboration.

4. PASSION:

In order to make effective change in one's life, he/she has to have a true **passion** for what they are trying to change. Of course one can make a change in their life because they may HAVE to. However, to make EFFECTIVE and meaningful change, one needs to really care about the situation or idea. He/she must truly want to see the change and have a burning desire to take action and put effort in. Also to make operative change, it is helpful to be surrounded by and working with people who have the same philosophies and similar values and futuristic goals as you. For example, in Patagonia, the workers all believe and work for similar reasons. "Living the values and knowing the philosophy of each part of the company align us all in a common direction, promote efficiency, and avoid the chaos that comes from poor communication...we have made many mistakes during the past decade, but at no point have we lost our way for very long. We have the philosophies for a rough map, the only kind that's useful in a business world who's contours, unlike those of the mountains, change constantly without much warning" (Chouinard 84). If we want to see and make changes and establish the result in our lifetime, we must surround ourselves with individuals who inspire us and promote us to stick to what we believe in. If we don't feel understood, or don't at all see eye-to-eye with those in our environment, we could lose motivation to make positive changes. We must be coming from a place of eagerness and freedom, not obligation and force. Knowing exactly what you want to change, having a clear perception of your philosophies, exhibiting passion, and feeling like



you have a real connection to those you are around can aid in developing compelling change, in both your work AND personal life.

5. POSITIVE WAY:

In order to get through to people and create change, we must communicate and teach in a **positive way**. More specifically speaking... the word sustainability holds a connotation of blame—for all of our human desires and needs we must fulfil and attain. It may give off a feeling of criticism or accusation. In the upcoming quotation, Yvon Chouinard states the problem of our society today in regards to sustainability and environmental matters. “Instead of presenting an inspiring vision of change, conventional environmental approaches focus on what not to do. Such proscriptions can be seen as a kind of guilt management for our collective sins, a familiar placebo in Western culture” (Chouinard, 66). We must think differently and see a brighter future that IS possible. Therefore, when I talk to others and, in the future, my students about sustainability and the environment and what we can do, I must speak in an uplifting way. Instead of talking so much about the detriments and past evils that have ALREADY occurred, I must talk about what we can do in the FUTURE. Doing this will motivate and inspire. It will make others want to work for positive changes, knowing the capabilities and skills us humans have and can utilize to leave the world a better place. It is important to see that good can occur with our actions, and not portray us humans and what we’ve done as simply depressing. In *Cradle to Cradle*, Bruggart and McDonough wrote “But to be less bad is to accept things as they are, to believe that poorly designed, dishonorable, destructive systems are the best humans can do. This is the ultimate failure of the imagination. From our perspective, this is a depressing vision of our species’ role in the world” (Chouinard, 67). In order to make change, it is not only about being uplifting, but also about doing more good, not less bad. As discussed in *Cradle to Cradle*, we can’t force change out of shutting out and brute force. We have strengths and capabilities and loving spirits and passions. We can’t keep portraying humans as inherently bad. There is a lot of guilt and sadness due to failure and destruction we’ve ALREADY done. Perhaps we must be more imaginative and creative, therefore gaining the right perspective and mentality. More specifically, let’s not view nature as something to be controlled, but instead view it as something to be engaged in.

6. INFORMATION:

In the classroom, if I want to truly get through to kids and present them knowledge, I need to make sure I am attaining **information** that is solely based on facts. It is also important to not let my emotions get the best of me; however, I believe at the same time that it is important to teach with your heart fully in it. To make changes and breathe curiosity and thought into others, I feel it is vital that I talk and teach without being too subjective. As I have learned from reading the *Wall Street Journal*, with media, people tend to pull out certain information and facts, mix them in with feelings and biases, and intend for the reader to believe it all. However, to create positive change, it is important to act as a viewer, a scientist, and an observer, rather than a



fan of one thing or another. To create real, long lasting change, and avoid disagreements and arguments from others, it is crucial to talk and teach in a way that comes from a place of reality and love at the same time. We must watch the little words we say, and also put a critical eye on what others say, what we watch, what we hear, and what we read. To create change, we cannot be fooled or misled in the wrong direction. Instead, we must provide ourself with the right information. We must think, teach, and learn with rationale, and critically analyze everything we come across during the learning process.

7. GOOD LEADERSHIP AND CREATIVITY:

Creating effective change also involves good leadership and creativity. In order to be a good leader, he/she must inspire curiosity, intelligence, and engagement. He/she must think inventively with clear visions in mind. He/she must come from the right culture and dynamics, viewing a problem, idea, situation, invention, and/or change with a refreshing perspective. A simple formula that I considered while reading Cradle to Cradle is the following: creativity + leadership = change. Thinking creatively and ‘outside the box’ tends to push for an inspiring engagement for oneself and others. Furthermore, towards the end of Cradle to Cradle, the author includes a long paragraph on the various creative ways we can use our intelligence and capabilities to create a partnership with nature, instead of trying to control it. “We can celebrate the fecundity in the world, instead of perpetuating a way of thinking and making that eliminates it. And there can be many of us and the things we make, because we have the right system—a creative, prosperous, intelligent, and fertile system—and, like the ants, we will be ‘effective’” (McDonough, Braungart). The world and its ecosystems are capable of thriving with our involvement and positive contributions and actions. We just need to have people and leaders with a certain way of creatively thinking, and having people teaching others with a visionary, innovative, and stimulating spirit and mind.

8. PROCESS:

The last key to creating competent change is seeing the goal you want to achieve, but NOT focusing on it. Instead, it is key to focus on the **process** and what you are doing everyday along the way. We must analyze our success and our failures as we go. We have to perfect the elements. Yvon Chouinard uses a bow and arrow as a metaphor. One looks at the target, but after seeing it, it is all about what you do with yourself as you’re pulling back and aiming. “If you’ve perfected all the elements, you cant help but hit the center of the target. The same philosophy is true for climbing mountains. If you focus on the process of climbing, you’ll end up on the summit” (Chouinard, 75). It is about the steps along the way and analyzing the process you’re going through on your way to that desired change you want. Throughout the course, it is vital that you consider improving and implementing new adaptive ideas. The more we focus on that process as we go, the greater chance we may see a better way to do things, and therefore essentially create the most effective change in the future. The view is great! But the only way to get to that end positive result we want is to be sure we are doing the climb correctly,



considering every step we choose, and hopefully leaving a positive trail for others to be excited and inspired by!

FIVE PLANS FOR CHANGE:

1. I would like to take more sustainability classes this coming year. Next semester, I have two in my schedule. Depending on how my first week of classes go, I am going to see if I can add a third one. If not, second semester of my sophomore year I plan to take three. Perhaps then my sophomore year can be more evenly balanced between both education classes and environmental/sustainability classes.

2. After taking my summer class called Facets of Sustainability, and after learning more this summer about the skills and knowledge useful to generate change, I plan to find out during this coming semester what it takes to double major in sustainability and education. I can sit down with my two counselors and discuss the costs, how to manage a schedule that also allows for my other passions and activities, and lastly creating that potential schedule to see if it could work.

3. During September, I plan to join and volunteer with Tuskawilla Learning Center, or TLC. TLC is a program which immerses kids from the age of 3-8 in one of the unique ecosystems of Florida. They build communication and problem-solving skills, learn to listen to their surroundings, engage in creative activities, sing, and get more connected with nature. During this month of August, I also plan to research more about TLC and what exactly I'd be doing, who I'd be working with, and how often per week. I'm really excited for this change, as I feel it would certainly be a truly rewarding and exciting part of my school work. It would also give me great experience and inspire me more to dig and get closer to my future pursuits.

4. I also plan to volunteer at one of the elementary schools close to campus. This will give me a better idea of which age groups I find myself most profitable and connected with. It will also give me more knowledge and skills of how to teach energetically and productively. I could use these skills with TLC as well.

5. Not only would I like to work with others in promoting sustainability and a connection with nature, but I would like to do something on a more personal level that involves ME! Starting in September, I plan to start growing some of my own vegetables in my new apartment. Seeing the results and tasting what grows can inspire me more to continue to be very caring and nurturing towards the natural world on a daily basis. It can be very rewarding and help me learn more about planting. Lastly, fresh food can help myself and those I share it with be healthy. I feel that actually seeing the developments I have created through my changes in daily activities will continue to motivate me to do more little things, make more positive changes, and be more caring towards not only the environment and its living beings, but also myself. Also adding to



my weekly schedule, I'd like to dedicate a couple hours a week for a time of reflection. Perhaps during the weekend, after a full five day week of classes and learning, I will find the time to watch inspiring, informative, interesting videos, read cool articles, reflect on topics I've learned in classes, and even resonate on life lessons I've come across that week. Oh!...And last but not least, one of the most important plans to add to my weekly schedule at school: twenty minutes dedicated to a catch up phone call with Pip!



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I just finished attaining my master's degree at the University of Florida in Special Education with a minor in Sustainability Studies, as I have a love for both environmental science and for teaching. I aspire to connect and use both my passions for education and the natural world in my future career. I will be using my recent research and studies to implement contemporary evidence-based practices in education in a personal, one-on-one mentoring setting in the coming months. Additionally, I will be continuing to look into alternative schooling systems that integrate environmental stewardship and sustainability. I have also been gratefully working for the Community for Change for the last four years, leading the writing circle, developing the website, and engaging in a diversity of other project-based tasks that help to spark meaningful change for others. In my free time, I love to blog for the writing circle, play sports, hike, go to the farmer's market, and spend time with my baby nieces.

