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CHANGING THE WORLD— *Who, Me?*

*“The more you change, the more you become
an instrument of change in others.”¹*

∞ Howard Hendricks

A Woman with a “Heart” for Change

Andrea Grossman started with a red heart sticker and changed her world. In little more than twenty years, she changed the world of those around her. Mrs. Grossman’s Paper Company is now one of the world’s largest manufacturers of decorative stickers, with more than three hundred fifty designs available in thousands of stores in the United States and Japan. The \$1,700 she initially borrowed from her sister resulted in \$20 million in recent sales, averaging a 15 percent increase in sales each

year. Building on and expanding her idea for the red heart sticker, Mrs. Grossman's Paper Company now prints 15,000 miles of stickers a year — enough to circle half the globe.²

Based on the financial and statistical data alone, this is a remarkable success story. But Andrea Grossman's vision to change

*In every dimension
of life, people are
confronted with change.*

her world was predicated on “uplifting people in a positive way,”³ presenting a model of excellence and cultivating the artistic talents of average, entry-level workers. In addition to sound financial principles, she was committed to building her company on the principle of “People First.” This is evidenced by

one hundred fifty employees who work in a relaxed, family-style environment, with corporate values that reflect Andrea Grossman's personal values.

How did she break out of the simple lifestyle of a small stationery storeowner and become a world-class corporate leader? She started by meeting a specific need. A client expressed a desire for a red heart sticker, something she couldn't find anywhere. At this point Andrea could have shrugged and done nothing. Instead, she personally designed a red heart sticker and then filled her client's order by manufacturing them herself. With the success of these stickers, demand increased. Mrs. Grossman's Paper Company successfully weathered a flood of copycat companies in its first decade of existence. Expanding and diversifying its product line assured this company's place as an industry leader in the following decade.

THE “CONSTANCY” OF CHANGE

Someone once quipped, “Change is inevitable — except from a vending machine.”⁴ More poignantly, someone else said, “If nothing ever changed, there would be no butterflies.” Both statements underscore the “constancy” of change. In defining the word “change,” *Webster’s Dictionary* focuses on four aspects:⁵

1. Change – to make radically different; to give a different position, course, or direction to; to transform; implies making either an essential difference often amounting to a loss of original identity or a substitution of one thing for another
2. Alter – implies a difference in some particular respect without suggesting loss of identity
3. Vary – stresses a breaking away from sameness, duplication or exact repetition
4. Modify – suggests a difference that limits, restricts or adapts to a new purpose

Some people resist change, like the film star who battles the aging process through multiple surgeries. Others welcome change, seeing opportunities for growth and improvement.

However, if there is a particular aspect of change that alarms people today, it is the speed at which change is taking place. In the last century we moved from an industry-based society to a technology-based society. Where it once took two to three decades for

Those who view change as an improvement can be termed “World Changers.”

major organizational and cultural change to take place within an industrial framework, it now takes only two or three years for major change to occur within technological parameters. Many experts claim that information is doubling every seventeen to thirty-six months, intensifying this phenomenon of accelerated change.

Leading Change: Action or Reaction?

Accelerated change overwhelms some people, causing them to feel powerless over circumstances they cannot seem to control. Others seem to thrive on change, anticipating its challenges and adapting its benefits to their personal and professional lives.

*World changers refuse
to be controlled by
perplexing circumstances.*

Those who view change as a negative force can be termed “life takers,” people who *take life* as it comes to them, who shrug their shoulders because they can’t find any red heart stickers. Life takers *take from* rather than *add to*; criticize rather than innovate; dwell on the problem rather than seek the solution; project negativism instead of optimism; tend toward self-centeredness instead of being service-minded.

Conversely, those who view change as a positive force can be termed “world changers.” They see opportunity instead of obstacles. They figure out a way to make things better in their relationships and actions. They recognize that our rapidly changing world needs people with better ideas, quicker responsiveness and a willingness to change.

In responding to change, human beings seem to walk between these two extremes. They either manage change or they let it manage them. King Whitney, Jr. said:

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Change has considerable psychological impact on the human mind. To the *fearful*, it is *threatening* because it means that things may get worse. To the *hopeful*, it is *encouraging* because things may get better. To the *confident* it is *inspiring* because the challenge exists to make things better. Obviously, then, one's character and frame of mind determine how readily he brings about change and how he reacts to change that is imposed on him.⁶

Figure 1.1

A QUICK SELF-ASSESSMENT

LIFE TAKER	WORLD CHANGER
Fearful, Threatened	Confident, Inspired
Incapable, Dependent	Capable, Empowered
Procrastinating, Desperate	Motivated, Encouraged
Stymied, Unwilling	Willing, Eager
Lethargic, Apathetic	Ready, Energized

If we visualize these negative and positive aspects of change on a continuum, we can characterize the “fearful-threatened” aspect of the *life-taker* at one end, and the “confident-inspired” aspect of the *world changer* at the opposite end. Most of us can be found somewhere in the middle, trying to balance change with a “hopeful-encouraged” frame of mind. Where do you see yourself on this continuum? (See Figure 1.1.)

World changers refuse to be controlled by unwanted and unplanned change or perplexing circumstances. For instance, they do not wait for issues of neglect or conflict to “go away,” because they

know from experience that this is an ineffective means of dealing with problems. They seize the opportunity to create constructive change.

World changers anticipate change. They take the initiative to confront and conquer any issues that diminish their sense of well-being or that interfere with their quality of life. Moreover, in their words and actions world changers help others change their world.

Dream Wider and Higher

Your influence on the world around you is based largely on your willingness to *expand your vision*, allowing you to see change as an opportunity and not as a threat.

In *Leading Change*, John Kotter identifies several characteristics of effective change, among them:⁷

1. **Necessity** — In order to maintain a competitive edge, organizations and individuals must see that change is necessary.
2. **Urgency** — If change is to occur, a sense of urgency must propel the individual or company to action.
3. **Vision** — Vision molds and clarifies the need for change and assists in structuring implementation.
4. **Communication** — Communication translates the vision and enables it to take effect.
5. **Teamwork** — Change is best realized when individual talents and strengths are combined.

To be successful in the next decade, people and organizations — businesses, schools, government, faith-based or nonprofit institutions — must develop a plan to deal with the reality of accelerated cultural

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change. They will have to think more clearly, work smarter, dream wider and higher, and relate to one another in different and more efficient ways.

On an individual basis you must ask yourself: In what ways am I outdated in my thinking, education, life skills, and job effectiveness? How does this limit my ability to influence my world in a positive way? If I must change, how and what must I change? Can I manage change and still carry on without too much disruption to my life?

A MODEL FOR CHANGE

Acknowledging the rapid pace of change, as well as the need for a well-designed plan to deal with it, Alfred North Whitehead said: “The art of progress is to preserve order amid change and to preserve change amid order.”⁸ A fast-paced culture requires a model that enables people to manage change.

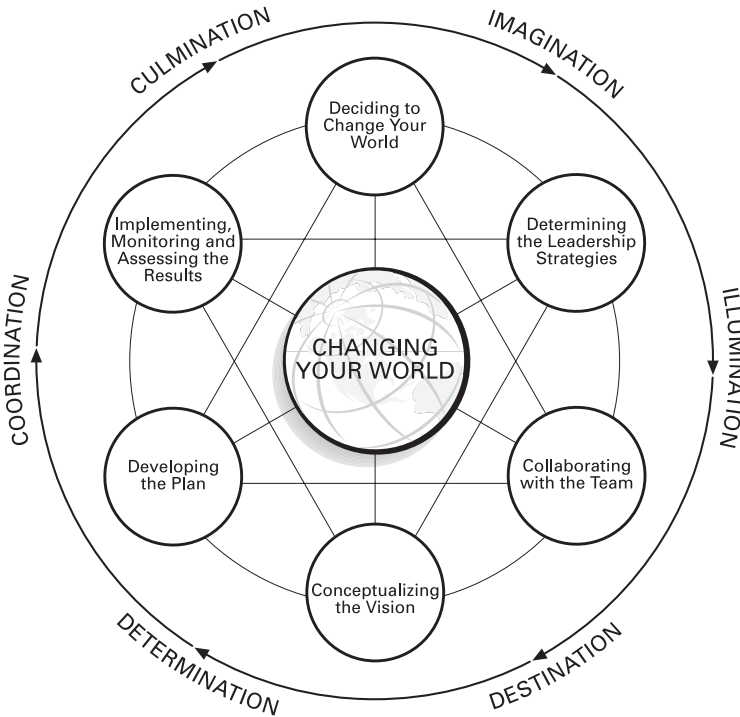
The purpose of this book is to offer such a model. Figure 1.2 illustrates a plan to help you move from a passive, “life-taking” status to an active, “world-changing” presence in all areas of your life — as well as the lives of others.

As you examine the Change Model, you will see that six interrelated/interdependent circles revolve around the center circle (Changing Your World). These we call the **change elements**:

- Deciding to Change Your World
- Determining the Leadership Strategies
- Collaborating with the Team
- Conceptualizing the Vision
- Developing the Plan
- Implementing, Monitoring and Assessing the Results

FIGURE 1.2

A MODEL FOR CHANGE



The change elements represent the objective strategy to bring about productive change. Enclosed within a larger circle around the change elements are six capitalized words. These we call the **change concepts**:

- Imagination
- Illumination
- Destination
- Determination
- Coordination
- Culmination

The change concepts represent the intuitive-feeling dimension of change. Change requires a confluence (a coming together) of these change concepts and change elements, a blending of subjective/creative thinking and objective/strategic planning.

Examining the Concepts of Change: The Outer Circle

In every invention there are two creations — the idea of the invention and the invention itself. The first begins in the heart and mind of the inventor or architect. Preceding the physical or material process of creation is the intuitive or imaginative process of creation. Every human being has a measure of *imagenuity* (i.e., the genius and creative imagination of God, the Creator of the universe). At times we are captivated with a sense that there may be a better way to do something. We become intrigued with this possibility until it becomes a fascination.

“I think and think for months, for years. Ninety-nine times the conclusion is false. The hundredth time, I am right.”

—Albert Einstein

1. Imagination

Fascination leads to the decision to implement this better way. You begin to ask yourself, how can I perceive this situation differently? What is the best way to alter this relationship? What will this change bring me in return? You move from fascination to **imagination**.

Einstein said, “Imagination is something more important than knowledge.” He also said, “I think and think for months, for years. Ninety-nine times the conclusion is false. The hundredth time, I am right.”⁹

2. Illumination

As you begin to tap into the enormous power of creative imagination, you are drawn toward a compelling opportunity. You begin to write the vision. As you write the vision, you sense that you are beginning to crystallize your thoughts about how you might accomplish this feat. You move from imagination to **illumination**.

3. Destination

The vision helps you determine the goals and action steps you need to take to move the invisible creation into the visible realm. A critical step in shaping the unseen, illumination involves generative thinking and strategic planning. The writing of goals and action plans enables you to see clearly where you are going, how you will get there, and how you will know you have arrived. Illumination leads to **destination**.

Once you have developed a strategic plan in the invisible dimension, you have charted your destination. As you move from the unseen to the seen, destination gives you focus and empowers you to push forward.

4. Determination

At this stage you may have compiled a “to create” list and charted your plan of action. You sense that you are involved in an important process, a process that will help to create something worthwhile. You see that your goal is entirely within reach. This sense of intrinsic value coupled with attainability spurs a fighting **determination** to fulfill the dream or vision — to see the project to the end. As you begin the project, you move with determination and establish dominion over your vision.

5. Coordination

In the creative process, the visionary or innovator must understand the importance of coordination. Distractions, hindrances and obstacles clutter the path of an individual setting out to change his or her world. Often the greatest enemies are your own thoughts and feelings — especially when you experience resistance or when the going gets tough. It is at this point that you must underscore your fighting determination — using the coordinated synergy and collective intelligence of a team to overcome these obstacles or distractions and prevent them from derailing your vision and strategic plan. Coordinated action enables the team to override setbacks, mistakes and thoughts of quitting. It means meeting such challenges with tenacity of purpose, while remaining flexible and open to adjustments or alternative methods of completing the plan. When you are able to do this, you move from **coordination** to culmination.

6. Culmination

Whether you are building a house, writing a book, completing a course or reconciling broken relationships, there is a sense of great joy as you approach the finish line. The closer you get to the completion of a big project or to the accomplishment of a worthwhile goal, the greater your sense of fulfillment. For many, the culmination of the project not only fills them with gratification but also with humility as they sense God's hand in this worthy endeavor.

It is at the point of culmination that you must take time to celebrate, thank and recognize the team members involved in the journey. The point of culmination also should be a point of beginning. This is no time to stifle the creative process! As you have worked toward your stated goal, you may have been inspired to pursue tangent goals; many times a good idea generates other good ideas. For example, as you seek to improve one company department,

you see how other departments can benefit from similar changes. Culmination points to a spirit of renewal and a commitment to continuous improvement. It confirms that you stayed the course and got the job done well.



MAKING IT PERSONAL: Doing Something about Paper Waste

One woman's example clearly demonstrates how change can have a rippling effect. Disturbed by the large quantity of paper thrown away daily at her office building, Clare remarked to various employees that the company should initiate a recycling program as a way to "save the trees." Clare was environmentally conscious but, as a staff member in a building with one hundred employees, did not feel she had the "clout" to change the status quo. Still, the waste of such enormous quantities of paper bothered her — so much so that she finally decided to come up with a plan. This involved calling a local recycling company to find out what would be involved in placing recycling bins at strategic areas within the office building.

Clare then enlisted the support of key office staff members around her and explained her ideas about a recycling program. She asked for a meeting with her leadership team and presented her plan, identifying the primary reasons for recycling wastepaper and offering ways to implement an effective recycling program. Upon review of her presentation, the leadership team agreed to the plan and gave approval for the entire division to begin recycling wastepaper in the building.

One inspired staff person challenged the status quo (*imagination*) and fulfilled her own dream to "save the trees" (*illumination*). In

charting a course (*destination*), she changed the world of one hundred individuals around her (*determination and coordination*) — uniting them and enlarging their vision of how to help the environment (*culmination*).

Examining the Elements of Change: The Inner Circle

From the change concepts located on the outer circle of the change model (Fig. 1.2), we now move to the six circles inside. These change elements represent the objective strategy to bringing about change, as well as an effective, realistic approach to managing change:

- Deciding to Change Your World
- Determining the Leadership Strategies
- Collaborating with the Team
- Conceptualizing the Vision
- Developing the Plan
- Implementing, Monitoring and Assessing the Results

Each element is related to and interfaces with the other elements. Together with the six **change concepts**, these **change elements** comprise an effective, realistic approach to leading change in your world.

1. Deciding to Change Your World

It might seem daunting to learn that only a small percentage of the population can be classified as world changers. Sadly, most of us are life takers. Many drift along taking what life throws at them. Many fail to take responsibility for their own lives and live without purpose

or direction. The prevalent societal philosophy seems to endorse this lifestyle, assuring us that we are not responsible for our actions, attitudes and circumstances. Instead, we are pacified into believing that we are just products or victims of our circumstances. Our “appropriate” response then is a sense of betrayal and injustice.



MAKING IT PERSONAL: A Different Perspective

Randy didn't buy into that kind of thinking. Raised in a poor African-American community of the inner city, he refused to believe in everyone's assessment that he was worthless. Looking around at his surroundings, he decided to change his world. He did that by making the decision to attend a local community church. Even as a teenager

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just that — a decision.*

actively involved in the congregation, he began to impact the lives of many. He later became a respected and influential leader in the community. Randy didn't leave the inner city. He served on the city council, led a drug awareness campaign, and literally saved many youngsters

from a life of crime. By staying, Randy became an instrument of change in his world.

The decision to change your world begins with just that — a decision. Many times the difference between the haves and have-nots, the leaders and the followers, the world changers and the life-takers is simply the willingness to make a decision and take the first

step. We will examine the process of decision making more closely in chapter 2.

The decision to change your world doesn't have to be focused on something "world-sized." It can involve something as simple as making a lifestyle change, incorporating more discipline or exercise into your daily routine, taking a course to improve your job skills, or reaching out to the community through volunteer work. All of us have areas that need improvement and all of us can benefit from change.

2. Determining the Leadership Strategies

Even the best strategic plan will accomplish nothing if it lies dormant. A plan is only effective if someone — like a Clare or a Randy or an Andrea — takes a leadership role, ensuring that the plan becomes a project. In chapter 3, we will compare and contrast some leadership models. Of the many good leadership models developed over the years, all require the leader to be involved in implementing the plan. Whether a coalition needs to be built, an agency contacted, a proposal written or a plan developed, passionate leadership propels the project and inspires those who are involved in the project.

3. Collaborating with the Team

In sports, the idea of teamwork is critical. Teams that stress the contribution of every team member rather than the importance of one superstar are usually the most successful. The same is true in other realms: personal, family, church, political, voluntary or public service, small business or the corporate world. Getting the right people involved in a strategic plan, creating a shared vision, focusing their energy and talent, and holding them accountable to the vision are the most effective ways to implement change. We will study techniques for developing an effective team in chapter 4.

4. Conceptualizing the Shared Vision

Once you make a decision to change, you must formulate a vision for the change area. This is the time for some creative, visionary thinking. Some people call this “blue sky” thinking because the sky is the limit when it comes to a vision. Visionary thinking encompasses such ideas as health, happiness, opportunity and peace for everyone. A vision may be as large as beginning a company and developing it into a multibillion-dollar international corporation. It may be as small as building a better mousetrap. It may be as universal as writing a book, or as personal as obtaining a college degree. Regardless of the perspective, the key is to conceptualize the vision and allow it to crystallize in your mind. Without a vision, any plan of changing the world cannot succeed. Developing a vision is the subject of chapter 5.

5. Developing the Plan

Having crystallized your shared vision, you must create a strategic plan. Creating a plan involves these key steps:

- Identifying a critical need or compelling opportunity
- Making a decision to initiate a change
- Creating a personal mission statement
- Identifying core values
- Setting goals for the area of change
- Writing action steps to accomplish the goals

We will discuss these key steps in depth in chapter 6.

The importance of a strategic plan cannot be overemphasized. The difference between world changers and life-takers is that life-takers seldom create a plan. This is true in the corporate world as well.

Organizations that have a strategic plan for mapping future goals and endeavors are purpose-driven organizations. They succeed because their strategic plans involve shared vision, creative thinking and collective analysis. In fact, by taking the time to prepare a strategic plan, these companies take aggressive steps to steer and control their futures, rather than be vulnerable to unanticipated future events. The same applies for individuals.

6. Implementing, Monitoring and Assessing the Results

After the plan is implemented, the next step is to develop ways to assess the goals. Setting goals is important, but the goals must be monitored and measured for desired results, giving evidence of the impact of change.

*Holding yourself
accountable is the key
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It is in this area that most people fail. Holding yourself accountable is the key to successful change. For example, personal goals to change spending patterns as they relate to the family budget are all well and good. But if the goals are ignored, change will not occur. As simple as it sounds, this is the difference between success and failure. It doesn't matter how many lofty goals a corporation or individual sets if there is no way to measure their effectiveness. All goals must be assessed periodically. The primary purpose of assessment is not only to look at how goals are achieved, but also to allow room for the reevaluation or redesign of goals. Based on what the assessment reveals, adjustments and changes should be built into the strategic plan. You will learn ways to monitor and assess your goals in chapter 7.

Processing Change

In writing of planned change, Gregory Moorhead and Ricky Griffin inform us, “Organizational development is the process of planned change and improvement of the organization through application of knowledge of the behavioral sciences.”¹⁰ Industrial psychologists confirm that the process of planned change and improvement in organizations also applies to self-directed growth and development.

Intrapersonal and Interpersonal — How They Relate

The process of change first begins with *intrapersonal* (i.e., personal or professional) goals. Every capable individual should be responsible for regularly initiating personal or professional change. As individuals manage change in their own lives, they are preparing themselves and serving as models for change in various *interpersonal* and organizational spheres of influence. People who effectively manage themselves are in a better position to lead others.

George Bernard Shaw wrote, “I rejoice in life for its own sake . . . Life is no brief candle to me. It’s a sort of splendid torch which I’ve got hold of for the moment, and I want to make it burn as brightly as possible before handing it on to the future generations.”¹¹

Change starts with an individual and spreads throughout the culture of a group or organization. As one enduring proverb puts it, “*Any enterprise is built by wise planning, becomes strong through common sense, and profits wonderfully by staying abreast of the facts*” (Proverbs 24:3-4 LB).

Becoming a World Changer

Earlier, we defined the purpose of this book as offering a model to help you lead productive change. As subsequent chapters follow the pattern of this model (Fig. 1.2), it is our hope that you will find information and inspiration that will enable you to translate effective change in your personal life to the lives of others — enabling you to become an “agent of change” in your world.

As individuals lead change, they are preparing themselves to serve as models.

Take a moment to reflect and really think about the people and organizations in your world. Focus on three great pains in the world:

- the pain of disconnection
- the pain of apathy
- the pain of regret

We encourage you to invest in the self-discipline and change actions that will enable you to lead others out of the pain of disconnection, apathy and regret.

Becoming a world changer will require dedication to a plan. If you follow each part of the model and complete each section, you will discover that the emerging truths reflect the purposeful plan that was there all along. The important question is, “Are you ready to change?” Are you ready to impact the lives of those around you, your church, company or organization? If so, begin leading change in your world!

Endnotes

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