



Stanford eCorner

Change-making is Key to Future Success

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October 30, 2013

Video URL: <http://ecorner.stanford.edu/videos/3215/Change-making-is-Key-to-Future-Success>

Ashoka Founder and CEO Bill Drayton discusses how the ability to be an effective changemaker will be absolutely necessary to succeed in the future of open, fluid teams and historic levels of change.



Transcript

All through pre-history and up to very recently the game was efficiency and repetition. That's what human organizations were designed to do. And we learned how to have efficiency at bigger and bigger scale and gained tremendous wealth out of that. So think the assembly line or the law firm. How are these organizations characterized? You've got a few people who choreograph everyone else and what you want is everyone else to have a specialty that they're really good at and they practice and do a lot and you want them to stay within those walls. And A fits B because they keep doing the same thing. We've built up very complicated structures with finer and finer stovepipes, universities are not exactly immune to this problem. Well, this doesn't work very well as you go up that curve of exponential change what is the environment like now. Well each piece changes and bumps everyone else. So you have to constantly change who you're working with if you're going to do a good job now serving in this new environment.

So instead of stable but walled institutions now you have to have a fluid no walls because you have to constantly be putting together new combinations that people and the sources from all over the world to be able to do a good job of serving the opportunity that's there today but will be different tomorrow. So you can't have walls. So fluid, open is obvious, you have to get the best ideas anywhere in the world, the best inputs, the best relationships, the best access so open. So fluid open teams of teams. Now the word team is very precise. You don't have a team if one person is telling everyone else what to do. In a team everyone is a player. And in a world, where everything is changing and the game is contributing to change, and contributing to the constant rearrangement that is associated with that, you better be a change maker because people can't afford to have you on their team if you aren't. And this is very stark and it's happening very quickly. One of the things that happens when you go up an exponential curve, what took 50 years, now is taking 10 years.

So Detroit in this country was the top of our technology, pride, not to mention hubris, the big tailfins, the whole thing. 50 years ago, and you know where it is today, they missed out. They missed entirely. Well that could happen to the country or it could happen to any metro area or to any ethnic group or any other group. If anyone misses this historic turn, they don't have a lot of time to miss it. So everyone has to be a change maker. This is Ashoka's goal now. An everyone a change maker world, helping people see it, helping everyone get there. This phrase is very radical. We mean everyone everyone, no mental reservations, though not including all those people, they can't do this.

They can. If we structure society so that they can. And a change maker, that's the most powerful thing you can be. So everyone really powerful. Everyone having the gift that everyone in this room has of being able to give at a significant level to express love and respect and significant action. That is what brings everyone all the prophets inside us tell us this health longevity, happiness. Well, we have that. It's not right that other people don't have it. So we're saying everyone has to master a set of skills so that they are change makers, so they can really contribute in playing this game. And you have to organize in

ways that make that work.

So what is the standard of success in this new world for any group or any team of teams? What proportion of your people are change makers, at what level of skill of change making and how good a job are you city, country, whatever it is doing in helping people work together in this fluid open way. We're living right here in this valley at an epicenter and you can see how quickly things are moving in that direction. Well, it's going to be much faster. Once people see this, then it's going to be really quick. And so there is huge leverage in helping people over the awareness tipping process and we think we're very, very close. So that's a quick summary of this change in the strategic environment.