

Leadership and the Ripple Effect

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Do you think you can be the one person to change our neighborhood, city, or state? Are you the one person that can forge through others to stand out alone on issues that later transform our families or societies? Can you make a difference for the people you are around every day? Are you an agent of change? Have you ever tried anything new or do you depend on the ingenuity of others for things to change? Is it easier to sit back and say, "Well, this is how we have always done it" or "I really don't know how to do this." Are you part of the an apathetic group that chooses to see life as it is or are you the person that sees life as the possibilities of what you can attain? Are you living in the present, understanding the changes in society and workforce, moving forward in a positive direction, befriending everyone you can, leading others along the way, and become someone who doesn't mind being different, but demands to be righteous and forth coming in service?

Well let's look at what masking tape, Barbie Dolls, coat hangers, sewing machines, Lifesavers candy, safety pins and White Out has in common with those questions?

In 1923, Richard Drew joined the 3M Company located in St. Paul, Minnesota. At the time, 3M only made sandpaper. Drew was product testing 3M's Wetordry brand sandpaper at a local auto body shop, when he noticed that auto painters were having a hard time making clean dividing lines on two-color paint jobs. Richard Drew was inspired to invent the world's first masking tape in 1925, as a solution to the auto painters' dilemma.

The Barbie doll was invented in 1959 by Ruth Handler (co-founder of Mattel), whose own daughter was called Barbara. Barbie was introduced to the world at the American Toy Fair in New York City. The doll was intended to be a teenage fashion doll. The Ken doll was named after Ruth's son.

Albert J. Parkhouse, an employee of Timberlake Wire and Novelty Company in Jackson, Michigan, created a coat hanger in 1903, in response to co-workers' complaints of too few coat hooks. He bent a piece of wire into two ovals with the ends twisted together to form a hook. Parkhouse patented his invention but it is not known if he profited from it.

The safety pin was the invention of Walter Hunt. Hunt was a mechanic from New York, whose other inventions include a successful flax spinner, knife sharpener, streetcar bell, hard-coal-burning stove, artificial stone, road sweeping machinery, velocipedes, ice ploughs and mail making machinery. In

1834, Walter Hunt built America's first sewing machine, which was also the first eye pointed needle sewing machine.

In 1912, chocolate manufacturer Clarence Crane invented Life Savers as a "summer candy" that could withstand heat better than chocolate. Since the mints looked like miniature life preservers, he called them Life Savers. After registering the trademark, Crane sold the rights to the peppermint candy to Edward Noble for \$2,900. Noble created tin-foil wrappers to keep the mints fresh, instead of cardboard rolls. Pep-O-Mint was the first Life Saver flavor.

It was originally called "mistake out" and was the invention of Bette Nesmith Graham, a secretary in Dallas and a single mother raising a son, Michael. Bette Nesmith Graham was an artist and use to handling paints and inks. She used her own kitchen blender to mix up her first batch of liquid paper, the substance used to cover up mistakes made on paper. Bette Nesmith Graham never intended to be an inventor; she wanted to be an artist. However, shortly after World War II ended, she found herself divorced with a small child to support. She learned shorthand and typing and got a job as an executive secretary. An efficient employee who took pride in her work, Graham sought a better way to correct typing errors. She remembered that artists painted over their mistakes on canvas, so why couldn't typists paint over their mistakes?

Stephen Covey, an American speaker and author, said, *"I am personally convinced that one person can be a change catalyst, a 'transformer' in any situation, any organization. Such an individual is yeast that can leaven an entire loaf. It requires vision, initiative, patience, respect, persistence, courage, and faith to be a transforming leader."*

Have you ever been sitting by a peaceful, almost "still" lake or pond where there is absolutely no movement in the water? You can then take one pebble - not even 1/8th square inch - toss it in the water, and watch ripples flow from that center point where it entered the water. It is not 2 or 3 ripples but continues rippling out in circles causing what we say is a "ripple effect" outward for a distance.

It is hard to think one pebble can make that impact. It is hard to think "white out" would become an office necessity, that a safety pin would become something that is necessary at times. And who knew that a coat hanger would be the essential organizer of a closet today. Certainly not the people that took action years ago. It is even harder to think that one person can make a difference in the laws, finances, protocol and societal norms in which we all live and work. How can one person be the means or channel thru which our processes, services or operations are altered, transformed, revolutionized such that the result is a opportunity of growth, expansion, and thriving? How can you have the confidence and assurance you can make that difference? It is called the ripple effect. One

moving pebble in a still slice of water starts a ripple effect. One person who moves for change in an unmoving, status quo environment can start a movement that ripples thru others and thru time.

"I am personally convinced that one person can be a change catalyst, a 'transformer' in any situation, any organization." So it may be you! "Such an individual is yeast that can leaven an entire loaf."

Others will follow because we need new leaders that move us in the right direction! But how? *It requires vision, initiative, patience, respect, persistence, courage, and faith to be a transforming leader."*

1. Vision: ability to picture what is not yet there.
2. Initiative: stepping up to the plate even though your name has not been called.
3. Patience: the ability to wait for the right moment in time.
4. Respect: honor by others because of who you are and what you represent.
5. Persistence: to never, never quit.
6. Courage: power to move on in the face of fear.

Are you ready for a change? Are you a change agent for what you believe in?

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