

Internal Requirements for Change Agents

The True Purpose™ Institute

The “inner game” of becoming a powerful change agent is of paramount importance. In its ordinary configuration, the ego is not properly tuned and optimized to be able to stay on course in the face of limiting beliefs, resistance and fear. Most people’s self-image just doesn’t include the degree of power and impact that is necessary to manifest a global mission!

Even if one can accept the mantle of “change agent” and wield the necessary power cleanly, other inner obstacles remain. Without substantial internal transformation, it is nearly impossible to do anything other than reinforce the prevailing paradigm. Those who attempt to create a new world by judging and attacking the current structures and institutions of society simply polarize and solidify opposition to change.

In order to ensure that you are not unconsciously reinforcing the old system, you must actively develop and cultivate an internal stance that is consistent with the new reality you seek to create. You must be able to consciously see beyond and act outside of the current paradigm, without polarizing in reaction against it. This is easier said than done! Change agents who have not done sufficient internal work are likely to complain about the current system, try to dismantle it, or try to implement its opposite, none of which advances the cause.

All of the requirements described here are related to your internal state only. For an overview of external requirements, see the document “External Requirements for Change Agents”. The internal requirements are organized into two broad categories:

Structures are “configuration changes” that you must make in order to develop an ego capable of achieving global transformation. Some of these structures are internal (like alignment with your parts) and some are external (like a spiritual practice). All are personal to you and meant to develop and maintain your internal state.

Skills are things you must know how to do in order to be a successful change agent. Most must be learned and cultivated; few people develop them without deliberate, conscious effort. You will need to use these skills over and over again to maintain an internal state consistent with the new paradigm (and to regain the state when you have lost it). There are many external skills you will need to develop; here we are only listing the internal ones.

Structures

A Spiritual Practice

A daily spiritual practice is the most basic form of maintenance for a healthy ego. Meditation, prayer, chanting and active imagination all serve to cultivate a state of being capable of operating outside the old paradigm. Without consistent spiritual practice, your ego will gradually (or swiftly) shift to a state from which transforming the world is impossible.

Core Strengths

Effective leaders don't try to be someone else or even become well-rounded; instead, they know their strengths and focus on leading from those — which means that there are all sorts of different ways to lead. (Note: That doesn't mean you can just do anything and be effective; the key point is that your particular style emerges *from your strengths*.) Understanding your personal strengths of character, personality, talent and brain function will enable you to leverage fully your authentic talents as a change agent. It will also help you align powerfully with other change agents who have naturally complementary strengths to yours.

Core Values

When wielding great power, you must be guided by clear principles that ensure your actions are in alignment with your purpose. As Mahatma Gandhi said, "The means are the ends in the making"! *How* you go about creating transformation is every bit as important as the transformation itself. Moreover, the values you choose must be consistent with the world you are creating. This ensures that your actions will continually model and reinforce the new paradigm (assuming your behavior aligns with your values, of course!)

Core Beliefs

Most people are saddled with dozens of limiting beliefs that prevent them from taking powerful action. "I'm not capable of changing the world." "I'm just deluding myself." "People won't pay me to live my purpose." "Things never really change." Affirmations meant to override limiting beliefs just create internal conflict; you cannot remove a belief through an act of will. To make matters worse, beliefs are difficult to change because most of them are unconscious! Global change agents must replace these potent internal obstacles with beliefs that accelerate their transformation and the manifestation of their purpose.

Connection to a Trusted Source

Determining the best direction to take to manifest sweeping, global change is beyond the abilities of even the most agile mind. A connection to a source of wisdom and guidance beyond the bounds of the ego is necessary to learn one's higher purpose and choose the path of maximum impact. Without this guidance, your ego will naturally revert to its basic job: ensuring that your individual needs are being met. (However, it will probably find a way of meeting your needs that conveys the image of being an altruistic, enlightened change agent!)

Clarity of Purpose

A simple "purpose statement" may be enough for most people, but not for global change agents! Knowledge of the precise details of the impact you are designed to have is required. This includes your fundamental state of being (your "essence"), the specific transformation you are designed to create in others (your "blessing"), the wisdom that is uniquely yours to bring to humanity (your "message"), and the changes you are designed to create in the world (your "mission"). You must know all of these in detail! Attempting to "figure out" your purpose or inferring it from examining your life to date may result in a phrase or sentence that pleases your ego. But a simple, vague purpose statement is unworthy of the powerful being you are and the dramatic changes you have been designed and called to implement. A purpose statement simply doesn't give enough detail to guide you along the path of maximum impact.

A Vision of the Future

It is far easier to complain about the old paradigm than to create a new one. What currently exists has served to bring us to this point, and it must continue to operate until the new paradigm is sufficiently developed to perform all the necessary functions of society. Making current reality wrong hinders transformation. What is needed is a crystal clear, detailed picture of the transformed world you are working to create. If you succeeded at your mission, exactly what would the world be like? If you don't know, it will be difficult or impossible to achieve! Unfortunately, the ego has little natural ability to envision things outside of its current belief structure. Ego-based attempts at visioning often result in either minor modifications to the current paradigm or a vague picture of its opposite. The assistance of a trusted source is essential to be able to see clearly the synthesis of old and new that is genuinely required.

Alignment with your Parts

Each of us is composed of a multiplicity of “selves,” internal voices that make our decisions and have our feelings and thoughts. When facing important decisions, you can hear these parts “arguing” in your head. They rarely agree on anything, so most people move through life awash in resistance, self-doubt and self-sabotage. Achieving a state of complete internal alignment is so rare that when it first happens, people find it disorienting! Massive global transformation is only possible when your internal voices are united in vision and working together as a collaborative team. If you are not aligned internally around your purpose, you will have great difficulty aligning others.

A Fully Healed Core Wound

Many change agents are actually “wounded healers”, unconsciously acting externally to ease some internal pain. The more vehement and single-minded people are, the more likely they are acting in reaction to their “sacred wound” from childhood. These deep wounds are a necessary step in the development of a powerful, functional ego structure. But once the ego has developed fully, they become a liability, generating reactivity, projection and polarization. Much consciousness work makes the ego more functional without fully healing and integrating the core wound, so its influence becomes more subtle. People who feel fully “healed” usually haven’t completely redeemed their wound. Its continued influence gives their change efforts an edge of desperation and has them perceive those with differing views as “unenlightened” or the “enemy”. The wound can also generate resistance to moving forward powerfully with their mission.

Skills

Self-Awareness

The ability to observe oneself usually takes years to develop. Most change agents have spent considerable time and effort cultivating it! In studies, self-reflection and self-monitoring correlate well with success in business leaders. This skill is even more essential for change agents, who must continually assess whether their internal state and behavior align with their values and the world they are trying to create.

Ease with Uncertainty

When operating outside the current system, change agents often function without the support structures available to others. Change agents may need to modify these structures rather than rely on them. It can be like trying to

build a car at the same time as driving it. Also, the path to the new world is constantly evolving: new instructions from trusted sources, new purpose information, and new challenges and opportunities arise constantly. Dancing on these shifting sands requires ease and flow in the absence of clarity, certainty and structure. Many of the other internal requirements contribute to and support the ability to maintain this calm amidst chaos: spiritual practice, alignment with your parts, communication with your trusted source, self-awareness and the healing of your sacred wound.

Permission from the Ego

Fears come up frequently when you take on the task of transforming society; they are the natural self-defenses of a healthy ego. Spiritual practice may reduce the power of fears, but there is no substitute for working directly with them. Like everything inherent in the old paradigm, fears contain wisdom and gifts that are necessary to create the new. Ignoring or overriding them can lead to self-sabotage. Only when the ego perceives that its safety and self-interest are best served by manifesting your purpose are you free to have the impact you are meant to have. Absent the safety of this sense of “permission,” you may find it difficult or impossible to communicate with your trusted source and discern the fine details of all aspects of your purpose. Even armed with a detailed plan and great clarity of purpose, you may find yourself resistant to taking bold action. Once attained, this state of permission has a short half-life; as you up your game and move forward, new fears and resistance are inevitable. You must know how to regain permission when you have lost it, over and over again.

If you are like most change agents, you will see immediately that you are strong in some of these areas and weak in others. Congratulate yourself for the hard work you have done! Some of these requirements take years of effort to develop. Had you not spent years working on yourself, you would not be here, reading this. Developing yourself as a change agent is something that you have earned.

You may be unsure of the degree to which you meet some of these requirements, or uncertain about how to develop yourself in these ways. Your ability to change the world will be strictly limited so long as these issues remain unresolved! The outer game of being a change agent is completely dependent on the inner game. Mahatma Gandhi’s injunction to “be the change you want to see in the world” is a specific instruction, not a platitude.