

MY CHANGEMAKER

TOOLKIT

CREATING CHANGE ISN'T JUST THE WORK OF IDEALISTS OR PEOPLE STARTING COMPANIES. OUR TOWNS AND CITIES, SCHOOLS AND WORKPLACES COME ALIVE THANKS TO PEOPLE LIKE YOU. PEOPLE WHO CARE. PEOPLE WHO SEE PAST THE PROBLEMS TO THE SOLUTIONS. THE FIXERS. THE DOERS. THE SLIGHTLY RESTLESS. THE SOMEWHAT KOOKY.

Do you imagine making your block friendlier? Do you dream of building better parks and hospitals? Does your heart go out to the new kid in your class? Do you wonder why many things are poorly designed when small tweaks could make them so much better?



Sometimes when we spot a problem, we immediately think “someone else will fix that, it’s their job.” But actually it’s often up to you, to us, to step up with a repair – and, turns out, this is good news. It’s actually where the fun starts!

WHAT IS A CHANGEMAKER ANYWAY?



It's anyone – parent, student,
programmer, nurse, neighbor
– who steps up to solve a
problem for the good of all.

CHANGEMAKERS:

- 1 Spot problems, big and small
- 2 Imagine a new way forward
that benefits everyone
(not just a few)
- 3 Try out a solution
- 4 Inspire others
to own the solution
- 5 Help others thrive and
adapt in a changing world



If these are skills you have or want, you're
probably already on your changemaker path.
We've rounded up principles, new ways of
thinking, tips and tricks that will help you
on your onward journey.

You've probably experienced the power of being a changemaker in some way already. Think about yourself at age eight, age twelve, and further on, including your career choices (if you've gotten that far already). Return to the moments when you felt one or more of these things:

Hey, that seems really unfair, does it have to work that way?

Wow, this way of doing things seems wildly inefficient!

I'm grateful for the kindness I've been shown, but I don't always know how to pass it on.

Hmm. Why are some people benefitting a lot here, while others are suffering?

I feel powerless to help my mother, brother, friend, even that person I don't know.

SEE YOURSELF

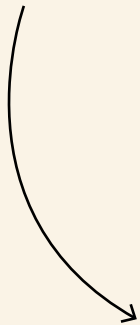
(AS A CHANGEMAKER)



How did you react when you felt these things? Did you take some kind of action? If you did, why and how did you act, and what happened as a result?

Or perhaps you felt stuck or unready and didn't respond in the way you hoped you might. Perhaps you thought: "what can I actually do to make things better?" or "where do I start?" These feelings are completely normal. Understanding them will help you grow.

GIVE YOURSELF PERMISSION



Getting unstuck is often a matter of taking one small step, then another, all the while practicing a new mindset of possibility, of “what if we do it this way?” The truth is that most of us wait for someone else to tell us what to do, to grant us permission to change things. You’ll discover that waiting for permission isn’t always helpful – for yourself or society. Try asking yourself instead:

Does this matter enough to spend time correcting it?

Why do I care about it?

Have I experienced the problem personally and do I know it as well or better than anyone else?

Do I have an inkling or an insight about what to do?

If I don’t step up, who will?

COMMIT TO YOUR IDEA

You may discover that you are the most qualified person to do something about the problem.

Then you face a choice!



“There’s a moment when you have to decide whether to be silent or stand up. At the moment of commitment, the universe conspires to assist you.”

—NOBEL PEACE LAUREATE MALALA YOUSAFAZAI

FIND YOUR PEOPLE

Making changes can feel lonely and isolating. Our advice: bring along friends, co-builders, fellow travelers from the very beginning. Look for collaborators – especially those who bring different perspectives and complementary skills. Align around big goals anchored by the values you share and the vision you want to realize. Soon, you’ll have something that begins to look like a team.

CREATE ROLES FOR OTHERS

Skillful changemakers invite others to help. Why? Because helping others see themselves as problem solvers is powerful - way more powerful than 'serving' people with 'your' idea. Finding out what really motivates people and how to unlock it involves time, mistakes, learning, practice. The good news is that this is often the most fulfilling part of the changemaker journey.



These principles will help your solution stick (because lots of people will care about it, not just you). Practice moving between them with intention:

ENVISION

See the solution and help others see it and get excited by it

ENABLE

Help others participate not as 'beneficiaries' but as drivers of the change

ENSURE

As you invite others to help, make sure that the solution stays on track and achieves the impact envisioned



“If you have come here to help me, then you are wasting your time... But if you have come because your liberation is bound up with mine, then let us work together.”

—LILLA WATSON, INDIGENOUS AUSTRALIAN ARTIST





“I’m talking about seeing beyond fear, Roger, about looking at the world with love.”

– FBI SPECIAL AGENT DALE COOPER,
TWIN PEAKS

We at Ashoka think of changemakers as society’s white blood cells: they sense areas of trouble and infection and come to the rescue. Another way we think about changemakers is that they put love and respect into action. They don’t prey on fear or use it to drive action. They do the opposite and there’s real power in that.



PUT LOVE AND RESPECT INTO ACTION

UNLOCK THE GIFT OF GIVING



One of the oldest words in any human language means ‘to give.’ Think of that. It’s in our nature to be generous and empathetic. Changemaking works with the natural flow, not against it: the act of giving is a deeply human act, stretching back to the very beginning.

SHARE YOUR STORY FREELY



Bringing others along to see and believe in a new way is not easy. (This is why brands invest millions just to get people to try a new product.)

Trust is your main currency. Inspiring it means standing right in your own experience, your own commitment, your own story, and sharing it openly and freely.

People may find that story magnetic. They will come to you and ask you “how can I help?”

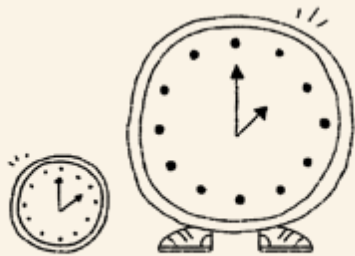
Your identity as a changemaker helps you frame your story. So embrace it!

SAY IT OUT LOUD, RIGHT NOW!

**“I AM A
CHANGE-
MAKER!”**

GO AT YOUR OWN PACE

Time is both short and abundant



Day to day, we all experience constraints and demands pressing against us. Our time can feel pinched, especially at some moments - when our family needs us, when we're pushing through a challenging phase at school or work, when injury or illness requires us to rest.

Some weeks and years we can commit more time, some less. What matters is contributing when we can, even in small ways. Imagine what we could achieve together with only a tiny fraction of the time, ideas and life force of every person on the planet?

8,760

hours per year per human

5,840

waking hours per year per human
(assumes a good night's sleep!)

1,898,000,000,000

waking hours per year per
325 million humans in the U.S.

43,800,000,000,000

waking hours per year per
7.5 billion humans on the planet

**SEE
CHANGEMAKERS
EVERYWHERE
AND HELP OTHERS
SEE THEM TOO!**

Our world is changing in profound ways. Think of the last fifteen years alone: technological innovation has put the ability to contribute, connect, and lead into the hands of the largest number of people in human history.

The truth is that we don't know which problems will appear tomorrow, but we do know that they will be increasingly complex and interconnected. That's why more than ever we need people to jump in, work together, and solve problems in imaginative ways.

An 'everyone a changemaker' world is a world where each of us has the confidence and support to make changes. It is more resilient and inclusive because each person owns the future and helps to shape it.

Look around you. Do you see a changemaker you'd like to encourage, celebrate, or thank? Share this toolkit with her. And share her story with us!

#changemakerseverywhere

Finally, ask yourself...

what role will I play?



ASHOKA

The home of changemakers

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