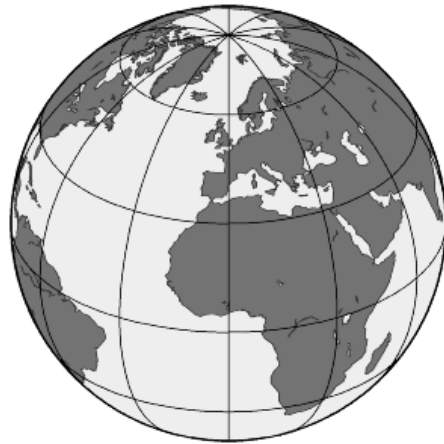


Ciaran McHale

A self-teachable training course to help
you bring about significant change

Skills You Need to Change the World



Slides Manual (formatted 2-up for US Letter paper)

CiaranMcHale.com — *Complexity explained simply*

Copyright

Copyright © 2009 Ciaran McHale.

Permission is hereby granted, free of charge, to any person obtaining a copy of this training course and associated documentation files (the “Training Course”), to deal in the Training Course without restriction, including without limitation the rights to use, copy, modify, merge, publish, distribute, sublicense, and/or sell copies of the Training Course, and to permit persons to whom the Training Course is furnished to do so, subject to the following conditions:

- The above copyright notice and this permission notice shall be included in all copies or substantial portions of the Training Course.
- THE TRAINING COURSE IS PROVIDED “AS IS”, WITHOUT WARRANTY OF ANY KIND, EXPRESS OR IMPLIED, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO THE WARRANTIES OF MERCHANTABILITY, FITNESS FOR A PARTICULAR PURPOSE AND NONINFRINGEMENT. IN NO EVENT SHALL THE AUTHORS OR COPYRIGHT HOLDERS BE LIABLE FOR ANY CLAIM, DAMAGES OR OTHER LIABILITY, WHETHER IN AN ACTION OF CONTRACT, TORT OR OTHERWISE, ARISING FROM, OUT OF OR IN CONNECTION WITH THE TRAINING COURSE OR THE USE OR OTHER DEALINGS IN THE TRAINING COURSE.

The globe logo is from www.mapAbility.com. Used with permission.

About the Author

Ciaran McHale holds a Ph.D. in Computer Science from Trinity College, Dublin, Ireland. Since 1995, he has been working in the computer software industry as a consultant, trainer and author of training courses. His primary talent is the ability to digest complex ideas and re-explain them in simpler ways. You can find some examples of his work at his website: www.CiaranMcHale.com. Ciaran lives in Reading, England with his wife, Bianca.

Disclaimer

Some parts of this training course uses first names such as Fred or Mary in examples. All such persons are fictitious. Any resemblance to real persons, living or dead is purely coincidental.

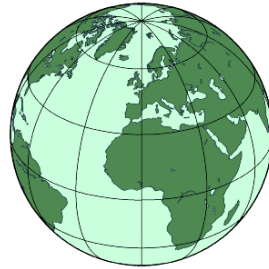
Last updated: August 18, 2009

Contents

1	Introduction	1
Part I: Almost Anybody Can Change the World		7
2	Two Kinds of Power	9
3	All Sorts of People Change the World	21
4	Motivation, Vocation and Disillusionment	27
Part II: Important Principles		37
5	The Status Quo is Flawed	39
6	Slack.	45
7	Utopias	53
8	Equations for Change	65
9	Clusters, Families and Partners	73
10	Social Entrepreneurs	81
11	Miscellaneous Principles	89
Part III: Lessons from Academia		97
12	The Innovator's Dilemma	99
13	The Luck Factor	111
14	Mindset	117
15	Flow	131
16	Obedience to Authority	137
17	Confirmation Bias	151
18	Cognitive Dissonance.	161
Part IV: Self Improvement		165
19	Turn a Weakness into a Strength	167
20	Constructive Debate	173
21	Lifelong Learning	177

Part V: Skills	185
22 Non-stereotypical Skills for Activism	187
23 Scalable Communication	193
24 Challenging Hidden Assumptions in Loaded Questions	199
25 The Importance of Non-core Skills	213
Part VI: Obstacles	219
26 Curse of the "Genius" Label	221
27 Criticism and Rejection	229
28 Timescales	237
Part VII: The Bell Curve of Intolerance	247
29 The Bell Curve of Intolerance	249
30 Bell Curve Insights into Satyagraha	259
31 The Bell Curve and the Domino Effect	267
32 Fighting the Domino Effect	281
33 Bell-curve Model's Insight into Crowd Psychology	291
34 Shifting the Bell Curve	295
Part VIII: Satyagraha	299
35 Principles of Satyagraha	301
36 Practical Aspects of Satyagraha	319
Part IX: Fighting Oppression	327
37 Segregation	329
38 Internalized Oppression	339
39 Other Tactics of Oppression	353
40 Lessons for Activists in "Black Like Me"	365
41 Risky Tactics	369
42 Underappreciated Tactics for Fighting Oppression	379

Introduction



CiaranMcHale.com
Complexity explained simply

1

License

Copyright © 2009 Ciaran McHale.

Permission is hereby granted, free of charge, to any person obtaining a copy of this training course and associated documentation files (the "Training Course"), to deal in the Training Course without restriction, including without limitation the rights to use, copy, modify, merge, publish, distribute, sublicense, and/or sell copies of the Training Course, and to permit persons to whom the Training Course is furnished to do so, subject to the following conditions:

The above copyright notice and this permission notice shall be included in all copies or substantial portions of the Training Course.

THE TRAINING COURSE IS PROVIDED "AS IS", WITHOUT WARRANTY OF ANY KIND, EXPRESS OR IMPLIED, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO THE WARRANTIES OF MERCHANTABILITY, FITNESS FOR A PARTICULAR PURPOSE AND NONINFRINGEMENT. IN NO EVENT SHALL THE AUTHORS OR COPYRIGHT HOLDERS BE LIABLE FOR ANY CLAIM, DAMAGES OR OTHER LIABILITY, WHETHER IN AN ACTION OF CONTRACT, TORT OR OTHERWISE, ARISING FROM, OUT OF OR IN CONNECTION WITH THE TRAINING COURSE OR THE USE OR OTHER DEALINGS IN THE TRAINING COURSE.

The globe logo is from www.mapAbility.com. Used with permission.

Purpose of this course

- Nelson Mandela changed the world:
 - He played a significant part in ending Apartheid in South Africa
- In his autobiography, Nelson Mandela writes:
 - “No one had ever suggested to me how to go about removing the evils of racial prejudice, and I had to learn by trial and error.”
— Chapter 10 of *Long Walk to Freedom*
- Most people who want to change the world face the same issue:
 - Many skills they need to do so are not taught in schools or universities
- This training course addresses this skills shortage:
 - Teaches some skills that can be learned quickly
 - Identifies other skills that require more effort to learn (you can study those skills outside of this course)

Intended audience

- This course is for people who want to change the world:
 - Or at least their part of the world (such as their country or neighbourhood, or an industry)
 - Such people self-identify with many different labels
 - Examples: activist, community leader, concerned citizen, entrepreneur, researcher, politician, ...
- You may find this course useful even if you do not want to change the world:
 - Many skills for changing the world are interesting
 - Some of the skills can increase chances of success in your career and personal relationships

What is missing from this course

- This course does *not* cover topics such as:
 - How to organize a protest march
 - How to write a funding proposal
- One reason for such omissions is that the details vary widely from one country to another
- Another reason is philosophical:
 - Before you learn to do something right, you should make sure you are doing the right thing. So...
 - This course focuses on *principles* (“the right thing to do”) rather than on *details* (“how to do something right”)

This training course is “free”

- This course is released under a “free” copyright license:
 - What some people call an “open source” copyright license
 - The terms “free” and “open source” come from the programming community
- What this means for you:
 - The training materials (in electronic form) are available free of charge
 - You have the freedom to:
 - Use, copy and modify the training materials
 - Teach the training course (free-of-charge or for profit)
 - Restrictions: don’t remove the copyright notice; don’t sue the author

Reasons for making this a free course

- Most people who try to change the world fail:
 - A major reason for this is that they lack many of the required skills
- The author of this course has an ambitious goal:
 - To help *millions* of people learn skills needed for changing the world
 - Doing this will help to accelerate (mostly beneficial) change in the world
- However, he cannot achieve this goal by himself:
 - He has incomplete knowledge of skills required to change the world (so there is lots of room for improvement in this course)
 - He has a limited amount of time to teach this course to others

Reasons for making this a free course (cont')

- Making this course free helps to overcome those obstacles
- You are free to modify the course:
 - For example:
 - Modify some chapters
 - Write new chapters
 - In this way, the course can grow and improve over time
- You are free to teach this course to others:
 - Free-of-charge or for profit
 - In this way, you (and many others like you) can help millions of people to learn the skills in this course

This course is “self-teachable”

- There is one more important aspect of this training course:
 - It is self-teachable
- You can read the slides yourself and understand them:
 - You do not need an instructor to teach the course to you
- However, a knowledgeable instructor *can* add value:
 - Facilitate classroom discussion of issues raised in the course
 - Tell anecdotes to illustrate points in the slides
- This “self-teachable” aspect of this course is important:
 - The author does not have to train instructors around the world
 - Instead, anyone can become an instructor for this course:
 - Read the slides to understand them
 - Then, ideally, read some books mentioned in the slides to flesh out your knowledge

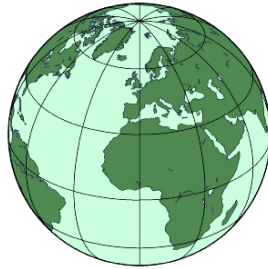
How to get a copy of this course

- You can obtain this training course from the author’s website:
 - www.CiaranMcHale.com
- You can download the following:
 - The slides
(in PowerPoint and PDF formats)
 - The “Slides Manual”
(PDF file with 2, 4, 6 or 8 slides per page)
 - The “Notes Manual” to complement the slides
(in LaTeX and PDF format)
- You can find a more detailed discussion of the topics in this chapter in Chapter 1 (“Introduction”) of the *Notes Manual*

Part I

Almost Anybody Can Change the World

Two Kinds of Power



CiaranMcHale.com
Complexity explained simply

1

License

Copyright © 2009 Ciaran McHale.

Permission is hereby granted, free of charge, to any person obtaining a copy of this training course and associated documentation files (the "Training Course"), to deal in the Training Course without restriction, including without limitation the rights to use, copy, modify, merge, publish, distribute, sublicense, and/or sell copies of the Training Course, and to permit persons to whom the Training Course is furnished to do so, subject to the following conditions:

The above copyright notice and this permission notice shall be included in all copies or substantial portions of the Training Course.

THE TRAINING COURSE IS PROVIDED "AS IS", WITHOUT WARRANTY OF ANY KIND, EXPRESS OR IMPLIED, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO THE WARRANTIES OF MERCHANTABILITY, FITNESS FOR A PARTICULAR PURPOSE AND NONINFRINGEMENT. IN NO EVENT SHALL THE AUTHORS OR COPYRIGHT HOLDERS BE LIABLE FOR ANY CLAIM, DAMAGES OR OTHER LIABILITY, WHETHER IN AN ACTION OF CONTRACT, TORT OR OTHERWISE, ARISING FROM, OUT OF OR IN CONNECTION WITH THE TRAINING COURSE OR THE USE OR OTHER DEALINGS IN THE TRAINING COURSE.

The globe logo is from www.mapAbility.com. Used with permission.

Introduction

- You need power to change the world:
 - But, not necessarily the kind of power that most people think you need
- This chapter discusses two different kinds of power:
 - And explains which one is more likely to help you change the world

1. Power over people

Power over people

- Most people think of *power* as being “power over people”:
 - The ability to get people to do what you want through money, authority, threats or force
- You might think
“I could significantly change the world if I were...”:
 - Very rich, for example, a billionaire
 - The president or prime minister of a country
 - The owner and manager of a large company
- Unfortunately:
 - You are unlikely to be any of those things
 - You are unlikely to be successful if you plead with such people
“I think you should use your money or power to ...”

Getting “power over people” is not a viable plan

- Your plan to change the world should *not* be:
 - First get lots of power over people
 - Then use that power to change the world
- Why? Because the first part of the plan is unlikely to succeed
- There is *another* kind of power that it much easier to obtain:
 - And that other kind of power has a proven track record for being able to change the world

2. Power to help people

7

Power to help people

- Recall:
 - Most people think of *power* as being “power **over** people”
 - The ability to get people to do what you want through money, authority, threats or force
- But *power* can also be “power **to help** people”:
 - Almost everybody has this kind of power
 - Most people do not use this kind of power as much as they could
- Before examining this kind of power, let’s look at examples of its use

Examples of power to help people

- Before there was a vaccine to prevent polio, Sister Kenny developed a cure, and spent decades curing millions
- Mother Theresa helped poor people around the world, most notably in Calcutta, India
- Gandhi opposed oppression in South Africa and India:
 - Eventually, he ended British rule of India
- Richard Stallman promoted the idea of free(dom) software:
 - His GPL copyright is the most popular software license in the world
- Alex Haley was an author struggling to make a living:
 - He wrote *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*
 - Then he wrote about his slave ancestry in the book *Roots*

Examples of power to help people (cont')

- John Howard Griffin was a white author in America:
 - In 1959, he darkened his skin so he appeared to be black
 - He lived as a black man for 4 weeks and then wrote of his experiences
 - In this way, he helped to expose the extent of racism in America
- Black-rights activists, like Martin Luther King and Malcolm X
- Mohammad Yunus was an economics professor:
 - He saw people in Bangladesh starving to death because of poverty
 - In 1977 he started with \$27, giving microcredit (small loans) to help people work their way out of poverty
 - His microcredit system has spread to over 50 countries
 - He and his Grameen Bank won the Nobel Peace Prize in 2006

A common theme

- You might be able to think of many more examples
- There is a common theme in the examples on the previous slides...
- When those people *started* helping others they:
 - Were *not* famous and did *not* have “power **over** people”
 - But they used “power **to help** people”
- Eventually, they became famous *because of* their work:
 - That is quite different to thinking that they were able to do the work because they were already famous
 - Becoming famous was *not* their motivation for wanting to help others:
 - Many faced hardship because of their desire to help others
 - Some faced death threats, and some were assassinated

Likelihood of success

- The examples show that “power to help people” *can* work:
 - But just because it *can* work, does not mean it is *likely* to work
 - Perhaps the examples are exceptions rather than the rule
- You probably know individuals who like to help others but:
 - Are not famous
 - Are not effective (they have an insignificant impact on the world)
- What can you do to make “power to help people” *effective*?

3. Making “power to help people” effective

13

Focus

- You should focus your work on just *one* issue
 - There are two reasons for this...
- It's better to make a large impact on one issue than smaller impacts on several issues
 - Better for the world, and better for your morale
- Many people prefer specialists over generalists:
 - Example:
 - A newspaper has printed lies that damage your reputation
 - You want to sue the newspaper for libel
 - Do you hire a lawyer who does many types of cases (divorce, accident compensation, making wills, contracts, copyright)?
 - Or do you hire a lawyer who specializes in libel?
 - People are more likely to help you if you specialize your efforts to change the world

Altruism

- *Altruism* is an unselfish concern for others
 - Often, acts of altruism are beneficial for others, but harmful to you
- Group altruism is rare but can be very effective. Examples:
 - Human rights activists tell oppressed people “You have to stand up to your oppressor. You might be killed or imprisoned but it will give freedom to future generations.”
 - Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Malcolm X succeeded with that tactic
 - When an earthquake or storm puts many people at risk, the populations of other countries often donate millions to provide aid
 - Tens of thousands of programmers around the world write free or open-source software
 - Tens of thousands of people contribute to Wikipedia (an online encyclopaedia)

Altruism (cont')

- A comparison:
 - Group altruism is rare but can be very effective
 - Individual altruism is more common, but less effective
- Often, a person who changes the world does so by creating group altruism:
 - This magnifies the effect that the person has
 - One person’s “power to help people” becomes a large group’s “power to help people”
- People are more likely to follow your altruistic lead if:
 - They see you are dedicated to the issue (hence the need to focus)
 - You are willing to suffer as much as them in being altruistic

Example: Richard Stallman

- In the first few decades of computers, hardware was sold, but:
 - Software was often distributed free of charge
 - In both binary (ready-to-run) and source code (recipe) formats
- Some users modified source code to fix bugs or add new capabilities
- One day, Richard Stallman:
 - Found a bug in some software to control a printer
 - He asked for the source code so he could fix the bug
 - The manufacturer refused to give him the source code
- Richard thought this was unacceptable and, in fact, immoral:
 - Soon, he started noticing other similar cases of users being denied what he felt was a legitimate right to access source code

Example: Richard Stallman (cont')

- The move to proprietary software accelerated
- Richard did not have power **over** people:
 - He could not force companies to provide source code of applications
- But he eventually realized he had power **to help** people:
 - "I asked myself: what could I, an operating-system developer, do to improve the situation? It wasn't until I examined the question for a while that I realized that an operating-system developer was exactly what was needed to solve the problem."
- Richard decided he would write an entire operating system:
 - He called it GNU (a recursive pun for "GNU is not UNIX")
 - Make all of it non-proprietary, provide everyone with source code
 - He was willing to dedicate his entire life to this (focus)

Example: Richard Stallman (cont')

- Richard publicly asked others to join him:
 - His request was initially met with optimism but disbelief
 - “The community reaction was pretty much uniform. People said, ‘Oh, that’s a great idea. Show us your code. Show us it can be done.’”
— Rich Morin
- 18 months later he released the first piece of software:
 - This was GNU Emacs (a powerful text editor):
 - People could see he was dedicated, and acting altruistically
 - Offers to help him increased greatly

Example: Bob Geldof

- Bob Geldof enjoyed success with The Boomtown Rats
 - But by 1984, they were no longer popular
- In late 1984, Bob Geldof saw a news report about famine:
 - “What could I do? I could send some money. [...] But that didn’t seem enough. [...] What else could I do? I was only a pop singer. And by now not a very successful pop singer. [...] All I could do was make records that no one bought.”
- He decided to make a record and donate the profits to charity:
 - The record would not sell well if it was recorded by The Boomtown Rats
 - So he asked other, more popular singers, to join him
 - He was surprised that so many agreed so readily
 - Chapter 13 (“Driven to Tears”) of his autobiography discusses how many others also agreed to give time, forego profits and incurred great personal expense to help with this charity work

4. Summary

21

Summary

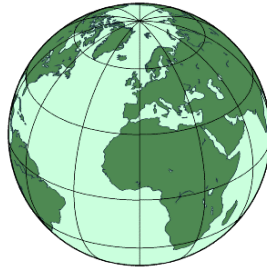
- “Power **over** people” can be used to change the world
 - But you probably won’t become powerful enough
- Better to use “power **to help** people”:
 - Almost everybody has this power, but most don’t use it much
 - There are some famous examples of this type of power being used effectively
- Suggestions for making “power to help people” effective:
 - Focus on one issue rather than spread your energy on many issues
 - Find ways to make a large group of people act in an altruistic way
- Many chapters in this training course discuss related skills and insights that will help you

Relevant quotes

- Napoleon Bonaparte (1769–1821), French general, emperor
 - “Ten persons who speak make more noise than ten thousand who are silent.”

- Margaret Mead (1901–1978), American cultural anthropologist
 - “Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. In fact, it’s the only thing that ever has.”

All Sorts of People Change the World



CiaranMcHale.com
Complexity explained simply

1

License

Copyright © 2009 Ciaran McHale.

Permission is hereby granted, free of charge, to any person obtaining a copy of this training course and associated documentation files (the "Training Course"), to deal in the Training Course without restriction, including without limitation the rights to use, copy, modify, merge, publish, distribute, sublicense, and/or sell copies of the Training Course, and to permit persons to whom the Training Course is furnished to do so, subject to the following conditions:

The above copyright notice and this permission notice shall be included in all copies or substantial portions of the Training Course.

THE TRAINING COURSE IS PROVIDED "AS IS", WITHOUT WARRANTY OF ANY KIND, EXPRESS OR IMPLIED, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO THE WARRANTIES OF MERCHANTABILITY, FITNESS FOR A PARTICULAR PURPOSE AND NONINFRINGEMENT. IN NO EVENT SHALL THE AUTHORS OR COPYRIGHT HOLDERS BE LIABLE FOR ANY CLAIM, DAMAGES OR OTHER LIABILITY, WHETHER IN AN ACTION OF CONTRACT, TORT OR OTHERWISE, ARISING FROM, OUT OF OR IN CONNECTION WITH THE TRAINING COURSE OR THE USE OR OTHER DEALINGS IN THE TRAINING COURSE.

The globe logo is from www.mapAbility.com. Used with permission.

All Sorts of People Change the World

2

All sorts of people change the world

- Many people think they cannot change the world because they:
 - Are not rich enough
 - Are not educated enough
 - Have a criminal record
 - Belong to a minority religion, skin colour or sexuality
 - Are female
 - Lack self-confidence
 - Have a disability
 - Are children

- This short chapter shows that people who have changed the world come from all sorts of backgrounds

Education

- Examples at one extreme:
 - Edward de Bono has 5 university degrees
 - Martin Luther King Jr. had a Ph.D.
 - Gandhi had a university degree in Law
 - Richard Stallman was a child prodigy

- Examples at the other extreme:
 - Jamie Oliver is dyslexic and was in the “special needs” class at school
 - Bob Geldof failed *all* his exams in his final year at school
 - Malcolm X dropped out of high school

Wealth

- People from rich backgrounds:
 - Florence Nightingale
 - Comtesse de Ségur was the daughter of a politician
- People from middleclass backgrounds:
 - Martin Luther King Jr.
 - Gandhi
- People from poor backgrounds:
 - Malcolm X
 - Bob Geldof came from a working-class background. He had a succession of menial jobs and lived in squats

Criminal activity

- Malcolm X committed many crimes:
 - Burglary
 - Selling drugs (he was also addicted to drugs)
 - Prostitution (he safely escorted white customers into a black ghetto to visit black prostitutes)
- For several years, Bob Geldof was an illegal immigrant in Canada
- As a teenager, Bruce Lee founded his own street gang and often got into trouble with the police for fighting

Women

Examples of famous women who changed the world...

- Anita Roddick (founder of The Body Shop)
- Gloria Steinem (and many other feminists)
- Florence Nightingale (significant contributions to healthcare)
- Comtesse de Ségur (put feminism and educational values into children's stories)

Lack of self-confidence

- Gandhi had a fear of public speaking:
 - This fear caused him to be unable to defend his clients in court
 - He overcame this fear only when he emigrated to South Africa
- Richard Stallman was a social misfit:
 - He was academically brilliant but had very poor social skills

People with disabilities

Many people with disabilities have changed the world...

- Winston Churchill suffered from depression
- Jamie Oliver is dyslexic
- Richard Stallman says he might have autism
- Cyril Arthur Pearson was blind:
 - He set up a hostel to teach soldiers blinded in the First World War how to cope with living blind, and skills for new careers

Children

In 1996, Jason Summey was a 13-year old student in America

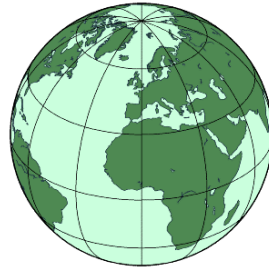
- His school had the highest dropout rate in the area:
 - Students who dropped out had a high chance of being poor or criminals
- He gave a speech at his middle school graduation:
 - He challenged his classmates to be the first year in the school's history to all graduate from high school
 - He started a "Be Cool... Stay In School" project
- Results:
 - The dropout rate dropped dramatically
 - He talked a student out of committing suicide
 - He appeared on TV shows and in newspapers
 - His book ("Be Cool... Stay In School") has a forward by President George Bush

Summary

- People who change the world have varied backgrounds
 - Rich or poor, male or female, highly educated or uneducated
 - Some lacked self-confidence
 - Some had disabilities
 - Some were children
 - Some were criminals
 - Some belonged to a minority religion, skin colour or sexuality

- It does not matter what your background is:
 - It *is* possible for you to change the world
 - The information in this training course can help you

Motivation, Vocation and Disillusionment



CiaranMcHale.com
Complexity explained simply

1

License

Copyright © 2009 Ciaran McHale.

Permission is hereby granted, free of charge, to any person obtaining a copy of this training course and associated documentation files (the "Training Course"), to deal in the Training Course without restriction, including without limitation the rights to use, copy, modify, merge, publish, distribute, sublicense, and/or sell copies of the Training Course, and to permit persons to whom the Training Course is furnished to do so, subject to the following conditions:

The above copyright notice and this permission notice shall be included in all copies or substantial portions of the Training Course.

THE TRAINING COURSE IS PROVIDED "AS IS", WITHOUT WARRANTY OF ANY KIND, EXPRESS OR IMPLIED, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO THE WARRANTIES OF MERCHANTABILITY, FITNESS FOR A PARTICULAR PURPOSE AND NONINFRINGEMENT. IN NO EVENT SHALL THE AUTHORS OR COPYRIGHT HOLDERS BE LIABLE FOR ANY CLAIM, DAMAGES OR OTHER LIABILITY, WHETHER IN AN ACTION OF CONTRACT, TORT OR OTHERWISE, ARISING FROM, OUT OF OR IN CONNECTION WITH THE TRAINING COURSE OR THE USE OR OTHER DEALINGS IN THE TRAINING COURSE.

The globe logo is from www.mapAbility.com. Used with permission.

1. Motivation without a vocation

3

Motivation without purpose has limited use

- Lots of books and speakers are inspirational
 - They leave you feeling motivated to do something
- Unfortunately, the motivation usually wears off after a few weeks
 - This is probably because you don't have a "vocation" (something deeply meaningful to you that you want to work on)
 - Motivation combined *with* a vocation can produce great results
 - Motivation *without* a vocation usually fades quickly
- Advice:
 - This training course may provide you with motivation
 - If you haven't yet found your vocation then reread this training course when you *have* found it

2. Finding your vocation

5

Many people have not found a vocation

- Many people think “I don’t know what I want to do with my life”
 - They may have a vague goal, but they don’t know how they should achieve it
- Examples:
 - Broad goal: “I want to work in computer software”
 - Possibilities: programmer, tester, manager, technical support, sales, marketing, ...
 - Broad goal: “I want to end social injustice”
 - Possibilities: Become a lawyer? Join Amnesty International? Organize protest marches? Fundraising? Lobby politicians? Plot a revolution to overthrow a dictator?...

How to find your vocation

- Some people passively wait for inspiration to strike them
 - This strategy is rarely productive
- A better approach is to work at (or study) *something*:
 - Preferably something that seems at least partially right for you
 - Keep analysing your area of work to determine its mismatch for you
 - This will help you to refine your ideas about what your vocation should be

Example: Martin Luther King Jr.

- The following example is taken from *The Autobiography of Martin Luther King Jr.*, chapters 2–4
- Chapter 2 concerns his time in university:
 - “I always had a deep urge to serve humanity, but I didn’t start out with an interest to enter the ministry. I thought I could probably do it better as a lawyer or doctor.”
 - So, he had a broad goal (“serve humanity”) but did not know how to achieve it
 - His first inspiration for how to achieve that goal came from reading *On Civil Disobedience* by American philosopher Henry David Thoreau
 - “I was do deeply moved that I reread the work several times”

Example: Martin Luther King Jr. (cont')

- Chapter 3 concerns his time studying in a seminary:
 - He began “a serious intellectual quest for a method to eliminate social evil”
 - He read many philosophies, theologies and political idealisms:
 - Plato, Aristotle, Rousseau, Hobbes, Bentham, Mill, Locke, Walter Rauschenbusch, Karl Marx, Lenin, Nietzsche, Reinhold Niebuhr
 - He found flaws with most of them, but also some good insights
- Still, he had not found a tactic for achieving his goal that was compatible with his ethics:
 - “During this period [...] I thought the only way we could solve our problem of segregation was an armed revolt.”

Example: Martin Luther King Jr. (cont')

- Then he heard a sermon about Gandhi:
 - “His message was so profound and electrifying that I left the meeting and bought a half-dozen books on Gandhi’s life and works”
 - In reading about Gandhi, he “discovered the method for social reform that I had been seeking”
- Chapter 4 concerns his post-graduate study for a Ph.D.:
 - He continued studying philosophies, including Personalism and Hegel
 - This continued study helped him to refine his tactics for achieving his goal
 - By the time he finished his Ph.D., he had “an intellectual understanding” of non-violent resistance, but “no firm determination to organize it in a socially effective situation”
 - It was another 18 months before he found an opportunity to start using the tactic of non-violent resistance

Analysis

- It took Martin Luther King Jr. more than 10 years to find and start using a tactic to achieve his goal
- He was *proactively searching* for a tactic during that time
- If he had waited passively for inspiration to strike him then:
 - He may not have found any tactic at all
 - Or perhaps he would have used a different tactic, such as armed revolt (which is unlikely to have been as successful)
- Waiting passively for inspiration is rarely productive:
 - Inspiration does not appear in a vacuum
 - Instead, you need input to feed inspiration
 - You can get that input from work (or study) plus analysis

3. Becoming disillusioned with a vocation

The pain of insults and having to leave a job

- The hurt of being insulted varies:
 - It hurts *a little* if the insult comes from a stranger or slight acquaintance
 - It hurts *a lot* if the insult comes from a friend or family member
- Likewise, how much it hurts to have to leave a job varies:
 - If it is “just” a job (and you can get another easily) then it hurts *a little*
 - If it is a “dream” job then it hurts *a lot*
 - If you considered the job to be your vocation then it can be *agony*

The pain of dysfunctional organizations

- Many people consider their career to be a vocation:
 - Examples: doctors, nurses, teachers, lawyers, ...
- Vocational careers are not guaranteed to be free from dysfunctional working environments:
 - A dysfunctional working environment can be agony for people who consider their careers to be a vocation
 - Some change career to escape dysfunction, thus ending their vocation
 - Some stay in the same job, but their vocational zeal gets burned out
- The same problem can happen to activists:
 - Some activist organizations have dysfunctional working environments
 - Becoming disillusioned with a not-for-profit organization can be just as much agony as becoming disillusioned with a (paying) career

Advice

- There are some things you encounter rarely, if ever:
 - Example: most people buy a house only once or twice in their lives
 - It can be difficult to cope with rare events because you lack experience (and most people you know also lack relevant experience)
 - Becoming disillusioned with your vocation is one of these rarely encountered events

- Do not think you are the only person to ever face the issue:
 - Because this is a rarely encountered problem, most people you know may not have experienced it, but that doesn't mean it is unique

- Do not feel you are being "too sensitive" for feeling so upset
 - It is your *vocation* so of course you feel upset
 - People who don't understand how upset you are probably don't have a vocation of their own

Advice (cont')

- Accept it may take a long time to put your life back on track:
 - Probably many months, possibly several years

- Try to not feel bitter:
 - Negative emotions will sap your energy
 - Rather than thinking "the other people are to blame", think "we were not compatible so it is best to go separate ways"

- Think of ways you can adapt your vocation so you can continue it by yourself:
 - Working by yourself means you can avoid dysfunctional organizations
 - Example:
 - A teacher ends up thinking that state education is dysfunctional
 - The teacher could switch to a non-teaching career
 - Or the teacher could find an alternative way to continue teaching (such as offering private tuition)

Relevant book

- The following autobiography discusses an activist's disillusionment
 - *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*
- Outline of story:
 - Malcolm X was a minister in the Nation of Islam; this was his vocation
 - Media exposure made him famous
 - That, combined with excellent communication skills helped him to grow the religious organization very fast
 - Other ministers in the religion became envious of his success
 - Malcolm discovered corruption at the top level of the organization; this shook his faith in his vocation
 - The Nation of Islam found an excuse to expel him

3. Summary

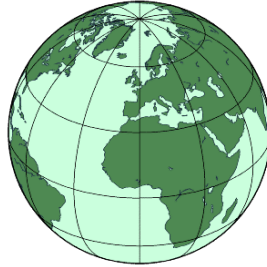
Summary

- Reading an inspirational book (or this training course) may motivate you for a few weeks:
 - But the motivation will wear off unless you have a purpose or vocation
 - Advice: reread this training course when you *do* have a vocation
- Finding your vocation can take a long time:
 - Don't wait passively for inspiration to strike
 - Instead, proactively work or study until you find your vocation
- You may become disillusioned with your vocation:
 - This may be due to a dysfunctional work environment
 - Such disillusionment can be agony
 - Coping with a rare event (such as vocation disillusionment) is difficult:
 - You probably lack relevant experience to cope well
 - Other people's lack of experience makes it difficult for them to understand why you are so upset

Part II

Important Principles

The Status Quo is Flawed



CiaranMcHale.com
Complexity explained simply

1

License

Copyright © 2009 Ciaran McHale.

Permission is hereby granted, free of charge, to any person obtaining a copy of this training course and associated documentation files (the "Training Course"), to deal in the Training Course without restriction, including without limitation the rights to use, copy, modify, merge, publish, distribute, sublicense, and/or sell copies of the Training Course, and to permit persons to whom the Training Course is furnished to do so, subject to the following conditions:

The above copyright notice and this permission notice shall be included in all copies or substantial portions of the Training Course.

THE TRAINING COURSE IS PROVIDED "AS IS", WITHOUT WARRANTY OF ANY KIND, EXPRESS OR IMPLIED, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO THE WARRANTIES OF MERCHANTABILITY, FITNESS FOR A PARTICULAR PURPOSE AND NONINFRINGEMENT. IN NO EVENT SHALL THE AUTHORS OR COPYRIGHT HOLDERS BE LIABLE FOR ANY CLAIM, DAMAGES OR OTHER LIABILITY, WHETHER IN AN ACTION OF CONTRACT, TORT OR OTHERWISE, ARISING FROM, OUT OF OR IN CONNECTION WITH THE TRAINING COURSE OR THE USE OR OTHER DEALINGS IN THE TRAINING COURSE.

The globe logo is from www.mapAbility.com. Used with permission.

The Status Quo is Flawed

2

Negative reactions to proposals for change

- Let's assume you propose a way to improve the world
- Some possible negative reactions from people:
 - "If that was a good idea then somebody else would have thought of it already"
 - Translation: "Your proposal is obviously flawed"
 - "The current system was designed by experts. Apparently, you think you know better than the experts"
 - Translation: "You are arrogant to think you can make a contribution"
- Such reactions suggest that the world is perfect

Ways in which the world is not perfect

There are countless ways in which the world is imperfect...

- On a global scale:
 - Wars, famine, global warming
- Within your own country:
 - Corrupt politicians, unethical business practices, pollution, high taxes, high unemployment, poor health care
- You can probably think of imperfections:
 - Within your local town or community
 - Within the industry in which you work
 - Within families (mom and dad keep arguing, your brother just split up with his girlfriend, your sister got fired, your son is failing subjects in school)

The status quo is flawed

- Imperfections are *everywhere*. In big things and small things
- It is strange that people react negatively when you say
 - “The status quo is flawed. I think I can improve it”
- Possibility 1: Some people:
 - Realise the status quo is imperfect but do not have energy to try to improve it
 - Feel guilty about doing nothing
 - Criticize you to hide their guilty feelings
- Possibility 2:
 - The biggest flaw in the world is that many people passively accept imperfections, rather than attempt to improve matters
 - Some people think this flaw is part of human nature
 - Others think it is a result of social conditioning

Advice for want-to-be entrepreneurs

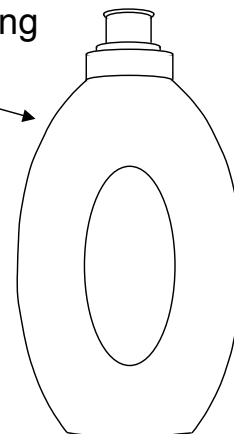
- Many people dream of starting their own business
 - But don't because they cannot think of a product to make or sell
- There is a simple way to think of business ideas
- First, realize the following:
 - “The status quo is flawed” means “there are lots of problems”
 - “Whenever there is a problem, there is an opportunity”
 - So you can find opportunities by analysing problems
- Second:
 - Get into the daily habit of analysing things you think are irritating, flawed or problematic
 - Try to think of an improvement or a better alternative
 - Could you build a business around this improvement or better alternative?

Example: invention of Velcro

- In 1941, George de Mestral noticed something sticking to his clothes and his dog's fur:
 - It was the burrs (prickly seeds) of burdock
- He examined a burr under a microscope:
 - He saw the burr had lots of hooks
 - These were catching on anything with loops, such as fur or clothing
- Most people would see only the *problem* of burrs:
 - They stick easily and are difficult to remove
- George de Mestral saw an *opportunity*:
 - The result was Velcro (the hook and loop fastener)

Example: innovations in sports water bottles

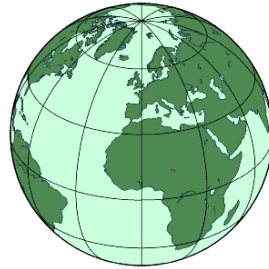
- Problem: glass bottles can break easily
 - Solution: make bottles from plastic
- Problem: awkward to unscrew bottle cap when exercising
 - Solution: a pull-up top that can be opened and closed with teeth
- Problem: bottles are difficult to grip when running
 - Solution: make bottles with a gripping hole
- An interesting book on turning problems into opportunities is: *Why Not?* by Barry Nalebuff and Ian Ayres



Summary

- The status quo *is* flawed:
 - There is nothing wrong with wanting to improve upon the status quo
 - Ignore people who accuse you of being foolish or arrogant for trying to make improvements
- Remember: “Whenever there is a problem, there is an opportunity”
- Relevant quote:
 - “The reasonable man adapts himself to the world; the unreasonable one persists in trying to adapt the world to himself. Therefore, all progress depends on the unreasonable man.”
— George Bernard Shaw
- Learn to take the following as compliments:
 - “You being unreasonable”
 - “You are arrogant to think you can improve upon the status quo”

Slack



CiaranMcHale.com
Complexity explained simply

1

License

Copyright © 2009 Ciaran McHale.

Permission is hereby granted, free of charge, to any person obtaining a copy of this training course and associated documentation files (the "Training Course"), to deal in the Training Course without restriction, including without limitation the rights to use, copy, modify, merge, publish, distribute, sublicense, and/or sell copies of the Training Course, and to permit persons to whom the Training Course is furnished to do so, subject to the following conditions:

The above copyright notice and this permission notice shall be included in all copies or substantial portions of the Training Course.

THE TRAINING COURSE IS PROVIDED "AS IS", WITHOUT WARRANTY OF ANY KIND, EXPRESS OR IMPLIED, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO THE WARRANTIES OF MERCHANTABILITY, FITNESS FOR A PARTICULAR PURPOSE AND NONINFRINGEMENT. IN NO EVENT SHALL THE AUTHORS OR COPYRIGHT HOLDERS BE LIABLE FOR ANY CLAIM, DAMAGES OR OTHER LIABILITY, WHETHER IN AN ACTION OF CONTRACT, TORT OR OTHERWISE, ARISING FROM, OUT OF OR IN CONNECTION WITH THE TRAINING COURSE OR THE USE OR OTHER DEALINGS IN THE TRAINING COURSE.

The globe logo is from www.mapAbility.com. Used with permission.

Slack

2

1. Introduction

3

What is slack?

- Dictionary definition of slack: *not tight; not busy*
- Tom DeMarco is:
 - A management consultant in the software industry
 - Author of several well-known books, including *Slack*
- In his book *Slack*, Tom DeMarco:
 - Redefines slack as *the degree of freedom required to effect change*
 - Discusses several issues that hinder change
- Slack is important to anyone who wants to change the world
 - This chapter discusses some issues that hinder slack
 - And suggests ways to combat them

Example of why slack is important

- Consider the following scenario:
 - You work 80 hours a week at minimum-wage to earn enough to live
 - The work is physically tiring and stressful
- You would like to make a change. Either:
 - Campaign to improve working conditions and pay, or...
 - Find a better job (fewer hours, more money, less stress)
- However:
 - Working long hours means you have very little time to campaign or search for a new job
 - Even if you do have some time, stress and exhaustion means you don't have the energy
- Put simply: a lack of slack makes it difficult to effect change
 - This applies to changing your own life or changing the world

Oppressive systems eliminate slack

- An oppressive system removes slack from those it oppresses
 - This makes it difficult for the oppressed to make changes to end the oppression
- Examples of how an oppressive system removes slack:
 - Removing freedom (through slavery, threat of imprisonment or threat of eviction)
 - Removing money (very low wages or slavery)
 - Removing free time due to hard work and long hours
 - Reducing morale due to continual stress

Creating slack

- If you want to make changes then you need to create slack:
 - There is no universal best way to do this
 - But the rest of this chapter suggests some possibilities

2. Ways to create slack in your life

Analyse how you waste time

- Taken from *The Lifelong Activist* by Hillary Rettig
 - Chapter 10 in Part II
- For one week, record how you spend your time:
 - Technique:
 - Write a list of tasks on a page, one task per line (everything from work-related tasks to entertainment and chores)
 - Set a timer to go off every 15 minutes (easy to remember what you were doing in such a short time period)
 - When the timer goes off, put a tick beside the task you were doing during the previous 15 minutes
 - Afterwards, analyse the ticks to find unexpected wastes of time
 - Many people discover 20+ hours of wasted time per week
 - Staring out the window, aimlessly surfing the Internet, ...
 - Working on unimportant tasks
 - Eliminating such wasted time can create a lot of slack

Act on the analysis

- Taken from *The Lifelong Activist* by Hillary Rettig
 - Chapters 11–13 in Part II
- Hillary Rettig explained how recording time usage helped her:
 - She kept track of her time in 15-minute increments and discovered:
 - She was spending a lot of working time on personal calls, web surfing, video games, coffee breaks and so on
 - She did just 25 hours of productive work in a 70-hour week
 - She resolved to do “a little better”:
 - Next week, she did 35 hours of productive work in a 60-hour week
 - Next week, she did 40 hours of productive work in a 55-hour week
 - Eventually, she did 40 hours of productive work in a 45-hour week
 - Result: she has a more productive work week and more relaxation time

Live more frugally

- Some common attitudes are:
 - “Work more to earn more money to buy more things”
 - “Buy with credit rather than buying only when you have the money”
- Such attitudes reduce slack in your life:
 - Working more reduces time slack
 - Buying on credit creates a financial obligation, which reduces freedom
- If you can live more frugally then:
 - You won’t need so much money, so...
 - You can reduce overtime work, or perhaps even work only part-time
- Many books provide tips on living cheaply
 - Look in a local bookstore or in an Internet bookstore such as Amazon

Relevant quote

- The following quote sums up the lack of slack in the lives of many people:
 - Normal is getting dressed in clothes that you buy for work, driving through traffic in a car that you are still paying for — in order to get to the job that you need so you can pay for the clothes, car, and the house that you leave empty all day in order to afford to live in it.
— Ellen Goodman, American journalist and author

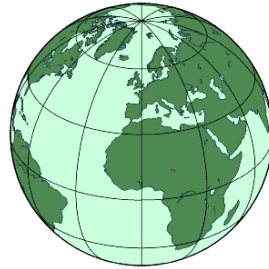
3. Summary

13

Summary

- Definitions of *slack*:
 - Dictionary: *not tight or not busy*
 - Tom DeMarco: *the degree of freedom required to effect change*
- An oppressive system removes slack from those it oppresses
 - This makes it difficult for the oppressed to make changes to end the oppression
- You need slack in your life if you want to change the world
- It is up to you to find ways to create slack in your life

Utopias



CiaranMcHale.com
Complexity explained simply

1

License

Copyright © 2009 Ciaran McHale.

Permission is hereby granted, free of charge, to any person obtaining a copy of this training course and associated documentation files (the "Training Course"), to deal in the Training Course without restriction, including without limitation the rights to use, copy, modify, merge, publish, distribute, sublicense, and/or sell copies of the Training Course, and to permit persons to whom the Training Course is furnished to do so, subject to the following conditions:

The above copyright notice and this permission notice shall be included in all copies or substantial portions of the Training Course.

THE TRAINING COURSE IS PROVIDED "AS IS", WITHOUT WARRANTY OF ANY KIND, EXPRESS OR IMPLIED, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO THE WARRANTIES OF MERCHANTABILITY, FITNESS FOR A PARTICULAR PURPOSE AND NONINFRINGEMENT. IN NO EVENT SHALL THE AUTHORS OR COPYRIGHT HOLDERS BE LIABLE FOR ANY CLAIM, DAMAGES OR OTHER LIABILITY, WHETHER IN AN ACTION OF CONTRACT, TORT OR OTHERWISE, ARISING FROM, OUT OF OR IN CONNECTION WITH THE TRAINING COURSE OR THE USE OR OTHER DEALINGS IN THE TRAINING COURSE.

The globe logo is from www.mapAbility.com. Used with permission.

Utopias

2

Introduction

- Originally, the term *utopia* meant *no place*:
 - Nowadays, *utopia* usually means a *good place* (like heaven)
 - The related term *dystopia* means a *bad place* (like hell)
 - Of course, one person's utopia might be another person's dystopia
- The term *utopia* is sometimes used in a dismissive way
 - The implication is that a utopian vision is unrealistic or impractical
- Many dystopias are explored through science fiction.
Examples: *1984* and *Brave New World*
- Many utopias can be found in ideologies.
Examples: socialism, communism

Introduction (cont')

- If you want to change the world then:
 - You may have a utopian vision
 - Or some people may dismiss your ideas as being hopelessly utopian
- Most attempts to implement utopias fail:
 - Learning *how* and *why* they failed may help you avoid similar problems
 - That is the purpose of this chapter

1. The scalability limit of utopias

5

The scalability limit of utopias

- Let's assume Fred believes an ideal life involves:
 - Hard physical labour (such as farm work) during the day
 - In the evening, play chess and have group sex
- Can Fred make this utopian ideal a reality?
- Initially, yes:
 - He can probably find 10 or 20 people who share his utopian ideals
 - So he *can* implement a small utopian community
- But then:
 - Fred will probably assume his utopia can work on a larger scale (such as an entire country)
 - But it will not because most of the population does *not* share his utopian ideals

The scalability limit of utopias (cont')

- Many people think:
 - “Communism failed because communism is a *bad* utopia”
 - “A *good* utopian vision could be made to work”
- That common belief is wrong:
 - *Any* utopia will fail if you implement it in a large society
 - Because most of the population will *not* share your utopian ideals
 - The failure will occur *regardless* of how good or bad the utopia is
- This can be discouraging if you have a utopian vision that you wish to share with the world

Options for implementing your utopian vision

- You have two options for implementing your utopian vision
- Option 1:
 - Implement your utopia within a small community of like-minded people
 - Do *not* be tempted to expand the community
- Option 2:
 - Decide to share your utopia with the general population but realize this will probably fail. So...
 - Learn how other utopias failed when exported to a larger community
 - This will help you to understand the frustrations you will encounter
- The rest of this chapter explores option 2

Lessons from attempted utopias

- Important lessons from attempted utopias:
 - People do things for *their* own reasons, not yours
 - Most of your supporters will share only a subset of your utopian vision
 - Often, a “failed” utopia is *partially* successful
- The next few sections examine these lessons

2. People do things for *their* own reasons, not yours

Be cool... Stay in school

Recap from an earlier chapter...

- In 1996, Jason Summey was a 13-year old student in America
- His school had the highest dropout rate in the area:
 - Students who dropped out had a high chance of being poor or criminals
- He gave a speech at his middle school graduation:
 - He challenged his classmates to be the first year in the school's history to all graduate from high school
 - He started a "Be Cool... Stay In School" project

Be cool... Stay in school (cont')

- Several tactics encouraged students to stay in school:
 - Many students joined a "dropout patrol" to mentor struggling students
 - Peer pressure made it less socially acceptable to drop out of school
- Many local businesses offered benefits to students who enrolled in the "dropout patrol" program:
 - Discounts on food, clothes, books, music, ...
 - Low-interest bank loans to parents
- Some students:
 - Did not care about Jason's altruistic ambitions for the program
 - But joined the "dropout patrol" anyway to get the offered benefits
- Jason learned an important lesson:
 - People do things for *their* own reasons, not yours

People do things for *their* own reasons, not yours

- Mary has a utopian vision. How can she convince others to support her?
- She should:
 - Group people into different categories
 - Find benefits of her utopian vision for each category
 - Communicate those benefits to each category
- Example. Mary's utopian vision is to end anti-X discrimination:
 - Two obvious groups: X and non-X people
 - Benefits of her vision for X people are obvious and easy to communicate
 - Benefits for non-X people are *not* obvious. Mary needs to focus on this if she wants to get widespread support

Another example

- Richard Stallman started the “free software” movement
- There are 3 categories of people relevant to his vision:
 - End users
 - Hobbyist programmers
 - Software vendors
- His utopian vision has:
 - Obvious benefits for end users and hobbyist programmers
 - Obvious drawbacks (and not-so-obvious benefits) for software vendors
- As a result, a splinter group formed:
 - They renamed “free” software as “open-source” software because they felt it was easier to market an open-source vision to software vendors

3. Most of your supporters will share only a subset of your utopian vision

15

A problem

- Recall:
 - People do things for *their* own reasons, not yours
- This suggests that some of your supporters will share:
 - *All* of your utopian vision
 - *Only a subset* of your utopian vision
 - *None* of your vision, but appreciate some of its anticipated side-effects
- Eventually, the partial sharing of the vision may cause friction:
 - Some supporters may accuse you of being “too extreme” or of being bad for the image of the movement
 - People who you used to trust for their support no longer seem trustworthy

Understanding the problem

- Such friction often leads to:
 - Feelings of betrayal
 - Movements dividing into factions that fight each other instead of working together whenever goals overlap

- Understanding the cause of the friction can help reduce it:
 - The friction probably isn't betrayal; just an incompletely shared vision
 - Different factions can be "friendly neighbours" instead of a "fighting family", and cooperate whenever goals overlap

4. A failed utopia can be partially successful

A failed utopia can be partially successful

- As stated earlier, utopias suffer from a scalability problem:
 - *Despite* this scalability problem, if many people *partially* buy into a utopian vision then it can cause widespread change
 - So, a “failed” utopia can be partially successful in a way that brings impressive results

- Example: Gandhi wanted to use Satyagraha tactics to end:
 - British rule of India (he succeeded)
 - Tensions between Muslims and Hindus (he failed)
 - Classism in Indian society (he failed)

- Example: The “Be Cool... Stay in School” program:
 - Wanted *no* students to drop out of school
 - In fact, one student dropped out during the first year
 - But previously there were 10 or 20 dropouts per year

All utopias are flawed

- The scalability limit means that *all* utopias are flawed:
 - You may find this hard to admit for your own utopian vision
 - But you can still argue that your utopian vision is *less flawed* than other visions (or the status quo)

- Relevant quote:
 - “Democracy is the worst form of government except for all those other forms that have been tried from time to time”
— Winston Churchill

5. Further reading and summary

21

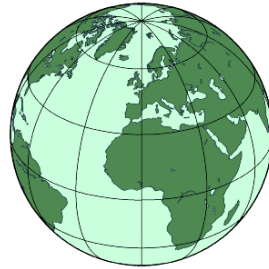
Relevant book

- Book: *The Faber Book of Utopias* by John Carey:
 - The introduction discusses characteristics common to many utopias and dystopias
 - Then each chapter summarizes a particular utopia or dystopia
 - Chapters are ordered from ancient history to modern times
- You are unlikely to be interested in all of the book's 101 utopias and dystopias
- However, the introduction contains a very interesting discussion of utopian characteristics

Summary

- A scalability limit applies to *all* utopias
- People do things for *their* own reasons, not yours
- Most of your supporters will share only a subset of your utopian vision
 - This will probably result in factions appearing within your movement
- Often, a “failed” utopia is *partially* successful
 - The partial success can be very impressive

Equations for Change



CiaranMcHale.com
Complexity explained simply

1

License

Copyright © 2009 Ciaran McHale.

Permission is hereby granted, free of charge, to any person obtaining a copy of this training course and associated documentation files (the "Training Course"), to deal in the Training Course without restriction, including without limitation the rights to use, copy, modify, merge, publish, distribute, sublicense, and/or sell copies of the Training Course, and to permit persons to whom the Training Course is furnished to do so, subject to the following conditions:

The above copyright notice and this permission notice shall be included in all copies or substantial portions of the Training Course.

THE TRAINING COURSE IS PROVIDED "AS IS", WITHOUT WARRANTY OF ANY KIND, EXPRESS OR IMPLIED, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO THE WARRANTIES OF MERCHANTABILITY, FITNESS FOR A PARTICULAR PURPOSE AND NONINFRINGEMENT. IN NO EVENT SHALL THE AUTHORS OR COPYRIGHT HOLDERS BE LIABLE FOR ANY CLAIM, DAMAGES OR OTHER LIABILITY, WHETHER IN AN ACTION OF CONTRACT, TORT OR OTHERWISE, ARISING FROM, OUT OF OR IN CONNECTION WITH THE TRAINING COURSE OR THE USE OR OTHER DEALINGS IN THE TRAINING COURSE.

The globe logo is from www.mapAbility.com. Used with permission.

1. Using equations to solve problems

3

Problems faced by Brazilian farmers

- The following anecdote is taken from:
 - Chapter 3 (“The Light in My Head Went On”) of *How to Change the World* by David Bornstein
- Small farmers in Brazil in the 1980s faced two problems:
 - Most dams and irrigation channels were owned by large land owners
 - They charged small farmers a lot of money for access to water (three times the world average)
 - Electric companies supplied power cost-effectively to cities
 - But they charged \$7000 to connect a rural farm (5–10 year’s income for a small farmer)
- These problems created a poverty trap for small farmers

Equations

- Fábio Rosa thought of a way to tackle the first problem:
 - He knew there was water under the farm land
 - Wells could be dug to access the water
 - The water could be pumped from the wells and used for irrigation
 - Farmers could then afford to use *water seedling*, which is a water-intensive but effective way to grow crops

- However, water pumps are *electric* pumps:
 - So he needed a way to *cheaply* connect farms to the electricity grid
 - He eventually found such a way that cost only \$400 (read the cited chapter for details)

- He expressed his ideas as equations:
 - Inexpensive electricity + wells + pumps = cheap irrigation
 - Cheap irrigation + water seedling = more efficient land use and more income

Lesson to be learnt

- When you want to solve a problem:
 - You might discover “X will solve this”
 - Your equation is: $x = \text{solution to problem}$

- That is a problem with a simple solution. Great

- Many problems are more complex:
 - They may require a more complex set of equations:
 - $a + b + c = z$
 - $x + y + z = \text{solution to problem}$
 - You won't solve a complex problem if you focus only on “x”
 - This can be frustrating if you have great x-related skills but lesser skills related to other parts of the equation(s)

Advice

- Do *not* assume: $x =$ solution to problem:
 - Try to determine if there are other components in the equation
- Developing an equation helps you to develop a “to do” list:
 - It helps you identify the sub-problems you have to solve
 - It also helps you identify skills you may need to develop (or find other people who have those skills)
- Explaining your equation to others can help:
 - They might spot flaws in the equation
 - If they agree your equation solves a worthwhile problem then they might get excited enough to help you solve some of the sub-problems

2. Using equations in your career

Unplanned career changes

- Fred might use the following tactic in his career:
 - Initially, he works doing job X
 - When he does not achieve success with X, he switches to (unrelated) Y
 - And when Y fails, he switches to (unrelated) Z

- That approach has two drawbacks:
 - It has a slim chance of making Fred successful
 - If Fred finally finds success with Z then he may regret the time he wasted on X and Y

- There is a better approach:
 - Think of a long term goal
 - Find an equation that leads to that goal: $x + y + z = \text{long term goal}$
 - Choose jobs that move you towards that goal

Reuse

- Another way to view equations is as a guideline for reuse

- Example:
 - Fred writes a paper on a subject about which he is knowledgeable
 - Then he writes a few more papers on related subjects

 - He realizes: $\text{paper}_1 + \text{paper}_2 + \text{paper}_3 + \text{a few more papers} = \text{book}$
(each paper can be reused as a chapter in the book)

 - After writing the book, he realizes:
 $\text{book} + \text{complementary slides} = \text{training course}$

 - Then he realizes:
 $\text{training course} + \text{"I'm an author" credentials} = \text{lots of paying students}$

 - Through these steps, Fred can start a new career for himself

Seek out opportunities for reuse

- Always look for ways to achieve reuse:
 - “Can I reuse previous projects in this new project?”
 - “Will I be able to reuse this current project in future projects?”
- Implement a project in a way that *enables* it to be reused.
Example:
 - A teacher’s writings on a chalk board cannot be reused
 - A teacher’s writings in a word processor document or PowerPoint slides *can* be reused
- Make sure the project can be reused by others:
 - A teacher can reuse his own *badly-written* lecture notes next year
 - But *well-written* lecture notes could be reused in a variety of ways:
 - By students, or by other teachers
 - Published in the form of a book
 - Incorporated into another, overlapping training course

Jamie Oliver’s career

- Jamie Oliver is a well-known TV chef in England
 - A look at his career shows how he reused existing skills in new projects
- He had a popular TV cooking programme for 3 years:
 - Then the TV station dropped him
 - Here are ways he reused his existing skills to earn a living:
 - He made a cookery DVD and sold it to the public
 - He went on tour, giving a live 2-hour cooking show in theatres
 - He recorded the live cookery show and released it on DVD
- You can think of those as equations (“???” denotes new skills he had to acquire):
 - Cooking skills + TV presenter skills + ??? = cookery DVD
 - Cooking skills + TV presenter skills + ??? = tour of live cookery show
 - Tour of live cookery show + DVD-making skills = DVD of the tour

Jamie Oliver's career (cont')

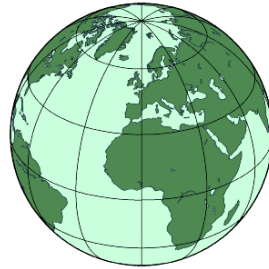
- Jamie learned that English school dinners were junk food
 - This was causing widespread health and behavioural problems
- Summary of how he tackled this problem:
 - He worked with one school's catering staff to analyse the problem
 - He invented nutritious recipes within the limited catering budget
 - He trained the catering staff to cook his recipes
 - He convinced politicians to roll out his plan nationwide
- Of course, he recorded this project:
 - This was shown as a six-part TV show and then released on DVD (*Jamie's School Dinners*)
 - The widespread viewing of the show helped apply pressure to politicians and schools to roll out his healthier school dinners
- The steps he took can be viewed as an equation

3. Summary

Summary

- Old phrase:
 - “If all you have is a hammer, everything looks like a nail”
- If you have skill “ x ” then you might be tempted to think you can use *just* “ x ” to solve a problem
 - But there are probably other (missing) parts of the equation
- Learning to think in terms of equations is beneficial:
 - Helps you to develop a “to do” list:
 - Sub-problems to be solved
 - New skills to be acquired
 - Helps you to convince others to work with you
 - Helps you to plan your career
 - Helps you to proactively seek opportunities for reuse

Clusters, Families and Partners



CiaranMcHale.com
Complexity explained simply

1

License

Copyright © 2009 Ciaran McHale.

Permission is hereby granted, free of charge, to any person obtaining a copy of this training course and associated documentation files (the "Training Course"), to deal in the Training Course without restriction, including without limitation the rights to use, copy, modify, merge, publish, distribute, sublicense, and/or sell copies of the Training Course, and to permit persons to whom the Training Course is furnished to do so, subject to the following conditions:

The above copyright notice and this permission notice shall be included in all copies or substantial portions of the Training Course.

THE TRAINING COURSE IS PROVIDED "AS IS", WITHOUT WARRANTY OF ANY KIND, EXPRESS OR IMPLIED, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO THE WARRANTIES OF MERCHANTABILITY, FITNESS FOR A PARTICULAR PURPOSE AND NONINFRINGEMENT. IN NO EVENT SHALL THE AUTHORS OR COPYRIGHT HOLDERS BE LIABLE FOR ANY CLAIM, DAMAGES OR OTHER LIABILITY, WHETHER IN AN ACTION OF CONTRACT, TORT OR OTHERWISE, ARISING FROM, OUT OF OR IN CONNECTION WITH THE TRAINING COURSE OR THE USE OR OTHER DEALINGS IN THE TRAINING COURSE.

The globe logo is from www.mapAbility.com. Used with permission.

Introduction

- No person is completely independent:
 - We all interact with others
 - Sometimes the interactions are good
 - Other times they are neutral or negative
- Occasionally, interactions are so good that people speak of *synergy*:
 - Synergy means the whole is greater than the sum of its parts
 - Increasing the synergy in your life can help you to change the world
- Sometimes synergy occurs through group interaction:
 - This chapter discusses different forms of group interaction that might result in synergy

1. Clusters

Clusters

- Often, people doing similar types of work cluster together:
 - In this way, they can inspire each other
 - Many people whose work is solitary (such as writers or painters) like to socialize with people who do similar work
- The Inklings was an informal group of literary enthusiasts in Oxford, England during the 1930s and 1940s
 - The group included:
 - J. R. R. Tolkien (author of *The Lord of the Rings* series)
 - C. S. Lewis (author of *The Chronicles of Narnia* series)
 - Members critiqued each others' draft work
 - They also had fun, such as competitions to read bad poetry without laughing
- Throughout history, there have been other clusters of famous writers and artists

Other examples of clusters

- Individual musicians join together to form a band:
 - Partly so the musicians can inspire each other
- A support group can act as a cluster:
 - An Internet search for “support group” shows many groups for medical conditions, handicaps, victims of crime, bereavement, ...
- A community centre or conference can act as a cluster:
 - Especially for people who share a particular interest or trait
 - Example traits: sexuality, ethnic origin, religion
- Midge Ure is a musician (most famously in Ultravox):
 - He co-wrote *Do They Know It's Christmas* (the Band Aid song)
 - His autobiography is called *If I was...*
 - Chapter 6 (“Life in the Blitz”) talks about a London music club that acted as a cluster for many soon-to-be-famous English singers and bands

Other examples of clusters (cont')

- Regular attendees at the Blitz included:
 - Midge Ure and Steve Strange from Visage, David Essex, Boy George, Spandau Ballet, Depeche Mode
 - Also soon-to-be famous make-up artists, stylists, photographers, video directors, fashion designers and hat makers

- Midge Ure states:
 - “It was the inspiration, the place that spawned London’s next ten year’s worth of creativity, maybe its next twenty.”
 - “Derek May, a DJ at the Warehouse in Chicago, picked up on the electronic sounds that were invented at the Blitz, developed them and turned it into his own form of dance grooves, which later became known as house music.”

- This example shows how much influence a single cluster can have

Importance of clusters

- Entire industries tend to cluster:
 - A lot of movie making is clustered in Hollywood
 - Many Formula-1 cars are made in the south of England
 - Musical theatre has clusters in London’s West End and New York’s Broadway
 - The US computer industry has clusters in Silicon Valley and Boston
 - There are clusters for fashion design, architecture and art

- The point of this section is this:
 - Clusters play an important role in society
 - Joining an existing cluster may help you change the world
 - If there isn’t already a cluster relevant to your work then perhaps you should create one

2. Families and partners

9

Can your family be a cluster?

- The previous section mentioned clusters of different sizes:
 - Very large clusters, that involve entire industries
 - Smaller clusters, such as community centres and support groups
 - Very small clusters, such as a music band
- Can your family be a supportive cluster for you?
 - Hopefully, yes. However, your family members may not share your passionate beliefs:
 - Example: you want to promote vegetarianism and campaign for animal rights, but your parents or siblings eat meat
 - Even if they share your beliefs, they may criticize you:
 - Example: “When are you going to stop that and find a real job?”
 - Jesus said “A prophet is not without honor, except in his own country, and among his own relatives, and in his own house.” — Mark 6:4
 - *The Lifelong Activist* by Hillary Rettig has a good discussion of this topic

Your chosen family

- There is an old saying:
 - “You can choose your friends but you cannot choose your family”
- Some people have the following experience:
 - Their family is not supportive or is even highly critical
 - They find other people who become close friends and provide support
 - They refer to these other people as their “chosen family”
- An important member of your chosen family is your partner:
 - Choose a partner who is supportive of your desire to change the world
 - If your partner is not supportive then conflicts might tear your relationship apart

Nelson Mandela

- Nelson Mandela’s first marriage failed because his wife did not share his activism ideals:
 - From Chapter 24 of his autobiography, *Long Walk to Freedom*
 - “Evelyn and I had irreconcilable differences. I could not give up my life in the struggle, and she could not live with my devotion to something other than herself and the family. [...] In the end we could not make our marriage work.”
- He took care when dating Winnie (his second wife) to make sure she shared his activism ideals:
 - From Chapter 26 of *Long Walk to Freedom*
 - “She came to meetings and political discussions; I was both courting her and politicizing her. [...] I told her it was more than likely that we would have to live on her small salary as a social worker. Winnie understood, and said she was prepared to take the risk and throw in her lot with me.”

Gandhi

- Most biographies of Gandhi downplayed the role of his wife:
 - However, the following book shows she played a vital role:
The Untold Story Kasturba: Wife of Mahatma Gandhi by Arun and Sundana Gandhi with Carol Lynn Yellin
 - Examples:
 - Gandhi first learned the effectiveness of peaceful non-cooperation from his wife when he was treating her unreasonably
 - Often Kasturba could communicate her husband's ideas to women better than he could
- Gandhi married Kasturba before either one became activists:
 - Gandhi's activism bloomed before Kasturba's did
 - This created some conflicts in their relationship
 - Luckily, Kasturba slowly came to share her husband's idealism
 - Over time, she became a well-known activist leader in her own right

Other people with supportive partners

- Martin Luther King Jr.:
 - Learned of his future wife's activism on their first date
 - She encouraged him to continue fighting racism, despite frequent death threats and assassination attempts
- Malcolm X and his future wife were both in the Nation of Islam:
 - This religion encouraged black people to oppose racism
 - Malcolm X was a public (and controversial) figure in the Nation of Islam
 - His future wife knew of the risks that Malcolm X faced

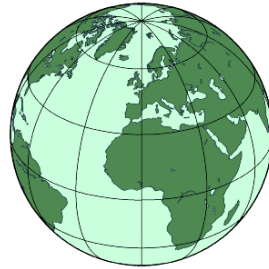
3. Summary

15

Summary

- Having the right kind of support for your work increases your chance of success
- Look for groups or organizations that can provide such support
 - If none exist then perhaps you could start one
- Your biological family may or may not be supportive
 - If not then develop a chosen family
- When looking for a long-term partner, choose someone who is supportive

Social Entrepreneurs



CiaranMcHale.com
Complexity explained simply

1

License

Copyright © 2009 Ciaran McHale.

Permission is hereby granted, free of charge, to any person obtaining a copy of this training course and associated documentation files (the "Training Course"), to deal in the Training Course without restriction, including without limitation the rights to use, copy, modify, merge, publish, distribute, sublicense, and/or sell copies of the Training Course, and to permit persons to whom the Training Course is furnished to do so, subject to the following conditions:

The above copyright notice and this permission notice shall be included in all copies or substantial portions of the Training Course.

THE TRAINING COURSE IS PROVIDED "AS IS", WITHOUT WARRANTY OF ANY KIND, EXPRESS OR IMPLIED, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO THE WARRANTIES OF MERCHANTABILITY, FITNESS FOR A PARTICULAR PURPOSE AND NONINFRINGEMENT. IN NO EVENT SHALL THE AUTHORS OR COPYRIGHT HOLDERS BE LIABLE FOR ANY CLAIM, DAMAGES OR OTHER LIABILITY, WHETHER IN AN ACTION OF CONTRACT, TORT OR OTHERWISE, ARISING FROM, OUT OF OR IN CONNECTION WITH THE TRAINING COURSE OR THE USE OR OTHER DEALINGS IN THE TRAINING COURSE.

The globe logo is from www.mapAbility.com. Used with permission.

Introduction

- The term *social entrepreneur* came into use during the 1960s and 1970s
- The term has grown in popularity, but many people are still unfamiliar with it
- This chapter:
 - Explains the term *social entrepreneur*
 - Discusses some funding-related issues of concern to social entrepreneurs

What is an entrepreneur?

- *Entrepreneur* comes from French:
 - Its literal meaning is: a person who undertakes a task
- Nowadays, most people think an entrepreneur is:
 - A person who starts a business to make money
- Actually, many entrepreneurs start a business so they can create a new product or service:
 - Their main motivation is the *creation* of the product or service
 - Making money from the creation is just a (useful) side effect

What is a social entrepreneur?

- A *social entrepreneur* is an entrepreneur who wants to create something of great benefit to society
- Many social entrepreneurs work on projects that have no chance of making money. Examples:
 - Telephone helplines for people who are in trouble (depression, victims of rape, child abuse, and so on)
 - Alternative forms of education for people who do not have their needs met by state-funded education
 - A soup kitchen to feed homeless people
 - Community-based healthcare
- Such social entrepreneurs face a problem: they have to find funding to carry out their work

What is a philanthropist?

- A philanthropist is a person (or organization) who donates money to good causes (including social entrepreneurs)
- Let's assume a philanthropist wants to give up to £1 million to "good causes"
- The philanthropist faces a problem:
 - There are tens of thousands of good causes but:
 - Not all of them are run by competent people
 - Not all of them use donations effectively
 - It is time-consuming for the philanthropist to find the "best" good causes to receive his or her donations
- How can social entrepreneurs and philanthropists find each other?

Talent scouts

- A *talent scout* is somebody who matches talented people with an organisation looking for such people
- Examples:
 - A record company uses talent scouts to find talented musicians who do not have a recording contract
 - A professional sports team uses talent scouts to find young talented sportspeople
- There are some variations:
 - A job recruitment agency matches job seekers with employers
 - A sports agent matches a talented sportsperson with a company that wants to use such a person to promote their products
- Could a talent scout direct philanthropists to the best social entrepreneurs?

Ashoka

- Ashoka (www.ashoka.org) is a talent scout organization:
 - It obtains funding from philanthropists
 - And gives that funding to the best social entrepreneurs it can find
 - It also provides non-financial support, such as:
 - Networking with other social entrepreneurs in related fields
 - Help from professional accountancy and management consultants
- Ashoka was started in 1980 by Bill Drayton:
 - He named the organization after an ancient Indian emperor
 - It started with \$50,000 donated by Bill Drayton and some of his friends
 - As its reputation increased, it attracted donations from other philanthropists (\$30 million in 2006)
- The following book provides a great introduction to Ashoka:
 - *How to Change the World: Social Entrepreneurs and the Power of New Ideas* by David Bornstein

Other talent scout organizations

- You can find some other talent scout organizations:
 - In the Wikipedia entry for “social entrepreneurship”
 - By using an Internet search engine
- Each organization has its own criteria for deciding which individuals or groups to support
- Some common selection criteria:
 - The project must aim not just to help people, but to bring about change in people’s lives
 - The project must aim to bring about change at a national level rather than just at a local level
 - The social entrepreneur has relevant skills and is willing to work for many years or decades on the project
- Such criteria make projects attractive to philanthropists

Long-term funding

- Many philanthropists and talent scout organizations:
 - Are willing to provide start-up funding
 - Are *not* willing to provide indefinite, on-going funding
- This means that a social enterprise project must:
 - Find a way to become profitable
(the nature of many social enterprises makes this impossible)
 - Or find a different source of on-going funding
- There is no easy solution to the difficulty of finding on-going funding:
 - The final chapter of *How to Change the World* discusses some issues that may help people find a solution
 - The next slide discusses one possibility (inspired by that chapter)

One future possibility for on-going funding

- In a hypothetical future society:
 - Metrics are used to measure the benefits of social enterprise projects
 - The government uses some tax money to fund social enterprise projects that score well against the metrics
- This might work because:
 - Many small social enterprise projects spend money more effectively than larger, more bureaucratic organizations. So...
 - Money spent on, say, healthcare-related social enterprise projects may be a cost-effective way to reduce the burden on a large, inefficient national healthcare system
 - So, redirecting *some* money from government-run projects (like healthcare) to complementary social enterprise projects can *save* money for the government

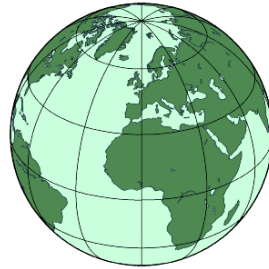
Funding for minority and oppressed groups

- This slide provides some food for thought...
- Could a minority or oppressed group create its own talent scout organization?
 - Collect donations from other members of the community (*lots* of people donating £10 or £100 each can result in many thousands being raised)
 - Money raised could be channelled to strategically important projects (some support groups, some “let’s change the law” campaigns)
 - The success stories can be fed back to people who donated money:
 - Assures them that their money was well spent
 - Encourages them to donate more money in the future
 - Some people can donate skills instead of money (accountancy, legal, management, web-site design, ...)

Summary

- An *entrepreneur* is motivated to *create* something
 - Making money is usually a lesser motivation
- A *social entrepreneur* is an entrepreneur who wants to create something that will greatly benefit society
- Some “talent scout” organizations help philanthropists give start-up money to the best social entrepreneurs
 - But finding a source of on-going funding can be a problem
- Food for thought:
 - Perhaps an oppressed or minority group could set up its own internal “talent scout” organisation

Miscellaneous Principles



CiaranMcHale.com
Complexity explained simply

1

License

Copyright © 2009 Ciaran McHale.

Permission is hereby granted, free of charge, to any person obtaining a copy of this training course and associated documentation files (the "Training Course"), to deal in the Training Course without restriction, including without limitation the rights to use, copy, modify, merge, publish, distribute, sublicense, and/or sell copies of the Training Course, and to permit persons to whom the Training Course is furnished to do so, subject to the following conditions:

The above copyright notice and this permission notice shall be included in all copies or substantial portions of the Training Course.

THE TRAINING COURSE IS PROVIDED "AS IS", WITHOUT WARRANTY OF ANY KIND, EXPRESS OR IMPLIED, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO THE WARRANTIES OF MERCHANTABILITY, FITNESS FOR A PARTICULAR PURPOSE AND NONINFRINGEMENT. IN NO EVENT SHALL THE AUTHORS OR COPYRIGHT HOLDERS BE LIABLE FOR ANY CLAIM, DAMAGES OR OTHER LIABILITY, WHETHER IN AN ACTION OF CONTRACT, TORT OR OTHERWISE, ARISING FROM, OUT OF OR IN CONNECTION WITH THE TRAINING COURSE OR THE USE OR OTHER DEALINGS IN THE TRAINING COURSE.

The globe logo is from www.mapAbility.com. Used with permission.

Introduction

- This chapter discusses some miscellaneous principles that are useful to know about

1. You are a product of your environment

You are a product of your environment

- The environment you live in influences your outlook on life:
 - You can best see this if you experience *other* environments
 - Travelling is a great way to do this
 - Reading biographies or watching documentaries can also help
- The examples on the next few slides illustrate this

Example: Martin Luther King Jr.

- The following example comes from Chapter 28 of *The Autobiography of Martin Luther King Jr.*
- Martin Luther King lived in a middle-class area:
 - He moved to Chicago for a few months to take part in an anti-racism campaign
 - He and his family lived in an apartment in a slum area of Chicago (so he could become acquainted with such living conditions)
 - “Our own children lived with us in [the slum area], and it was only a few days before we became aware of the change in their behaviour. Their tempers flared, and they sometimes reverted to almost infantile behaviour.”
 - “[The slum area] was just too hot, too crowded, too devoid of creative forms of recreation. [...] And I understood anew the conditions which make of the ghetto an emotional pressure cooker.”

Example: Andrew Mawson

- The following example is from:
 - *The Social Entrepreneur* by Andrew Mawson
 - Page 103 in the (unnumbered) chapter *Learning From Laura Ashley*
- Andrew Mawson organized a community centre in an impoverished suburb of London:
 - The community centre was staffed by local people
 - He was offered use of a large mansion in Wales for a staff meeting
 - Initially his staff were intimidated by the mansion's grandeur
 - One woman was too frightened to sleep the first night because she found the lack of traffic noise to be disturbing
 - "Yet, after a few days [...] all our mindsets had changed, and we were having entirely different conversations about ourselves, our homes and our plans for the future."
 - "This experience taught me how profoundly true it is to say that we are products of the environment we live in"

Summary and advice

- The environment you live in influences your outlook on life
- If you want to change the world then:
 - You should try to experience other environments
 - Doing this helps you to better understand the world you want to change

2. Just because a theory explains the facts
does not mean the theory is correct

9

Multiple theories can explain the same facts

- A theory may explain the facts, but the theory can still be wrong
- Example: Why does the sun rise in the East and set in the West?
 - Old theory: the sun revolves around the earth
 - More modern theory: the earth spins as it revolves around the sun

A puzzle for oppressed people

- Black people in the 1950s' USA frequently wondered *why* white people oppressed them
- Relevant quotes from *Black Like Me* by John Howard Griffin
 - November 14: "The Negro cannot understand how [...] the whites as a group can still contrive to arrange life so that it destroys the Negro's sense of personal value, degrades his human dignity, deadens the fibres of his being."
 - "Why do [white people] do it? Why do they keep us like this? What are they gaining? What evil has taken them?"
 - November 19: "None of [the oppression] really makes any sense."
 - November 28: "What sense could a man make of it?"
 - August 17: "Why do the whites hate us—we don't hate them?"
 - "I was dismayed to see the extent to which this youth exaggerated—how could he do otherwise?—the feelings of the whites towards Negroes. He thought they all hated him."

Competing theories

- Why *did* white Americans hate and oppress black Americans?
- Black people knew of one theory (offered by white racists):
 - "Black people are intrinsically inferior to white people"
 - Of course, black people rejected that theory because they did not consider themselves to be intrinsically inferior
- The Nation of Islam (NOI) is a religious group that combines concepts from mainstream Islam with unorthodox additions (considered heretical by mainstream Islam)
- The Nation of Islam (NOI) offered an alternative theory to explain racism...

The Nation of Islam's explanation for racism

- The NOI story of creation:
 - Originally, all humans were black and were good
 - A scientist with a grudge against God used selective breeding principles to progressively lighten the skin colour of his followers
 - Over the course of 800 years, his successors created white people
 - As each generation became lighter skinned, they became more evil.
 - The white people were fully evil, devils, and knew themselves to be devils

- The above is from Chapter 10 ("Satan") of *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*

- A white person can easily dismiss the theory
 - "I'm white and I do not 'know myself' to be a devil; therefore the theory is wrong"

If the theory fits the facts...

- When Malcolm X first heard the NOI's story of creation, he did not believe it

- But then he thought back on his life:
 - He recalled *many* white people who had caused harm to him and his family
 - He could not recall a *single* white person who had been good to him

- The theory seemed to fit the facts of his life:
 - There was no competing theory that fits the facts
 - So he started to believe the theory
 - He joined the NOI and became a minister

- Malcolm X was not alone in believing the theory:
 - Through his excellent communication skills, he helped to convert tens of thousands of black people to the NOI

Is there a better theory that explains racism?

- A later part of this training course entitled *The Bell Curve of Intolerance* offers an alternative theory to explain oppression
- Different theories suggest different tactics to combat oppression:
 - NOI's theory suggests either:
 - Violent war between black people and white people. Or
 - Black nationalism: black people (somehow) obtain their own country and rule it themselves
 - The *Bell Curve of Intolerance* suggests using Gandhi's Satyagraha tactics to stop the oppression and thus facilitate an integrated society
- If you believe in one theory then the tactics of another theory can seem dangerously misguided

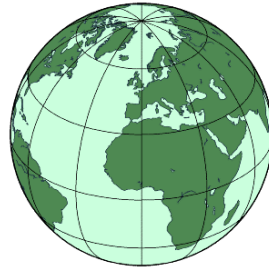
Summary and advice

- Just because a theory explains the facts does not mean the theory is correct
- There might be other theories that also explain the facts:
 - Perhaps some of those other theories have not yet been discovered
 - Or perhaps you have not read widely enough to have encountered those other theories
- So believe a theory if it seems to make sense to you
 - But keep an open mind. Perhaps you will encounter a better theory in the future

Part III

Lessons from Academia

The Innovator's Dilemma



CiaranMcHale.com
Complexity explained simply

1

License

Copyright © 2009 Ciaran McHale.

Permission is hereby granted, free of charge, to any person obtaining a copy of this training course and associated documentation files (the "Training Course"), to deal in the Training Course without restriction, including without limitation the rights to use, copy, modify, merge, publish, distribute, sublicense, and/or sell copies of the Training Course, and to permit persons to whom the Training Course is furnished to do so, subject to the following conditions:

The above copyright notice and this permission notice shall be included in all copies or substantial portions of the Training Course.

THE TRAINING COURSE IS PROVIDED "AS IS", WITHOUT WARRANTY OF ANY KIND, EXPRESS OR IMPLIED, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO THE WARRANTIES OF MERCHANTABILITY, FITNESS FOR A PARTICULAR PURPOSE AND NONINFRINGEMENT. IN NO EVENT SHALL THE AUTHORS OR COPYRIGHT HOLDERS BE LIABLE FOR ANY CLAIM, DAMAGES OR OTHER LIABILITY, WHETHER IN AN ACTION OF CONTRACT, TORT OR OTHERWISE, ARISING FROM, OUT OF OR IN CONNECTION WITH THE TRAINING COURSE OR THE USE OR OTHER DEALINGS IN THE TRAINING COURSE.

The globe logo is from www.mapAbility.com. Used with permission.

The Innovator's Dilemma

2

Introductory example

- Imagine it is about 1800 and you are head of a company that makes sailing ships that can cross an ocean:
 - Some customers want faster, bigger ships that can carry more cargo
 - You listen to these customers and build such ships
 - In doing so, you achieve ever-increasing profit margins
- Then the steamboat is invented:
 - It can move against the wind, or in the absence of wind, which makes it useful for use on inland rivers, canals and lakes
 - However, compared to your sailing ships, it is slower, costs more per mile to run and is unreliable, so it is unsuitable for use on the ocean
- What is your likely reaction to the steamboat?

Introductory example (cont')

- You *could* diversify your business:
 - Continue to build ocean-going sailing ships
 - But also invest in steam technology
- However, it is unlikely you would do so:
 - Your existing sailing-ship business serves a massive market and you barely have enough resources to meet customer demand
 - You cannot afford to divert resources into steamboats when:
 - Your existing customers do not want them
 - And there is a much smaller market for river steamboats
- Result:
 - Over time, steamboats got faster, more reliable and cheaper to operate
 - Eventually, they became "good enough" for use on the oceans
 - *None* of the sailing ship companies survived the transition to steam power

Disruptive technologies

- The introduction of steam technology for ships is an example of a *disruptive technology*:
 - It disrupted the industry of transoceanic ships *despite* (initially) being an inferior technology
 - Market-leading companies went out of business and were replaced by new companies
- An in-depth discussion of disruptive technologies is provided in the following book:
 - *The Innovator's dilemma* by Professor Clayton M. Christensen

Importance of *The Innovator's Dilemma*

- The book provides some important advice for businesses:
 - How a business can survive when a disruptive innovation is introduced to the market
 - Some do's and don'ts for introducing a disruptive innovation to your own business
- This chapter views the topic from a different point of view:
 - An *individual* innovator (rather than a business)
- The main lesson for an individual innovator is this:
 - Existing companies catering to the mainstream market may reject your innovation
 - If so, *assume* the innovation is disruptive and find a niche market for it
 - Success in a niche market will help you to eventually enter the mainstream market

1. Example: the Dyson vacuum cleaner

7

The Dyson vacuum cleaner

- In the 1970s, most vacuum cleaners used disposable bags to collect dirt
- James Dyson, an English inventor, noticed a problem:
 - The cleaners worked by drawing air and dirt into a bag and the air then went out through tiny pores in the bag, leaving the dirt in the bag
 - But even a small amount of dirt in the bag clogged up the pores, thus reducing the suction power
- James Dyson invented a new type of vacuum cleaner that avoided the need for bags:
 - No bags to clog up → no loss of suction
- This was a great technical breakthrough:
 - Surely he could license his technology to vacuum cleaner companies

Was this technology disruptive?

- Was the Dyson vacuum cleaner *disruptive*?
- Apparently no, because:
 - It was *superior* to mainstream vacuum cleaners (disruptive technologies are usually initially inferior)
- Apparently yes, because:
 - Mainstream vacuum cleaner manufacturers ignored the technology because they did not like the *marketing* implications
 - They made lots of money selling disposable vacuum cleaner bags
 - Disruptive technologies usually require a change in marketing, which mainstream manufacturers are reluctant to do

Suggested tactics

- The technology appears to be semi-disruptive
 - This suggests a tactic for James Dyson to use
- Tactic:
 - Stop trying to sell the technology to the mainstream manufacturers
 - They view it as disruptive, and so will never listen
 - Instead, sell it into a new, niche market
 - Use profits from the niche market to (eventually) attack the mainstream market
- Eventually, James Dyson found some small niche markets:
 - Industrial cleaners instead of consumer vacuum cleaners
 - In another country:
 - Manufacturers in Europe and America ignored the technology
 - However, he was able to license the technology in Japan

Results

- Profits from the niche markets plus additional investment enabled James Dyson to set up his own factory in England
- Results:
 - Dyson vacuum cleaners became the market leader in England despite costing 2 or 3 times more than most conventional vacuum cleaners
 - Dyson's patents limited the ability of mainstream manufacturers to compete with his new technology for several years
- You can find more details in James Dyson's autobiography:
 - The book is called *Against The Odds*
 - The book discusses many examples of dirty tricks used by business partners and mainstream companies to steal or discredit his ideas
 - The book's focus is "skills you will need, and obstacles you will face, if you want to be a successful inventor"

2. Example: Sister Kenny's treatment for polio

Polio

- Polio is a disease that affects muscles, thus causing paralysis:
 - Today, there are vaccines that make people immune to polio
 - But before the invention of the vaccine, Polio epidemics ruined the lives of millions of people
- For decades, doctors had a fundamentally flawed understanding of the nature of polio:
 - This caused them to treat polio in a way that was harmful (the treatment significantly worsened the effects of polio)
- A breakthrough in understanding polio came from a nurse:
 - Her name was Sister Elizabeth Kenny
 - “Sister” was a rank given to nurses in the Australian army

Elizabeth Kenny's first encounter with polio

- When Elizabeth was 14 she studied books on muscles:
 - The knowledge gained enabled her to devise exercises to strengthen the muscles of her weak younger brother
 - Her expertise in muscles later helped her gain insight into polio
- Later, she studied for 3 years to become a nurse:
 - She decided to become a “bush” (rural) nurse rather than work in a hospital
- At the age of 23, she encountered polio for the first time:
 - She was unfamiliar with this disease
 - She described the symptoms in a telegraph to Dr. McDonnell in the nearest hospital
 - The reply stated “No known treatment. Do the best you can with the symptoms presenting themselves.”

Initial success and opposition

- Combining her expert knowledge of muscles with experimentation, she treated and cured 6 cases
 - In doing so, she developed a theory of polio and coined several new terms to explain her theory
- Later, when she met Dr. McDonnell, he was amazed at her success:
 - He realized her theory and treatment of polio contradicted accepted medical knowledge
 - But Dr. McDonnell was a surgeon rather than an expert in polio so he could not effectively champion her unorthodox theory
- Elizabeth Kenny tried to explain her ideas to other doctors:
 - They would not listen to her
 - The problem was one of hierarchical authority: a nurse should not dare to teach a doctor

Tactics used

- Dr. McDonnell instinctively knew *The Innovator's Dilemma*:
 - Doctors (representing the mainstream market) were not interested in Elizabeth Kenny's ideas
 - Therefore, she should market her ideas elsewhere (a niche market)
 - He advised her to set up her own treatment clinics
- She took his advice:
 - Polio sufferers who had tried the mainstream doctors and not been cured went, in desperation, to Elizabeth Kenny clinics
 - Many citizens became supporters of Elizabeth Kenny
 - So did some people in government, because they saw the practical benefits
 - But still the medical establishment refused to consider her ideas

Tactics used (cont')

- Over time, she became more famous and controversial:
 - Her support among the general population increased, but...
 - After 25 years, most Australian doctors still refused to consider her ideas
- Eventually, she took her ideas to other markets:
 - English doctors were initially sceptical, but within a year she had convinced many of them
 - Within 2 years of being in America, her ideas became accepted in the USA and Canada
- Elizabeth Kenny's legacy:
 - The need for her polio treatment diminished when, years later, a polio vaccine was developed
 - However, her knowledge of muscles has had a lasting impact in *physiotherapy* (called *physical therapy* in some countries)

3. Example: Manufacturing goods without exploitation

Manufacturing goods without exploitation

- Many items you buy are manufactured abroad
 - Some of these items are made by exploiting people in slave-labour conditions
 - Let's assume you want to end slave-labour conditions around the world

- You will face the following problem:
 - Most companies use foreign, slave labour to keep down the cost of manufacture of a particular product
 - One company uses more expensive, non-slave labour for the same product
 - That company *cannot* compete on price in the mainstream market (and so risks going out of business)

- This suggests you cannot end slave labour by trying to change the practices of mainstream companies

Use of a disruptive tactic

- There *is* a way to bring about change:
 - Create a niche market for products that are not manufactured with slave labour (or other exploitative practices)

- Example:
 - Create *The Fairtrade Foundation* that controls use of a "fairtrade" logo
 - Allow non-exploitative companies to use this logo on their products
 - A minority of customers will buy fairtrade products instead of cheaper non-fairtrade products
 - Such customers value a clear conscience more than other product attributes, such as "cheapest price" or "highest quality"
 - This niche market will slowly grow if you educate consumers
 - Eventually mainstream manufacturers will notice the decline in sales of their non-fairtrade products, and will change their business practices

Widespread use of this tactic

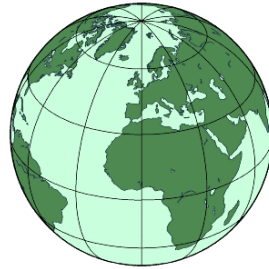
- The Fairtrade Foundation is not the only organization to use this tactic
- Some countries have an official “organic” or “environmentally friendly” logo that can be used on conforming products
- The use of an national or international official logo is not always necessary:
 - Some companies independently market themselves for niche markets
 - Example: The Body Shop (cosmetics)
 - Example: Benny & Jerry's (ice cream)

4. Summary

Summary

- Let's assume you have an innovation
- If you can interest mainstream companies in your innovation:
 - Great. Instant success
- If you *cannot* interest mainstream companies in your innovation then:
 - You could keep trying to interest them, but you are unlikely to succeed
 - It is probably better to find a niche market for your innovation
 - Eventually, your niche market may grow and replace the mainstream market
- Advice:
 - Be patient. It may takes decades for the niche market to grow enough to replace the mainstream market

The Luck Factor



CiaranMcHale.com
Complexity explained simply

1

License

Copyright © 2009 Ciaran McHale.

Permission is hereby granted, free of charge, to any person obtaining a copy of this training course and associated documentation files (the "Training Course"), to deal in the Training Course without restriction, including without limitation the rights to use, copy, modify, merge, publish, distribute, sublicense, and/or sell copies of the Training Course, and to permit persons to whom the Training Course is furnished to do so, subject to the following conditions:

The above copyright notice and this permission notice shall be included in all copies or substantial portions of the Training Course.

THE TRAINING COURSE IS PROVIDED "AS IS", WITHOUT WARRANTY OF ANY KIND, EXPRESS OR IMPLIED, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO THE WARRANTIES OF MERCHANTABILITY, FITNESS FOR A PARTICULAR PURPOSE AND NONINFRINGEMENT. IN NO EVENT SHALL THE AUTHORS OR COPYRIGHT HOLDERS BE LIABLE FOR ANY CLAIM, DAMAGES OR OTHER LIABILITY, WHETHER IN AN ACTION OF CONTRACT, TORT OR OTHERWISE, ARISING FROM, OUT OF OR IN CONNECTION WITH THE TRAINING COURSE OR THE USE OR OTHER DEALINGS IN THE TRAINING COURSE.

The globe logo is from www.mapAbility.com. Used with permission.

The Luck Factor

2

The Luck Factor

- Richard Wiseman (www.RichardWiseman.com):
 - Is a professor of psychology at the University of Hertfordshire, UK
 - Does research into deception, humor, the paranormal and luck
- He wondered if there was a psychological basis for luck:
 - He used experiments, questionnaires and interviews to find out
 - He published the results in the bestseller book *The Luck Factor*
- He discovered that:
 - Lucky and unlucky people have different behaviors and attitudes
 - If you change these then you can increase your luck
- Luck is often associated with success, so...
 - If you can become luckier then you are more likely to be able to change the world

Principle 1: maximize your chance opportunities

- Meet and interact with more people:
 - Talk to strangers at bus stops, while waiting in line or at parties
 - Use “open” (friendly, inviting) body language and smile to attract people
 - Build and maintain a long-lasting network of friends and colleagues
- Try to stay relaxed:
 - You will notice more chance opportunities if you are relaxed instead of anxious
- Be open to new experiences:
 - New or random experiences can expose you to more opportunities
 - Try new food, vary your route to work or your method of transport
 - Every time you go on holiday, go to a different place
 - Talk to new people, or talk about different topics to people you already know

Principle 2: pay attention to your intuition

- Questionnaires showed that lucky people are more likely to listen to their intuition in 4 parts of their lives:
 - Careers, personal relationships, business and finance
- Examples:
 - A woman had a history of relationships that turned out to be abusive
 - Each time she started such a relationship, her intuition told her the man was not good for her
 - But she ignored her intuition each time

 - Intuition lead a salesman to put great effort into getting information for a potential customer
 - All his colleagues thought it was a foolish waste of time
 - Within a year, he had a £140,000 of business from this new customer

Principle 2: pay attention to your intuition (cont')

- Lucky people employ techniques to boost their intuition:
 - Some meditate on a regular basis
 - Some find a quiet place to relax and clear their mind
 - Some stop working on a difficult problem for a while and return to it again after they have had a chance to think about it

Principle 3: be optimistic

- Optimism and pessimism can become self-fulfilling prophecies:
 - If you are optimistic about a goal then you may work harder to achieve it
 - If you are pessimistic about a goal then you may subconsciously sabotage your own efforts
- Lucky people tend to persevere when something is difficult:
 - In contrast, unlucky people give up sooner, thereby decreasing their chances of success
- Lucky people are optimistic about their interactions with others:
 - They assume that other people are competent and approachable
 - This creates a self-fulfilling prophecy

Principle 4: turn bad luck into good

- Focusing on negative thoughts makes you feel depressed and wastes energy:
 - Unlucky people tend to focus on the negative
 - Lucky people tend to focus on the positive
- Lucky people can see the positive side of bad luck:
 - “Somebody accidentally shot me in the arm? I’m lucky because I might have been killed.”
 - “I broke a leg and am housebound? This gives me a chance to read some books that I’ve been too busy to read previously.”
- Lucky people think that bad luck will work out for the best in the end:
 - “I’m in prison for committing a crime? Perhaps I should think of a different career path.”

Principle 4: turn bad luck into good (cont')

- Lucky people learn from their mistakes or bad luck:
 - "I've been rejected by dates or potential employers. I need to find out what I have been doing wrong so I can fix it and succeed next time."

Luck school

- Richard Wiseman wondered if good luck could be taught:
 - He developed an experiment called *luck school* in which...
 - People filled out a questionnaire to determine their current level of luck
 - He gave them advice and exercises that might improve their luck
 - A month later, 80% of the people reported that their luck had improved dramatically
- *The Luck Factor* book discusses several exercises to increase luck

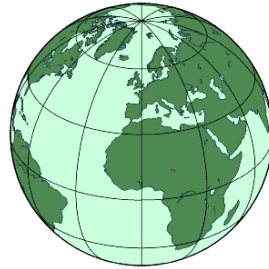
Relevant quotes

- Several popular quotes support aspects of *The Luck Factor*
 - “You make your own luck”
 - “The harder I work, the luckier I get”
- Similar ideas can be found in several religions:
 - Christianity: “The Lord helps those who help themselves”
 - Islam: “If you take one step towards Allah, He will take two steps towards you”

Summary

- Luck is closely associated with success
 - If you want to be successful in changing the world then you should be interested in luck
- Richard Wiseman’s research indicates:
 - Luck is largely determined by how you think and act
 - You can change your luck by changing how you think and act
- This chapter has provided a quick overview
 - Read *The Luck Factor* for more details

Mindset



CiaranMcHale.com
Complexity explained simply

1

License

Copyright © 2009 Ciaran McHale.

Permission is hereby granted, free of charge, to any person obtaining a copy of this training course and associated documentation files (the "Training Course"), to deal in the Training Course without restriction, including without limitation the rights to use, copy, modify, merge, publish, distribute, sublicense, and/or sell copies of the Training Course, and to permit persons to whom the Training Course is furnished to do so, subject to the following conditions:

The above copyright notice and this permission notice shall be included in all copies or substantial portions of the Training Course.

THE TRAINING COURSE IS PROVIDED "AS IS", WITHOUT WARRANTY OF ANY KIND, EXPRESS OR IMPLIED, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO THE WARRANTIES OF MERCHANTABILITY, FITNESS FOR A PARTICULAR PURPOSE AND NONINFRINGEMENT. IN NO EVENT SHALL THE AUTHORS OR COPYRIGHT HOLDERS BE LIABLE FOR ANY CLAIM, DAMAGES OR OTHER LIABILITY, WHETHER IN AN ACTION OF CONTRACT, TORT OR OTHERWISE, ARISING FROM, OUT OF OR IN CONNECTION WITH THE TRAINING COURSE OR THE USE OR OTHER DEALINGS IN THE TRAINING COURSE.

The globe logo is from www.mapAbility.com. Used with permission.

Mindset

2

Introduction

- Carol S. Dweck:
 - Is a professor of psychology at Stanford University in the USA
 - Conducts research in several areas, including motivation
- One experiment early in her career was as follows:
 - Children were given simple puzzles to work on (so they could experience success initially)
 - Afterwards, they were given harder puzzles to work on (so they could then experience failure)
 - What tactics would the children use to cope with failure?
- The reactions of some children surprised her:
 - Some seemed to *enjoy* the likelihood of failure
 - “I love a challenge”, “I was *hoping* this would be informative!”

Introduction (cont')

- Over time, Carol S. Dweck developed a theory to explain this and other aspects of human behaviour
- The theory is very simple, but it has implications for many aspects of life:
 - Education, work, sports, relationships, ...
- This chapter explains the theory and some of its implications
- You can read details in the book, *Mindset* by Carol S. Dweck

1. A simple theory

5

Two mindsets: fixed and growth

- Dictionary definition of *mindset*:
 - A mental attitude that predetermines a person's responses to an interpretation of situations
- Carol Dweck identified two important mindsets
- Growth mindset:
 - "No matter what my skill level currently is, I can improve through continued practice"
 - "I do not worry about making mistakes or failing because they provide opportunities for learning"
- Fixed mindset:
 - "My skill level is fixed; I am either good or bad at something and there is not much, if anything, I can do to change my skill level"
 - "My self-esteem is based on whether I am better or worse than other people"

Miscellaneous notes

- Having a growth mindset is good
- Having a fixed mindset can result in many types of dysfunctional behaviour
 - The next section contains some examples
- Most people have a mixture of both mindsets:
 - Example: you might have a growth mindset for learning foreign languages and a fixed mindset for mathematics or relationships
- Your mindset can change:
 - Becoming aware of the concept of mindsets can help you change
 - People can be taught to have a particular mindset
 - How you are treated by others can influence which mindset you have (this has implications for parents, teachers, coaches and managers)

2. Dysfunctional behaviour arising from a fixed mindset

Identities arising from a fixed mindset

- A fixed mindset can transform an action into an identity

Action	Identity
I succeeded	I am a success
I failed	I am a failure

- An “I am a failure” identity can be bad for your mental health
- When you make a mistake:
 - You might sink into depression
 - Or, you might make excuses or assign blame to others
 - By denying responsibility, you deny yourself the opportunity to learn from mistakes or failure
 - Blaming others unfairly is a form of verbal abuse

Identities arising from a fixed mindset (cont')

- An “I am a success” identity can also be bad:
 - It encourages a feeling of superiority over other people (This can cause you to mistreat others)
 - Even when currently successful, you might be fearful of future failure
- People with a fixed mindset are more likely to try to look good by comparison with others:
 - By putting other people down
 - By agreeing with derogatory stereotypes of other groups
- People with a fixed mindset are also more likely to begrudge the success of others:
 - Somebody being more successful than you can make you feel like a failure

Fixed mindsets in education

- Consider two students who have fixed mindsets
- Fred has poor mathematical skills. He thinks:
 - “I’m no good, and can never be any good, at this. Therefore, there is no point in me even trying.”
 - This becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy. Without studying, he will fail
- John has excellent mathematical skills. He thinks:
 - “People who are poor at mathematics have to study hard to improve. Mathematics comes naturally to me, so I don’t have to work at it.”
 - “I must not put effort into studying mathematics because doing that would suggest I *need* to study hard, and only people who are poor at mathematics need to study hard.”
 - “I am the best in the school at mathematics. I must not enter a national competition because if I lose then I would no longer be ‘the best’”.

Fixed mindsets in education (cont’)

- John’s fixed mindset can result in problems:
 - Eventually, he will encounter a mathematical topic beyond his natural ability
 - At this point, his refusal to study hard will stunt his education
 - He might cheat or lie to maintain his reputation for being “the best” at mathematics
(in one experiment, 40% of fixed-mindset students who viewed themselves as having high abilities lied about poor test results)
 - His refusal to take part in competitions (due to fear of failure) limits his opportunities in life
- So a fixed mindset can cause you problems in education, regardless of your skill level

Fixed mindsets in education (cont')

- Recall that people with a fixed mindset are more likely to try to look good by comparison with others
- This was verified by the following experiment:
 - Students who did poorly on a test were given the chance to look at the test papers of other students
 - Students with a growth mindset looked at tests of students who did much better to find inspiration
 - Students with a fixed mindset looked at tests of students who did much worse, so they could feel better about themselves

Self sabotage

- A person with a growth mindset is comfortable admitting ignorance or limitations and seeking help
- In contrast, a person with a fixed mindset:
 - Does not like admitting ignorance or limitations for fear of people judging him or her
 - Might reject offers of help (because that would be admitting a problem)
- One experiment concerned Chinese students attending an English-language university:
 - Some of the new students were not fluent in English
 - Those with a growth mindset accepted the offer of a free English course
 - Those with a fixed mindset rejected the offer:
 - They did not want to admit to any deficiencies
 - In this way, they sabotaged their own education

Prejudice

- The concept of a stereotype is closely related to a fixed mindset
- Research shows that people with a fixed mindset are more likely to believe derogatory stereotypes:
 - About *other* groups
 - About *their own* group
- This suggests that you can reduce prejudice indirectly:
 - Teaching a growth mindset to a population will have the side-effect of reducing prejudice in the population

Bullying

- Bullying comes from a fixed mindset.
It involves passing judgement on others to:
 - Boost your own self-esteem (“I’m better than the victim”)
 - Increase your social standing
(others may think you are cool, funny or powerful, or at least fear you)
- Victims of bullying cope better if they have a growth mindset:
 - They reject the bully’s judgement
 - They seek to end the bullying through peaceful means
- Victims of bullying with a fixed mindset:
 - Accept the bully’s judgement (“I am worthless”)
 - Are more likely to dream of violent revenge

Bullying (cont')

- One school tackled bullying by teaching students a growth mindset
- Within a few years:
 - Physical bullying decreased 93%
 - Verbal teasing decreased 53%

Leadership

- A fixed mindset in a leader or manager can cause problems
- He may spend an organization's money foolishly:
 - Growing the organization is not a high priority
 - Making himself look good to the world is a higher priority
 - Luxurious office, company car (or jet airplane), ...
- He may humiliate subordinates who make mistakes
- He may try to sabotage the careers or projects of talented subordinates
 - Because they threaten his "I'm the best" identity

Relationships

- Some examples of fixed-mindset thinking:
 - Fairy tales that end with two people falling in love and “they lived happily ever after”
 - Looking for “Mr. Right” or “Miss Right”
 - “Love means never having to say you’re sorry”
(a famous quote from the book and 1970 movie *Love Story*)
- The assumption is that when you meet the “right” person:
 - You will be a perfect match (without even trying)
 - You will always get along perfectly

Problems with a fixed mindset in relationships

- Fixed-mindset thinking in relationships brings problems due to two assumptions
- Assumption 1:
 - “If you have to work at the relationship, it wasn’t meant to be”
 - This means you are likely to end the relationship when problems arise
- Assumption 2:
 - “Problems are a sign of permanent personality flaws”
 - You are likely to blame your partner when problems occur in the relationship
 - Over time, you will grow to feel contempt for your partner’s personality flaws

A growth mindset in relationships

- A growth mindset says everything, including relationships, can improve with continued effort
- Instead of
 “And we lived happily ever after”,
the attitude is
 “And we worked (at the relationship) happily ever after”
- Communication is vitally important for:
 - Resetting each other’s expectations about roles and responsibilities
 - Resolving problems (instead of assuming they indicate character flaws)
- Offer support rather than judgement. Example:
 - You come home and find the house is messy because your partner is swamped with work
 - Support your partner by clearing up rather than criticizing the mess

The ending of a relationship

- If your partner ends their relationship with you, your reaction depends on your mindset
- If you have a growth mindset, you will be hurt but:
 - Forgive your former partner for the hurt and wish them well
 - Try to learn from mistakes in the relationship so you can have better relationships in the future
- If you have a fixed mindset, you will:
 - Interpret this as your partner judging you to be unlovable
 - Want to seek revenge for this humiliation

3. How to create a particular mindset in others

23

Creating a mindset in others

- You can create a fixed mindset by praising ability. Examples:
 - “You learned that so quickly; you’re so smart.”
 - “You’re a genius; you got an A without even studying.”
 - “That’s a great drawing. You’re going to be the next Picasso.”
- You can create a growth mindset by praising persistence in practice or study, and good strategies. Examples:
 - “You did well on that test; you must have worked hard”
 - “You put so much thought into that essay. It really makes me understand Shakespeare in a new way.”
 - “The passion you put into that piano piece gives me a real feeling of joy. How do you feel when you play it?”

Genius

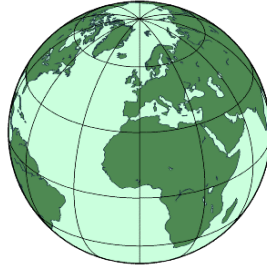
- “Genius” is commonly thought to mean a superior ability that comes *naturally* to a person:
 - In other words, either you are born a genius or you are not
 - If you are not born with the relevant abilities then:
 - You will never be as intelligent as Albert Einstein
 - You will never play basketball as well as Michael Jordan
- This commonly held understanding of “genius” is full of fixed-mindset thinking. It is also wrong
- Thomas Edison offered a more accurate definition, which comes from a growth-mindset thinking:
 - “Genius is 1% inspiration and 99% perspiration”
- A later chapter of slides (*Curse of the Genius Label*) discusses genius in more detail

4. Summary

Summary

- A fixed mindset causes dysfunctional behaviour that harms you and others
- A growth mindset avoids such dysfunctional behaviour
- It *is* possible to learn and teach a growth mindset
 - See *Mindset* by Carol S. Dweck
- You can improve your ability to change the world by:
 - Eradicating fixed-mindset thinking within yourself
 - Introducing a growth mindset to people and organizations you work with

Flow



CiaranMcHale.com
Complexity explained simply

1

License

Copyright © 2009 Ciaran McHale.

Permission is hereby granted, free of charge, to any person obtaining a copy of this training course and associated documentation files (the "Training Course"), to deal in the Training Course without restriction, including without limitation the rights to use, copy, modify, merge, publish, distribute, sublicense, and/or sell copies of the Training Course, and to permit persons to whom the Training Course is furnished to do so, subject to the following conditions:

The above copyright notice and this permission notice shall be included in all copies or substantial portions of the Training Course.

THE TRAINING COURSE IS PROVIDED "AS IS", WITHOUT WARRANTY OF ANY KIND, EXPRESS OR IMPLIED, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO THE WARRANTIES OF MERCHANTABILITY, FITNESS FOR A PARTICULAR PURPOSE AND NONINFRINGEMENT. IN NO EVENT SHALL THE AUTHORS OR COPYRIGHT HOLDERS BE LIABLE FOR ANY CLAIM, DAMAGES OR OTHER LIABILITY, WHETHER IN AN ACTION OF CONTRACT, TORT OR OTHERWISE, ARISING FROM, OUT OF OR IN CONNECTION WITH THE TRAINING COURSE OR THE USE OR OTHER DEALINGS IN THE TRAINING COURSE.

The globe logo is from www.mapAbility.com. Used with permission.

Flow

2

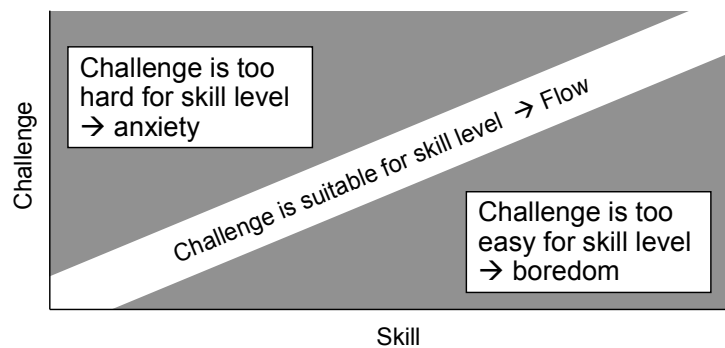
What is flow?

- You may have the following experience occasionally:
 - You focus your attention on an activity
 - Your involvement with the activity becomes deep but it seems effortless
 - You become unaware of your surroundings or the passing of time
- That experience is called *flow*:
 - Also referred to as being *in the groove* or *in the zone*
 - After flow has ended, you usually feel very happy and self-confident
- Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi is a psychologist:
 - He wondered “When are people happy?”
 - In researching that question, he discovered the concept of flow
 - He wrote *Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience*
- This chapter explains flow and explains why it is relevant to people who want to change the world

Awareness of surroundings during flow

- During flow, people are often unaware of their surroundings
- There is experimental evidence to support this:
 - Brain activity in the cerebral cortex is associated with senses
 - Individuals had activity in their cerebral cortex measured before and during an experiment
 - The experiment involved individuals paying attention to flashes of light or sound
 - There was *increased* brain activity in people who reported they rarely entered states of flow
 - There was *decreased* brain activity in people who reported they often entered states of flow
 - Conclusion: while in flow, your brain processes only inputs relevant to the task at hand

Flow provides opportunities for learning



- You can enter a state of flow when your skills are just good enough for the challenge of the task:
 - As skills improve, you must increase the challenge to remain in flow
 - In this way, flow provides opportunities for learning and improving skills
- After a state of flow has ended, you feel happy:
 - Because your skills or knowledge have improved

Entering a state of flow for different activities

- Most people experience flow for a particular activity:
 - That activity varies from one person to another
 - Examples: playing chess, painting, mountain climbing, swimming, reading, gardening, writing, composing music, playing a sport, ...
- Some people invent games to enter a state of flow during boring activities:
 - Doing this can turn a boring situation into an interesting one
- Example:
 - One man, had a repetitive boring job on a factory assembly line
 - The task performed on each unit was supposed to take 43 seconds
 - He set himself the challenge of doing it faster
 - Over a five-year period, he reduced his time to 28 seconds per unit

Entering a state of flow for different activities (cont')

- Another example:
 - To pass time in boring meetings, a man composed complex sequences of finger taps
- Some people invent games to enter a state of flow during times of stress:
 - Doing this can turn a stressful situation into an invigorating challenge
- Some examples from former prisoners:
 - Play chess against yourself in your head
 - Compose and memorise poems
 - Hold imaginary conversations in a foreign language
 - In a Hungarian prison, inmates kept themselves occupied for over a year by secretly running poetry translation competitions

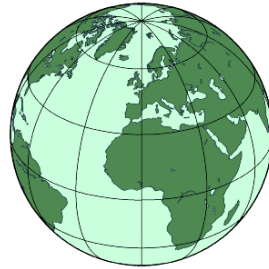
Flow and the meaning of life

- Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi claims that flow can help you to find the meaning of life
- His logic is as follows:
 - What is the meaning of life?
 - It is whatever provides you with meaning in life
 - How do you find meaning in life?
 - By frequently doing an activity that puts you in a state of flow

Relevance to changing the world

- Reasons why flow is relevant to people who want to change the world...
- Changing the world takes a lot of time and effort:
 - You may not have the required endurance if there is a lot of anxiety or boredom
 - If your effort frequently puts you in a state of flow then you will find it to be deeply satisfying
- This suggests two useful pieces of advice:
 - Your work of changing the world should be based on flow-inducing activities
 - If that is not feasible then invent mind games to help you enter a state of flow for boring or stressful activities

Obedience to Authority



CiaranMcHale.com
Complexity explained simply

1

License

Copyright © 2009 Ciaran McHale.

Permission is hereby granted, free of charge, to any person obtaining a copy of this training course and associated documentation files (the "Training Course"), to deal in the Training Course without restriction, including without limitation the rights to use, copy, modify, merge, publish, distribute, sublicense, and/or sell copies of the Training Course, and to permit persons to whom the Training Course is furnished to do so, subject to the following conditions:

The above copyright notice and this permission notice shall be included in all copies or substantial portions of the Training Course.

THE TRAINING COURSE IS PROVIDED "AS IS", WITHOUT WARRANTY OF ANY KIND, EXPRESS OR IMPLIED, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO THE WARRANTIES OF MERCHANTABILITY, FITNESS FOR A PARTICULAR PURPOSE AND NONINFRINGEMENT. IN NO EVENT SHALL THE AUTHORS OR COPYRIGHT HOLDERS BE LIABLE FOR ANY CLAIM, DAMAGES OR OTHER LIABILITY, WHETHER IN AN ACTION OF CONTRACT, TORT OR OTHERWISE, ARISING FROM, OUT OF OR IN CONNECTION WITH THE TRAINING COURSE OR THE USE OR OTHER DEALINGS IN THE TRAINING COURSE.

The globe logo is from www.mapAbility.com. Used with permission.

Obedience to Authority

2

Introduction

- After World War II, nazi leaders were tried for war crimes
 - Some of the accused claimed “I was just following orders” as their (unsuccessful) defence
- Stanley Milgram was a social psychologist at Yale University:
 - He was curious about the “I was just following orders” defence
 - He decided to test the willingness of people to follow orders that conflict with their conscience
 - The results of his experiments were published:
 - Initially in academic journals in the 1960s
 - Then later in his 1974 book *Obedience to Authority*
- This chapter:
 - Describes the experiments and their results
 - Explains their relevance to people who want to change the world

1. Description of the experiments

Description of the experiments

- Members of the public were recruited to take part in an experiment:
 - They were told it was to test the effects of punishment on learning
- An experiment consisted of:
 - A “learner” who was strapped into an electric chair in one room
 - A “teacher” who sat in another room. He used an intercom to ask the learner multiple-choice questions:
 - The learner pressed one of 4 buttons to answer
 - If the answer was wrong then the teacher pressed a button to administer an electric shock
 - The electric shocks increased in intensity for each incorrect answer (from 15 volts to 450 volts, in 15-volt increments)
 - An “experimenter” (in a lab coat) supervised the teacher:
 - If the learner’s screams of pain disturbed the teacher, the experimenter asked the teacher to continue

The real purpose of the experiment

- Both the teacher and learner were members of the public recruited to take part in the experiment
 - The roles of “teacher” and “learner” appeared to be randomly assigned
- The teacher did not realize that:
 - The “random” assignment of roles was rigged
 - The learner was an actor who *pretended* to receive electric shocks
 - The learner’s right and wrong answers and cries of pain were scripted (beyond a certain voltage level, the learner remained quiet, indicating that he might be unconscious or dead)
- The real experiment was to test obedience to authority:
 - In particular, when obedience meant doing something contrary to one’s conscience
 - At what point would the teacher refuse to continue the experiment?

Variations of the experiment

- The experiment was performed on 40 “teachers” at a time:
 - Then a change was made and the modified experiment was repeated on 40 new “teachers”
- Many variations of the experiment were performed, including:
 - Using men or women in the role of teacher
 - Using a mild-mannered or hard-looking actor in the role of student
 - Having the learner complain of heart problems
 - Putting the student in the same room as the teacher
 - Requiring the teacher to press the student’s hand onto a metal plate to give the electric shock
 - Putting the “experimenter” into another room and enabling the teacher to contact him by telephone
 - Dividing the teacher’s duties among 3 people (2 of whom were actors) and having the two actor-teachers refuse to continue the experiment at particular voltages

2. Expectations and results of the experiment

Modest expectations for the experiment

- Stanley Milgram realized that:
 - The experimenter would not have “real” authority over the teacher
 - The volunteer teacher could *not* be fined, imprisoned or sacked for disobeying
 - Because of this, the experiment could not replicate realistic situations of authority in, for example, the army
- However, Stanley Milgram thought his “modest” experiment would still be useful:
 - The experiment might provide some insights to help him develop better experiments in the future

Predictions of the experimental results

- Before starting the experiments, Stanley Milgram asked some colleagues to predict the outcome of the experiments:
- They predicted:
 - About 2/3 of the teachers would refuse to continue the first time the learner demanded the experiment be stopped
 - About 1 in 1000 teachers would continue the experiment to the maximum voltage level

Actual experimental results

- The results of the experiment surprised everyone:
 - The majority of teachers continued the experiment to the maximum voltage level
 - This surprising result is what caused Milgram to do so many variations of the experiment
 - He was trying to discover the factors that might cause people to *disobey* authority

- The teachers were *not* sadists:
 - They represented a wide variety of demographics
 - Most displayed signs of increasing stress as the experiment went on
 - Many argued and pleaded with researchers to stop the experiment, but continued reluctantly when the researcher asked them to do so

3. Insights from the experiments

Insights into human behaviour

- The experiments provide some insights into human behaviour
- Insight 1:
 - Most humans have a strong urge to obey authority *even when*:
 - Authority instructs them to do something against their conscience
 - The “authority” does not have any means to punish people who disobey
- Insight 2:
 - When faced with a conflict: (1) do something wrong or (2) disobey, we pass the responsibility for the wrong-doing to the figure of authority
 - Hence the “I was only following orders” defence of war criminals
- Insight 3:
 - Inflicting hurt on another person can cause you to despise them (your conscience retrofits reasons to justify you hurting the person)

What is the relevance to changing the world?

- Those insights are interesting insights into human behaviour
 - But they are not necessarily relevant if you want to change the world
- The experiments do provide other insights that *are* relevant
 - But before discussing those insights, we need to take a slight detour

A theory to explain obedience to authority

- Near the end of *Obedience to Authority*, Stanley Milgram presents a theory to explain *why* people obey authority:
- Milgram notes that authority hierarchies are ubiquitous in human societies:
 - Family: children obey parents; one spouse obeys the other
 - Religion, schools, places of work, the army, hospitals, team sports, systems of government, policing ...
- Authority hierarchies can also be observed in other animal species
- This ubiquity suggests that authority hierarchies might be intrinsic to the nature of humans (and other species)

Summary of Milgram's theory

- Within any species:
 - Uncontrolled competition among individuals will wipe out the species
 - Evolution gives individuals a conscience that limits competition **(1)**
- In addition:
 - A society in which each individual is a "Jack of all trades and a master of none" has a poor chance of survival
 - Specialized division of labour increases a society's chances of survival
 - Such divisions of labour can be coordinated with a hierarchy of authority
 - For this to work, individuals must be willing to obey authority **(2)**
 - This improves the survival chances for the society (and its individuals)
 - Challenges to authority are stopped (viciously if necessary) because they decrease the society's chances of survival
- Evolution has decided that **(2)** takes precedence over **(1)**:
 - This results in a strong instinct to obey authority *instead of* conscience

Summary of Milgram's theory (cont')

- An individual acting within a hierarchy:
 - "No longer views himself as acting out of his own purposes but rather comes to see himself as an agent for executing the wishes of another person."
- This means an individual does not feel guilt if he obeys orders to do something immoral:
 - "I was just following orders"
- Morality is still present, but with a different focus:
 - The individual "feels shame or pride depending on how adequately he has performed the actions called for by authority"
- We can now discuss some insights relevant to changing the world

Insight 4

- Bringing about change may require you to challenge existing authority:
 - Change the status quo → challenge the status quo's authority hierarchy
 - Do not be surprised if some people try to viciously suppress your challenge of authority
- Examples:
 - A government:
 - Might use dirty tactics to fight terrorists
 - Might also use dirty tactics to investigate peaceful protestors or those who publicly express criticisms of the government
 - A company has been doing a particular task the same way for years:
 - An employee finds a different and better way to do the same task
 - The employee's idea might be suppressed
 - The employee might be punished or sacked

Insight 5

- If you are fighting oppression then:
 - Many of your oppressors might *not* actually hate you
 - Instead, they could be just following orders
- Nelson Mandela's autobiography contains an example:
 - See Chapter 72 of *Long Walk to Freedom*
 - Nelson Mandela was held at Robben Island prison
 - A commanding officer with a reputation for brutality was moved there
 - This commanding officer made life hell for the prisoners
 - Later when the commanding officer was being transferred to another prison, he surprised Nelson Mandela by wishing him "Good luck"
- Nelson Mandela's conclusion:
 - The commanding officer "was not evil; his inhumanity had been foisted upon him by an inhuman system"

Insight 6

- Obedience drops if the teacher is aware of the learner's pain:
 - Learner is in another room and the teacher *cannot* hear his screams (obedience is 65%)
 - Learner is in another room and the teacher *can* hear his screams (obedience is 62.5%)
 - Move the learner into the same room as the teacher (obedience drops to 40%)
 - Have the teacher force the learner's hand onto a metal plate to administer the electric shock (obedience drops to 30%)
- If you want an "evil corporation" to stop doing evil:
 - Find ways for its employees to directly sense (hear, see, touch, smell, taste) the effects of its evil policies

Insight 7

- Many obedient teachers tried to sabotage the experiment:
 - They emphasised the correct answer when reading a list of possible answers
 - If the experimenter was not in the room then they administered the lowest voltage shock
- A real life analogy is an employee who leaks sensitive information to activist groups or journalists

Insight 8

- Experiments were done on a group of 3 teachers:
 - One teacher read questions, another indicated if the learner's answer was right or wrong, and the last teacher administered electric shocks
 - Only one teacher was a volunteer; the other two were actors
- Results:
 - If the two actor teachers obey then the volunteer teacher's obedience increases (to 92.5%)
 - If the two actor teachers disobey then the volunteer teacher's obedience decreases (to 10%)
- These experiments show the importance of group effects:
 - Feeling you are just a cog in a wheel makes it difficult to disobey immoral orders ("If I don't do it then somebody else will")
 - Seeing others disobey immoral authority gives you courage to disobey
 - This is why people in authority must *quickly* suppress disobedience

3. Summary

23

Summary

- Stanley Milgram's *Obedience to Authority* shocked the world:
 - Good people can easily do evil
- According to Milgram's theory:
 - Evolution has decided that obedience to authority takes precedence over an individual's conscience
 - Challenges to authority are often subdued, with violence if necessary
- Bringing about change may require you to challenge existing authority:
 - Change the status quo → challenge the status quo's authority hierarchy
 - Do not be surprised if some people try to viciously suppress your challenge of authority

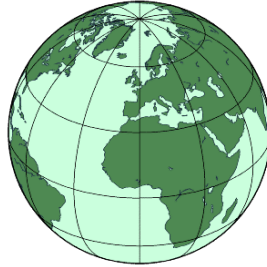
Summary (cont')

- If you are fighting oppression then:
 - Many of your oppressors might *not* actually hate you
 - Instead, they could be just following orders

- If you want an “evil corporation” to stop doing evil:
 - Find ways for its employees to directly sense (hear, see, touch, smell, taste) the effects of its evil policies
 - Some employees with a troubled conscience may leak sensitive information to activists or journalists

- Group effects play an important role in obedience:
 - Feeling you are just a cog in a wheel makes it difficult to disobey immoral orders (“If I don’t do it then somebody else will”)
 - Seeing others disobey immoral authority gives you courage to disobey

Confirmation Bias



CiaranMcHale.com
Complexity explained simply

1

License

Copyright © 2009 Ciaran McHale.

Permission is hereby granted, free of charge, to any person obtaining a copy of this training course and associated documentation files (the "Training Course"), to deal in the Training Course without restriction, including without limitation the rights to use, copy, modify, merge, publish, distribute, sublicense, and/or sell copies of the Training Course, and to permit persons to whom the Training Course is furnished to do so, subject to the following conditions:

The above copyright notice and this permission notice shall be included in all copies or substantial portions of the Training Course.

THE TRAINING COURSE IS PROVIDED "AS IS", WITHOUT WARRANTY OF ANY KIND, EXPRESS OR IMPLIED, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO THE WARRANTIES OF MERCHANTABILITY, FITNESS FOR A PARTICULAR PURPOSE AND NONINFRINGEMENT. IN NO EVENT SHALL THE AUTHORS OR COPYRIGHT HOLDERS BE LIABLE FOR ANY CLAIM, DAMAGES OR OTHER LIABILITY, WHETHER IN AN ACTION OF CONTRACT, TORT OR OTHERWISE, ARISING FROM, OUT OF OR IN CONNECTION WITH THE TRAINING COURSE OR THE USE OR OTHER DEALINGS IN THE TRAINING COURSE.

The globe logo is from www.mapAbility.com. Used with permission.

Confirmation Bias

2

Introduction

- In 1960, Peter Wason performed the following experiment...
- A person was:
 - Shown three numbers (a triplet), for example: 2, 4, 6
 - Told the numbers conformed to a particular rule
 - Asked to generate their own triplets, and they would be told whether each triplet conformed to the rule
- When the person was sure what the rule was, they should announce it
- Most people did *not* deduce the correct rule:
 - The correct rule was “any sequence of increasing numbers”
 - They thought the rule was different, for example, “successive even numbers” or “numbers increasing by 2”
 - They tested their hypothesis only with triplets that agreed with it

Introduction (cont')

- Wason's experiment provides an example of *confirmation bias*
 - You form an opinion based on evidence available initially
 - Afterwards, you are likely to:
 - Seek out more evidence that supports your already-formed opinion
 - Ignore (or neglect to seek out) evidence that contradicts your already-formed opinion
- For more details, see:
 - *Confirmation Bias: A Ubiquitous Phenomenon in Many Guises* by Raymond S. Nickerson, in *Review of General Psychology* 1998, volume 2, number 2, pages 175–220
- This chapter:
 - Provides some more examples of confirmation bias (most are taken from the above paper)
 - Explains how it is relevant to people who want to change the world

1. Examples of confirmation bias

5

Making predictions

- Some activities are based on an ability to make predictions:
 - Examples: astrology, fortune telling, gambling
- Some of the predictions will be correct; some will be incorrect
- Confirmation bias can help preserve your *belief* in such an activity:
 - You use correct predictions as evidence to support your belief
 - You ignore (or explain away) incorrect predictions
- Likewise, confirmation bias can help preserve your *disbelief* in such an activity:
 - You use incorrect predictions as evidence to support your disbelief
 - You ignore (or explain away) correct predictions

Judging people's character

- In one experiment:
 - Students were asked to comment on the sociability and friendliness of a guest lecturer
 - The students' comments were heavily influenced by how the guest lecturer had been described before the lecture took place
- Analysis:
 - The students formed an initial opinion based on the description of the guest lecturer
 - The students used this initial opinion as a filter when observing the lecturer's behaviour
 - They noted behaviour that confirmed their initial opinion
 - They ignored behaviour that disagreed with their initial opinion

Science

- The history of science shows a recurring pattern:
 - Most scientists believe theory X
 - A new theory, Y, is developed that contradicts theory X
 - Most scientists continue to believe X due to the limited evidence in support of theory Y
 - Over time, more and more evidence in support of theory Y is found
 - As this happens, more and more scientists start to believe theory Y
- That pattern of behaviour is good. However:
 - A few individual scientists will suffer from confirmation bias
 - They will ignore or disbelieve the new evidence and continue to believe theory X for a long time

Pre-scientific medicine

- Some medical practices continued for decades or centuries before doctors realized they were ineffective or harmful:
 - Example: the practice of bleeding a patient was widespread for about 2000 years
- This can be explained by confirmation bias:
 - Some patients who received a particular treatment recovered
→ this was viewed as evidence of the treatment's effectiveness
 - Some patients who received the same treatment did not recover
→ this information was ignored
 - Some people who did not receive the treatment recovered
→ this information was also ignored

Government policy

- Sometimes, confirmation bias can be seen in the actions of a government or the senior managers of a company
- Example sequence of events:
 - A government examines available information and makes a policy decision
 - After the policy is implemented, new information is found that suggests the policy might be a bad one
 - The government's response might display confirmation bias:
 - Ignore any information that discredits the policy
 - Find (or invent) other facts that support the policy

Other examples of confirmation bias

- Hypochondriacs may ignore the “healthy” signals from their bodies and instead focus only on the “unhealthy” signals
 - Likewise, confirmation bias may worsen paranoia or depression
- Some sayings allude to confirmation bias:
 - “You only get one chance to make a good first impression”
 - “It is important to keep an open mind”
 - “Love is blind”
 - “She is an angel”
 - “He is a good for nothing”
 - “He is a ne’er do well” (“ne’er” means “never”)

Confirmation bias leads to self-fulfilling prophecies

- A self-fulfilling prophecy can be rooted in belief of a stereotype
 - One common stereotype is that physically attractive people are more sociable, confident and humorous than physically unattractive people
- In one experiment:
 - Men were asked to have telephone conversations with women
 - Some women were described to the men as being attractive
 - Some women were described to the men as being unattractive
- Results:
 - A man’s behaviour during the telephone calls was influenced by what he had been told about a woman
 - In turn, this influenced how the woman responded to the man
 - In effect, a man’s expectations of a woman became a self-fulfilling prophecy

2. Confirmation bias and prejudice

13

It is difficult to recognise our own prejudices

- It is easy to recognize and condemn prejudice *in others*:
 - Example: when you read about prejudice in another country
- It is difficult to recognize *your own* prejudices:
 - You may not consciously realize you dislike a group
 - You may consciously realize you dislike a group but think the dislike is based on a good reason
- Even if you accept you have a prejudice, it may not be safe to publicly admit it
- This presents a problem:
 - You think the world would be a better place if *other people* stopped being prejudiced. But...
 - If *you* can't recognize and admit *your own* prejudices then how can you help *other people* to recognize and eliminate *their* prejudices

An ineffective way to tackle prejudice

- Let's assume you say to Fred: "You are racist"
- Likely reaction from Fred:
 - He realizes that you have accused him of something
 - Since Fred does not like being accused, he will try to defend himself by:
 - Denying he did anything racist
 - Trying to justify his beliefs or behaviour
 - Counter-attacking you
- Your chances of changing Fred's prejudiced beliefs and behaviour are slim
- Is there a better way?

A more effective way to tackle prejudice

- A better way to tackle prejudice might be as follows...
- Explain the concept of confirmation bias to Fred:
 - Start with examples that have nothing to do with prejudice
 - Use a wide variety of examples to show that confirmation bias is ubiquitous
- Then explain how confirmation bias plays a role in prejudice:
 - A child is repeatedly told stereotypes about "X" people
 - The child assumes this information is true
 - Later, when the child grows up and encounters X people, she:
 - Notices behaviour that agrees with the stereotypes
 - Does not notice behaviour that disagrees with the stereotypes

Continued on the next slide...

A more effective way to tackle prejudice (cont')

- Then ask if some of Fred's beliefs might be a result of confirmation bias
- This tactic is likely to be more successful, for several reasons
- Fred is less likely to get defensive because:
 - The term *confirmation bias* sounds less like an accusation than *racist*
 - You have explained that *everybody* suffers from confirmation bias
 - Fred will be able to think of non-racist examples of confirmation bias in his own life
- You have made Fred aware of a general principle:
 - Later, he might use knowledge of confirmation bias to re-examine some of his other possibly-prejudiced beliefs towards other groups

3. Summary

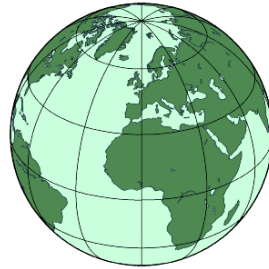
Summary

- **Confirmation bias:**
 - You form an opinion based on evidence available initially
 - Afterwards, you are likely to:
 - Seek out more evidence that supports your already-formed opinion
 - Ignore (or neglect to seek out) evidence that contradicts your already-formed opinion

- **Confirmation bias is ubiquitous:**
 - Belief in astrology, fortune telling, gambling, scientific theories, medical treatments; our perceptions of other people, ...

- **Confirmation bias plays a big part in prejudice:**
 - Spreading knowledge of confirmation bias might help to make people aware of their own prejudices in a non-accusatory manner

Cognitive Dissonance



CiaranMcHale.com
Complexity explained simply

1

License

Copyright © 2009 Ciaran McHale.

Permission is hereby granted, free of charge, to any person obtaining a copy of this training course and associated documentation files (the "Training Course"), to deal in the Training Course without restriction, including without limitation the rights to use, copy, modify, merge, publish, distribute, sublicense, and/or sell copies of the Training Course, and to permit persons to whom the Training Course is furnished to do so, subject to the following conditions:

The above copyright notice and this permission notice shall be included in all copies or substantial portions of the Training Course.

THE TRAINING COURSE IS PROVIDED "AS IS", WITHOUT WARRANTY OF ANY KIND, EXPRESS OR IMPLIED, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO THE WARRANTIES OF MERCHANTABILITY, FITNESS FOR A PARTICULAR PURPOSE AND NONINFRINGEMENT. IN NO EVENT SHALL THE AUTHORS OR COPYRIGHT HOLDERS BE LIABLE FOR ANY CLAIM, DAMAGES OR OTHER LIABILITY, WHETHER IN AN ACTION OF CONTRACT, TORT OR OTHERWISE, ARISING FROM, OUT OF OR IN CONNECTION WITH THE TRAINING COURSE OR THE USE OR OTHER DEALINGS IN THE TRAINING COURSE.

The globe logo is from www.mapAbility.com. Used with permission.

Cognitive Dissonance

2

Introduction

- Cognitive dissonance:
 - Is an uncomfortable feeling caused by holding two contradictory ideas (cognitions) at the same time
 - The terms comes from two words:
 - *Cognition* = the act or process of knowing; perception
 - *Dissonance* = lack of harmony

- Exercise:
 - Think of somebody you dislike *intensely*
 - It can be somebody you know personally or somebody famous

 - Now try to think of something you like or admire about that person
 - If doing so makes you feel uncomfortable then that is an example of cognitive dissonance

Cognitive dissonance can cause confirmation bias

- Assume we have a strong opinion about Fred's personality:
 - Either he is very charming (good) or obnoxious (bad)

- We might assume that Fred is equally "good" or "bad" in *unrelated* ways. Examples:
 - We assume he is hard-working (good) or lazy (bad)
 - We assume he is honest (good) or dishonest (bad)

- In this way, we can maintain a polarized opinion:
 - Fred is *totally good* (charming, hard-working and honest). Or...
 - Fred is *totally bad* (obnoxious, lazy and dishonest)
 - Confirmation bias suggests that we may ignore any evidence that contradicts our belief about Fred

- It might be better to recognize both good and bad in Fred:
 - But that could result in cognitive dissonance

How other people perceive you

- Cognitive dissonance and confirmation bias:
 - Can affect how you view other people
 - Can also affect how other people view you
- Most people do not have a strong opinion about you:
 - But a few people do have a strong and very polarized opinion of you
 - Some of them think you are totally great
 - And, unfortunately, some others think you are a total jerk

Managing your career

- Question: What happens if:
 - Your colleagues think you are a total jerk, and...
 - You have a great idea for improving business (or changing the world)?
- Answer:
 - This can produce cognitive dissonance in the minds of your colleagues
 - They find it difficult to like your idea while simultaneously disliking you
 - Confirmation bias will probably result, and they will ignore or ridicule your idea
- Moral:
 - Your career will go *much better* if you do not give people reasons to think you are a jerk. So...
 - *Always* be polite
 - Do not win an argument in a way that makes people think you are a jerk

Receiving personal insults

- People who try to bring about change often face criticisms:
 - They expect criticisms of their ideas
 - But they also receive personal insults

- Example:
 - Richard Stallman is an activist for “free software”
 - Some people criticise his ideology
 - Some of those people also criticise his personality and appearance

- Cognitive dissonance can explain why this happens:
 - It is difficult to dislike one aspect of a person while liking another aspect
 - Therefore you dislike (or like) *everything* about the person
 - Therefore, arguing that a person has a character fault is subconsciously thought of as being equivalent to arguing against that person’s ideas

Summary

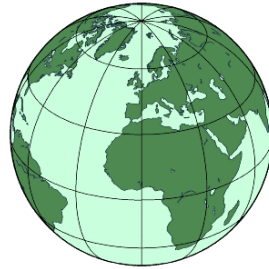
- Cognitive dissonance:
 - Is an uncomfortable feeling caused by holding two contradictory ideas (cognitions) at the same time
 - The terms comes from two words:
 - *Cognition* = the act or process of knowing; perception
 - *Dissonance* = lack of harmony

- Cognitive dissonance:
 - Can be a cause of confirmation bias (you can remove dissonance by ignoring one of the conflicting views)
 - Can cause us to have polarized views of people (a person is “totally good” or “totally bad”)
 - Colleagues who think you are a “total jerk” will ignore your great ideas
 - People may attack you personally instead of attacking your ideas

Part IV

Self Improvement

Turn a Weakness into a Strength



CiaranMcHale.com
Complexity explained simply

1

License

Copyright © 2009 Ciaran McHale.

Permission is hereby granted, free of charge, to any person obtaining a copy of this training course and associated documentation files (the "Training Course"), to deal in the Training Course without restriction, including without limitation the rights to use, copy, modify, merge, publish, distribute, sublicense, and/or sell copies of the Training Course, and to permit persons to whom the Training Course is furnished to do so, subject to the following conditions:

The above copyright notice and this permission notice shall be included in all copies or substantial portions of the Training Course.

THE TRAINING COURSE IS PROVIDED "AS IS", WITHOUT WARRANTY OF ANY KIND, EXPRESS OR IMPLIED, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO THE WARRANTIES OF MERCHANTABILITY, FITNESS FOR A PARTICULAR PURPOSE AND NONINFRINGEMENT. IN NO EVENT SHALL THE AUTHORS OR COPYRIGHT HOLDERS BE LIABLE FOR ANY CLAIM, DAMAGES OR OTHER LIABILITY, WHETHER IN AN ACTION OF CONTRACT, TORT OR OTHERWISE, ARISING FROM, OUT OF OR IN CONNECTION WITH THE TRAINING COURSE OR THE USE OR OTHER DEALINGS IN THE TRAINING COURSE.

The globe logo is from www.mapAbility.com. Used with permission.

Turn a Weakness into a Strength

2

Introduction

- Many people have a weakness of some sort:
 - Perhaps a disability
 - Perhaps a lack of skill
- What can you do with a weakness you have?
 - You could use it as an excuse to not try to succeed. Or...
 - You could find a way to turn the weakness into a strength
- This chapter provides some examples of people who turned a weakness into a strength

Jamie Oliver

- Jamie Oliver is a celebrity chef in England
 - He suffers from dyslexia
 - How could he turn that disability into a benefit?
- Some people with dyslexia find ways to express themselves that do not involve reading or writing
 - For example, through art or physical movement
- Jamie uses a lot of body movement when communicating:
 - This makes him work well in front of a camera
 - In fact, this helped him get his initial contract to be a TV chef
- A TV chef needs to write recipe books:
 - Jamie dictates his recipe books (9 so far) into a tape recorder and gets somebody else to type them
 - Dictation is probably a faster way to write than typing or pen-and-paper

Bruce Jenner

- Bruce Jenner won a gold medal in the 1976 Olympics in the decathlon
 - He has dyslexia
- For Bruce, the difficulty of reading taught him to work hard to achieve goals
 - “If I wasn’t dyslexic, I probably wouldn’t have won the Games. If I had been a better reader then that would have come easily, sports would have come easily... and I never would have realized that the way you get ahead in life is hard work.”

Bob Geldof

- Bob Geldof:
 - Achieved fame as the lead singer of *The Boomtown Rats*
 - He co-authored the Band-Aid single *Do They Know It’s Christmas?*
 - He helped organize Live Aid (and, 20 years later, Live 8)
- Bob’s weakness is that he is tactless and often says the wrong thing:
 - This held back the career of *The Boomtown Rats*
- Bob was able to turn this drawback into a benefit:
 - It enabled him to say things to world leaders that other people were too timid to say

Richard Stallman

- While growing up, Richard Stallman was a social outcast:
 - Due to a combination of poor social skills, a lack of interest in popular culture, his high intelligence and geekiness
- He turned this into a strength:
 - Being a social outcast meant that he grew used to rejection. So...
 - He did not fear yet more rejection when he started to develop free software

Anita Roddick

- Anita Roddick founded *The Body Shop*
- Her weakness was very limited finances
 - For example, she could not afford “proper” packaging bottles for shampoos
 - The cheapest bottles she could find were urine sample bottles
 - She asked customers to bring back empty bottles for refills
- The concept of cheap, reusable packaging became a strength
 - It fit in with ideas of environmentalism

Gandhi

- Gandhi's weakness was a fear of public speaking:
 - This greatly hindered his social life and his career as a lawyer in India
- Gandhi turned his weakness into a strength:
 - He thought carefully about what he wanted to say before he opened his mouth
 - Because of this:
 - He learned to communicate concisely
 - He rarely said things that he later regretted
- Eventually, Gandhi overcame his fear of speaking
 - But he continued to think carefully before speaking

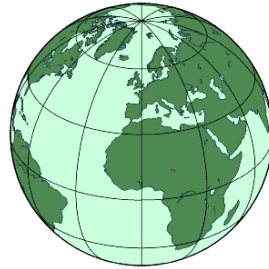
Sir Arthur Pearson

- Sir Arthur Pearson:
 - Founded the *Daily Express* newspaper in England
 - Gradually lost his eyesight due to the disease Glaucoma
- When World War One started:
 - Arthur heard about a soldier who had been blinded in battle
 - He realized that many other soldiers would also be blinded
 - By default, most of them would lead "hopeless and useless lives"
- Arthur founded a hospital, St Dunstan's:
 - At the hospital, soldiers could "learn to be blind"
 - Being blind himself, Arthur was able to inspire and teach the soldiers

Summary

- Many people have a weakness of some sort:
 - Perhaps a disability
 - Perhaps a lack of skill, social etiquette or money
- A weakness does not have to hold you back
- Sometimes it is possible to turn a weakness into a strength

Constructive Debate



CiaranMcHale.com
Complexity explained simply

1

License

Copyright © 2009 Ciaran McHale.

Permission is hereby granted, free of charge, to any person obtaining a copy of this training course and associated documentation files (the "Training Course"), to deal in the Training Course without restriction, including without limitation the rights to use, copy, modify, merge, publish, distribute, sublicense, and/or sell copies of the Training Course, and to permit persons to whom the Training Course is furnished to do so, subject to the following conditions:

The above copyright notice and this permission notice shall be included in all copies or substantial portions of the Training Course.

THE TRAINING COURSE IS PROVIDED "AS IS", WITHOUT WARRANTY OF ANY KIND, EXPRESS OR IMPLIED, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO THE WARRANTIES OF MERCHANTABILITY, FITNESS FOR A PARTICULAR PURPOSE AND NONINFRINGEMENT. IN NO EVENT SHALL THE AUTHORS OR COPYRIGHT HOLDERS BE LIABLE FOR ANY CLAIM, DAMAGES OR OTHER LIABILITY, WHETHER IN AN ACTION OF CONTRACT, TORT OR OTHERWISE, ARISING FROM, OUT OF OR IN CONNECTION WITH THE TRAINING COURSE OR THE USE OR OTHER DEALINGS IN THE TRAINING COURSE.

The globe logo is from www.mapAbility.com. Used with permission.

Constructive Debate

2

Ineffective debate

- If you are like most people then you probably do the following:
 - Occasionally have a new idea: “Hey, I thought of a good way to do ...”
 - As you think about the idea it seems better and better
 - Tell your idea to somebody else and they say “It is flawed because ...”
- Possible results:
 - You think the other person is too negative
 - The other person thinks you are stupid or naïve
 - You decide it is too frustrating to share your ideas with others
- What went wrong?
 - People tend to view ideas in a one-sided way
 - If we initially think an idea is good then we look only for reasons to support that viewpoint
 - Likewise, if we initially think an idea is bad then ...
 - People view a debate as a competition with a winner and a loser

The Wright Brothers

- The Wright Brothers flew the first airplane in 1903:
 - They spent 4½ years doing research into flying before they succeeded
 - During this time they developed and tested many theories
- Their father taught them a way to debate productively:
 - At the dinner table he picked a topic for debate
 - One brother argued *for* the topic and the other argued *against* it
 - After a while, the father asked them to switch sides in the debate
- By doing this, the brothers:
 - Got to look at an issue from multiple (at least two) sides
 - Viewed debating not as competition, but as a cooperative way to uncover the truth
- The brothers used this tactic frequently in their work
 - It helped them beat aviation researchers who had better funding

Edward de Bono

- Edward de Bono coined the term *lateral thinking*:
 - He has written many books on techniques to improve thinking
 - *Lateral Thinking* was one of his first books
 - *Six Thinking Hats* is more up-to-date
 - His work was inspired by his academic research into physiology
- A detailed discussion of his ideas is outside the scope of this course:
 - Instead, the next few slides provide a brief outline to arouse your curiosity
 - Read *Six Thinking Hats* for details

Edward de Bono (cont')

- Six (imaginary) hats have different colours:
 - White denotes objective facts and beliefs (that is, unchecked facts)
 - Red denotes emotions. Example: "I don't know why, but I don't like it"
 - Yellow denotes optimism, hope and positive thinking
 - Black denotes caution. It is used to point out weaknesses in an idea
 - Green denotes creativity and new ideas
 - Blue is used by the facilitator to control a meeting
- The facilitator puts on his blue hat and might say:
 - "We want to discuss <topic>. We will use <sequence of hats>. First, put on your <colour> hat."
- Everybody gives comments according to the current hat
- The facilitator tells the group when to switch to another hat
 - The facilitator uses the blue hat at the end to conclude the meeting

Edward de Bono (cont')

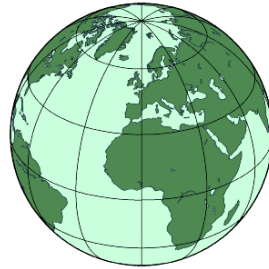
The use of imaginary hats serves a few purposes...

- It helps people to explore an idea from different viewpoints
 - The Wright brothers' technique explored an idea from two viewpoints
 - The hats help you explore an idea from five different viewpoints
- It removes people's egos from the meeting:
 - *Everybody* looks for flaws when wearing the black hat
 - *Everybody* looks for positive ideas when wearing the yellow hat
 - And so on
- The *Six Thinking Hats* book:
 - Provides useful detail that is outside the scope of this course
 - Is very readable and quite short (less than 200 pages)

Summary

- Most debates are not productive because they are competitive
- The Wright Brothers used debate in a more constructive way
 - They switched sides, so they could tease out the truth of the issue at hand
- Edward de Bono's *Six Thinking Hats* is more refined
 - Provides an ego-less way to examine an issue from five viewpoints

Lifelong Learning



CiaranMcHale.com
Complexity explained simply

1

License

Copyright © 2009 Ciaran McHale.

Permission is hereby granted, free of charge, to any person obtaining a copy of this training course and associated documentation files (the "Training Course"), to deal in the Training Course without restriction, including without limitation the rights to use, copy, modify, merge, publish, distribute, sublicense, and/or sell copies of the Training Course, and to permit persons to whom the Training Course is furnished to do so, subject to the following conditions:

The above copyright notice and this permission notice shall be included in all copies or substantial portions of the Training Course.

THE TRAINING COURSE IS PROVIDED "AS IS", WITHOUT WARRANTY OF ANY KIND, EXPRESS OR IMPLIED, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO THE WARRANTIES OF MERCHANTABILITY, FITNESS FOR A PARTICULAR PURPOSE AND NONINFRINGEMENT. IN NO EVENT SHALL THE AUTHORS OR COPYRIGHT HOLDERS BE LIABLE FOR ANY CLAIM, DAMAGES OR OTHER LIABILITY, WHETHER IN AN ACTION OF CONTRACT, TORT OR OTHERWISE, ARISING FROM, OUT OF OR IN CONNECTION WITH THE TRAINING COURSE OR THE USE OR OTHER DEALINGS IN THE TRAINING COURSE.

The globe logo is from www.mapAbility.com. Used with permission.

The importance of lifelong learning

- Biographies of people who have changed the world indicate that they never stopped learning:
 - They learned partly because they enjoyed learning
 - Often, things they learned provided inspiration for their work
 - Sometimes, they got cross-fertilization of ideas from different fields
- Relevant quote (and article):
 - “Not all learners are leaders, but the research clearly shows that the strongest leaders are continuous learners.”
— Jim Clemmer, <http://www.jimclemmer.com/leadership-and-learning-are-indispensable.php>
- If you want to change the world then increase your chances by continually learning throughout your life

1. Practical issues for lifelong learning

Techniques for lifelong learning

- Lifelong learning can take different forms:
 - Some people read books in their spare time
 - Some seek out new experiences
 - Recall from the *Flow* chapter:
 - A flow experience provides a challenge so it promotes learning
- For many successful people, continual learning rarely involves formal education:
 - Biographies indicate many successful people actually dislike formal education

Learning paralysis

- Be aware of “learning paralysis”
 - Spending years to learn something “properly” before you start doing it
- In reality, there are two ways to learn:
 - Just do it. The practice will make you better
 - Just do it, and complement this with reading about the subject

Reading about a subject is rarely sufficient by itself
- The origin of learning paralysis might be in the school system:
 - Schools use book reading and lectures as the primary learning tool
 - Learning through practice is much less common in schools
- If you want to change the world then:
 - Just do it. The practice will make you better
 - Complement the “doing” with learning, but don’t postpone the “doing”

2. Home schooling

7

What is home schooling?

- *Home schooling* = learning at home instead of in a school
- A family might choose home schooling because:
 - The family travels constantly (perhaps in a circus) so children cannot be enrolled in a school
 - Their children struggle academically in school or are bullied
 - Their children learn best in their own time and at their own pace
- Many people think:
 - Regular school is best or is the only way
 - Home schooling is an inferior substitute, to be used only if attending a regular school is impossible
- However, a growing number of people think:
 - Regular school is actively harmful to children
 - Home schooling is preferable

Relevance of home schooling

Home schooling is relevant to this course in several ways...

- If you lack the confidence to try to change the world then:
 - Perhaps attending regular schools destroyed your confidence
 - Some books about home schooling offer good critiques of what problems exist in regular schools
 - You may gain a “It’s not just me” or “It’s not my fault” insight that can restore your confidence
- Perhaps you suffer from learning paralysis:
 - Books about home schooling explain why *doing* something can be a better way to learn than just *reading about* it
 - You may gain the confidence to do things imperfectly now rather than wait until you are an expert before you start to do things

Relevance of home schooling (cont’)

- Some critics of the regular school system:
 - Do not believe schools teach a lot that is *useless*
 - Instead they believe schools teach a lot that is *harmful*
(part of this harm involves destroying entrepreneurial spirit)
- Newspaper articles about a business tycoon might say:
 - “He achieved his great success *despite* leaving school at the age of 12”
- Perhaps the newspaper article should say:
 - “He achieved his great success *because* he left school at the age of 12”
- Do not think “I’m not educated enough to change the world”
 - You don’t need a Ph.D. or MBA, or even a high school diploma

Bibliography for home schooling

- A detailed discussion of home schooling is outside the scope of this training course:
- If you are interested in this topic then:
 - Start by reading personal accounts of home-schooling families.
Examples:
 - *Free Range Education*, edited by Terri Dowty
 - *The Teenage Liberation Handbook*, by Grace Llewellyn
 - *Real Lives*, edited by Grace Llewellyn
 - For the theory and history of home schooling, read books by John Holt and John Taylor Gatto

3. Summary

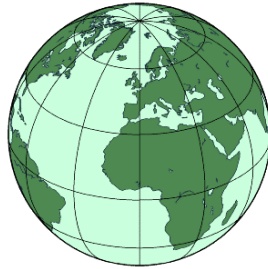
Summary

- Lifelong learning is common to many successful people:
 - Many biographies explicitly mention lifelong learning
 - “Not all learners are leaders, but the research clearly shows that the strongest leaders are continuous learners.”
— Jim Clemmer
- Lifelong learning does *not* have to involve formal education:
 - Often it is done by reading a wide range of books
 - Or by trying new things
 - A state of flow helps learning
- Home-schooling books are interesting *even if* you disagree with much of what they say:
 - Their critiques of regular schooling can be insightful
 - They suggest effective ways to learn without the expense of schooling
 - They can help you to increase your confidence

Part V

Skills

Non-stereotypical Skills for Activism



CiaranMcHale.com
Complexity explained simply

1

License

Copyright © 2009 Ciaran McHale.

Permission is hereby granted, free of charge, to any person obtaining a copy of this training course and associated documentation files (the "Training Course"), to deal in the Training Course without restriction, including without limitation the rights to use, copy, modify, merge, publish, distribute, sublicense, and/or sell copies of the Training Course, and to permit persons to whom the Training Course is furnished to do so, subject to the following conditions:

The above copyright notice and this permission notice shall be included in all copies or substantial portions of the Training Course.

THE TRAINING COURSE IS PROVIDED "AS IS", WITHOUT WARRANTY OF ANY KIND, EXPRESS OR IMPLIED, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO THE WARRANTIES OF MERCHANTABILITY, FITNESS FOR A PARTICULAR PURPOSE AND NONINFRINGEMENT. IN NO EVENT SHALL THE AUTHORS OR COPYRIGHT HOLDERS BE LIABLE FOR ANY CLAIM, DAMAGES OR OTHER LIABILITY, WHETHER IN AN ACTION OF CONTRACT, TORT OR OTHERWISE, ARISING FROM, OUT OF OR IN CONNECTION WITH THE TRAINING COURSE OR THE USE OR OTHER DEALINGS IN THE TRAINING COURSE.

The globe logo is from www.mapAbility.com. Used with permission.

Stereotypical forms of activism

- Many people think activism involves:
 - Waving a placard and shouting angry slogans in a protest march
 - Distributing flyers to the public
 - Taking part in endless committee meetings
 - Standing for hours with a collection bucket to raise funds
 - Writing letters to politicians

- You should do those things *only if* they appeal to you

- If you do things that you don't enjoy then:
 - You will find them tedious and frustrating
 - You will quickly give up

- Whatever activism you do should be enjoyable and rewarding:
 - So you will look forward to doing it
 - And you won't get stressed or burn out

Non-stereotypical forms of activism

- Don't limit yourself to stereotypical forms of activism
 - Instead, focus on your innate skills or activities you find pleasurable
 - Find ways to use them in activism

- Examples:
 - Are you good at teaching or explaining things?
 - A lot of activism involves educating the public. Could you do that?

 - Do you have good writing skills?
 - If so, could you write leaflets, articles or books about an activist cause?

 - Do you enjoy photography?
 - If so, think of ways these skills might be useful to an activist group

 - Are you good at decorating?
 - Could you help redecorate the headquarters of an activist group?

Non-stereotypical forms of activism (cont')

■ More examples:

- Are you good at cooking?
- Could you cook lunch when an activist group has an all-day meeting?

- Do you have dreams of being a film director?
- If so, could you make a documentary relevant to an activist cause?

- Do you like gardening?
- Could you brighten up the activist headquarters with flowers?
- Could you grow a particular type of flower in large quantities:
 - To sell in a fund-raising event?
 - To use in a dramatic way at an activist event?

Example: Ciaran McHale

■ Ciaran's skills include:

- Understanding complex issues and re-explaining them more simply
- Writing training courses (mainly about computer technologies)

■ Those skills are not stereotypical activist skills

■ Ciaran used those skills as follows:

- He read a lot about people who have changed the world (activists, entrepreneurs, inventors, and so on)
- He noticed they shared many skills and faced similar obstacles
- He wrote this training course to explain those skills and obstacles
- He made the training course available on the Internet

■ Result:

- Ciaran wants to help *other* people acquire skills to change the world
- Ciaran wants to do this on a massive scale

Example: Richard Stallman

- Details are given in the *Two Kinds of Power* chapter of slides
- Richard Stallman felt proprietary software was immoral:
 - He did not have “power over people” to force companies to make their software non-proprietary
 - He realized he had “power to help people” by writing his own non-proprietary software
- Richard’s non-stereotypical activist skill was programming:
 - “I asked myself: what could I, an operating-system developer, do to improve the situation? It wasn’t until I examined the question for a while that I realized that an operating-system developer was exactly what was needed to solve the problem.”

Example: Joanna Russ

- Joanna Russ’ skills include:
 - Being an author (mainly science fiction)
 - A deep knowledge of literature
- She was frustrated that literature written by women is often dismissed as being inferior to literature written by men
- Through research, she identified several historical ways women’s writing had been suppressed
 - She documented this in *How to Suppress Women’s Writing*

Relevant quotes

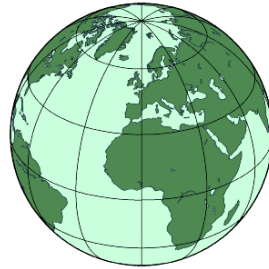
■ Relevant quotes:

- Don't ask yourself what the world needs. Ask yourself what makes you come alive, and then go do that. Because what the world needs is people who have come alive.
— Howard Thurman (1899–1981), American author, philosopher, theologian, educator and civil rights leader
- Your work is to discover your work and then with all your heart to give yourself to it.
— Buddha
- I sing sometimes for the war that I fight
'Cause every tool is a weapon — if you hold it right.
— Ani diFranco in her song *My IQ*

Summary

- Don't feel constrained by stereotypical forms of activism
- Find ways to help the world by doing things that you like doing

Scalable Communication



CiaranMcHale.com
Complexity explained simply

1

License

Copyright © 2009 Ciaran McHale.

Permission is hereby granted, free of charge, to any person obtaining a copy of this training course and associated documentation files (the "Training Course"), to deal in the Training Course without restriction, including without limitation the rights to use, copy, modify, merge, publish, distribute, sublicense, and/or sell copies of the Training Course, and to permit persons to whom the Training Course is furnished to do so, subject to the following conditions:

The above copyright notice and this permission notice shall be included in all copies or substantial portions of the Training Course.

THE TRAINING COURSE IS PROVIDED "AS IS", WITHOUT WARRANTY OF ANY KIND, EXPRESS OR IMPLIED, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO THE WARRANTIES OF MERCHANTABILITY, FITNESS FOR A PARTICULAR PURPOSE AND NONINFRINGEMENT. IN NO EVENT SHALL THE AUTHORS OR COPYRIGHT HOLDERS BE LIABLE FOR ANY CLAIM, DAMAGES OR OTHER LIABILITY, WHETHER IN AN ACTION OF CONTRACT, TORT OR OTHERWISE, ARISING FROM, OUT OF OR IN CONNECTION WITH THE TRAINING COURSE OR THE USE OR OTHER DEALINGS IN THE TRAINING COURSE.

The globe logo is from www.mapAbility.com. Used with permission.

Scalable Communication

2

A typical story

- Fred has a passionately held vision for changing the world
 - All he needs to do is convert “enough” people to his beliefs
- Fred tries to convert people through conversations:
 - Mostly one-to-one conversations
 - At work, bus stops, pubs, parties, ...
 - Some weeks he talks to just 2 people, other weeks he talks to more than 20
- Results:
 - Fred never manages to talk to “enough” people
 - His friends think he is boring because he talks about only one topic
 - Fred becomes frustrated by his lack of success

Analysis

- Fred’s communication technique is not effective:
 - Each in-depth conversion lasts, say, 30 minutes or more
 - If he speaks for 8 hours each day, that’s just 16 people per day (80 people in one week, assuming he speaks 5 days per week)
 - He probably needs to share his message with tens of thousands (or even millions) of people to bring about change
- Ideally, Fred should:
 - Find ways to communicate with *many* people at the same time
 - If possible, communicate without him being present
- This can be called *scalable communication*

Examples of scalable communication

- Example techniques for scalable communication:
 - Publish a letter or article in a national newspaper (readership measured in millions)
 - Make a video documentary and put it on www.YouTube.com
 - Put a PowerPoint presentation onto www.SlideShare.net
 - If you are a musician, write a song about the issue:
 - Fantastic if you can get a famous group to record it
 - Alternatively, make an MP3 version available for free on the Internet
 - Set up a website that contains relevant information
 - Write a book:
 - Publish it in paper format. Or make it available on a website
 - Publish your own newspaper, newsletter or magazine

Example: Annie Leonard and “The Story of Stuff”

- Annie Leonard:
 - Is an environmental activist
 - Travelled a lot to speak to different groups about environmental issues
 - Wanted a more scalable way to communicate her message
- She:
 - Wrote a script for a 20-minute “talking head” video
 - Worked with a small team to shoot the video and add cartoon-style animation to complement the script
 - Made the finished video available free-of-charge on a website: www.storyofstuff.com
- Results:
 - The movie has been viewed over 6 million times in its first 18 months
 - The website encourages visitors to download it and host screenings in their community

Combining several communication techniques

Al Gore combined several scalable communication techniques

- He wrote a slide-based presentation about climate change:
 - He presented this more than 1000 times around the world
- The presentation was filmed as *An Inconvenient Truth*
 - It was watched by more than 2 million people in cinemas
 - Lots of newspapers and TV programs reviewed this movie
 - It was watched by more people through DVD sales and rentals
 - Copies of the DVD were distributed to schools in several countries
- A companion book was released
- The book and movie promote a website that has more information (www.climateCrisis.net)

Barriers to scalable communication

- Many activists mainly use non-scalable communication tactics
 - Why?
- Partly because they provide instant gratification
 - Scalable communication requires lots of up-front effort
 - Example:
 - It might take weeks to write an article
 - You have to put in all that effort before the target audience sees it
- Scalable communication may require skills that are rare:
 - Ability to express yourself in a clear, simple and concise manner
 - Technical skills with computers, audio and video equipment, ...
- Scalable communication may require expenses:
 - Cost of computers, audio and video recording equipment, ...

Gaining skills

- Decide what forms of scalable communication appeal to you
 - Examples: “I want to a make a documentary” or “I want to write a book”
- List the skills and equipment you will need
- Save up for the equipment or ask for it as a birthday present
 - Perhaps you can get it cheaply on eBay or free on Freecycle
- Ways to gain skills:
 - Play with the equipment as a hobby
 - Find somebody more experienced to mentor you
 - Read relevant books
 - Join a local enthusiast group

Writing is a fundamental skill

- Most forms of scalable communication require good writing ability:
 - To write books, articles, letters to newspapers, flyers, ...
 - To write the script for making a video documentary
 - To write a speech
 - To write a well-structured PowerPoint presentation
- Unfortunately, how to write well is taught badly in many schools and universities
- Find a person or group who can proofread your work and give feedback:
 - Ask in your local library for a list of local writers' groups
 - Ask a work colleague who writes well to give you feedback on your writing
 - Read books that provide advice on writing

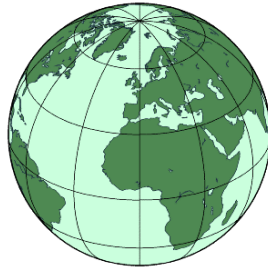
Summary

- Many activists communicate in ways that:
 - Provide instant gratification
 - Are not scalable

- Scalable communication:
 - Requires a lot of up-front investment of time
 - Might require skills that are rare
 - Might require expensive equipment
 - Can have a much bigger impact than one-to-one communication

- Somehow:
 - Get the required equipment
 - Get the required skills
 - Invest the time to produce scalable communication documents

Challenging Hidden Assumptions in Loaded Questions



CiaranMcHale.com
Complexity explained simply

1

License

Copyright © 2009 Ciaran McHale.

Permission is hereby granted, free of charge, to any person obtaining a copy of this training course and associated documentation files (the "Training Course"), to deal in the Training Course without restriction, including without limitation the rights to use, copy, modify, merge, publish, distribute, sublicense, and/or sell copies of the Training Course, and to permit persons to whom the Training Course is furnished to do so, subject to the following conditions:

The above copyright notice and this permission notice shall be included in all copies or substantial portions of the Training Course.

THE TRAINING COURSE IS PROVIDED "AS IS", WITHOUT WARRANTY OF ANY KIND, EXPRESS OR IMPLIED, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO THE WARRANTIES OF MERCHANTABILITY, FITNESS FOR A PARTICULAR PURPOSE AND NONINFRINGEMENT. IN NO EVENT SHALL THE AUTHORS OR COPYRIGHT HOLDERS BE LIABLE FOR ANY CLAIM, DAMAGES OR OTHER LIABILITY, WHETHER IN AN ACTION OF CONTRACT, TORT OR OTHERWISE, ARISING FROM, OUT OF OR IN CONNECTION WITH THE TRAINING COURSE OR THE USE OR OTHER DEALINGS IN THE TRAINING COURSE.

The globe logo is from www.mapAbility.com. Used with permission.

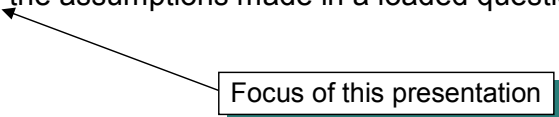
1. Introduction

3

Loaded questions

- Here is a famous example of a “loaded” (or “trick”) question:
“Have you stopped beating your wife?”
- The question makes two important assumptions:
 - You have a wife
 - You have beaten her at some time
- The question invites a “yes” or “no” answer
 - Either of these answers is an admission that you are/were a wife beater
- Better tactics:
 - Refuse to answer the question. Or...
 - Challenge the assumptions made in a loaded question or claim

Focus of this presentation



Loaded claims

- Often, claims about oppressed groups are loaded
- Examples for homosexuality (or another aspect of sexuality):
 - “It’s just a phase”
 - “Homosexuality is not normal (or natural)”
 - “Homosexuals are likely to be rapists (or paedophiles)”
- Examples for racism (where “X” stands for an ethnic group):
 - “X people have low moral standards”
 - “X people are rapists, murderers, ...”
 - “X people are terrorists”
- Let’s examine some of these examples

2. “It’s just a phase”

“It’s just a phase”

- Common reply: “it’s *not* a phase. I’ve been like this for years”
 - Counter-reply: “You will *eventually* grow out of it”
- Implicit assumption in the claim:
 - The word “just” is used in the claim to reduce importance
 - So, the assumption is that a phase is not important
- Actually, phases occur throughout life:
 - Example: childhood, adolescence, (young) adult, middle age, old age
 - Was your childhood unimportant “just” because it was a phase?
- The length of a phase is not a measure of its importance:
 - Childhood lasts more than a decade
 - The “terrible twos” last (hopefully) only a few months but are an important part of a child’s development

Examples of phases

- Pablo Picasso went through many phases (periods) in his art:
 - blue period, rose period, African period, (various types of) cubism
- It is common for a musician or band to change musical styles:
 - Early U2 is quite different to later U2. Same for the Beatles
 - Pink Floyd: psychedelic period, Dark Side of the Moon, later on Roger Waters wrote an opera
- During your life you probably had phases for liking:
 - Hobbies: reading, art, model construction, dancing
 - Particular musicians or genres of music, authors or genres of books
 - Particular (genres of) movies, TV shows, actors, directors
 - Particular kinds of sport
 - Particular types of food or drink
 - Particular types of work, so you had a career change

Phases should be celebrated

- It is not right to dismiss something because it is “just” a phase
- English idiom: “variety is the spice of life”
 - Means that life is more interesting when you try different things
- Phases in your life bring variety and so should be *celebrated*
- Consider the following hypothetical conversation:
 - X: “Your homosexuality is just a phase”
 - Y: “Possibly. Of course, that means my heterosexuality was a phase too. Do you think your heterosexuality is also a phase?”
 - X is likely to feel baffled and possibly angry by the response:
 - Y is *not* defending his/her sexuality
 - Instead, Y is challenging core beliefs and assumptions of X

3. “Homosexuality is not normal (or natural)”

“Homosexuality is not normal (or natural)”

- “Normal” has several meanings, including:
 - Typical, common
 - Moral or ethical

- “Natural” has several meanings, including:
 - Occurs in nature (which means that it is typical or common)
 - Moral or ethical

- The next few slides:
 - Discuss some common approaches to tackling this loaded claim
 - Then discuss an assumption hidden in the claim

“Homosexuality is not common or part of nature”

- Common reply to “homosexuality is not common and does not occur in nature”...

- Use an Internet search engine for “homosexuality animals”
 - One useful reference: <http://www.news-medical.net/?id=20718>

- Summary of search:
 - Homosexuality has been observed in over 1500 species
 - Including humans!

“Homosexuality is immoral”

- Common reply to “homosexuality is immoral” ...
- Often, morality is defined in terms of religious beliefs, so...
 - Look in the Bible (or equivalent book for another religion) for:
 - Neutral or positive references to homosexuality
 - Other taboos that are widely ignored today
 - Argue that such contradictions enable us to ignore Bible-based homophobia with a clear conscience

Hidden assumption

- There is an assumption in “homosexuality is not normal”
 - Assumption is that something else (heterosexuality) is normal
- This assumption can be challenged with a counter-claim:
 - “I don’t believe anyone is normal. Everyone is a pervert”
 - There are two parts to this counter-claim
- Part 1 (challenging “normal = typical”)
 - There is enormous variety in sexual practices of (even) heterosexuals
 - No one sexual position or act is dominant enough to be “typical”
- Part 2 (challenging “normal = moral”):
 - Religions condemn many sexual acts that (even) heterosexuals commonly employ
 - Therefore, most heterosexuals are just as immoral as homosexuals

Should hidden assumptions be challenged?

- The purpose of the previous slide:
 - Is *not* to force you to argue that “everyone is a pervert” rather than “homosexuality is as normal as heterosexuality”
 - But is to make you aware of more *options* you have in arguments
- Note: if 2 things are “equally good” then they are “equally bad”
- Therefore, the following seem like opposites, but are similar:
 - “Homosexuality is as normal as heterosexuality”
 - “Everyone (heterosexual and homosexual) is a pervert”

4. Implicit comparisons

Implicit comparisons

- Consider the following claims (“X” denotes an ethnic group):
 - “Homosexuality is just a phase”
 - “Homosexuality is not normal (or natural)”
 - “Homosexuals are likely to be rapists (or paedophiles)”
 - “X people have low moral standards”
 - “X people are rapists, murderers, ...”

- All of these claims contain implicit comparisons:
 - “**Unlike heterosexuality**, homosexuality is just a phase”
 - “**Unlike heterosexuality**, homosexuality is not normal”
 - “**Unlike heterosexuals**, homosexuals are likely to be rapists (or paedophiles)”
 - “**Unlike us**, X people have low moral standards”
 - “**Unlike us**, X people are rapists, murderers, ...”

Challenging implicit comparisons

It can be useful to challenge the implicit comparison:

- Could heterosexuality be a phase?
- Is heterosexuality normal?
- Do crime figures prove that sex-related crimes per 1000 heterosexuals is lower than sex-related crimes per 1000 homosexuals?
- Do non-X people have high moral standards?
- Do crime figures prove that non-X people have lower crime rates?
 - Perhaps non-X people commit lots of crimes that are socially acceptable and hence go unrecognised. Examples:
 - Job and housing discrimination against X people
 - Harassment, exploitation, rape, murder, genocide of X people
 - Often, crimes by non-X people are viewed differently than similar crimes committed by X people

Background information about Malcolm X

- His original surname was Little. He grew up poor
- Became a criminal:
 - Robbery, selling drugs, illegal gambling, “steering” (escorting white clients to brothels in black ghettos)
- Spent 8 years in prison. Converted to Islam while in jail
- Changed his surname to X to reject the name of slave owner
- When released from prison:
 - He became a minister in the Nation of Islam and helped increase membership from 400 to 40,000
 - He was a black-rights activist in the 1950s and 1960s
- Wrote “The Autobiography of Malcolm X” before being assassinated

“X people have low moral standards”

- Recall, “X” stands for an ethnic group
 - Do not confuse the “X” placeholder with Malcolm X
- Chapter 7 (“Hustler”) of Malcolm X’s autobiography:
 - His “steering” job and conversations with prostitute friends enabled him to compare the (lack of) moral standards of whites and blacks
 - Probably a better-informed comparison than that of many “respectable” people
 - His conclusion: “The hypocritical white man will talk about the Negro’s ‘low morals’. But who has the world’s lowest morals if not whites?”

“X people are rapists, murderers, ...”

- Often, non-X people conveniently overlook the large-scale crimes that their government commits on their behalf
- Chapter 11 (“Saved”) of Malcolm X’s autobiography:
 - Malcolm X read lots of books in the prison library
 - “And I read the histories of various nations, which opened my eyes gradually then wider and wider, to how the whole world’s white men had indeed acted like devils, pillaging and raping and bleeding and draining the whole world’s non-white people.”

Double standards

- Often, non-X people use a double standard when commenting on similar crimes committed by X and non-X people
- Chapter 18 (“El-Hajj Malik El-Shabazz”) of Malcolm X’s autobiography:
 - “New York white youth were killing victims; that was a ‘sociological’ problem. But when black youth killed somebody, the power structure was looking to hang somebody.
 - ...
 - When whites had rifles in their homes, the Constitution gave them the right to protect their home and themselves. But when black people even spoke of having rifles in their homes, that was ‘ominous’.”

Double standards (cont')

- In July 2007, some Muslims:
 - Planted two car bombs outside London nightclubs
 - Crashed a car into Glasgow airport

- These events were widely reported in the English media
 - But there was significantly less reports of the 25+ retaliation attacks in the following weeks
(including a car bomb, a petrol bomb, and a near-fatal stabbing)

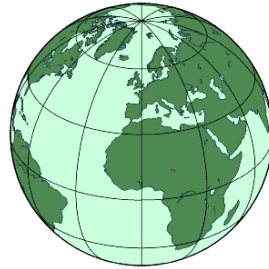
- Results of Google searches:
 - "car bomb Glasgow airport": 75,500 results
 - "car bomb Glasgow airport revenge": 882 results

5. Summary and conclusions

Summary and further reading

- Often, claims about oppressed groups are loaded with hidden assumptions
 - Example: “Homosexuality is just a phase” assumes that a phase is bad
 - Example: “**Unlike us**, X people have low moral standards”
 - The assumption is that non-X people have high moral standards
- You can counter such claims by challenging the hidden assumptions/comparisons
- Recommended book:
 - “The Gentle Art of Verbal Self Defense” by Suzette Haden Elgin
 - This was the first in a series of books
 - Other titles in the series tailor the message for different audiences.
Examples: at work, communicating with children, ...

The Importance of Non-core Skills



CiaranMcHale.com
Complexity explained simply

1

License

Copyright © 2009 Ciaran McHale.

Permission is hereby granted, free of charge, to any person obtaining a copy of this training course and associated documentation files (the "Training Course"), to deal in the Training Course without restriction, including without limitation the rights to use, copy, modify, merge, publish, distribute, sublicense, and/or sell copies of the Training Course, and to permit persons to whom the Training Course is furnished to do so, subject to the following conditions:

The above copyright notice and this permission notice shall be included in all copies or substantial portions of the Training Course.

THE TRAINING COURSE IS PROVIDED "AS IS", WITHOUT WARRANTY OF ANY KIND, EXPRESS OR IMPLIED, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO THE WARRANTIES OF MERCHANTABILITY, FITNESS FOR A PARTICULAR PURPOSE AND NONINFRINGEMENT. IN NO EVENT SHALL THE AUTHORS OR COPYRIGHT HOLDERS BE LIABLE FOR ANY CLAIM, DAMAGES OR OTHER LIABILITY, WHETHER IN AN ACTION OF CONTRACT, TORT OR OTHERWISE, ARISING FROM, OUT OF OR IN CONNECTION WITH THE TRAINING COURSE OR THE USE OR OTHER DEALINGS IN THE TRAINING COURSE.

The globe logo is from www.mapAbility.com. Used with permission.

The Importance of Non-core Skills

2

Introduction

- Many jobs have an obvious “core” skill
 - Example of such jobs: doctor, nurse, teacher, programmer, football player, musician, artist
- Many people think: “I can have a successful career if my core skill is better than most other people”
- Actually:
 - Having an excellent core skill may be necessary but it is *not* sufficient
 - You need to have “good enough” non-core skills too
- This chapter:
 - Explains why having poor non-core skills can hold back your career or activist goals
 - Suggests ways to improve your non-core skills

Example: Fred the programmer

- Fred is a skilled programmer & works at a software company
- Fred would love to spend all his working time doing programming. However:
 - He spends *less than half* of his time programming
 - Most of his time is spent doing other tasks.
Examples: project planning, high-level design, writing progress reports, team meetings, meetings with people in other departments (sales, marketing, documentation), mentoring new colleagues, email, ...
- If Fred has poor skills for those non-programming tasks then:
 - He has poor skills for the *majority* of his job
 - This lack of skills is likely to hold back his career

Example: Fred the programmer (cont')

- Fred has 3 choices (2 of which are bad ones)
- Choice 1:
 - “I will become even more skilled at programming; this will compensate for my poor non-core skills”
 - Result: Fred remains with poor skills for the majority of his job. This is not good for his career
- Choice 2:
 - “If I behave rudely then maybe I won’t be invited to meetings or asked to mentor new employees”
 - Result: Cultivating a bad personality is unlikely to help his career
- Choice 3:
 - “I will improve my non-core skills so they are ‘good enough’”
 - Result: Fred’s career improves

Example from a movie

- The movie *And The Band Played On* provides an example:
 - The movie is about scientists in the 1980s who investigated a new disease (AIDS) as it spread through America and Europe
 - The main character in the movie is Dr. Don Francis (played by Matthew Modine)
- Dr. Don Francis:
 - Has excellent medical research skills
 - But he has poor communication skills (he is sometimes tactless when communicating with others)
 - On several occasions, things he says annoy people and they react by making his work harder

How to improve your non-core skills

- You can improve non-core skills through formal education or training. However:
 - This can be expensive
 - Your work schedule might clash with the education timetable
- Another way is through self-study:
 - Read books on various topics, such as, management, leadership, project planning, sales, marketing, how to organize meetings, customer service, public speaking, writing skills, ...
 - Ask your manager or colleagues to recommend such books
 - Some “self-help” books provide useful advice, for example, *How to Win Friends and Influence People* by Dale Carnegie
 - Observe the techniques used by colleagues who have better non-core skills than you

Relevance of business skills for activists

- Some activists:
 - Blame many of the world’s problems on greedy businesses
 - Like to reject anything associated with business
- But many business skills are relevant to activists.
Examples:
 - Management and leadership skills, so you can organize people to work together to achieve a goal
 - Marketing and sales skills, so you can communicate and “sell” your message to the general public in an effective way
 - Time management skills, so you can be more productive in your activist work
- The book *The Lifelong Activist* by Hillary Rettig is useful. It:
 - Explains the importance of these skills for activists
 - Provides simple, introductory lessons for some useful skills

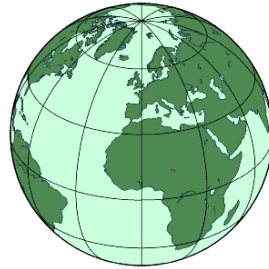
Summary

- Many people have an excellent core skill but poor non-core skills
- Poor non-core skills are likely to hold you back, both in a paying career and in activism
- It is important to find ways to improve your non-core skills
 - Self-study is probably a more affordable way than formal education

Part VI

Obstacles

Curse of the “Genius” Label



CiaranMcHale.com
Complexity explained simply

1

License

Copyright © 2009 Ciaran McHale.

Permission is hereby granted, free of charge, to any person obtaining a copy of this training course and associated documentation files (the “Training Course”), to deal in the Training Course without restriction, including without limitation the rights to use, copy, modify, merge, publish, distribute, sublicense, and/or sell copies of the Training Course, and to permit persons to whom the Training Course is furnished to do so, subject to the following conditions:

The above copyright notice and this permission notice shall be included in all copies or substantial portions of the Training Course.

THE TRAINING COURSE IS PROVIDED "AS IS", WITHOUT WARRANTY OF ANY KIND, EXPRESS OR IMPLIED, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO THE WARRANTIES OF MERCHANTABILITY, FITNESS FOR A PARTICULAR PURPOSE AND NONINFRINGEMENT. IN NO EVENT SHALL THE AUTHORS OR COPYRIGHT HOLDERS BE LIABLE FOR ANY CLAIM, DAMAGES OR OTHER LIABILITY, WHETHER IN AN ACTION OF CONTRACT, TORT OR OTHERWISE, ARISING FROM, OUT OF OR IN CONNECTION WITH THE TRAINING COURSE OR THE USE OR OTHER DEALINGS IN THE TRAINING COURSE.

The globe logo is from www.mapAbility.com. Used with permission.

Curse of the “Genius” Label

2

1. What is genius?

3

A common misunderstanding of “genius”

- The term “genius” can be used to mean a superior ability:

- “He is a genius” → “he has a very high intelligence”
- “Michael Jordan was a genius on the basketball court”

There is nothing wrong with the above meaning

- However, “genius” is often used to mean a superior ability that comes *naturally* to a person:

- In other words, either you are born a genius or you are not
- If you are not born Superman, you will never be bullet proof, be able to fly or have X-ray vision, regardless of how much you practise
- Likewise, if you are not born with the relevant abilities then:
 - You will never be as intelligent as Albert Einstein
 - You will never play basketball as well as Michael Jordan

This commonly held understanding of “genius” is wrong

Thomas Edison

- Thomas Edison was a famous American inventor:
 - His inventions include the light bulb and the phonograph
 - He is widely regarded as a genius
- Famous quote from Thomas Edison:
 - “Genius is 1% inspiration and 99% perspiration”
- Important points to note about this quote:
 - It does *not* mention anything about being *born with* superior abilities
 - The 1% and 99% figures are inaccurate placeholders
 - More likely to be 1 unit of inspiration and 10,000+ units of hard work
 - Don't assume he was being modest. Perhaps he was making an insult:
“I am called a ‘genius’ because I work hard. You are not called that because you are lazy”

The “genius” of stars

- Is Thomas Edison's quote accurate?
 - Is it valid only for him? Or does it hold for many other geniuses too?
- The term “genius” is often applied to the best people in a field, such as sports, music, art, movies, business, ...
- Were such people born already being “the best”?
Or did they have to work very hard to become the best?
- The answer (at least for *most* geniuses) is: they worked hard
 - You can verify this by reading biographies of “the best” people
 - The book *Mindset* by Carol S. Dweck comes to the same conclusion
- Even young prodigies usually work very hard

The “genius” of stars (cont’)

- Example of a sports genius:
 - Michael Jordan is regarded as the best basketball player ever
 - However, several basketball teams rejected him because he was not (yet) good enough
 - His skill was “mediocre” initially. Hard work made it “good”, “better”, “great” and eventually “genius”.
 - He had to continue working hard to *remain* at the “genius” level

- So it seems Thomas Edison was right:
 - Genius = a small bit of inspiration plus *lots* of hard work
 - For tips on finding inspiration, see:
 - *The Status Quo is Flawed* chapter of slides
 - Edward de Bono’s *Six Thinking Hats* or *Lateral Thinking* books
 - *Why Not?* by Barry Nalebuff and Ian Ayres

2. Why the “genius” label can be a curse

“You are a genius”

- “You are a genius” is normally intended as a compliment
- When somebody calls you a genius they probably assume:
 - You were born with a superior talent or IQ
 - You don't have to work hard to achieve excellent results
- These assumptions of you are likely to be incorrect:
 - You were *not* born superior
 - You *did* have to work hard
- These incorrect assumptions can cause you problems...

Problems with being called a genius

- People may develop unrealistic expectations of you:
 - They think “You're a genius so you can do anything”
 - It is usually impossible to live up to their unrealistic expectations
 - So then people become disappointed in you
 - If one of these disappointed people is your manager then bonuses, pay rises and promotions may occur less frequently
- Many people think something developed by a genius must be complex:
 - “I'd have to be a genius to understand that”
 - So they won't bother trying to understand your work
 - This makes it difficult for you to promote the results of your work
- These problems mean “You are a genius” is more of a curse than a compliment

Unrealistic expectations of a “genius”

■ Interesting article:

- *It Isn't Easy Being a Genius* by Jim Collins, New York Times, 19 September 2005
- http://www.nytimes.com/2005/09/19/opinion/19collins.html?_r=1

■ Brief summary:

- The author was called a genius by the US national media
- As a result, people developed unrealistic expectations of him
- Family, friends and strangers asked him:
 - For investment advice, questions on unusual subjects
 - To listen to theories they had
- Friends were frustrated he wasn't better at playing Trivial Pursuit
- His young daughter was disappointed when he was no good at playing a children's card game
- Colleagues assumed his research papers were all accepted for publication

4. Advice and summary

Advice

- Banish “genius” from your vocabulary because of ambiguity:
 - Does it mean a high IQ or natural ability?
 - Or does it mean inspiration plus hard work?
- Instead, explicitly say what you mean. For example:
 - “You are very intelligent”
 - “That is a good bit of inspiration”
 - “I am impressed with how hard you worked on this”

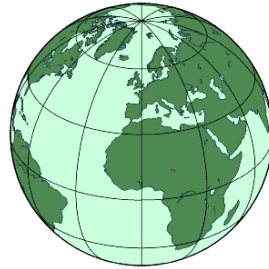
Advice (cont’)

- Treat the label “genius” as a curse rather than a compliment
 - Reject and fight this curse
- You can fight it through education (such as this presentation)
- Humour can help:
 - “I *used to be* a genius, but I’m retired now.”
 - “I *can’t be* a genius: I work only part-time.”
 - “You say I’m a genius? Thank you, and yes, I do work hard.”
- Such jokes are likely to receive a puzzled response:
 - This gives you an opportunity to educate people that “genius” refers to “hard work” rather than an innate ability

Summary

- The term “genius” is widely misunderstood:
 - It is *not* an *intrinsically* superior ability you are born with
 - Instead, you reach a state of genius (superior ability) through lots of practice and hard work
- The misunderstanding can cause problems. People will:
 - Dismiss your claims of having worked hard because “you are a genius”
 - Develop unrealistic expectations of you that you cannot live up to
 - Ignore your work because “only another genius could understand it”
- *Never* accept the label “genius” as a compliment
 - Its effects are like a curse that can hinder your career or goals

Criticism and Rejection



CiaranMcHale.com
Complexity explained simply

1

License

Copyright © 2009 Ciaran McHale.

Permission is hereby granted, free of charge, to any person obtaining a copy of this training course and associated documentation files (the "Training Course"), to deal in the Training Course without restriction, including without limitation the rights to use, copy, modify, merge, publish, distribute, sublicense, and/or sell copies of the Training Course, and to permit persons to whom the Training Course is furnished to do so, subject to the following conditions:

The above copyright notice and this permission notice shall be included in all copies or substantial portions of the Training Course.

THE TRAINING COURSE IS PROVIDED "AS IS", WITHOUT WARRANTY OF ANY KIND, EXPRESS OR IMPLIED, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO THE WARRANTIES OF MERCHANTABILITY, FITNESS FOR A PARTICULAR PURPOSE AND NONINFRINGEMENT. IN NO EVENT SHALL THE AUTHORS OR COPYRIGHT HOLDERS BE LIABLE FOR ANY CLAIM, DAMAGES OR OTHER LIABILITY, WHETHER IN AN ACTION OF CONTRACT, TORT OR OTHERWISE, ARISING FROM, OUT OF OR IN CONNECTION WITH THE TRAINING COURSE OR THE USE OR OTHER DEALINGS IN THE TRAINING COURSE.

The globe logo is from www.mapAbility.com. Used with permission.

Criticism and Rejection

2

Introduction

- If you try to bring about significant change then you *will be* criticized unjustly:
 - Some of the reasons for unjust criticisms have been discussed in earlier chapters
- This chapter:
 - Summarizes the reasons for unjust criticisms given in earlier chapters
 - Discusses some forms used for unjust criticisms
- It is useful to be forewarned that you will face unjust criticisms:
 - Knowing that other people have faced similar, unjust criticisms takes some of the sting out of the criticisms
 - You can view the existence of unjust criticisms as a sign that you are making progress

1. Recap of reasons for unjust criticisms

Recap: The Status Quo is Flawed

- The following quote was used in the chapter *The Status Quo is Flawed*:
 - “The reasonable man adapts himself to the world; the unreasonable one persists in trying to adapt the world to himself. Therefore, all progress depends on the unreasonable man.”
— George Bernard Shaw
- The quote is relevant because:
 - People who are viewed as being unreasonable are criticized
 - Therefore, people who bring about progress are criticized
- Some of the criticisms you will face include:
 - “If that was a good idea then somebody else would have thought of it already.” → Your idea is stupid
 - “The current system was designed by experts. Apparently you think you know better than the experts.” → You are arrogant

Recap: The Innovator’s Dilemma

- Organizations serving an established, mainstream market sometimes reject innovations:
 - A rejected innovation might succeed in a smaller, niche market
 - Success in the niche market enables the innovation to mature
 - The matured innovation might then succeed in the mainstream market
- The initial rejection often comes with criticisms:
 - If you believe in your innovation then do not take the criticisms to heart
 - Instead, look for a niche market

Recap: The Confirmation Bias

- The confirmation bias says:
 - People form an opinion based on first impressions
 - Afterwards, they tend to:
 - Listen to data that confirm their already-held opinion
 - Dismiss data that contradict their already-held opinion
- The confirmation bias can result in two types of criticism:
 - Criticism of your innovation because it contradicts people's opinions of the status quo
 - Criticism of your personality and integrity. This occurs because:
 - It is difficult to dislike a person for one reason but like them for another reason. We tend to like (or dislike) a person in their entirety
 - Your being "unreasonable" will make some people dislike you for one reason, and therefore assume you are uniformly dislikeable

2. Unjust criticisms may take different forms

Criticisms may come in the form of accusations

- Marva Collins:
 - Was a teacher in a school in America
 - Her innovative teaching style worked very well with her students
 - She was unable to convince other school staff of the benefits of her innovations. So...
 - She converted half of her house into a small school and taught there

- She encountered a criticism: “You are experimenting on the students”
 - The accusation was true: she *was* experimenting to improve her teaching techniques. And the experiments were *very* successful
 - The accusation had some hidden assumptions that were false

Assumptions about your motivations

- Some people will criticize you, not for what you have done
 - But for what they *assume* are your motivations

- Bob Geldof:
 - Was the lead singer of The Boomtown Rats
 - They had many hits, but by 1984 they were no longer popular
 - They had finished recording a new album and wanted to promote it
 - Bob Geldof was moved by a news report about famine in Ethiopia
 - As a result, he spent many months organizing Band Aid and Live Aid
 - This meant The Boomtown Rats could not promote their new album effectively, and its chances of success slipped away

- Some people assumed Bob Geldof organized Band Aid and Live Aid as a gimmick to promote his music career

Accuse first, ask questions later

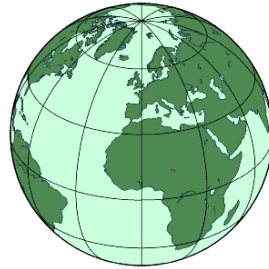
- Some people will make accusations based on assumptions
 - They can't be bothered to ask questions to discover the facts first
- David Bailey is a famous photographer:
 - He released a charity book entitled *Imagine: A Book for Band Aid*
 - Sales of this book raised £200,000 for Band Aid
- At the launch of the book, a journalist:
 - Assumed he had travelled to Ethiopia first class at Band Aid's expense
 - Attacked him for wasting money that could have been used for charity
- In fact, David Bailey:
 - Had travelled in the hold of a cargo plane
 - Paid all his own travel and living expenses
 - Gave his time and talent free of charge for the project

3. Summary

Summary

- Newton's third law of motion:
 - "To every action there is an equal and opposite reaction"
- A variation applies to people who try to bring about change:
 - "To every action there is an equal and opposite criticism"
- If you try to bring about change then you *will be* criticized
 - Some criticisms may be justified, but much will be unjustified
 - It is likely that the greater the change, the greater the criticism
- There is no magic shield to defend you from such criticism:
 - Criticisms always sting
 - But understanding that "criticism happens" helps to deflect some of the sting

Timescales



CiaranMcHale.com
Complexity explained simply

1

License

Copyright © 2009 Ciaran McHale.

Permission is hereby granted, free of charge, to any person obtaining a copy of this training course and associated documentation files (the "Training Course"), to deal in the Training Course without restriction, including without limitation the rights to use, copy, modify, merge, publish, distribute, sublicense, and/or sell copies of the Training Course, and to permit persons to whom the Training Course is furnished to do so, subject to the following conditions:

The above copyright notice and this permission notice shall be included in all copies or substantial portions of the Training Course.

THE TRAINING COURSE IS PROVIDED "AS IS", WITHOUT WARRANTY OF ANY KIND, EXPRESS OR IMPLIED, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO THE WARRANTIES OF MERCHANTABILITY, FITNESS FOR A PARTICULAR PURPOSE AND NONINFRINGEMENT. IN NO EVENT SHALL THE AUTHORS OR COPYRIGHT HOLDERS BE LIABLE FOR ANY CLAIM, DAMAGES OR OTHER LIABILITY, WHETHER IN AN ACTION OF CONTRACT, TORT OR OTHERWISE, ARISING FROM, OUT OF OR IN CONNECTION WITH THE TRAINING COURSE OR THE USE OR OTHER DEALINGS IN THE TRAINING COURSE.

The globe logo is from www.mapAbility.com. Used with permission.

Timescales

2

1. Timescales

3

Introduction: change occurs very slowly

- It would be great if you could bring about change in a weekend
 - Unfortunately, meaningful change usually occurs much more slowly
- To bring about change, you *must* have patience and perseverance
 - To understand why, consider the scenario on the next slide...

One change is just the tip of the iceberg

- Typical scenario:
 - You see a problem that should be fixed
 - You estimate that doing so will take a few weeks

 - Your estimate is far too short. The work takes many months

 - By this time, you realize that the problem you addressed was really just a symptom of a larger problem
 - You estimate it will take several more months to fix this larger problem

 - Your estimate is far too short. The work takes several years
 - Then you realize this second problem was just a symptom of an even larger problem...

- That scenario:
 - Shows why patience and perseverance are so important
 - Has occurred for many people throughout history

Example: Bob Geldof

- Bob Geldof wanted to raise some money to combat famine in Ethiopia:
 - He organized the Band Aid charity record; it raised millions of pounds
 - Next problem: by default, much of the money raised would be wasted on bureaucracy and expensive means of transport
 - Solution: he finds ways to significantly cut these overheads
 - Next problem: the money raised was not enough to combat famine
 - Solution: he organized Live Aid, which raised \$200million
 - Next problem: the amount of aid money is tiny compared to interest payments on the crippling amount of debt that many poor countries face
 - Solution: he organized Live 8 to pressure large nations to forgive the debt

- Timespan for the above events: more than 20 years

Other examples

- Elizabeth Kenny developed a successful treatment for polio:
 - It took her 30 years to convince the medical establishment of the validity of her theories and treatment
- Gandhi peacefully ended British rule of India:
 - It took him 30 years to achieve this goal
- James Dyson introduced the bagless vacuum cleaner:
 - It took him 15 years to bring his invention to market in England
- Martin Luther King Jr. made significant progress for black rights within the USA:
 - He worked at this for 12 years, until he was assassinated

Increasing your patience and perseverance

- If you are impatient and give up easily in small things then you are unlikely to have patience and perseverance for big things
- You can increase your patience and perseverance by...
 - Cutting down on “instant gratification” activities
Examples: television and movies, eating ready-cooked meals, writing blog entries
 - Engaging in some “delayed gratification” activities
Examples: gardening, art, do-it-yourself home improvements, regular exercise, writing long articles or books

Bringing about change can be a life-long activity

- The bible has a story about patience and perseverance:
 - Moses spent 40 years bringing his people to the promised land
 - Unfortunately, he died before they arrived
- When old, you might reflect on your life and think:
“There is still so much more to do”
- But it is not all gloom and doom:
 - You *will* experience occasional milestones of achievement
 - You *must* recognise and celebrate those to motivate yourself to continue
- In old age:
 - *Do not* think: “There is so much more to do; therefore I failed”
 - *Do* think: “There is so much more to do, but I achieved a lot, and other people can continue the work after me”

2. Obsession

Dedication or obsession?

- Bringing about change requires:
 - An enormous amount of time (as already discussed)
 - Overcoming obstacles that are difficult and sometime seem impossible
- Does persevering at such a task indicate dedication?
Or does it indicate obsession?
- There is no universal answer to that:
 - It is subjective: one person's dedication is another person's obsession
 - The proverb "All things in moderation" is not helpful:
 - Moderation prevents unhealthy obsession
 - But moderation also prevents healthy dedication

Dedication or obsession? (cont')

- Your dedication/obsession might badly impact on your life:
 - Perhaps you develop health problems due to overwork or stress
 - Perhaps your relationship with your partner deteriorates
 - Perhaps your career is put at risk
- In such cases, you need to decide if persevering is worth the trouble it causes
- Some autobiographies mention the harmful effects of dedication on their lives:
 - Nelson Mandela repeatedly struggled with weighing his duty as a activist and his duties to his family
 - Elizabeth Kenny had to choose between accepting a marriage proposal or working as a nurse; she chose the latter
 - Bob Geldof suffered from months of sleep deprivation and stress when organizing Band Aid and Live Aid

3. Unconventional rewards

13

Unconventional rewards of activism

- Activism can cost you a lot of time and money:
 - In this way, activism can impoverish you
- However, activism *can* enrich your life in other ways:
 - You can develop a network of close friends who share your beliefs
 - Some activists in other regions may offer you free accommodation and food when you travel on holiday
 - Bringing about positive change can provide deep meaning to your life
- Relevant quote:
 - “I could have had a normal life. I could have had a normal legal career. I’d be a partner in some big firm by now. I’d be making tons of money. I make less now than the secretary at my old law firm.
Money is a poor substitute for having an interesting life.”
— Elizabeth May, author of *How to Save the World in Your Spare Time*

Unconventional rewards of activism (cont')

- The following anecdote is from *How to Save the World in Your Spare Time* by Elizabeth May
- Some activists opposed the environmentally-destructive plans of a large business:
 - The business sued the activists, trying to bankrupt them into silence
 - The activists were depressed and stressed about this legal danger
- One day an activist's car was being repaired at a garage:
 - The mechanic saw a news story about the lawsuit
 - He said "I really envy you. I go to work every day. I fix cars. I never know if my life really means anything. You know. Your life really makes a difference."
- Result: the activist "went from feeling sorry for herself, to feeling lucky"

4. Summary

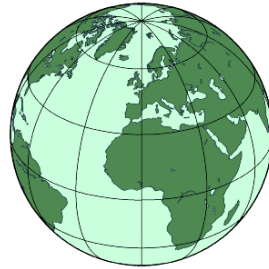
Summary

- **Bringing about significant change:**
 - Will take much longer than you assume. Possibly your entire life
 - You must have patience and perseverance
(you can develop these skills in “delayed gratification” activities)
- **Only you can decide:**
 - Is your commitment healthy dedication or unhealthy obsession?
 - Is your commitment worth the sacrifices you have to make?
- **Appreciate the unconventional benefits that activism brings**

Part VII

The Bell Curve of Intolerance

The Bell Curve of Intolerance



CiaranMcHale.com
Complexity explained simply

1

License

Copyright © 2009 Ciaran McHale.

Permission is hereby granted, free of charge, to any person obtaining a copy of this training course and associated documentation files (the "Training Course"), to deal in the Training Course without restriction, including without limitation the rights to use, copy, modify, merge, publish, distribute, sublicense, and/or sell copies of the Training Course, and to permit persons to whom the Training Course is furnished to do so, subject to the following conditions:

The above copyright notice and this permission notice shall be included in all copies or substantial portions of the Training Course.

THE TRAINING COURSE IS PROVIDED "AS IS", WITHOUT WARRANTY OF ANY KIND, EXPRESS OR IMPLIED, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO THE WARRANTIES OF MERCHANTABILITY, FITNESS FOR A PARTICULAR PURPOSE AND NONINFRINGEMENT. IN NO EVENT SHALL THE AUTHORS OR COPYRIGHT HOLDERS BE LIABLE FOR ANY CLAIM, DAMAGES OR OTHER LIABILITY, WHETHER IN AN ACTION OF CONTRACT, TORT OR OTHERWISE, ARISING FROM, OUT OF OR IN CONNECTION WITH THE TRAINING COURSE OR THE USE OR OTHER DEALINGS IN THE TRAINING COURSE.

The globe logo is from www.mapAbility.com. Used with permission.

The Bell Curve of Intolerance

2

1. Introduction

3

Generalizations

- Often, members of an oppressed group use generalizations when identifying their oppressors
- For example:
 - A black man might identify “white people” as his oppressors
 - But not all white people are racist
 - And not all white people who *are* racist are *equally* racist
- Generalizations can be a useful verbal shorthand for activists
 - But we have to see beyond generalizations to do a deeper analysis
 - Otherwise:
 - We will not be able to develop good strategies to combat oppression
 - We may accidentally offend people who don't oppress us

Getting beyond generalizations

- This chapter describes a bell curve model for intolerance:
 - Helps us to get beyond generalizations commonly used in activism
- Note: this chapter does not provide any insights:
 - It just *describes* the bell curve model without saying why it is useful
 - Later chapters discuss insights provided by this bell curve model

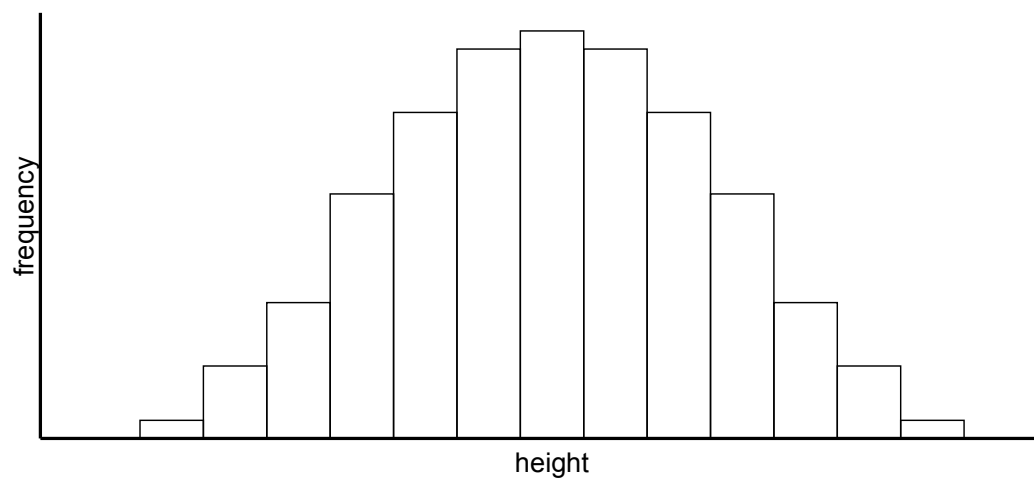
2. The bell curve model

Measuring random variation

- Experiment:
 - Measure the height of, say, 1000 adult men picked at random
 - Show the results as a bar chart
- The result probably looks like the bar chart on the next slide

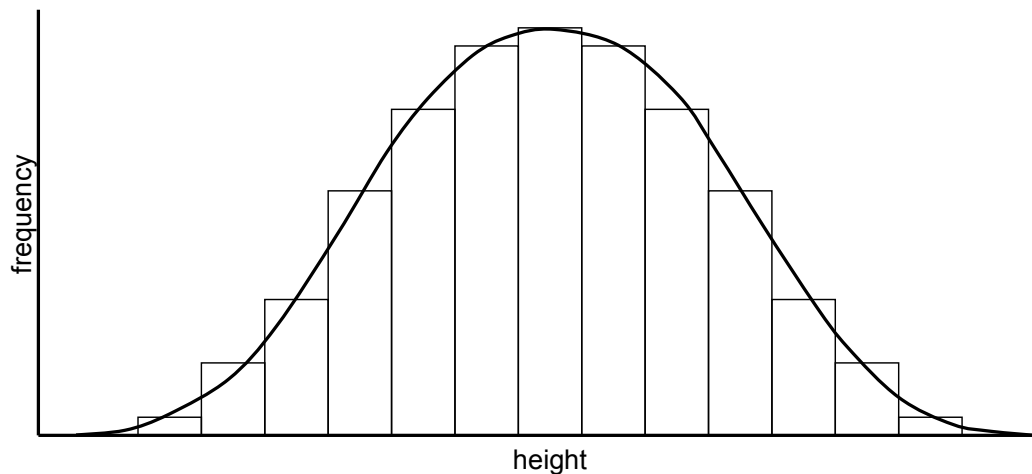
Measuring random variation (cont')

- Observations:
 - Most people are close to average height
 - A smaller number of people are very tall or very short



A bell curve

- The bar chart actually looks like a bell
 - Hence the name “bell curve”
 - Also known as “normal distribution” or “Gaussian distribution”

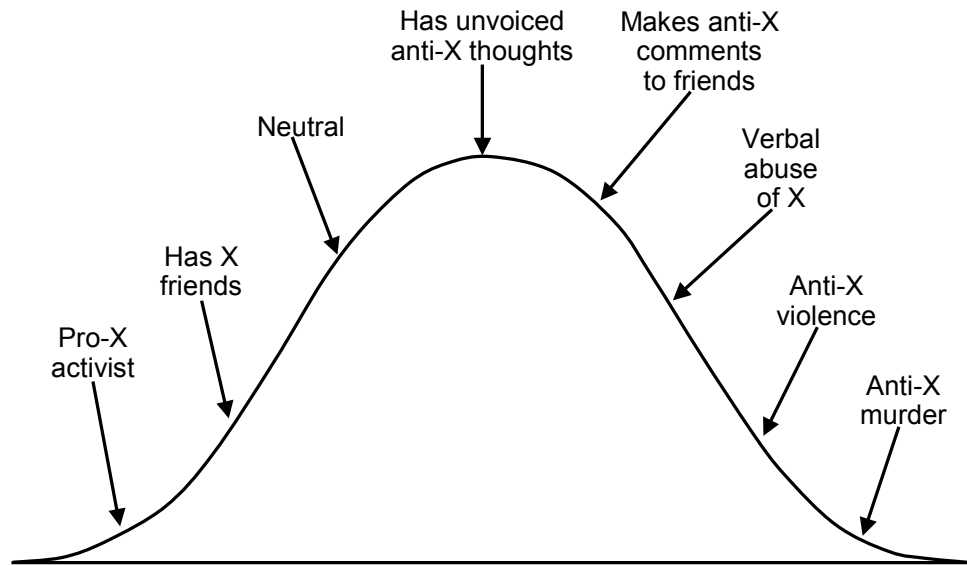


Importance of the bell curve

- Bell curve distributions occur widely in nature
 - Height, weight, chest-size of populations, survival times for diseases...
 - Many uses in mathematics, physics, social sciences, ...
- Do levels of intolerance follow a bell curve distribution?
 - If so, could this provide any insights into intolerance?
- The next slide shows a bell curve distribution:
 - “X” denotes an oppressed group (a different religion or race, homosexuality, ...)
 - Bell curve shows the distribution of non-X intolerance for X people

Bell curve of intolerance

- Comments are on the following slides



The Bell Curve of Intolerance

11

Extremists

- The extreme right of the curve denotes increasing hate
 - Anti-X “extremists” probably believe they are doing a good thing:
 - “Most people just moan about the X problem. I’m going to *do something* about it.”
 - “I’m doing what the public wants (but are too scared to do)”
 - “It’s a dirty job but somebody’s got to do it.”
- The extreme left of the curve denotes increasing love
 - Not necessarily romantic love, but friendship and caring
 - Is love really such an extreme?
 - Yes, because love is the opposite of hate
 - Yes, according to people at the middle or on the right of the curve.
 - Historical examples from USA:
 - A white person with black friends might be called “nigger lover”
 - A white person campaigning for black rights might be socially shunned, harassed or even killed

The Bell Curve of Intolerance

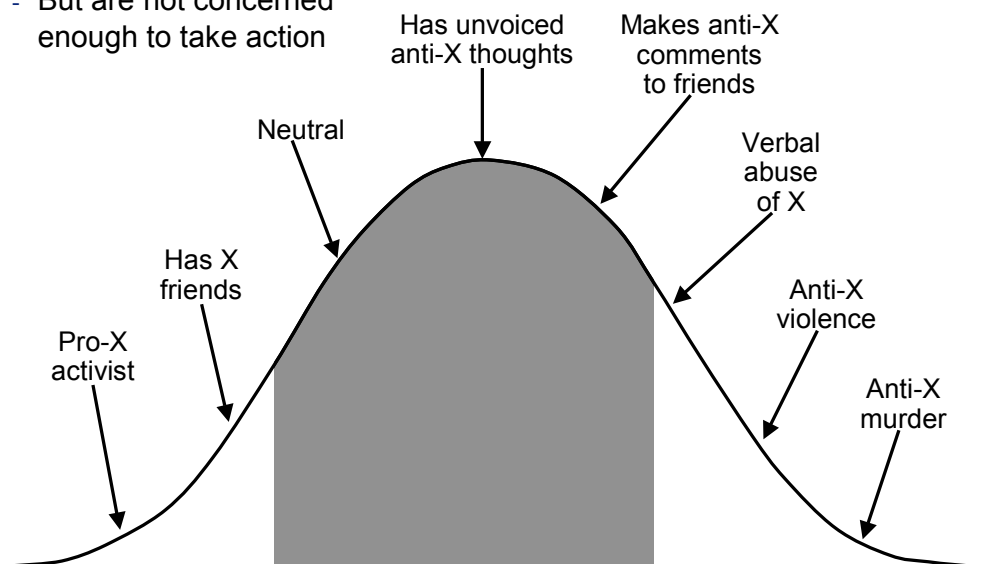
12

Neutral people and the lack of scale

- “Neutral”:
 - Means “I don’t dislike X people but I don’t know any either”
 - Is *not* in the centre of the bell curve because the “average” person has anti-X feelings
 - At least in a society that oppresses X people
- The bell curve is *not* drawn to scale:
 - The scale shown slide implies:
 - About 8% of non-X population commit anti-X violence
 - About 2% of non-X population commit anti-X murder
 - In reality, levels of anti-X violence and murder are (hopefully) much less
- Reason for the deliberate lack of scale:
 - It would be difficult to see “extremists” if they are shown at, say, 0.1%
 - Levels of anti-X intolerance might change over time
(Example: there is less racism in USA today than 100 years ago)

The apathetic majority

- Most people near the centre of the bell curve:
 - Might think, or talk to friends and family, about X people
 - But are not concerned enough to take action



Is the bell curve accurate?

- Bell curves are often used to do mathematical predictions:
 - For such uses, it is important to verify that the data fit a bell curve
- There is no statistical data on levels of intolerance to know that a bell curve model is appropriate:
 - This flaw means we should not try to use the bell curve for mathematical predictions
- However, the bell curve model *can* still be useful:
 - It provides a more elaborate way to reason about, say, racism than the simplistic view of “You are racist or you are not racist”
 - The next few chapters discuss some insights that we can get from the bell curve model of intolerance

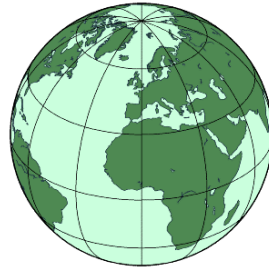
3. Summary

Summary of the bell curve model

- Summary of the bell curve model:
 - Increasing love towards the left extreme
 - Increasing hate towards the right extreme
 - Neutral is to the left of centre
 - Because the model is for a group that faces widespread intolerance
 - Large apathetic majority:
 - Might stay silent or make comments to friends
 - But don't care enough to do anything
 - Not drawn to scale:
 - It would be difficult to see "extremists" if they are shown at, say, 0.1%
 - Levels of anti-X intolerance might change over time

- The next few chapters discuss some insights we can get from the bell curve model

Bell Curve Insight into Satyagraha



CiaranMcHale.com
Complexity explained simply

1

License

Copyright © 2009 Ciaran McHale.

Permission is hereby granted, free of charge, to any person obtaining a copy of this training course and associated documentation files (the "Training Course"), to deal in the Training Course without restriction, including without limitation the rights to use, copy, modify, merge, publish, distribute, sublicense, and/or sell copies of the Training Course, and to permit persons to whom the Training Course is furnished to do so, subject to the following conditions:

The above copyright notice and this permission notice shall be included in all copies or substantial portions of the Training Course.

THE TRAINING COURSE IS PROVIDED "AS IS", WITHOUT WARRANTY OF ANY KIND, EXPRESS OR IMPLIED, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO THE WARRANTIES OF MERCHANTABILITY, FITNESS FOR A PARTICULAR PURPOSE AND NONINFRINGEMENT. IN NO EVENT SHALL THE AUTHORS OR COPYRIGHT HOLDERS BE LIABLE FOR ANY CLAIM, DAMAGES OR OTHER LIABILITY, WHETHER IN AN ACTION OF CONTRACT, TORT OR OTHERWISE, ARISING FROM, OUT OF OR IN CONNECTION WITH THE TRAINING COURSE OR THE USE OR OTHER DEALINGS IN THE TRAINING COURSE.

The globe logo is from www.mapAbility.com. Used with permission.

1. What is Satyagraha?

3

Gandhi and Satyagraha

- Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi (1869–1948) was:
 - One of the most significant people of the 20th century (according to Time magazine)
 - One of the most successful activists of all time
- Some other famous activists were inspired by Gandhi:
 - Examples: Martin Luther King and Nelson Mandela
- Gandhi used peaceful tactics to fight violent oppression
 - He did not like the term “passive resistance”
 - He coined the term *Satyagraha*, meaning truth-force
 - From Sanskrit. *Satya* means truth; *Graha* means firmness or force

Outline of Satyagraha strategy

- Outline of Satyagraha strategy:
 - Lead peaceful demonstrations and refuse to obey unjust laws
 - Do not resist arrest. Do not defend yourself against attack
 - Do not try to destroy, hurt or humiliate your oppressors (instead, leave the door open to friendship)
- The oppressors typically respond to this strategy with:
 - Mass imprisonment of protestors
 - Beatings and even murder of the protestors
- Surprisingly, Satyagraha (eventually) worked
 - Gandhi had many successes with it
 - Eventually, he used it to end English rule of India
- What is the explanation for Satyagraha's success?

Gandhi's explanation of Satyagraha's success

- Gandhi described Satyagraha as
 - “The vindication of truth not by infliction of suffering on the opponent but on one's self.”
 - Chapter 11 (“Gandhi Goes to Jail”) of Part One in “The Life of Mahatma Gandhi” by Louis Fischer
- There are longer descriptions of Satyagraha but they all are based on religious ideas, such as:
 - Love can conquer hate
 - Self-suffering, penance and self-restraint are good for the soul
- Satyagraha worked, but it does not seem logical
- The bell curve of intolerance offers another explanation
 - Much easier to understand, regardless of your religious beliefs
 - If you can understand Satyagraha then you can use it in your activism

2. Insight provided by the bell curve

7

The bell curve explanation for Satyagraha's success

■ Initial events:

- X and pro-X activists do a peaceful protest *designed to provoke* anti-X extremists
- Anti-X extremists react, usually with violence and mass arrests
- X and pro-X activists *do not* defend themselves or resist arrest

■ Then:

- The asymmetrical conflict is *widely reported* in the news
- The *apathetic majority* become sympathetic and take action:
 - "I don't like X people much but they don't deserve *that* treatment"
 - They put *peer pressure* on anti-X extremists to stop
- The international, apathetic community also becomes sympathetic
- They put political peer pressure on the government to stop anti-X extremists

Comparison of explanations

- Gandhi did not discuss mass communication (to generate peer pressure) as being a part of Satyagraha
 - Perhaps he thought this was obvious & therefore not worth mentioning
 - Or perhaps he was so focused on spiritual issues that he discarded non-spiritual aspects of Satyagraha
 - Mark Shepard (author of “Mahatma Gandhi and His Myths”) believes Gandhi did not realize the importance of mass communication

- Mass communication is important because:
 - It enables the apathetic majority to see the horrifying truth of oppression
 - Many anti-X extremists believe they are carrying out the will of the majority
 - When the majority express horror at the actions of the anti-X extremists:
 - The extremists’ pride turns to shame
 - The extremists no longer feel safe from prosecution by the majority

Examples of Satyagraha

- You can find many documented examples of Satyagraha-based campaigns in:
 - Biographies of Gandhi
 - *The Autobiography of Martin Luther King Jr.*

- The following slides provide two examples:
 - The first example is from Gandhi
 - Chapter 18 (“Colour Bar”) in Part II of Gandhi’s autobiography
 - The second example is from Martin Luther King Junior.
 - Chapter 26 (“Selma”) of *The Autobiography of Martin Luther King Jr.*

Example: Gandhi tackled job discrimination

- Sequence of events:
 - Gandhi had a law degree
 - Gandhi applied for a license to work in the South African Supreme Court
 - No non-white person had such a license
 - Existing barristers invented silly reasons to deny him his request
 - Gandhi was enraged by this, “but I restrained my feelings”
 - Gandhi’s autobiography does not mention him communicating the issue to newspapers. But he must have done so because...
 - “Most of the newspapers condemned the opposition and accused the Law Society of jealousy.”
 - In this way, peer pressure was applied
 - Result: Gandhi obtained his license

- Note: this example shows that Satyagraha can work even if your opponent uses bureaucracy instead of violence

Example: King secured black voting rights

- Sequence of events:
 - In many states in the USA :
 - Black people could not vote
 - Or racist bureaucracy made it almost impossible for black people to register to vote
 - King asked the US president to introduce a bill to tackle this
 - The president said public and political opinion would defeat such a bill
 - King organized Satyagraha-based protests in Selma
 - Selma had racist bureaucracy to hinder black voter registration
 - As planned, peaceful protestors were met with violence
 - Nationwide media reported the protest
 - Result: the apathetic majority applied peer pressure
 - The president was able to introduce a bill for black voting
 - The bill passed

- Total elapsed time: 5 months

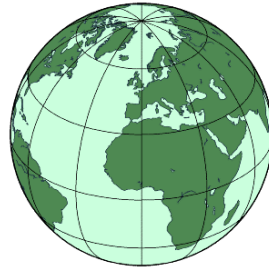
5. Summary

13

Summary

- Satyagraha is usually explained in religious terms
 - Something like “love is more powerful than hate”
 - Or “penance and suffering are good for the soul”
- The bell curve model offers a better explanation for the success of Satyagraha
 - A non-religious explanation is easier to understand
- This chapter has only scratched the surface of Satyagraha
 - Satyagraha has many subtleties you need to understand before you can use it properly
 - See the “Satyagraha” chapter for more details

The Bell Curve and the Domino Effect



CiaranMcHale.com
Complexity explained simply

1

License

Copyright © 2009 Ciaran McHale.

Permission is hereby granted, free of charge, to any person obtaining a copy of this training course and associated documentation files (the "Training Course"), to deal in the Training Course without restriction, including without limitation the rights to use, copy, modify, merge, publish, distribute, sublicense, and/or sell copies of the Training Course, and to permit persons to whom the Training Course is furnished to do so, subject to the following conditions:

The above copyright notice and this permission notice shall be included in all copies or substantial portions of the Training Course.

THE TRAINING COURSE IS PROVIDED "AS IS", WITHOUT WARRANTY OF ANY KIND, EXPRESS OR IMPLIED, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO THE WARRANTIES OF MERCHANTABILITY, FITNESS FOR A PARTICULAR PURPOSE AND NONINFRINGEMENT. IN NO EVENT SHALL THE AUTHORS OR COPYRIGHT HOLDERS BE LIABLE FOR ANY CLAIM, DAMAGES OR OTHER LIABILITY, WHETHER IN AN ACTION OF CONTRACT, TORT OR OTHERWISE, ARISING FROM, OUT OF OR IN CONNECTION WITH THE TRAINING COURSE OR THE USE OR OTHER DEALINGS IN THE TRAINING COURSE.

The globe logo is from www.mapAbility.com. Used with permission.

The Bell Curve and the Domino Effect

2

1. Indifference and the domino effect

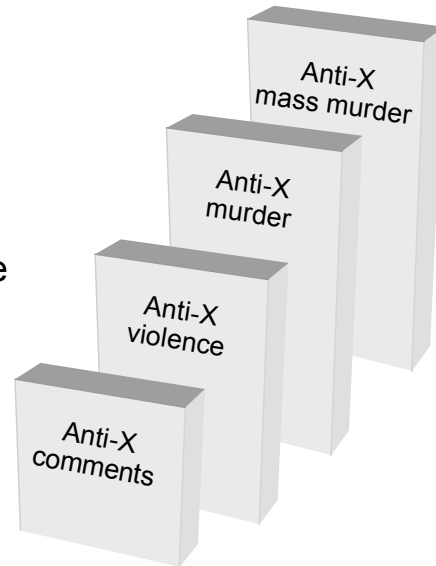
3

Indifference

- Many non-X people:
 - Feel uncomfortable when they hear anti-X statements
 - But they do *not* say “Please stop making such comments”
- A person making anti-X statements might interpret the silence:
 - As *agreement* with the statements
 - As *encouragement* to continue making such comments
 - The person might believe “I am saying what most people think”
- An anti-X extremist probably thinks:
 - The unchallenged anti-X statements means most of the public is anti-X
 - “Most people just moan about the X problem. I’m going to *do something* about it.”
 - “I’m doing what the public wants (but are too scared to do)”

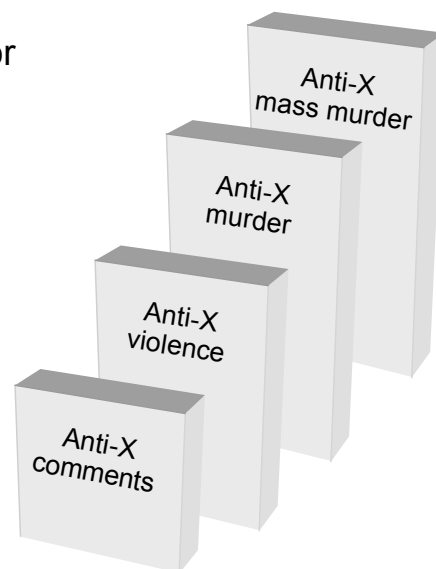
A domino effect

- The silent majority unintentionally create an environment for anti-X violence and occasional murder
- Anti-X comments lead to...
- Anti-X violence, which leads to...
- Anti-X murder, which leads to...
- Anti-X mass murder and genocide



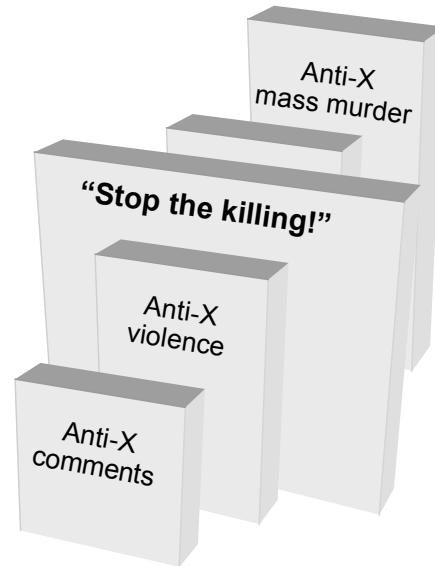
A domino effect (cont')

- The domino effect is usually stopped before it reaches its logical conclusion
- Often, it takes an anti-X murder for the non-X public to proclaim "That's unacceptable"



A domino effect (cont')

- The public outcry over an anti-X murder temporarily stops further murders
- But it does not stop the anti-X comments or anti-X violence
- Eventually, the public outcry is forgotten, and another murder occurs

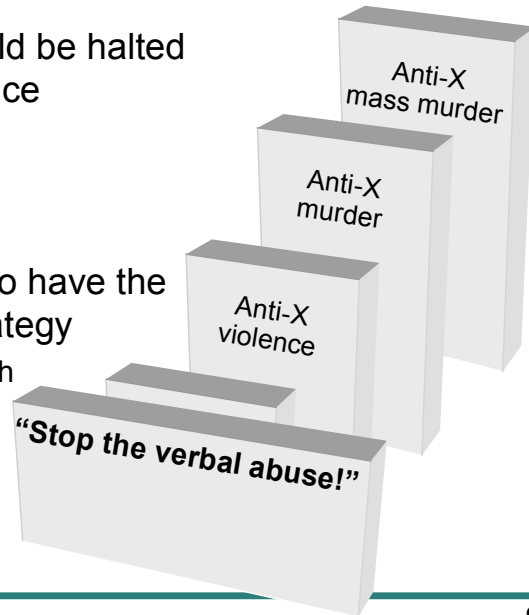


Frequency of hate crimes

- How often does anti-X violence and murder occur?
 - Varies from one "X" group to another
 - And from one country or decade to another
- In many countries, police keep statistics on hate crimes
 - Use an internet search engine to find these statistics
 - Or visit your local police station
 - The figures are probably much higher than you had assumed
- For example, in 2008 in the greater London area, England, there were:
 - Over 1000 racist and religious hate crime incidents reported per month (number of *unreported* incidents is estimated to be 5 times greater)
 - Over 100 homophobic hate crime incidents reported per month (number of *unreported* incidents is estimated to be 10 times greater)

Stopping the domino effect

- If non-X people said “That’s unacceptable” to anti-X comments...
- Then the domino effect would be halted *before* it could lead to violence
- Relevant English proverb: “A stitch in time saves nine”
- Note: it is **non-X people** who have the power to implement this strategy
 - Because peer pressure is much more effective if it comes from **non-X people**



2. Example of an extremist

General Dyer's massacre

- Taken from the Gandhi biography by Louis Fischer
 - Chapter 8 ("Murder") of Part Two
- Sequence of events:
 - General Dyer issued a proclamation forbidding Indian processions and meetings
 - The proclamation was announced, but not very widely
 - Next day, 10,000–20,000 Indians held a peaceful meeting on some unused ground mostly enclosed by walls
 - General Dyer brought troops inside the entrance of the ground
 - An armoured car could not get through narrow entrance
 - General Dyer, without warning, ordered troops to open fire on the crowd
 - 1650 rounds of ammunition were fired
 - There were 1516 casualties (379 dead plus 1137 wounded)
- An enquiry was held to investigate Dyer's extreme action

General Dyer felt he was doing his duty

- Quotes from transcript of investigation's report indicate that Dyer felt he was doing his duty
- Examples:
 - Dyer explained that "if his orders against holding a meeting were disobeyed he was going to fire at once"
 - "Yes, I think it is quite possible that I could have dispersed them perhaps without firing" but "I was going to punish them."
 - "It was no longer a question of merely dispersing the crowd, but one of producing a sufficient moral effect from a military point of view not only on those who were present, but more especially throughout the Punjab. There could be no question of undue severity."
 - "I thought I would be doing a jolly lot of good."

Conclusion of the report

- The conclusion of Louis Fischer (Gandhi biographer) and the investigation's report:
 - "His unnecessary massacre was the child of British military mentality then dominant in India" which can be characterized as "Force is the only thing that an Asiatic has any respect for."
- Put simply:
 - The atmosphere in the British military was acceptance and encouragement of violence against Indians
 - This atmosphere resulted in a domino effect with at least one person taking more extreme action

Dyer was not an isolated case

- Gandhi's protest against the salt tax:
 - In India, you needed a license to produce salt
 - The authorities gave these licenses only to English businesses
 - Gandhi organized Satyagraha-based protests:
 - Many Indians made salt
 - No protesters resisted arrest or resorted to violence
- Police response:
 - Estimated 100,000 arrests. And when that did not stop the protests...
 - Police beat protestors (killing some and seriously injuring many)
 - Police cavalry charged a peaceful protest
 - Police fired rifles and machine guns at peaceful protestors
 - An armoured car ran full speed into a crowd and then opened fire with its machine gun (70 dead and 100 injured)
- These extreme actions are examples of a domino effect

3. Anti-X intolerance in the media

15

Anti-X intolerance in the media

- Summary so far:
 - Anti-X comments lead to anti-X violence
 - Which leads to anti-X murder, and eventually anti-X mass murder
- Anti-X comments made by an individual:
 - Are heard by a small number of people
 - So the encouragement to commit anti-X violence has limited effect
- Anti-X comments in the media (TV, newspapers, radio...):
 - Are read or heard by many more people
 - Readership for the top 10 UK newspapers is 1–8 million each (figures from www.nrs.co.uk)
 - Popular TV shows might be watched by millions of people
 - So the encouragement has a much more extensive effect

How common are anti-X comments in the media?

- Often, anti-X comments are:
 - Stated indirectly or by euphemism
 - Dressed up to sound patriotic
- That makes it difficult for non-X people to recognise a comment as being anti-X
- Exercise: use an Internet search engine for keywords like:
 - Media racism
 - Media homophobia
 - Media Islamophobia
 - Media anti-Semitism
- Anti-X comments in the media are more common than most people realize

4. Anti-X comments made by people in authority

Anti-X comments made by people in authority

- When a person in a position of authority makes anti-X comments, the public is influenced heavily because:
 - The public looks to figures of authority for guidance
 - The anti-X comments are widely reported in the media
- The example on the next slide is from “The Autobiography of Martin Luther King Jr.”:
 - Chapter 8 (“The Violence of Desperate Men”)

Sequence of events

- Sequence of events:
 - King organized a peaceful boycott of segregated buses in Montgomery
 - Taxi drivers agreed to offer cheap fares to people in boycott
 - Police enforced a minimum taxi fare law to stop the taxi drivers
 - Volunteer drivers offered free rides to cover for loss of taxi drivers
 - Some white housewives drove black maids to ensure clean houses
 - “Divide and conquer” through rumours and misinformation failed to stop the boycott
 - The mayor announced a “get tough” policy on TV. He:
 - Claimed the vast majority of whites were opposed to the boycott
 - Asked white employers to stop driving blacks
 - All three city commissioners joined the White Citizens Council (a segregationist organization)
 - Police started arresting drivers for minor and imaginary traffic violations

Analysis

- Recall motivations of anti-X extremists:
 - “Most people just moan about the X problem. I’m going to *do something* about it.”
 - “I’m doing what the public wants (but are too scared to do)”
- Analysis:
 - The actions of the mayor, city commissioners and police gave important messages to anti-black vigilantes
 - “The majority of white people are opposed to the boycott”
 - “The authorities are getting tough; citizens should too”
- Without understanding the bell curve model’s domino effect:
 - The Mayor and police could deny responsibility for violence
- When you understand of the bell curve model’s domino effect:
 - Their (possibly unintentional) incitement to violence can be clearly seen

Result

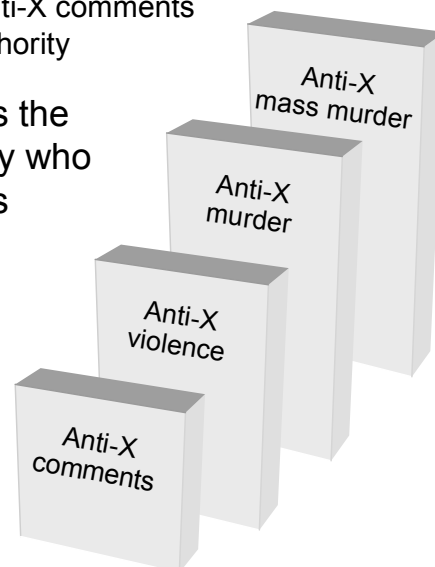
- Within a week, King’s house was bombed
 - Luckily, nobody was hurt
- The mayor expressed regret that “this unfortunate incident has taken place in our city”
- A colleague of King replied:
 - “You may express your regrets, but you must face the fact that your public statements created the atmosphere for this bombing. This is the end result of your ‘get tough’ policy.”

6. Summary

23

Summary

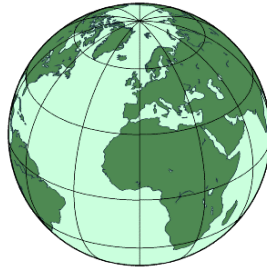
- The domino effect:
 - Anti-X comments lead to anti-X violence, anti-X murder & mass murder
 - The domino effect is multiplied when anti-X comments are made by the media or people in authority
- An “enabler” for the domino effect is the indifference of the apathetic majority who don’t say “Stop” to anti-X comments



Summary (cont')

- Famous quotes about indifference:
 - “The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing”, Edmund Burke (1729–1797), an Irish philosopher
 - “Indifference is always the friend of the enemy, for it benefits the aggressor”, Elie Wiesel, holocaust survivor
 - “Evil is obvious only in retrospect”, Gloria Steinem, feminist
- The domino effect of the bell curve helps us to understand how the above quotes apply our everyday lives
- The next chapter explores ways in which activism can tackle this indifference

Fighting the Domino Effect



CiaranMcHale.com
Complexity explained simply

1

License

Copyright © 2009 Ciaran McHale.

Permission is hereby granted, free of charge, to any person obtaining a copy of this training course and associated documentation files (the "Training Course"), to deal in the Training Course without restriction, including without limitation the rights to use, copy, modify, merge, publish, distribute, sublicense, and/or sell copies of the Training Course, and to permit persons to whom the Training Course is furnished to do so, subject to the following conditions:

The above copyright notice and this permission notice shall be included in all copies or substantial portions of the Training Course.

THE TRAINING COURSE IS PROVIDED "AS IS", WITHOUT WARRANTY OF ANY KIND, EXPRESS OR IMPLIED, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO THE WARRANTIES OF MERCHANTABILITY, FITNESS FOR A PARTICULAR PURPOSE AND NONINFRINGEMENT. IN NO EVENT SHALL THE AUTHORS OR COPYRIGHT HOLDERS BE LIABLE FOR ANY CLAIM, DAMAGES OR OTHER LIABILITY, WHETHER IN AN ACTION OF CONTRACT, TORT OR OTHERWISE, ARISING FROM, OUT OF OR IN CONNECTION WITH THE TRAINING COURSE OR THE USE OR OTHER DEALINGS IN THE TRAINING COURSE.

The globe logo is from www.mapAbility.com. Used with permission.

Fighting the Domino Effect

2

Introduction

- The previous chapter explained the problem of the domino effect
- This chapter proposes a way to combat the problem

Three important messages

We have to communicate 3 messages to the public...

- Message 1:
 - “Anti-X intolerance is a *much* bigger problem than you realize.”
- Message 2:
 - “Anti-X intolerance is bad for non-X people too.”
- Message 3:
 - “There is a simple and effective way you can stop this problem.”

1. “Anti-X intolerance is a *much* bigger problem than you realize”

5

“I haven’t seen it so I don’t believe it exists”

- Reason why non-X people under-estimate anti-X intolerance
 - “I haven’t seen it so I don’t believe it exists”
- Many non-X people do not have close X friends because:
 - X people might be a minority of the population
 - Most X people might live in “X neighbourhoods” or socialize in “X pubs”
- Anti-X intolerance is:
 - Frequently expressed at X people (verbal abuse or violence)
 - Much less frequently witnessed by non-X people
- Therefore:
 - An X person is likely to *experience* anti-X intolerance 100+ times more often than a non-X person *witnesses* it
 - So, non-X people witness less than 1% of anti-X intolerance
 - So, most non-X people think anti-X intolerance is not a big problem

Communicating statistics on hate crimes

- Recap: in 2008 in London, England, there were:
 - Over 1000 racist and religious hate crime incidents reported per month (number of *unreported* incidents is estimated to be 5 times greater)
 - Over 100 homophobic hate crime incidents reported per month (number of *unreported* incidents is estimated to be 10 times greater)
- Marketing can be used to express hate crime statistics in ways that people find meaningful and memorable
 - Break down statistics per year? Month? Week? Day? Hour? Minute?
 - Compare hate crime statistics to statistics for other types of crime?
 - Compare hate crime statistics to other activities?
 - Examples:
 - “How long does it take you to wash your hands (of a problem)?”
 - “Every breakfast time, lunchtime and dinner time, a gay hate crime is committed in London. Can you stomach it?”

2. “Anti-X intolerance is bad for non-X people too”

Revenge attacks

- One reason why anti-X intolerance is bad for non-X people:
 - Some oppressed X people will hit back at non-X people
- There is another, not so obvious, reason why anti-X intolerance is bad for non-X people...

A general atmosphere of intolerance

- The following example is from Martin Luther King's autobiography
 - Chapter 21 ("Death of Illusions")
- When Kennedy was assassinated, King pointed out that:
 - Anti-X violence and murder *cannot* be confined to just X people
 - Instead, anti-X intolerance infects other aspects of society ("hate [...] grows and spreads as a disease")
 - It creates an atmosphere in which people think it is acceptable to kill somebody they disagree with
 - It was in such an atmosphere that JFK was assassinated
- Put another way:
 - Anti-X intolerance does not affect non-X people directly
 - But it creates a general atmosphere of violence that is bad for non-X people

A general atmosphere of intolerance (cont')

Other examples that back up King's point...

- Lynching in USA was used mainly against black people
 - But some white people were lynched too
- Nazi concentration camps are associated with killing Jews:
 - But other groups were killed in concentration camps too, including:
 - Mentally retarded people, alcoholics, homeless people
 - Homosexuals, prostitutes, habitual criminals
 - Roman Catholic Polish people, Jehovah's Witnesses
 - Romany and Sinti people (more commonly known as gypsies)
 - Social democrats, freemasons, anarchists
 - Communists (including Soviet prisoners of war)

Anti-X prejudice limits choices for non-X people

- Anti-gay prejudice can hurt straight people:
 - Some straight people suffer anti-gay prejudice because they dress, speak or behave the "wrong way" or have an "inappropriate" job
 - To avoid that danger, many straight people engage in self-censorship
- To avoid suffering anti-X prejudice, many non-X people avoid having X friends

3. “There is a simple and effective way you can stop this problem”

13

The simple and effective way to stop the problem

- Let’s assume John is non-X and is an anti-X extremist
 - He commits acts of anti-X violence or murder
 - He also makes anti-X statements
- If John hears “Your anti-X statements are unacceptable”
 - *From an X person*, he is unlikely to change his behaviour or attitude
 - *From a non-X person*, he is much more likely to change
 - Because John had previously assumed he was “doing what the public want but are too scared to do”
- So, we need to empower the public:
 - Whenever you hear an anti-X statement, just say “Stop. Those comments are unacceptable.”

A joint “Don’t tolerate intolerance” campaign

- Many activists fight against intolerance for one specific group:
 - Fighting against homophobia does not reduce anti-black racism
 - Fighting against anti-black racism does not reduce Islamophobia
 - Fighting against Islamophobia does not reduce anti-Semitism
 - And so on...
- It might be better for activists to pool resources:
 - Launch a joint “Don’t tolerate intolerance” campaign
 - Give **non-X people** the courage to say “That’s unacceptable” to anti-X comments
 - “The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to ~~do nothing~~ say nothing when they hear an anti-X comment”
 - Try to stop the domino effect before it can lead to violence and murder

Shame anti-X media personalities

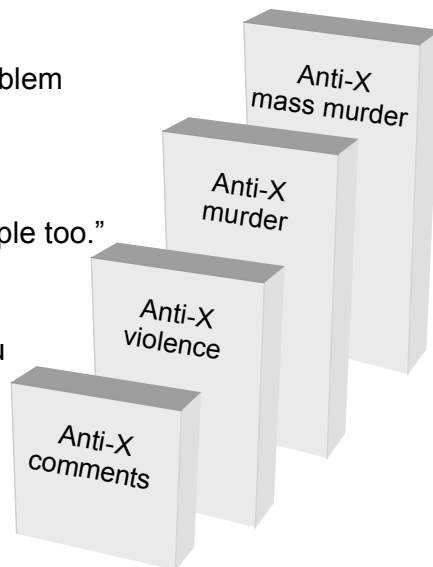
- Some TV presenters and journalists repeatedly make anti-X comments
- The cumulative effects of these could be made visual in a TV advertisement:
 - An actor is dressed as a famous TV or radio personality who regularly makes anti-X comments
 - The actor uses a bullhorn to repeatedly state anti-X comments made by the personality
 - In a crowded street, in a shopping mall, in a school, in a sports stadium, ...
 - Tag line: “The anti-X comments made by <personality’s name> on <name and date of program or newspaper> reached 2,534,000 people”

4. Summary

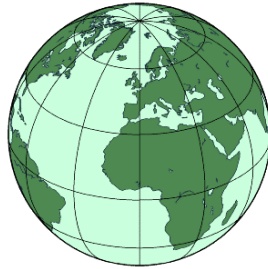
17

Summary

- We can stop the domino effect by communicating 3 messages to the public
- Message 1:
 - “Anti-X intolerance is a *much* bigger problem than you realize.”
- Message 2:
 - “Anti-X intolerance is bad for non-X people too.”
- Message 3:
 - “There is a simple and effective way you can stop this problem. Just say ‘Stop. Those comments are unacceptable.’ when you hear anti-X comments”



Bell-curve Model's Insight into Crowd Psychology



CiaranMcHale.com
Complexity explained simply

1

License

Copyright © 2009 Ciaran McHale.

Permission is hereby granted, free of charge, to any person obtaining a copy of this training course and associated documentation files (the "Training Course"), to deal in the Training Course without restriction, including without limitation the rights to use, copy, modify, merge, publish, distribute, sublicense, and/or sell copies of the Training Course, and to permit persons to whom the Training Course is furnished to do so, subject to the following conditions:

The above copyright notice and this permission notice shall be included in all copies or substantial portions of the Training Course.

THE TRAINING COURSE IS PROVIDED "AS IS", WITHOUT WARRANTY OF ANY KIND, EXPRESS OR IMPLIED, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO THE WARRANTIES OF MERCHANTABILITY, FITNESS FOR A PARTICULAR PURPOSE AND NONINFRINGEMENT. IN NO EVENT SHALL THE AUTHORS OR COPYRIGHT HOLDERS BE LIABLE FOR ANY CLAIM, DAMAGES OR OTHER LIABILITY, WHETHER IN AN ACTION OF CONTRACT, TORT OR OTHERWISE, ARISING FROM, OUT OF OR IN CONNECTION WITH THE TRAINING COURSE OR THE USE OR OTHER DEALINGS IN THE TRAINING COURSE.

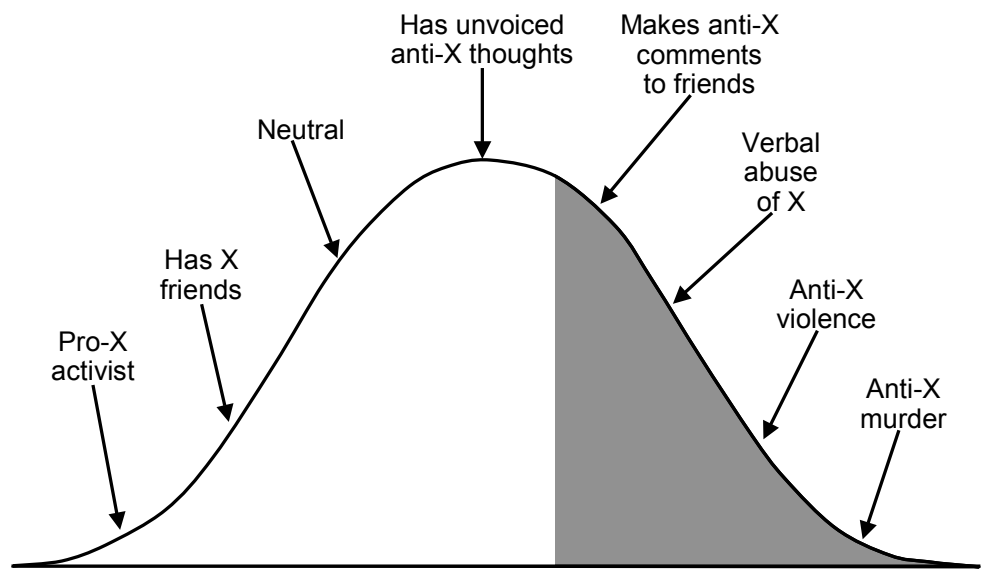
The globe logo is from www.mapAbility.com. Used with permission.

Crowd psychology

- A crowd acts differently to the individuals in the crowd
- Example:
 - An angry mob might kill a person
 - But most individuals in the mob do not intend for that to happen
 - Perhaps they just want to shout their disapproval of something
- Crowd psychology is typically viewed as being mysterious:
 - There are several competing psychological theories
 - None seem entirely convincing or understandable to a lay person
 - Example: Convergence theory:
 - States: people who wish to act in a certain way come together to form crowds
 - But most individuals in a mob do not intend to do harm

Explanation offered by the bell curve model

- Participants in a crowd are a skewed representation of society



Explanation offered by the bell curve model (cont')

Examples of crowds...

- An angry mob contains:
 - Lots of anti-X people
 - Very few, if any, neutral or pro-X people
- A “sun, sand and sex” holiday resort attracts:
 - Lots of “let’s party” people
 - Very few, if any, religious people or families with young children
- This type of skew can result in unusual behaviour...

How an angry mob might kill people

- The skewed population sample in a mob results in a domino effect:
 - Nobody opposes the shouting of anti-X slogans
 - So a *lot* of anti-X slogans are shouted
 - People who want to commit violence take the shouting as encouragement to beat up somebody
 - Then people who want to kill take the beatings as encouragement to kill
- Likewise, in a “sun, sand and sex” resort:
 - There is nobody to re-enforce self-restraint or inhibitions
 - People behave during a holiday unlike they would at home (where there is a more balanced sample of the population)

Relevance to activism

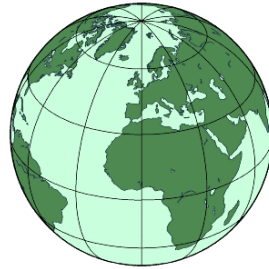
- If you organize a march...
 - Beware that the marchers are a skewed representation of society
 - So unusual behaviour might occur
- A march of angry protestors might turn into an angry mob riot
- Ways to reduce the chances of this occurring:
 - Introduce a fun theme into the march
 - Costumes, funny placards, funny chants
 - Or, introduce religion into the march
 - Sing hymns

Summary

Crowd psychology can be explained as follows...

- Some crowds contain a skewed sample of the population
 - Examples: an angry mob or people on a “sun, sand and sex” holiday
 - Vitally, the crowd is missing people who say “Don’t do that”
- Sequence of events:
 - Starts with behaviour that is unusual in a “normal population”
 - Lack of “Don’t do that” comments encourages more unusual behaviour
 - Which encourages more extreme behaviour
- Take steps to ensure that a protest march does not turn into an angry mob, which then turns into a riot
 - Introduce fun or religion into the march

Shifting the Bell Curve



CiaranMcHale.com
Complexity explained simply

1

License

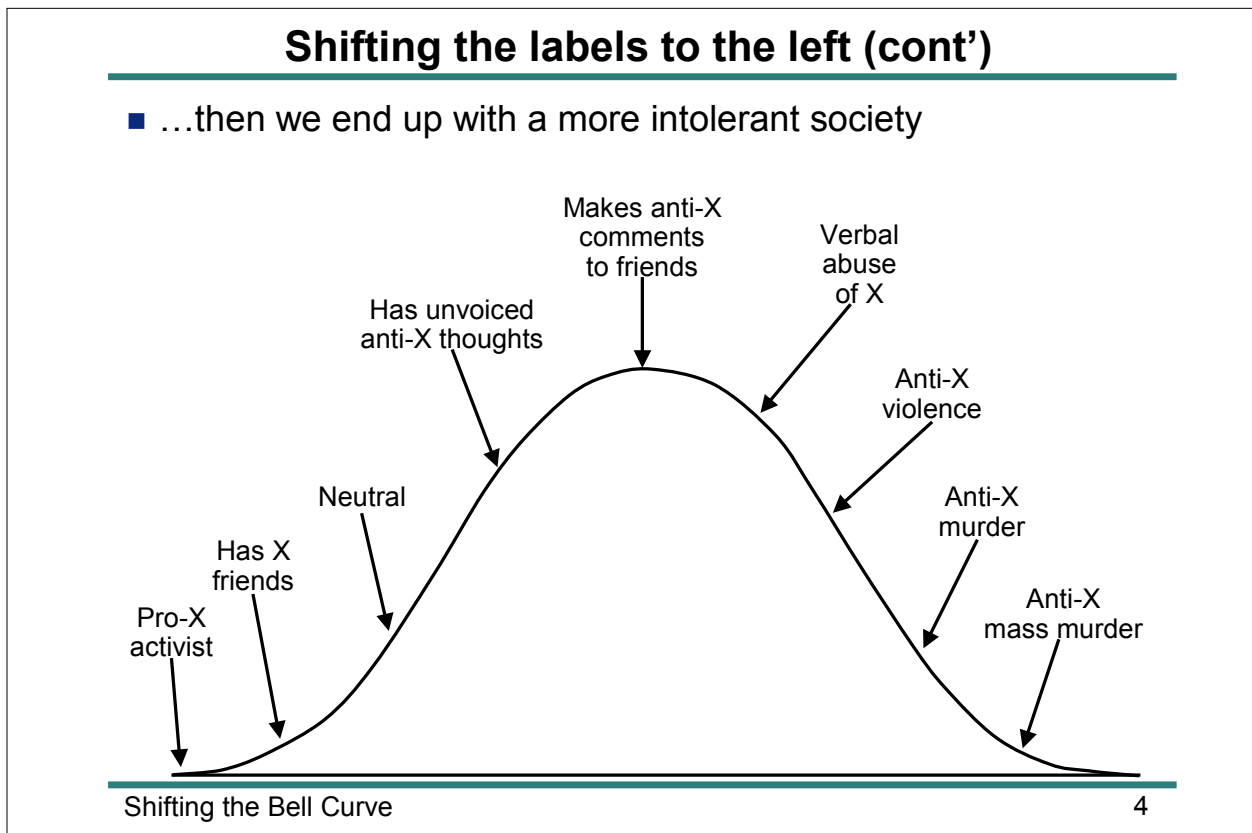
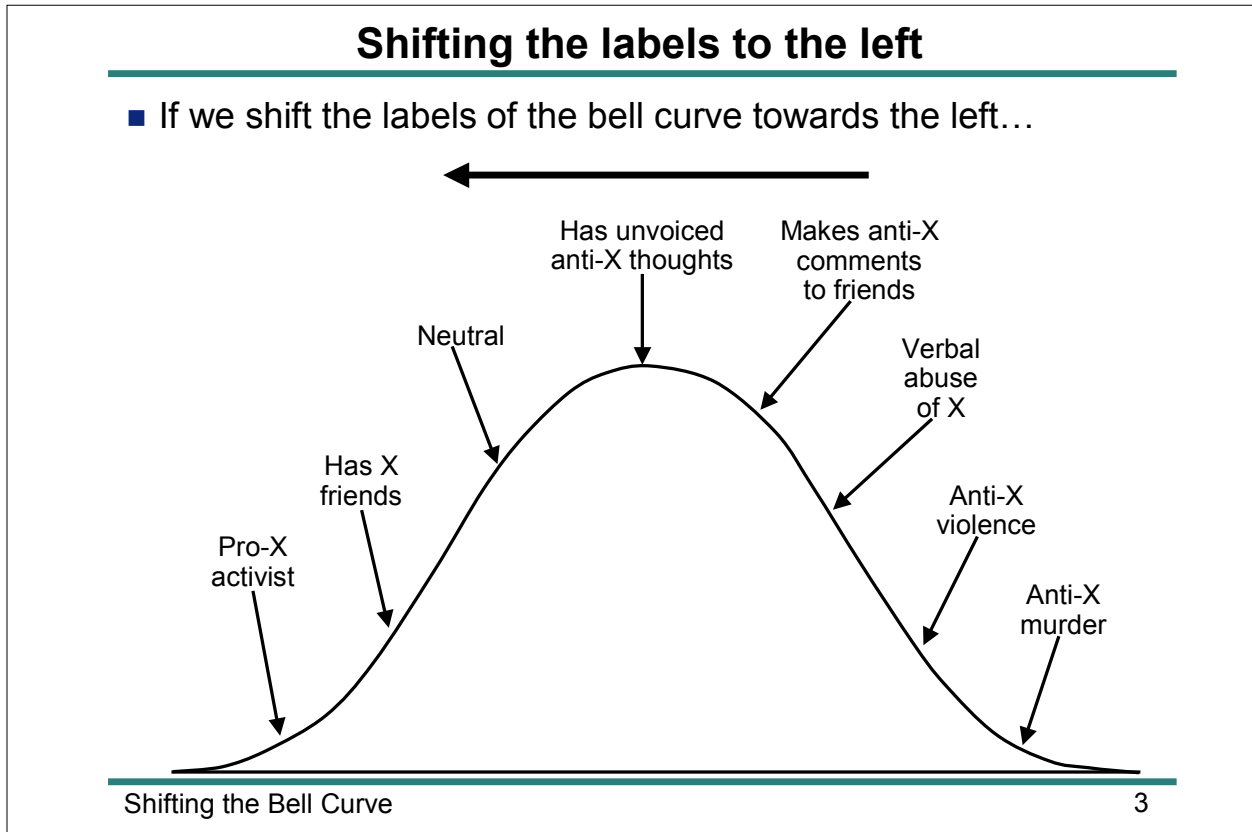
Copyright © 2009 Ciaran McHale.

Permission is hereby granted, free of charge, to any person obtaining a copy of this training course and associated documentation files (the "Training Course"), to deal in the Training Course without restriction, including without limitation the rights to use, copy, modify, merge, publish, distribute, sublicense, and/or sell copies of the Training Course, and to permit persons to whom the Training Course is furnished to do so, subject to the following conditions:

The above copyright notice and this permission notice shall be included in all copies or substantial portions of the Training Course.

THE TRAINING COURSE IS PROVIDED "AS IS", WITHOUT WARRANTY OF ANY KIND, EXPRESS OR IMPLIED, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO THE WARRANTIES OF MERCHANTABILITY, FITNESS FOR A PARTICULAR PURPOSE AND NONINFRINGEMENT. IN NO EVENT SHALL THE AUTHORS OR COPYRIGHT HOLDERS BE LIABLE FOR ANY CLAIM, DAMAGES OR OTHER LIABILITY, WHETHER IN AN ACTION OF CONTRACT, TORT OR OTHERWISE, ARISING FROM, OUT OF OR IN CONNECTION WITH THE TRAINING COURSE OR THE USE OR OTHER DEALINGS IN THE TRAINING COURSE.

The globe logo is from www.mapAbility.com. Used with permission.



Example bell-curve shifts

- Obviously, shifting the labels to the right would produce a more tolerant society
- Example shift that *increased* intolerance:
 - Rise of Nazism in 1930s Germany resulted in more intolerance of Jews
 - This culminated in the holocaust during World War 2
- Example shift that *decreased* intolerance:
 - America used to have black slaves
 - Then slaves were freed, but there was widespread segregation
 - Black-rights activism ended the segregation in the 1960s
 - Racism is still widespread but America today is much less intolerant of blacks than it was 50, 100, or 200 years ago
- Shifts *do* happen:
 - But they can take years, decades or even centuries to be noticeable

www.withoutsanctuary.org

- This website has photographs of lynchings in the USA:
 - From 1870 up to 1960
- The website contains:
 - Over 80 photographs of lynchings
 - A 5-minute flash video of the photographs with commentary
 - A forum for leaving comments
- Many comments in the forum fall into two categories:
 - “I don’t see how the historical lynching photographs relate to modern-day USA”
 - The bell curve model might help such people see the relationship
 - “The most shocking part is not the dead black people but the faces of the white spectators”

www.withoutsanctuary.org (cont')

- Many photographs emphasize the *extent* of the bell-curve shift
 - Many photographs contain identifiable faces of white spectators
 - So, there was no fear of being prosecuted for taking part in a lynching

 - In some photographs, children are present
 - Apparently, a lynching was considered family entertainment

 - Some photographs include the names of the photographers
 - Presumably they hoped to get repeat business

 - Many photographs were sold as postcards
 - So, a niche consumer market existed
 - Comments on some postcards indicated pride at being there

 - Some photographs show large groups attending lynchings
 - An estimated 15,000 people attended one lynching

Summary

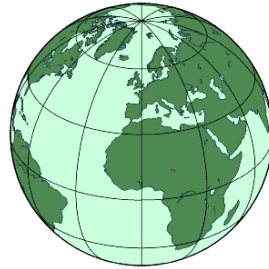
- Countries can increase or decrease their level of intolerance
 - Decreasing intolerance: Anti-black racism in USA
 - Increasing intolerance: Anti-Semitism in 1930s Germany

- Changes in intolerance levels occur slowly
 - Can take years, decades or even longer
 - Expecting to see changes immediately leads to frustration and burn-out
 - Instead, look for improvement milestones every few years

Part VIII

Satyagraha

Principles of Satyagraha



CiaranMcHale.com
Complexity explained simply

1

License

Copyright © 2009 Ciaran McHale.

Permission is hereby granted, free of charge, to any person obtaining a copy of this training course and associated documentation files (the "Training Course"), to deal in the Training Course without restriction, including without limitation the rights to use, copy, modify, merge, publish, distribute, sublicense, and/or sell copies of the Training Course, and to permit persons to whom the Training Course is furnished to do so, subject to the following conditions:

The above copyright notice and this permission notice shall be included in all copies or substantial portions of the Training Course.

THE TRAINING COURSE IS PROVIDED "AS IS", WITHOUT WARRANTY OF ANY KIND, EXPRESS OR IMPLIED, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO THE WARRANTIES OF MERCHANTABILITY, FITNESS FOR A PARTICULAR PURPOSE AND NONINFRINGEMENT. IN NO EVENT SHALL THE AUTHORS OR COPYRIGHT HOLDERS BE LIABLE FOR ANY CLAIM, DAMAGES OR OTHER LIABILITY, WHETHER IN AN ACTION OF CONTRACT, TORT OR OTHERWISE, ARISING FROM, OUT OF OR IN CONNECTION WITH THE TRAINING COURSE OR THE USE OR OTHER DEALINGS IN THE TRAINING COURSE.

The globe logo is from www.mapAbility.com. Used with permission.

1. Introduction

3

Purpose of this chapter

- Satyagraha was mentioned earlier in this course
 - In The *Bell Curve Insights into Satyagraha* chapter
- In that earlier chapter, you learned that:
 - Satyagraha is the technique Gandhi used to fight oppression
 - From Sanskrit. *Satya* means truth; *Graha* means firmness or force
 - Satyagraha made Gandhi one of the most effective activists of all time
 - Gandhi's explained Satyagraha in spiritual terms
 - Unfortunately, many people find his explanation difficult to understand
 - The bell-curve model explains Satyagraha's effectiveness more easily
- This chapter discusses the principles of Satyagraha in depth:
 - Satyagraha has subtleties you should understand before attempting to use it

Recap: bell-curve model's insight

- Satyagraha technique:
 - Lead peaceful demonstrations and refuse to obey unjust laws
 - Do not resist arrest. Do not defend yourself against attack
 - Do not try to destroy, hurt or humiliate your oppressors
 - The oppressors respond with:
 - Mass imprisonment of protestors
 - Beatings and even murder of the protestors

- The bell-curve model explains why the technique works:
 - The asymmetrical conflict is *widely reported* in the news
 - The *apathetic majority* become sympathetic and take action
 - "I don't like X people much but they don't deserve *that* treatment"
 - They put *peer pressure* on anti-X extremists to stop
 - The international, apathetic community also becomes sympathetic
 - Puts political peer pressure on government to stop anti-X extremists

Recap: importance of mass communication

- Gandhi did not discuss mass communication (to generate peer pressure) as being a part of Satyagraha
 - Perhaps he thought this was obvious & therefore not worth mentioning
 - Or perhaps he was so focused on spiritual issues that he discarded non-spiritual aspects of Satyagraha

- Mass communication is important because:
 - It enables the apathetic majority to see the horrifying truth of oppression
 - Many anti-X extremists believe they are carrying out the will of the majority
 - When the majority express horror at the actions of the anti-X extremists:
 - The extremists' pride turns to shame
 - The extremists no longer feel safe from prosecution by the majority

Structure of this chapter

- This chapter is split into many sections. Each section:
 - Focuses on one aspect of Satyagraha
 - Illustrates some subtle, but important, principles about Satyagraha

2. Importance of love

Importance of non-violence

- Love is an important ingredient of Satyagraha
 - For Satyagraha, *love* means non-violence and forgiveness
- Non-violence is important in the short term:
 - It creates an asymmetrical conflict:
 - Violent oppression versus peaceful protest
 - This is newsworthy, so it is likely to be reported widely by the media
 - It wins the sympathy and support of the apathetic majority
 - It also eases the apathetic majority's fears of X people
- Non-violence is important in the longer term:
 - Avoids future generations of non-X people being hostile towards X people
("Your ancestors killed my ancestors so I hate you")

Importance of forgiveness

Forgiveness is important for several reasons...

- It *might* cause some anti-X extremists to rethink their anti-X beliefs
- It eases the apathetic majority's fear of X people
- It avoids future generations of X people holding a grudge against non-X people
 - "Your ancestors oppressed my ancestors so I hate you"

3. Importance of self-restraint

11

Self-restraint is required for Satyagraha

- Forms of self-restraint required for Satyagraha include:
 - Self-restraint to *not* defend yourself against attack
 - Self-restraint to *not* resist arrest
 - If arrested then obey all the rules while in prison
- A Satyagraha protest will fail if *any* protestors defend themselves against attack:
 - Because then the protest looks like a riot and this will not get sympathy of the apathetic majority
 - Likewise, resisting arrest or being a bad prisoner loses you sympathy of the apathetic majority

Self-restraint training

- Martin Luther King organized training for protesters:
 - See Chapter 28 (“Chicago Campaign”) of his autobiography
 - “[W]e had trained a group of about two thousand disciplined devotees of nonviolence who were willing to take blows without retaliating.”
- Unfortunately, his autobiography does not describe the training:
 - His widow’s autobiography briefly mentions the use of role play-based training at the end of the Montgomery bus boycott
 - See Chapter 7 (“Don’t you get weary”) of *My Life with Martin Luther King, Jr.* by Coretta Scott King

Practicing self-restraint in your daily life

- Gandhi took a different approach:
 - He felt people should practice self-restraint in *every* aspect of their lives
 - For example, he advocated:
 - Celibacy, eating a bland diet, abstinence from alcohol and drugs
 - Lots of manual labour and living in poverty
 - Honesty and living fully in accord with your religious beliefs
 - Most religions associate self-restraint with spiritual well-being
 - So it was natural for Gandhi to think all forms of self-restraint were good
- Perhaps self-restraint is a transferable skill:
 - If it is then practising self-restraint in your daily life will provide you with the self-restraint required for Satyagraha
 - But it is unlikely that you need to practise self-restraint in every aspect of your life to have sufficient self-restraint for Satyagraha

If self-restraint fails then stop the protest

- Chapter 8 (“Murder”) in Part Two of Louis Fischer’s biography of Gandhi:
 - Gandhi organized a Satyagraha-based campaign in India
 - Unfortunately, some Indians used violence
 - Gandhi immediately stopped the campaign
 - “His miscalculation, Gandhi explained, was in overlooking the fact that a person must be trained in civil obedience before civil disobedience against some laws could succeed.”

- Chapter 16 (“Drama at the Seashore”) in Part Two:
 - Gandhi organized another Satyagraha-based campaign, this time to protest the British monopoly on making salt
 - British rulers used mass arrests and violence against the protestors
 - Indians did *not* use violence. “Because they treasured the movement Gandhi had conjured into being, and lest he cancel it, they abstained from force.”

4. Resist the urge to destroy your opponent

Resist the urge to destroy your opponent

- Satyagraha does *not* attempt to:
 - Hurt your opponent
 - Humiliate your opponent
 - Destroy your opponent
- Religious explanation for this:
 - Satyagraha rejects violence
 - Hurting, humiliating and destroying are forms of violence
- A non-religious explanation for this:
 - Acting in a gentle manner creates newsworthy opportunities
 - Which in turn cause the apathetic majority to apply peer pressure on your opponent

Example

- From Chapter 15 (“The Victory”) of “The Life of Mahatma Gandhi” by Louis Fisher
 - Gandhi was fighting against anti-Indian oppression in South Africa
 - He was organizing a massive protest march against the government
 - Then the white employees of all railways went on strike
 - Gandhi postponed the march until the strike was over
 - He did not want to “destroy, hurt, humble or embitter the adversary, or to win a victory by weakening him”
- Gandhi’s sympathy for the plight of his opponent :
 - Greatly impressed the apathetic majority and increased their support
 - Put more pressure on the government to negotiate rather than fight

Long-term benefit of avoiding violence

- Gandhi had another reason for not destroying his opponent
 - He wanted the oppressor and oppressed to become friends
- Which is better?
 - You make your oppressors powerless to oppress you anymore?
(Perhaps by killing them or putting them in prison)
 - You turn your oppressors into friends so they do not want to oppress you any more?

5. Importance of communication

Importance of communication in Satyagraha

- The strategy of Satyagraha:
 - Is *not* to combat the anti-X extremists directly
 - *Is* to win the support of the apathetic majority so *they* will use peer pressure to stop the extremists
- To win the support of the apathetic majority, you need to arouse their sympathy enough so they apply peer pressure
- You can do this by:
 - Arranging events (protests, strikes, a trial...) that exposes the injustice and requires sympathy and action to rectify the injustice
 - Communicating this “sympathy and peer pressure required” to the apathetic majority

Importance of communication in Satyagraha (cont')

- Likely causes of failure:
 - Protesting without communicating “sympathy and peer pressure required”
 - Communicating that message, but to the *wrong* audience
- Gandhi’s autobiography provides an example of the latter:
 - Chapter 30 (“That Wonderful Spectacle!”) in Part V
 - Gandhi had recruited Indians to fight for England in the First World War
 - The expectation was that after the war, England would give Indians more civil rights
 - During the war, many civil liberties were suspended for Indians
 - After the war, England decided to *not* restore civil liberties
 - Gandhi did not seem to realize why his **appeals to the English rulers** failed
 - “I earnestly pleaded with the Viceroy. I addressed him private letters as also public letters [...] But it was all in vain.”

Importance of communication in Satyagraha (cont')

- Example from “The Autobiography of Martin Luther King” ...
- Read what King wrote about Gandhi’s teachings:
 - Tip: look up “Gandhi” in the index to obtain page numbers
 - King understood the importance of love in Satyagraha
 - But he does not mention anything about the importance of using widespread communication to generate peer pressure
- Chapter 8 (“The Violence of Desperate Men”):
 - King organized a peaceful boycott of segregated buses in Montgomery
 - Bus boycotters met with representatives of the bus company
 - King naively thought the bus company would give in once they understand the viewpoint of the boycotters
 - “I had believed that the privileged would give up their privileges on request. This experience, however, taught me a lesson. I came to see that no one gives up his privileges without strong resistance.”

The right audience for the communication

- The right audience for your communication:
 - Is an audience that can apply peer pressure on the oppressor
 - Often, this is the general public — particularly for a large-scale protest
 - Sometimes, the right audience might be more selective
- For an oppressive company, the right audience might be:
 - Shareholders
 - Customers
 - Members of a relevant professional trade organization
- For an oppressive individual, the right audience might be:
 - That individual’s friends or extended family
 - Another non-X person who is nearby

The right audience for the communication (cont')

- **Examples from Gandhi's autobiography**
 - Chapter 9 ("More Hardships") of Part II
 - Gandhi was travelling by a horse-drawn coach
 - He sat beside the driver (was not allowed to sit inside with passengers)
 - The leader of the coach sat with the passengers
 - Later the leader wanted to sit beside the driver to smoke a cigarette
 - Gandhi refused the leader's instruction to move to the footboard
 - The leader started beating Gandhi
 - Gandhi's cries got the passengers to put peer pressure on the leader to stop the beating
 - Gandhi bought a first-class ticket for a train journey
 - The ticket inspector ordered him to move to the third-class carriage
 - An English passenger in the carriage put peer pressure on the inspector to allow Gandhi to stay in first class

Ways to communicate a large-scale protest

- **Through the traditional media (TV, radio, papers):**
 - Press releases
 - Interviews
- **Also explore non-traditional media. Examples:**
 - Document the protest on a website or blog
 - Create a video and put it on www.youtube.com
 - Create a PowerPoint presentation and put it on www.slideshare.net
- **Also letter-writing campaigns**
 - This is a tactic employed by Amnesty International

Communicating with the oppressor

- Gandhi informed his opponents about upcoming Satyagraha-based actions
- There are several benefits of *avoiding* the element of surprise:
 - Forewarning your opponent of your actions is unusual
 - So you can also communicate the forewarning to the media to increase the newsworthiness of your actions
 - Opponents will *not* mistakenly think a peaceful protest is a riot
 - This avoids *accidental* violent reaction of oppressors
 - Could save lives
 - Opponents might *deliberately choose* to respond with violence
 - This makes the campaign more newsworthy, leading to more peer pressure from the apathetic majority

6. Using Satyagraha when oppressors do not use violence

Recap: how Gandhi faced job discrimination

■ Example:

- Chapter 18 (“Colour Bar”) in Part II of Gandhi’s autobiography
- Gandhi had a law degree
- Gandhi applied for a license to present cases in the Supreme Court in South Africa
 - This would make him the first non-white person to have such a license
- Existing barristers invented silly reasons to deny him his request
- Gandhi was enraged by this, “but I restrained my feelings”
- Gandhi’s autobiography does not mention him communicating the issue to newspapers. But he must have done so because...
 - “Most of the newspapers condemned the opposition and accused the Law Society of jealousy.”
 - In this way, peer pressure was applied
- Result: Gandhi obtained his license

Using Satyagraha to tackle job discrimination

■ Hypothetical example:

- Fred is gay but in the closet
- He gets a job working with a company
- He is a valued employee
- Eventually, he comes out; and is fired

■ Usual course of action:

- Fred sues his former employer for unfair dismissal
- At most, this gets a tiny mention in a newspaper
- If Fred wins the court case, a huge compensation payment might hurt the company

Using Satyagraha to tackle job discrimination (cont')

- Fred decides to use Satyagraha-based tactics:
 - He always behaves politely with the company
 - He communicates the job discrimination widely
- Individuals and other organizations put peer pressure on the company
- Fred lets the company (and public) know he wants his job back rather than to sue for compensation
- If that does not work then Fred takes the case to court:
 - If he wins, he *unconditionally* rejects compensation and asks for his job back
 - Fred's unexpected generosity generates widespread news coverage

Using Satyagraha to tackle job discrimination (cont')

Benefits...

- The company is not harmed by a huge compensation payment
- People are impressed by Fred by not suing for money:
 - This puts peer pressure on the company to end its discrimination
 - If he gets his job back, colleagues are likely to treat him well
 - If he does not get his job back, his display of integrity increases his chances of getting other job offers

Using Satyagraha to tackle job discrimination (cont')

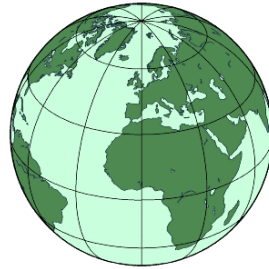
- Perhaps you can think of many reasons why Satyagraha might fail in the job discrimination example
- There are only a few reasons why it might succeed:
 - The unusual nature of a Satyagraha-based action is newsworthy (unlike most job discrimination cases)
 - The newsworthiness raises awareness in the population
 - And helps to create peer pressure
- The point of the example:
 - The bell curve model provides an insight into Satyagraha
 - This insight provides us with more options for tackling discrimination

7. Summary

Summary

- Cynical quote:
 - “The secret of success is sincerity. Once you can fake that you’ve got it made.”
 - Jean Giraudoux, French diplomat, dramatist, & novelist (1882–1944)
- You cannot fake Satyagraha and hope to succeed
 - Satyagraha has too many subtleties for an insincere person to fake it successfully
 - This chapter has discussed some of those subtleties
- Suggested exercises:
 - Read *The Life of Mahatma Gandhi* by Louis Fischer
 - Watch *Gandhi*, the 1982 movie, directed by Richard Attenborough and starring Ben Kingsley
 - Read *The Autobiography of Martin Luther King*

Practical Aspects of Satyagraha



CiaranMcHale.com
Complexity explained simply

1

License

Copyright © 2009 Ciaran McHale.

Permission is hereby granted, free of charge, to any person obtaining a copy of this training course and associated documentation files (the "Training Course"), to deal in the Training Course without restriction, including without limitation the rights to use, copy, modify, merge, publish, distribute, sublicense, and/or sell copies of the Training Course, and to permit persons to whom the Training Course is furnished to do so, subject to the following conditions:

The above copyright notice and this permission notice shall be included in all copies or substantial portions of the Training Course.

THE TRAINING COURSE IS PROVIDED "AS IS", WITHOUT WARRANTY OF ANY KIND, EXPRESS OR IMPLIED, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO THE WARRANTIES OF MERCHANTABILITY, FITNESS FOR A PARTICULAR PURPOSE AND NONINFRINGEMENT. IN NO EVENT SHALL THE AUTHORS OR COPYRIGHT HOLDERS BE LIABLE FOR ANY CLAIM, DAMAGES OR OTHER LIABILITY, WHETHER IN AN ACTION OF CONTRACT, TORT OR OTHERWISE, ARISING FROM, OUT OF OR IN CONNECTION WITH THE TRAINING COURSE OR THE USE OR OTHER DEALINGS IN THE TRAINING COURSE.

The globe logo is from www.mapAbility.com. Used with permission.

Introduction

- The previous chapter explained the main principles of Satyagraha
- This chapter explores some practical aspects of Satyagraha

Time period for a Satyagraha campaign

- Many Satyagraha campaigns run for a long time
- To understand why, imagine Fred is a member of the apathetic majority:
 - Fred sees “Police use violence against peaceful protesters” in the news
 - Initially he thinks “That’s not right. But there’s nothing I can do.”
 - If Fred sees the similar headlines *repeatedly* over many weeks then he grows uneasy
 - It is only at this point that he *starts* to apply peer pressure
 - When the headlines continue, he slowly increases the peer pressure
- Look at biographies of Gandhi or Martin Luther King Jr. :
 - Their campaigns usually lasted *at least* several months
 - King’s Montgomery bus boycott lasted 1 year

Required skills

- Two skills are vitally important for a Satyagraha campaign
- Scalable communication skills (typically media skills)
 - You need this to generate peer pressure
- Training for the peaceful protestors:
 - You must ensure no violence is *ever* used
 - Tips:
 - Teach protestors about the Bell Curve of Intolerance model so they understand *why* refraining from violence is important
 - Have protestors sing peaceful songs (such as hymns) to dissipate their anger
 - If *any* protestor (or any person who could be mistaken for one) uses violence then immediately stop the protest
 - Both Gandhi and King applied this tactic successfully
 - Otherwise the media will report the 1% of violence

Target *one* feature of oppression

- Do not run a Satyagraha campaign against anti-X oppression in general
- Instead, campaign against *one* feature of the oppression.
Examples:
 - Unequal pay for X and non-X employees in a specific company
 - Segregation of *one* facility, such as buses, restaurants or toilets
 - Denial of a particular service to X people
- Benefits of this focussed approach:
 - It makes it easier for the apathetic majority to understand the issue and sympathise enough to apply peer pressure
 - Success for one issue makes it easier to achieve success for other issues later on
 - Your opponents will think “They caused disruption for 6 months for that first issue. We don’t want to go through that trouble again.”

Target one feature of oppression (cont')

- This anecdote is from: Chapter 16 (“The Albany Movement”) of *The Autobiography of Martin Luther King Jr.*
- Black rights protestors in Albany ran simultaneous campaigns against:
 - Discrimination in public places (libraries and parks)
 - Denial of voting rights
 - Segregations in schools
 - Segregation on buses
 - Denial of free speech and assembly
- King’s analysis:
 - “The mistake I made there was to protest against segregation generally rather than against a single and distinct facet of it. Our protest was so vague that we got nothing, and the people were left very depressed and in despair.”

Target economic power instead of political power

- A Satyagraha campaign can be more effective if it is aimed at *economic power* of oppressors rather than *political power*
- Limits of targeting political power:
 - Oppressed X people may not have enough votes to bring about change
 - Even if they do, elections occur only once every, say, 4 years
- Benefits of targeting economic power:
 - Often, oppressed X people are customers of their oppressors
 - Boycotting an oppressor’s business *quickly* affects its profits
 - In addition, economic problems quickly get the attention of politicians
- King’s analysis of the Albany movement:
 - “We attacked the political power structure instead of the economic power structure. You don’t win against a political power structure where you don’t have the votes.”

Think nationally, act locally

- A *localized* Satyagraha campaign can generate *national* media coverage:
 - Because of this, a local win can affect national policy
- There were two examples of this in earlier chapters:
 - These examples are repeated on the following slides for ease of reference

Recap: Gandhi tackled job discrimination

- Sequence of events:
 - Gandhi had a law degree
 - Gandhi applied for a license to work in the South African Supreme Court
 - No non-white person had such a license
 - Existing barristers invented silly reasons to deny him his request
 - Gandhi was enraged by this, “but I restrained my feelings”
 - Gandhi’s autobiography does not mention him communicating the issue to newspapers. But he must have done so because...
 - “Most of the newspapers condemned the opposition and accused the Law Society of jealousy.”
 - In this way, peer pressure was applied
 - Result: Gandhi obtained his license:
- Gandhi’s win was well publicised so it set a precedent for national policy

Recap: King secured black voting rights

- Sequence of events:
 - In many states in the USA :
 - Black people could not vote
 - Or racist bureaucracy made it almost impossible for black people to register to vote
 - King asked the US president to introduce a bill to tackle this
 - President said that public and political opinion would defeat such a bill
 - King organized Satyagraha-based protests in Selma
 - Selma had racist bureaucracy to hinder black voter registration
 - As planned, peaceful protestors were met with violence
 - Nationwide media reported the protest
 - Result: the apathetic majority applied peer pressure
 - The president was able to introduce a bill for black voting
 - The bill passed

- Total elapsed time: 5 months

Summary

- A Satyagraha campaign is not a one-day protest. It can last for months

- Vital skills:
 - Media communication (for peer pressure)
 - Self-discipline to *never* use violence

- Campaign on *one* specific issue.
 - If possible, make it an economic issue

- A successful *local* campaign can have *national* impact

Exercise

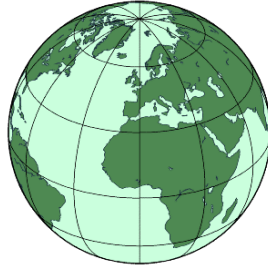
- Amnesty International (www.amnesty.org) uses Satyagraha tactics:
 - It campaigns only for people who have not used violence
 - An international letter-writing campaign is used to apply peer pressure
 - Letter writers instructed to be polite and respectful
 - Campaigns can last for a long time

- Exercise: analyse the tactics of other organizations
 - Are those tactics compatible with Satyagraha?
 - Could those organizations be more effective if they embraced Satyagraha?

Part IX

Fighting Oppression

Segregation



CiaranMcHale.com
Complexity explained simply

1

License

Copyright © 2009 Ciaran McHale.

Permission is hereby granted, free of charge, to any person obtaining a copy of this training course and associated documentation files (the "Training Course"), to deal in the Training Course without restriction, including without limitation the rights to use, copy, modify, merge, publish, distribute, sublicense, and/or sell copies of the Training Course, and to permit persons to whom the Training Course is furnished to do so, subject to the following conditions:

The above copyright notice and this permission notice shall be included in all copies or substantial portions of the Training Course.

THE TRAINING COURSE IS PROVIDED "AS IS", WITHOUT WARRANTY OF ANY KIND, EXPRESS OR IMPLIED, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO THE WARRANTIES OF MERCHANTABILITY, FITNESS FOR A PARTICULAR PURPOSE AND NONINFRINGEMENT. IN NO EVENT SHALL THE AUTHORS OR COPYRIGHT HOLDERS BE LIABLE FOR ANY CLAIM, DAMAGES OR OTHER LIABILITY, WHETHER IN AN ACTION OF CONTRACT, TORT OR OTHERWISE, ARISING FROM, OUT OF OR IN CONNECTION WITH THE TRAINING COURSE OR THE USE OR OTHER DEALINGS IN THE TRAINING COURSE.

The globe logo is from www.mapAbility.com. Used with permission.

Segregation

2

Introduction

- This chapter discusses segregation. In particular:
 - Racial segregation in America
 - Apartheid in South Africa
- Those systems of segregation have ended. However, it is useful to study them because:
 - Some tactics from those systems are used in other (lesser) forms of oppression
 - Sometimes it is easier to learn from extreme examples than from milder examples

1. Historical look at segregation

The “separate but equal” lie

- Segregationists often claimed that two races could live “separate but equal” lives
- Of course, the “equal” part of “separate but equal” was a lie:
 - Providing two sets of *equal* facilities was prohibitively expensive:
 - Public toilets, libraries, schools, drinking water fountains, restaurants, hotels, ...
 - Aside from the financial expense, there was also the waste of land
 - Neither the government nor businesses could afford it
 - In reality, inferior, and therefore *non-equal*, facilities were provided for black people
- Despite this, the “separate but equal” lie *sounded plausible* to naïve white people

Why segregation was important for oppression

- Obvious reasons:
 - Inferior facilities ensured oppressed people remained poorly educated and poor
 - So they could continue to be exploited
 - It reduced slack in the lives of oppressed people (See the *Slack* chapter earlier in this course)
 - Without slack, it is difficult to bring about change
- Less obvious reason:
 - Recall from the *Bell Curve of Intolerance* part of this training course that most non-oppressed citizens form the “apathetic majority”
 - Keeping this majority ignorant of the true horror of oppression ensured they remained apathetic
 - This apathy arising from ignorance enabled the oppression to continue

Punishments for violating segregation

- There were severe punishments for white people who tried to end their own (or others') ignorance
- Examples:
 - From Chapter 28 of Nelson Mandela's autobiography
 - His wife, Winnie, spent 2 weeks in prison after taking part in a peaceful protest
 - While in prison, Winnie befriended 2 white prison wardens
 - After her release, these new friends visited her in the black township
 - They lost their jobs because of this
 - Donald Woods, was a journalist in South Africa
 - After befriending Steven Biko he started to write unbiased articles
 - The government "banned" him (from writing or being in a room with more than one other person)
 - (For details, see his autobiography or the *Cry Freedom* movie)

Punishments for violating segregation (cont')

- The *Black Like Me* book provides some more examples:
 - The author, John Howard Griffin, received death threats after publishing his accounts of living as a black man
 - The *November 14* and *November 15* chapters discussed P. D. East, a journalist who satirised segregation laws
 - His newspaper lost all its local subscribers
 - His family was shunned by almost everybody
- Punishments for violating segregation laws were more severe for black people:
 - Black people who started their own businesses (thus demonstrating their ability for more than menial work) risked having their homes or businesses burned down
 - 4700 people in America (most black) were lynched between 1882–1968 (an average of slightly more than one per week)

Segregation aided genocide

- In World War 2, the Nazis put Jews into ghettos:
 - (See Wikipedia article on *Ghettos in Nazi-occupied Europe*)
 - With security guards to prevent Jews leaving the ghettos (and to prevent non-Jewish people from entering)
 - The ghettos helped to enforce segregation
 - The ghettos were holding areas, until Jews could be transported to concentration camps

- Some Nazi concentration camps had a “Work sets you free” sign at their entrances
 - Local villagers thought they were work camps rather than death camps

2. Is segregation finished?

Examples of decreasing segregation

- The 1955–1956 Montgomery Bus Boycott ended segregation on public buses in the city of Montgomery
 - Segregation on public buses continued elsewhere in southern states
 - The 1960 Freedom Rides challenged segregation on inter-state buses
- Separate campaigns had to be launched to tackle:
 - Different forms of segregation within the same city or state
 - The same form of segregation in different states
- There was no single moment in time when segregation suddenly stopped:
 - Instead, segregation was reduced piece by piece
 - Even after segregation laws were repealed, de facto segregation continued in some aspects of society

Segregation is not all or nothing

- The examples show that segregation is *not* “all or nothing”:
 - A country does not have to be either completely segregated or completely integrated
- Instead, segregation is usually a matter of degree:
 - Many countries are *partially* segregated
 - There isn't one law that segregates all aspects of society
 - Instead, there can be:
 - Several laws that, between them, segregate employment
 - Another bunch of laws that segregate housing
 - Yet more laws that segregate restaurants, restrooms, education, ...
 - Typically, such laws are created (or repealed) one at a time
 - In this way, the amount of segregation increases or decreases over time

3. Modern segregation-like issues

13

Ghettos

- Origin of the term *ghetto*:
 - The name of an island near Venice where Jews were *required* to live in the 16th century
- Modern dictionary definition:
 - Section of a city, especially a slum area, inhabited predominantly by members of a minority group, often as a result of social or economic restrictions, pressures or hardships
- In modern cities, ghettos *informally* segregate people:
 - Laws may not require “X” people to live in an ghetto, but...
 - Badly paid jobs and high unemployment levels (due to discrimination) cause X people to live in cheap areas
 - This keeps most X people segregated from most non-X people

Segregation of disabled people

- Widespread lack of disabled access to buildings keeps disabled people segregated from non-disabled people
- The lyrics of one song are relevant:
 - *I am What I am* by Mark Dignam, on his 1984 *Poetry and Songs from the Wheel* album
 - Note: “special” is sometimes used to refer to people with disabilities

Special child, offered alternative routes of travel
 Special child, given special things to do
 Special child, sent to special schools

Job discrimination and segregation

- Job discrimination financially affects a discriminated person
 - But it serves another purpose too
- Job discrimination helps to maintain segregation:
 - It keeps the apathetic majority ignorant about the reality of minorities
 - If you don't have work colleagues who are “different” then your only source of information about such people may be the (biased) media
- Keeping “different” people out of teaching positions maintains the ignorance of future generations
 - An example of this can be seen in the UK's “Section 28” law (discussed on the next slide)

Section 28 of the Local Government Act

- In 1998, England and Wales introduced a law that contained the following text:
 - “A local authority shall not:
 - intentionally promote homosexuality or publish material with the intention of promoting homosexuality;
 - promote the teaching in any maintained school of the acceptability of homosexuality as a pretended family relationship.”
 - In 2003, this law was repealed
- The concept of “promoting” homosexuality was ambiguous:
 - Did it mean “to encourage straight people to become gay”?
(something that most gay people think is impossible)
 - Or did it mean “to promote the idea that homosexuality is acceptable”?
(this was a widely accepted interpretation)

Section 28 of the Local Government Act (cont’)

- Analysis: there is not much difference between:
 - *Forbidding* the promotion of “X is acceptable”, and
 - *Promoting* “X is unacceptable”
- Many people would say this encourages anti-X prejudice
 - Unsurprisingly, this was a major concern with Section 28
- A less widely understood concern was that Section 28 helped to maintain segregation
 - It helped to maintain the ignorance of (future generations of) the apathetic majority

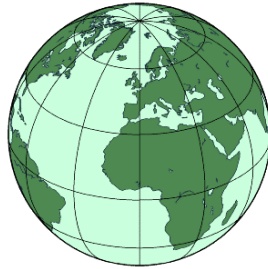
4. Summary

19

Summary

- Segregation is not an “all or nothing” issue:
 - Instead, it is a matter of degree
 - The level of segregation in a society increases or decreases as individual laws are created or repealed
- An individual anti-X practice or law might not seem like a big cause for concern
 - However, the slow accumulation (or repealing) of such practices or laws over time changes the nature of society

Internalized Oppression



CiaranMcHale.com
Complexity explained simply

1

License

Copyright © 2009 Ciaran McHale.

Permission is hereby granted, free of charge, to any person obtaining a copy of this training course and associated documentation files (the "Training Course"), to deal in the Training Course without restriction, including without limitation the rights to use, copy, modify, merge, publish, distribute, sublicense, and/or sell copies of the Training Course, and to permit persons to whom the Training Course is furnished to do so, subject to the following conditions:

The above copyright notice and this permission notice shall be included in all copies or substantial portions of the Training Course.

THE TRAINING COURSE IS PROVIDED "AS IS", WITHOUT WARRANTY OF ANY KIND, EXPRESS OR IMPLIED, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO THE WARRANTIES OF MERCHANTABILITY, FITNESS FOR A PARTICULAR PURPOSE AND NONINFRINGEMENT. IN NO EVENT SHALL THE AUTHORS OR COPYRIGHT HOLDERS BE LIABLE FOR ANY CLAIM, DAMAGES OR OTHER LIABILITY, WHETHER IN AN ACTION OF CONTRACT, TORT OR OTHERWISE, ARISING FROM, OUT OF OR IN CONNECTION WITH THE TRAINING COURSE OR THE USE OR OTHER DEALINGS IN THE TRAINING COURSE.

The globe logo is from www.mapAbility.com. Used with permission.

Internalized Oppression

2

Introduction

- Let's assume Fred is insulted frequently:
 - "You are ugly/stupid/untrustworthy/incompetent/sick/perverted/evil/..."
 - Such verbal abuse might come from parents, a partner, a bully at school or work, ...
- Eventually, Fred might start to believe the insults
- As a result, Fred might develop some problems:
 - Lack of confidence and low self-esteem
 - Depression
- What happens when an *entire group* is insulted frequently?
 - The result is often called *internalized oppression*
 - Examples: internalized racism, internalized classism, internalized sexism, internalized homophobia, ...

1. Symptoms of internalized oppression

Symptoms of internalized oppression

- Let's assume:
 - You belong to an oppressed group, X
 - There are lots of negative stereotypes about X people (stupid, dirty, incompetent, criminal, immoral, ...)
- After you repeatedly hear the negative stereotypes:
 - You may come to believe them about yourself (oppressed groups often have high rates of mental health problems)
 - You may come to believe the stereotypes about *X people in general* (the next few slides provide examples of problems this creates)

Example of internalized oppression

- From Chapter 15 (“Vocational Guidance”) of *The Mis-education of the Negro* by Carter Woodson, 1933
 - A white-owned chain store was asked to put a black manager in charge of one branch
 - A survey was carried out to find how black people felt about this idea
 - “One hundred thirty-seven Negro families in that neighbourhood seriously objected to buying from Negroes and using articles handled by them.”
- The author explains this was due to internalized oppression:
 - Black people had internalized racist stereotypes, including black people are “dirty”
 - Nobody wants to buy from a shop staffed with “dirty” people

Economic effects of internalized oppression

- Many people want to have (more) money:
 - Often, they settle for the *appearance* of having more money
 - They buy items that give the impression they are rich
 - Bigger houses, bigger cars, bigger TVs, designer clothes, ...
 - Many people buy such things on credit, thus making them poorer
- Likewise, if X people think “X is inferior to non-X” then:
 - They might eat and buy items associated with non-X
 - They might prefer to shop at non-X businesses
- Result:
 - X-owned businesses suffer (thus keeping the X community poor)
 - X-related culture struggles to survive

Internalized oppression is widespread

- Slang terms for people suffering from internalized racism:
 - Oreo (a black cookie with a white filling)
 - Coconut (brown on the outside, white on the inside)
 - Bounty bar (a chocolate bar with a coconut filling)
- These slang terms illustrate that internalized oppression:
 - Is common around the world
(those slang terms are used in England, South Africa and the USA)
 - Can be serious enough to warrant a label that means “traitor to your own race”

Infighting

- An oppressed group has a limited amount of “safe” resources
 - Places of worship, community centres, pubs/discos, cafes, restaurants
- Internalized oppression may make members of the group think:
 - “We are incompetent, therefore we *cannot create* additional resources”
 - “We are inferior, therefore we do not *deserve* additional resources”
- This can cause in-fighting within the oppressed group:
 - People compete to control the existing limited resources
 - It would be better if they cooperated to create new resources

A nation of begrudgers

- Many Irish people say Ireland is “a nation of begrudgers”
 - To begrudge = to envy or resent the good fortune of somebody else
- Some other countries also have a begrudgery stereotype of themselves
- One quote from the bible suggests begrudgery is not restricted to modern societies:
 - “A prophet is not without honour, except in his own country” — Mark 6:4
- Perhaps begrudgery is a symptom of internalized oppression:
 - “X people are inferior and don’t deserve success. Therefore, that X person should stop being successful and get back into his or her place.”

2. Recipe for creating internalized oppression

11

Ingredients of internalized oppression

- One ingredient of internalized oppression is obvious:
 - *Frequently repeated insults* of the group. For example:
 - Derogatory stereotypes
 - Slavery or segregation
 - Laws that discriminate against X people
- But, another, less obvious ingredient is also important:
 - *Lack of positive images* about the group (including the group's history, culture, and role models)
 - This can be achieved through censorship of the school curriculum and reported news

Example

- Black people in the USA were taught they were inferior:
 - Through slavery, segregation laws and socially-condoned lynchings
 - Think of these as being *frequently repeated (extreme) insults*
- The *lack of positive images* was achieved through censorship:
 - History in school focussed on white Americans and white Europeans
 - There was *no* mention of African history despite its impressive ancient achievements in metalworking, science, mathematics, architecture, philosophy, art and empires
- From Chapter 1 (“The Seat of the Trouble”) of *The Mis-education of the Negro* by Carter Woodson, 1933
 - “The thought of the inferiority of the Negro is drilled into him in almost every class he enters and in almost every book he studies.”

Example (cont’)

- *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* also mentions the lack of information about black people in American history books:
 - From Chapter 2 (“Mascot”)
 - “We came to the textbook section on Negro history. It was exactly one paragraph long. [The teacher] laughed through it practically in a single breath, reading aloud how the Negroes had been slaves and then were freed, and how they were usually lazy and dumb and shiftless.”
- This censored, anti-black history was taught to all students:
 - White people were *taught* to hate black people
 - Black people were *taught* to hate themselves
- Chapter 1 of *The Mis-education of the Negro*:
 - Stopping such bigoted teaching “is much more important than the anti-lynching movement, because there would be no lynching if it did not start in the schoolroom.”

Examples from Nelson Mandela

- These quotes are from Nelson Mandela’s autobiography, *Long Walk to Freedom*
- Chapter 3:
 - “I did not yet know that the real history of our country was not to be found in standard British textbooks, which claimed South Africa began [...] in 1652.”
- Chapter 6:
 - “We were taught — and believed — that the best ideas were English ideas, the best government was English government, and the best men were English men.”
- Chapter 20
 - “The government subsequently passed a law that made it an offence punishable by fine or imprisonment to offer unauthorized education.”

Widespread historical censorship

- The censorship of black history is not unique
- In many countries, history taught in school censors or disparages the role of minorities, such as:
 - Other races or religions
 - Women (a 51% minority)
 - Non-heterosexuals
 - People with disabilities
- Think of the history education you received in school:
 - Were you taught about historical figures of minority groups?

3. Recipe for stopping internalized oppression

17

Recipe for stopping internalized oppression

- The recipe for stopping internalized oppression is the opposite of the recipe for creating internalized oppression
- The recipe has two ingredients:
 - Stop the anti-X insults
 - Find and promote positive images of X people
- The first ingredient is the most obvious:
 - But the second ingredient is equally important and is often underappreciated
- The next few slides suggest some categories of positive images

Positive images of X people

- Carter Woodson (author of *The Mis-education of the Negro*):
 - Founded Negro History Week (now known as Black History Month)
 - This has inspired other oppressed groups to do likewise
 - Example: there is a Gay History Week/Month in some countries
 - Do you know of other “X” History weeks?

- Role models and heroes for X people are important. Example:
 - Chapter 2 (“Mascot”) of *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*:
 - “Joe Louis knocked out James J. Braddock to become the heavyweight champion of the world. And all the Negroes in Lansing, like Negroes everywhere, went wildly happy with **the greatest celebration of race pride our generation had ever known.**”
 - Can you think of comparable people or events for other groups?

- Books, movies and TV shows featuring X characters portrayed in a positive way

Positive images of X people (cont’)

- Biographies of X people who achieved great things:
 - Inventors and scientists
 - People who challenged anti-X laws
 - Political leaders, ...

- Successful businesses run by X people
 - And the X community *supporting* those businesses

- Aspects of X culture that can be exported into mainstream culture. Examples:
 - Food, art, music
 - Bruce Lee popularised Chinese martial arts in other countries

- Epic stories about X people. Examples:
 - *Roots* by Alex Haley (book and two TV mini-series)
 - *Defiance* by Nechama Tec (book and movie)

Positive images of X people (cont')

- Stopping the anti-X insults is often outside the control of X people
- But it is within the power of X people to:
 - Find and bring to light *existing* positive images of X people
 - Create *new* positive images of X people
- As the quantity of positive images of X people grows:
 - Internalized oppression will decrease
 - The frequency of anti-X insults from non-X people will also decrease (albeit at a slower rate)

4. Schools for oppressed groups

Schools for oppressed groups

- Some oppressed groups create their own schools:
 - Examples: black people and women
- This practice can be controversial. For example:
 - There were white-only and black-only schools during segregation in America and apartheid in South Africa
 - Now that schools are integrated, why would black people want to un-integrate the schools again? Isn't that just segregation?

Schools for oppressed groups (cont')

- There is an important reason for such schools:
 - Under segregation, a racist curriculum was taught in black-only schools
 - Even after segregation ended, integrated schools still have a racist bias in the curriculum
 - Example: history textbooks are still white-oriented
- A school run by black people can create a black-inclusive curriculum
 - In this way, internalized racism can be eradicated more quickly
- The need for black schools will disappear *when* racism finally disappears from integrated schools

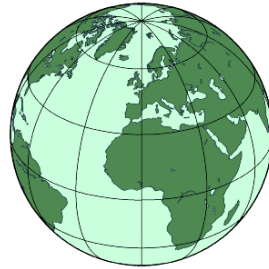
5. Summary

25

Summary

- Internalized oppression causes X people to:
 - Hate themselves (as individuals)
 - Hate X people (as a group)
- Some symptoms of internalized oppression:
 - X people do not support X businesses, and so ensure continued poverty of the X community
 - In-fighting over the limited X resources instead of cooperating to increase the quantity of X resources
 - Possibly begrudgerly
- Recipe for internalized oppression has two ingredients:
 - Frequent anti-X insults
 - Censor positive images of X people
- Respond by creating & promoting positive images of X people

Other Tactics of Oppression



CiaranMcHale.com
Complexity explained simply

1

License

Copyright © 2009 Ciaran McHale.

Permission is hereby granted, free of charge, to any person obtaining a copy of this training course and associated documentation files (the "Training Course"), to deal in the Training Course without restriction, including without limitation the rights to use, copy, modify, merge, publish, distribute, sublicense, and/or sell copies of the Training Course, and to permit persons to whom the Training Course is furnished to do so, subject to the following conditions:

The above copyright notice and this permission notice shall be included in all copies or substantial portions of the Training Course.

THE TRAINING COURSE IS PROVIDED "AS IS", WITHOUT WARRANTY OF ANY KIND, EXPRESS OR IMPLIED, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO THE WARRANTIES OF MERCHANTABILITY, FITNESS FOR A PARTICULAR PURPOSE AND NONINFRINGEMENT. IN NO EVENT SHALL THE AUTHORS OR COPYRIGHT HOLDERS BE LIABLE FOR ANY CLAIM, DAMAGES OR OTHER LIABILITY, WHETHER IN AN ACTION OF CONTRACT, TORT OR OTHERWISE, ARISING FROM, OUT OF OR IN CONNECTION WITH THE TRAINING COURSE OR THE USE OR OTHER DEALINGS IN THE TRAINING COURSE.

The globe logo is from www.mapAbility.com. Used with permission.

Introduction

- Earlier chapters discussed some tactics used in oppression:
 - Segregation
 - Internalized oppression
- This chapter outlines some other tactics that frequently appear in oppression
- Being forewarned about these tactics can help you prepare for them

1. Divide and conquer

Institutionalised divide and conquer

- Oppressive systems find ways to classify the oppressed into different categories:
 - This can create in-fighting and hinder cooperation between the different categories
- Examples:
 - Under apartheid, South Africa had 3 different non-white classifications: black, coloured and Indian
 - In addition, people were often segregated based on their tribes
 - Colonial powers in Rwanda classified natives:
 - As *Tutsi* if they had more than 10 cows or a long nose
 - Most others were classified as *Hutu*
 - The Tutsi were given higher social standing, thus creating conflict between the Tutsi and Hutu

Institutionalised divide and conquer (cont')

- More examples:
 - During slavery in the USA, different chores, food and living conditions were given to *field slaves* and *house slaves*
 - Nazis ensured that each concentration camps had a mix of prisoners from different countries because lack of a common language decreased the chances for prisoners to organize rebellions
- Quotes from Nelson Mandela's autobiography:
 - Chapter 3: "The white man shattered the *abantu*, the fellowship, of the various tribes."
 - Chapter 9: "Miners were normally housed according to tribe. The mining companies preferred such segregation because it prevented ethnic groups from uniting around a common grievance [...]. The separation often resulted in factional fights between different ethnic groups and clans, which the companies did not effectively discourage."

Ad-hoc divide and conquer

- You can accuse an activist group of having some “taboo” members. Examples:
 - Accuse a “respectable feminist” group of having some lesbians
 - Accuse a Muslim group of having some “militants” or communists
- Insist you will not negotiate with the group unless they expel the taboo members
 - Doing that is likely to create internal conflict within the group
- Ask a “respectable” activist group if they condemn the actions of a “militant” activist group
 - If they do condemn then you have created in-fighting between the activist groups
 - If they don’t condemn then you can claim the “respectable” group is just a front for the more “militant” group

Ad-hoc divide and conquer (cont’)

- A non-X person can:
 - Claim to be sympathetic to the aims of an X activist group
 - But secretly express doubts to some members of the group about their leader
- That tactic can result in a power-struggle within the group
 - This tactic is mentioned in Chapter 8 of Martin Luther King Jr.’s autobiography

2. Dirty tactics

9

Spread false rumours

- You can spread false rumours about an activist group
- Martin Luther King Jr.'s autobiography, Chapter 8:
 - Rumours that Martin Luther King Jr. had embezzled money to buy new cars for himself and his wife
 - Rumours that the bus boycott has been called off
- Nelson Mandela's autobiography, Chapter 14:
 - "Government propagandists repeatedly claimed that the leaders of the campaign were living it up in comfort while the masses were languishing in jail."

Frame activists

- The *Epilogue* essay at the end of some new editions of *Black Like Me* (by John Howard Griffin) warns:
 - “Racists showed high ingenuity in developing schemes to destroy a man’s reputation as a means of nullifying his work.”
- The essay contains advice to reduce your chances of being framed:
 - Never use a public toilet unless accompanied by somebody to act as a witness that you did not act in an indecent manner
 - If you are a man then never be alone with a woman you do not know
 - Keep a detailed diary so you can account for all your time every day
 - Keep your travel schedules secret and find a pretext to change hotel rooms soon after your arrival

Manufacture the appearance of violence

- A peaceful protest might receive positive news coverage and gain public sympathy
- In contrast, a violent protest usually receives bad publicity and loses public sympathy
- Therefore, you can sabotage a peaceful protest:
 - Use infiltrators to start violence from within the ranks of protestors
 - If that is not possible then you start violence *near* the peaceful protestors

Bankruptcy though legal action

- Governments sometimes misuse the legal system to bankrupt activists:
 - Take a person or organization to court
 - The legal costs of defence may bankrupt the accused
 - If the accused wins the case, the judge might *not* order the accuser to pay the legal fees of the accused

- There is a famous case of a business using the same tactic:
 - McDonald's threatened libel action against people and companies that criticized McDonald's
 - Most avoided a court case by publicly apologising to McDonald's and agreeing to never criticize McDonald's again
 - Eventually, two activists in *London Greenpeace* faced McDonald's in court
(see the *McLibel* book or DVD)

3. Bread and circuses

Bread and circuses

- The expression *bread and circuses* comes from Roman times:
 - It refers to rulers keeping the population content with food and entertainment rather than through good policies
 - In its original context (a satirical poem), the expression criticized:
 - Politicians for using the tactic
 - The population for being foolish enough to fall for the tactic
- Similar expressions have been used in other countries:
 - Spain: *bread and bullfights*
 - Russia: *bread and spectacle*
- The lyrics of *Working Class Hero* by John Lennon allude to the concept:
 - “Keep you doped with religion and sex and TV
And you think you’re so clever and classless and free
But you’re still fucking peasants as far as I can see”

Exercise

- Look at the front-page headlines of newspapers:
 - How many headlines are about important issues?
 - And how many headlines are about unimportant issues, such as celebrity gossip or TV shows?

4. Say one thing but do another

17

Say one thing but do another

- Politicians rarely say “We are introducing an oppressive law”
 - Instead, they claim a harmful law will be beneficial
- Nelson Mandela states in his autobiography:
 - Chapter 14 of *Long Walk to Freedom*:
 - “[The government] pretended to preserve what they were attempting to destroy. Laws stripping people of their rights were inevitably described as laws restoring those rights.”
- Claims of religion and patriotism are often used to introduce oppressive laws:
 - Throughout history, bigots have used religion to justify racism

Say one thing but do another (cont')

- P. D. East showed some of his research material to John Howard Griffin
 - See the *November 15* chapter of *Black Like Me* by John Howard Griffin
 - “It shows that the most obscene figures are not the ignorant ranting racists, but the legal minds who front for them, who ‘invent’ for them the legislative proposals and the propaganda bulletins. They deliberately choose to foster distortions, always under the guise of patriotism [...]”

- Saying one thing but doing another is not confined to governments:
 - Some businesses introduce policies that serve their own needs at the expense of consumer rights
 - Often these policies have euphemistic names
 - The following slides provide some examples

Oppressive practices by business

- Some companies are introducing *trusted computing* technology into PCs:
 - Trusted computing may give a hardware or software company remote control over computers bought by consumers
 - This means the owner of a computer *cannot* trust it

- Windows Genuine Advantage (WGA):
 - This uses heuristics to detect suspected piracy of Microsoft software
 - Unfortunately, sometimes WGA thinks legal software has been pirated
 - WGA can disable software functionality if it suspects piracy
 - This is a “guilty until proven innocent” policy
 - Despite its name, WGA offers *no* advantage to consumers

Oppressive practices by business (cont')

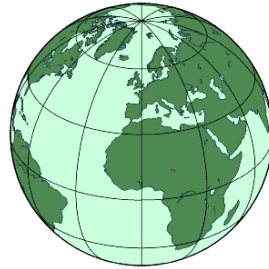
- Digital Rights Management (DRM):
 - This is an anti-copying technology sometimes used on software, music CDs and DVDs
 - The name sounds like it *protects* the rights of consumers
 - Actually, it *restricts* the “fair use” rights of consumers

5. Summary

Summary

- There are many tactics that can be used in oppression:
 - Earlier chapters discussed segregation and internalized oppression
 - This chapter has briefly mentioned some other tactics
- It is important to be aware of commonly used tactics:
 - Being forewarned helps you to defend yourself

Lessons for Activists in "Black Like Me"



CiaranMcHale.com
Complexity explained simply

1

License

Copyright © 2009 Ciaran McHale.

Permission is hereby granted, free of charge, to any person obtaining a copy of this training course and associated documentation files (the "Training Course"), to deal in the Training Course without restriction, including without limitation the rights to use, copy, modify, merge, publish, distribute, sublicense, and/or sell copies of the Training Course, and to permit persons to whom the Training Course is furnished to do so, subject to the following conditions:

The above copyright notice and this permission notice shall be included in all copies or substantial portions of the Training Course.

THE TRAINING COURSE IS PROVIDED "AS IS", WITHOUT WARRANTY OF ANY KIND, EXPRESS OR IMPLIED, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO THE WARRANTIES OF MERCHANTABILITY, FITNESS FOR A PARTICULAR PURPOSE AND NONINFRINGEMENT. IN NO EVENT SHALL THE AUTHORS OR COPYRIGHT HOLDERS BE LIABLE FOR ANY CLAIM, DAMAGES OR OTHER LIABILITY, WHETHER IN AN ACTION OF CONTRACT, TORT OR OTHERWISE, ARISING FROM, OUT OF OR IN CONNECTION WITH THE TRAINING COURSE OR THE USE OR OTHER DEALINGS IN THE TRAINING COURSE.

The globe logo is from www.mapAbility.com. Used with permission.

Lessons for Activists in "Black Like Me"

2

Overview of *Black Like Me*

- In 1959, John Howard Griffin, a white author in the USA:
 - Used pills, a sun lamp and skin dye to darken his skin
 - Lived as a black man for 4 weeks
 - Experienced racism in ways that most white people never witness
 - Afterwards, he reported his experience in magazine articles and TV interviews

- Result:
 - The author received death threats for the rest of his life
 - In 1961 he published a book, *Black Like Me*, about his experience
 - It sold 10 million copies and was translated into many languages
 - It is required reading in many schools in the USA
 - Many people describe the book as "life changing"

Effectiveness

- Which is more effective for raising awareness of racism?
 - An autobiography, spanning decades, written by a black person
 - A 4-week autobiography written by a white person disguised as black

- Surprisingly, the 4-week autobiography is arguably better:
 - Latent racism in many white people means they will trust a white author more to provide non-biased information about racism
 - This is unfortunate but true. *Black Like Me* takes advantage of this
 - Some readers might suspect a book spanning decades is cherry picking the racist incidents it reports to make racism seem worse than it is
 - A 4-week book, written in diary format, clearly shows the frequency of racist incidents
 - The 4-week autobiography provides some marketing opportunities:
 - Novelty of a white person disguised as black
 - Shortness of a 4-week autobiography is appealing to casual readers

Effectiveness (cont')

There is one other reason why *Black Like Me* is "better"...

- Somebody who is an expert in a particular topic might:
 - Think some information is obvious and not worth mentioning
 - Not realize the same information provides great insight for non-experts
- Likewise, a black author might:
 - Think some aspects of racism are obvious and not worth discussing
 - Not realize that such a discussion would be insightful for white readers
- Griffin, disguised as a black man, was able to identify and report on some of these often overlooked aspects of racism

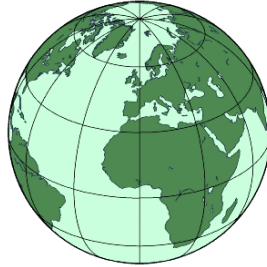
Opportunities for activism

- The tactics used to write *Black Like Me* could be reused
- For example:
 - A white man in the USA could repeat Griffin's experiment
 - Might show changing levels of racism over a 50-year period
 - A black person could keep a 4-week diary of racism experienced and publish it as an autobiography
 - Would not have the novelty of a white person disguised as black
 - But the 4-week diary format could highlight the frequency of racist experiences better than a multi-decade autobiography
 - A Christian could pretend to be, say, Muslim for a few weeks and write a book on the experience
 - *Lowest of the Low* by Gunter Wallraff and M. Chalmers is a *Black Like Me*-style experiment to highlight racism faced by Turks in Germany

Opportunities for activism (cont')

- Many non-X people would like to fight anti-X intolerance but do not know how
 - *Black Like Me* provides one example of how to do this
- Before you undertake a *Black Like Me* project ensure you have good writing skills
 - See the *Scalable Communications* chapter for advice on improving your writing skills

Risky Tactics



CiaranMcHale.com
Complexity explained simply

1

License

Copyright © 2009 Ciaran McHale.

Permission is hereby granted, free of charge, to any person obtaining a copy of this training course and associated documentation files (the "Training Course"), to deal in the Training Course without restriction, including without limitation the rights to use, copy, modify, merge, publish, distribute, sublicense, and/or sell copies of the Training Course, and to permit persons to whom the Training Course is furnished to do so, subject to the following conditions:

The above copyright notice and this permission notice shall be included in all copies or substantial portions of the Training Course.

THE TRAINING COURSE IS PROVIDED "AS IS", WITHOUT WARRANTY OF ANY KIND, EXPRESS OR IMPLIED, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO THE WARRANTIES OF MERCHANTABILITY, FITNESS FOR A PARTICULAR PURPOSE AND NONINFRINGEMENT. IN NO EVENT SHALL THE AUTHORS OR COPYRIGHT HOLDERS BE LIABLE FOR ANY CLAIM, DAMAGES OR OTHER LIABILITY, WHETHER IN AN ACTION OF CONTRACT, TORT OR OTHERWISE, ARISING FROM, OUT OF OR IN CONNECTION WITH THE TRAINING COURSE OR THE USE OR OTHER DEALINGS IN THE TRAINING COURSE.

The globe logo is from www.mapAbility.com. Used with permission.

Risky Tactics

2

Introduction

- Not all tactics for fighting oppression are equally good
- This chapter discusses some tactics that are used sometimes but are risky

1. Putting role models on pedestals

Putting role models on pedestals

- It is important for an oppressed group to have positive role models to counteract negative stereotypes
- However, there is a danger:
 - Role models tend to be placed on pedestals and idolised
 - Idolised role models tend to be hated if fans discover their feet of clay
- Relevant quote:
 - “A pedestal is as much a prison as any small, confined place”
— Gloria Steinem
- The “feet of clay” does not even have to be a character flaw
 - It can be any way in which the role model does not meet the unrealistic and confining expectation of others

Example: Tom Robinson

- Tom Robinson was a popular and openly gay singer in the late 1970s England
- Later on, much to his surprise, he fell in love with a woman
 - Many gay people felt betrayed by this
- Tom Robinson answered his critics in a song:

For 21 years now I've fought for the right
 For people to love just whoever they like
 But the right-on and righteous are out for my blood
 Now I live with my kid and a woman I love

Well if gay liberation means freedom for all
 A label is no liberation at all
 I'm here and I'm queer and I do what I do
 And I'm not gonna wear... a straitjacket for you

Example: Ani diFranco

- The singer Ani diFranco was frustrated at being put on a feminist pedestal
- She responded to her critics in a song:
 - People talk about my image
 - Like I come in two dimensions
 - Like lipstick is a sign of my declining mind
 - Like what I happen to be wearing
 - The day that someone takes a picture
 - Is my new statement for all of womankind
 - ...
 - I wish they could see us now
 - In leather bras and rubber shorts
 - Like some ridiculous new team uniform
 - For some ridiculous new sport
 - Quick someone call the girl police
 - And file a report

Examples: Bob Geldof and Gandhi

- After organising Band Aid to raise money for famine relief:
 - The UK media gave Bob Geldof the nickname “Saint Bob”
 - Much to his disgust, some people wanted to touch him because they thought he was holy
- Bob Geldof wrote about this in his autobiography:
 - He called it the *God syndrome*
 - He quoted a fictional character from a short story at the start of his autobiography
 - “I don’t mind being revered, greeted and honoured,’ said Vespaluus, ‘I don’t even mind being sainted in moderation, as long as I’m not expected to be saintly as well.’”
 - *The Story of St. Vespaluus*, by Saki
- Gandhi was horrified whenever people treated him as a god

The moral

- Be proud of people who make great achievements
- But resist putting them on a pedestal:
 - The confinement frustrates them
 - And you will feel hurt when they do not live up to your unrealistic expectations

2. Using feelings of superiority to
combat feelings of inferiority

Eradicating a sense of inferiority

- Let's use numbers to indicate levels of self-esteem
 - Negative numbers → Low self-esteem ("I am inferior")
 - Zero → Healthy level of self-esteem
 - Positive numbers → Overly high self-esteem ("I am superior")
- Oppression can cause oppressed people to have low self-esteem, let's say -5
 - What is a good way to get their self esteem back up to zero?
- One way is to reclaim history, culture and role models to say "We are just as good as other people"
 - Ideally, your self esteem will rise back to zero
- Drawback:
 - Continued oppression might keep dragging your self-esteem back below zero

An alternative tactic

- An alternative tactic is as follows:
 - Reclaim history, culture and role models to say "We are *better* than other people"
 - The aim is to bring self-esteem to a *positive* number, for example, +5
 - This will cancel out the negative self-esteem created by oppression to leave your overall self-esteem at zero
- This tactic may seem appealing, but it can be dangerous:
 - Perhaps you will overcompensate and end up with a self-esteem of, for example, +2
 - Even if the tactic works perfectly, external supporters might be alienated if they hear the "we are better than other people" message

3. Demonising your oppressor

13

The temptation to demonise your oppressor

- Typical scenario:
 - X people are oppressed by *some* non-X people
 - *Most other* non-X people (who are not oppressors) do nothing to stop the oppression
- X people are upset and frustrated:
 - With the oppressors
 - With the non-oppressors who do nothing to stop the oppression
- It is tempting for an X-rights activist to demonise non-X people:
 - Doing this taps into the frustrations and anger of X people
 - It can be an effective way to build up support among X people

The danger of demonising your oppressor

- Demonising non-X people is likely to scare non-X people.
Examples:
 - If you are white, how would you feel hearing the Nation of Islam's claim that white people are devils
 - If you are well off, how would you feel about lots of poorer people shouting "Capitalist bastard" at you?
- Likely results:
 - The oppressors will feel more justified in their oppression
 - Some of the non-oppressors may, as a form of self-defence, become oppressors
- If non-X people outnumber X people then riots or attempts at an "non-X versus X war" will probably fail

An alternative tactic

- Satyagraha tactics can be more effective:
 - See *The Bell Curve of Intolerance* part of this training course
 - Satyagraha does *not* demonise an oppressor
- A brief recap:
 - Widespread news coverage of extremist oppressors hurting peaceful protestors wins sympathy of the non-oppressors (the apathetic majority)
 - The no-longer-apathectic majority will then put peer pressure on the oppressive extremists to end the oppression

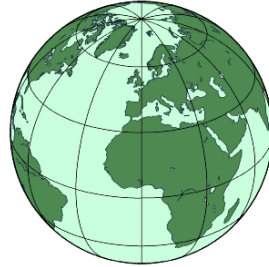
4. Summary

17

Summary

- This chapter has briefly discussed some dangerous tactics...
- Role models are important but resist the urge to put them on pedestals
- Do not use “we are superior to our oppressors” as a tactic to combat feelings of inferiority
- Do not demonise your oppressors

Underappreciated Tactics for Fighting Oppression



CiaranMcHale.com
Complexity explained simply

1

License

Copyright © 2009 Ciaran McHale.

Permission is hereby granted, free of charge, to any person obtaining a copy of this training course and associated documentation files (the "Training Course"), to deal in the Training Course without restriction, including without limitation the rights to use, copy, modify, merge, publish, distribute, sublicense, and/or sell copies of the Training Course, and to permit persons to whom the Training Course is furnished to do so, subject to the following conditions:

The above copyright notice and this permission notice shall be included in all copies or substantial portions of the Training Course.

THE TRAINING COURSE IS PROVIDED "AS IS", WITHOUT WARRANTY OF ANY KIND, EXPRESS OR IMPLIED, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO THE WARRANTIES OF MERCHANTABILITY, FITNESS FOR A PARTICULAR PURPOSE AND NONINFRINGEMENT. IN NO EVENT SHALL THE AUTHORS OR COPYRIGHT HOLDERS BE LIABLE FOR ANY CLAIM, DAMAGES OR OTHER LIABILITY, WHETHER IN AN ACTION OF CONTRACT, TORT OR OTHERWISE, ARISING FROM, OUT OF OR IN CONNECTION WITH THE TRAINING COURSE OR THE USE OR OTHER DEALINGS IN THE TRAINING COURSE.

The globe logo is from www.mapAbility.com. Used with permission.

Introduction

- Oppression is rarely ended through a *single* tactic:
 - Success is more likely with a *combination* of tactics
 - The tactics can form an equation for change
($A + B + C = \text{end of oppression}$)
 - Recall that *Equations for Change* was the subject of an earlier chapter
- This chapter discusses several tactics that are often used by members of an oppressed group
- Many people underappreciate the importance of these tactics:
 - Possibly because they view them in isolation instead of as being part of an equation for change
 - Ignoring some of these tactics means ignoring part of an equation for change, so it can hinder the fight to end oppression
 - Even if a tactic does not appeal to you personally, you should try to support others who use the tactic

1. Create a community newspaper

The need for community newspapers

- Mainstream newspapers:
 - Rarely report news of interest to an oppressed group
 - Often report news in a way that supports existing oppression
- Some famous activists started newspapers or magazines for their own communities:
 - Gandhi (for Indians)
 - Malcolm X (for the Nation of Islam)
 - John Holt (for home-based education)

Difficulties for a community newspaper

- Problems faced by many community-specific newspapers:
 - They are smaller than mainstream newspapers (so they seem unimpressive by comparison)
 - Articles about community events are less dramatic than articles about national or international issues (so a community newspaper is often thought of as boring)
 - They act as a concentrated source of information about oppression faced by the community (the bearer of bad news is often disliked)
 - A small readership means funds for running the newspaper are scarce
- These problems can create a vicious circle:
 - Many newspapers for oppressed communities struggle to survive

Benefits of a community newspaper

- A community-specific newspaper offers important services:
 - It can report oppressive events ignored by mainstream newspapers
 - It can report and analyse prejudice in mainstream media
 - This can help combat internalised oppression

 - It can announce community events and advertise community businesses

 - It may be used as a source of information for mainstream newspapers

- These are important services:
 - But many people perceive the difficulties more strongly than the benefits
 - They don't want to buy an "unimpressive, boring and depressing" paper
 - Because of this, community-specific newspapers are underappreciated

2. Social groups and conferences

Social groups

- Social groups for “X” people provide a safe environment for them to meet and be themselves:
 - Often, they are highly valued by people suffering from internalised oppression
- Underappreciation of a social group can occur as follows:
 - A person, Fred, regularly goes to a social group
 - Attending the group helps to reduce Fred’s internalised oppression
 - As Fred recovers, he needs the group’s support less and less
 - Eventually, when Fred has recovered enough, he leaves the group
 - Fred may misunderstand the reason he is leaving:
 - He does not realize that *he* has changed and outgrown the group
 - Instead, he thinks “the group changed and became boring”
 - This misunderstanding might make Fred reluctant to recommend the group to others

Conferences

- A local social group might have less than 20 people
 - In contrast, an annual (inter)national conference might have hundreds or thousands of people
- The larger size of a conference means its benefits are magnified:
 - Finding so many “people like me” in one place can be empowering
 - Workshops and merchandise stalls can promote the community’s history, values and role models
 - A mix of “social” and “activist” workshops provides interesting variety
 - Entertainments provided by community members provide a source of pride

Conferences (cont')

- Recall from the *Clusters, Families and Partners* chapter:
 - Occasionally, interactions between people with common interests produce synergy
- An annual conference provides opportunities for synergy:
 - A conference, by itself, can be enjoyable, informative, empowering...
 - The networking and collaborations *resulting* from people meeting at the conference can be even more important
- Conferences often suffer from the same underappreciation as social groups:
 - Eventually, Fred stops attending an annual conference
 - He does not realize that *he* has changed and outgrown the conference
 - Instead, he thinks the conference is “not as good as it used to be”
 - This misunderstanding makes Fred reluctant to recommend the conference to others

3. Document a group's history and culture

Documentation can challenge stereotypes

- Derogatory stereotypes exist about every oppressed group.
Examples:
 - Lazy, unintelligent, criminals, terrorists, sexually promiscuous, rapists, child molesters, hedonists, violent
- These stereotypes can be challenged if the oppressed group documents:
 - Positive aspects of their own culture
 - Their achievements in science, art, music, movies, sports, business, charity, campaigning for human rights and so on
 - Biographies of their people who lead eventful and interesting lives
 - Anthologies of personal accounts about oppression and pride

Importance of such documentation

- They can help to raise the self esteem and lower internalised oppression of individuals *within* the oppressed group
- Documentation of recent history (last 10 or 20 years) can show progress in reducing oppression
 - This can be a morale boost to activists who do not see progress on a week-by-week basis
- Mainstream historians often fail to document the history of oppressed groups

Obstacles for such documentation

- They are rarely read by people *outside* the oppressed group
 - There are occasional exceptions, such as *Roots* by Alex Haley
- A limited readership means:
 - Many bookshops do not stock “special interest” titles that sell poorly
 - Such books quickly go out of print
- Some books have to be rewritten for each generation:
 - Anthologies of personal accounts written recently are more relevant for readers than similar anthologies written 50 years ago

Exercise (to be done outside the course)

- Look for books about an oppressed group on Amazon (www.amazon.com)
- Estimate how well or badly such books sell (Amazon’s “sales rank”)
- How many of these books are “unavailable” (out of print)
- Is there any way to keep such books available for future generations?
 - One possible answer is on the next slide

Suggested solution to the exercise

■ Suggestion:

- Create a website to act as a centralized archive of community-specific biographies, histories and personal accounts
- Track down the copyright holders of such books that are out of print
 - Ask them to add HTML and PDF versions of the books to the archive
- Encourage future authors of such books to do likewise (they will forego insignificant royalties to get a wider readership)

■ Bonus suggestion:

- Study *print-on-demand* technologies (ability to print and bind a single copy of a book on an as-needed basis)
- Add a print-on-demand service to the website
 - In this way, authors and the website can make some money from books that have a limited readership
- Expand the website so it covers books for *many* oppressed groups (this scalability may make it a sustainable business)

4. End reliance on your oppressor for funding

End reliance on your oppressor for funding

- An important principle to keep in mind is this:
 - Don't ask your oppressor to fund your revolution
- It may not be possible to live up to that ideal:
 - But over time you should try to reduce your reliance on funding from your oppressor
- When you accept funding from your oppressor then:
 - You may have to engage in self-censorship (otherwise the funding might be cut off)
 - You may have to deal with extra bureaucracy (to satisfy the funding organization that the money is being spent well)
 - If the funding suddenly stops, your organization may not be able to survive

Example from Black Like Me

- From the "December 7" chapter in *Black Like Me*:
 - Two black economists:
 - "recognized that so long as the Negro had to depend on white banks to finance his projects for improvement and growth, the race was at the mercy of the white man."
 - Helped create two banks in Atlanta financed and run by black people
 - Often, white-owned banks in Atlanta refused to loan money to black people to buy houses
 - The newly created black-owned banks started to provide such loans
 - Within a few days, the white-owned banks called to say "Don't take all that business away from us. How about letting us handle a few of those loans?"
- Important point:
 - Just two black banks broke a white-only monopoly on loans
 - This caused white-owned banks to act less oppressively

Example from John Holt

- The US Department of Education announced it would give up to \$5million per district to fund innovative schools:
 - From Chapter 12 (“The Failure of School Reform”) in *Instead of Education* by John Holt
- Results:
 - Less than 1% of schools who applied for funding received it
 - The 99% of schools who were denied funding wasted time on the bureaucracy of applying for the funds
 - When funding was given, most of the money was used to add extra bureaucracy to coordinate and evaluate the innovations
 - “The innovative schools and teachers, which in their former poverty had at least been left alone to do their work as best they could, now had to spend much of their time explaining and justifying what they were doing. Many of them felt that the federal funding had, if anything, made their work harder.”

Example from the Nation of Islam

- An important teaching of the Nation of Islam (NOI) was that black people should work towards financial independence:
- Many NOI members opened their own businesses
- In this way, money could stay within their own community, so:
 - They were reducing their financial reliance on white people
 - They were not financially supporting their oppressors

Example from Malcolm X

- This example shows that sometimes you can reduce but not eliminate your dependence on oppressors
- Malcolm X started a monthly newspaper:
 - From Chapter 5 (“The Interview”) of *To Kill a Black Man* by Louis Lomax
 - The newspaper reported stories relevant to the Nation of Islam (NOI)
- Malcolm X could not find writers or editors within the NOI:
 - He reluctantly asked Louis Lomax (a black man *not* in the NOI) who had the relevant skills to help
- There were no black-owned printing companies capable of printing the newspaper:
 - He reluctantly used a white-owned printing company

5. Ways to cope with stress caused by oppression

The excessive kindness of strangers

- From *Black Like Me*:
 - On many occasions, the author experienced kindness by black strangers
 - The amount of kindness was far greater than he had experienced as a white person among white strangers
 - He concluded that “the world outside was so bad for us that we had to counter it among ourselves by salving one another with kindness” (from the “November 7” chapter)

- Such “excessive kindness” is common in oppressed groups:
 - *Defiance* by Nechama Tec tells the true story of how 3 Jewish brothers in Poland saved over 1200 Jewish people from the Nazi holocaust
 - Chapter 13 (“Keeping Order”) of *Defiance* states:
 - “As outside dangers increased, people became more cooperative. In contrast, as soon as they felt more secure, they became more competitive, more critical, and more disobedient.”

Using music to relieve stress

- From the “November 14” chapter in *Black Like Me*:
 - In Mississippi a black man had been lynched and the grand jury decided that the white men accused of the crime should not face trial
 - Black people felt betrayed by this blatant lack of justice
 - The author travelled to Mississippi to experience life as a black man in such circumstances

- The author arrived at the black part of the town of Hattiesburg:
 - There was loud music everywhere, and he realized white people would think black people were happy, partying and “living jubilantly”
 - He recognised the music was a way for people to relieve stress caused by oppression

Other ways to relieve stress

- Not everyone uses music and dancing to relieve stress
 - Some prefer to work out in a gym, play sports, comedy, art, ...
 - Some resort to alcohol, drugs or crime
- Many rehabilitation programs increase their success rate by having attendees take up a pastime that:
 - Relieves stress, while
 - Building self esteem or providing a purpose to life

Relieving stress productively

- Advice:
 - Engage in a stress-relieving hobby
 - Tailor your hobby so that it helps your community to fight oppression
- Examples:
 - For people who like to write:
 - Write fictional stories that show oppressed people in a positive light
 - Document your community's culture, history or role models
 - Contribute to a community newspaper
 - For people who like to play music:
 - Write and play songs relevant to your oppressed community
 - Write a musical stage show relevant to your community
 - For artists:
 - Paint or sculpt images depicting community pride or oppression

Relieving stress productively (cont')

More examples...

- For people who like sports:
 - Learn or teach self-defence sports

- For people who like using a video camera:
 - Make a documentary about your community's history or culture

- For people who love to cook:
 - Provide catering for activist groups
 - Write a cook book of recipes associated with your community

- For people who like gardening, knitting, collecting stamps...
 - Find *some way* for your hobby to help your community

6. Summary

Summary

- Taken individually, the tactics discussed in this chapter are not impressive. For example:
 - A community-specific newspaper won't end oppression by itself
 - Likewise for a conference or an anthology of personal accounts
- Because they can appear unimpressive, many people underappreciate the importance of these tactics
- The tactics gain importance when viewed as parts of an equation for change:
 - $A + B + C =$ lessen oppression enough to enable D to occur
 - $D + E + F =$ build enough pride and self-esteem to facilitate G
 - $G + H =$ another step towards ending oppression