

# Ten Commandments for Changing the World

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## **1. You Gotta Believe**

Have hope, passion and confidence that valuable change can and does happen because individuals take bold initiative.

## **2. Challenge Authority**

Don't be afraid to question authority. Authority should be earned, not appointed. The "experts" are often proven wrong (they used to believe that the earth was flat!). You don't have to be an expert to have a valuable opinion or to speak out on an issue.

## **3. Know the System**

The system perpetuates itself. Use the tools you have - the telephone is the most underrated. The internet can be of great value for research as well. Learn how decisions are made. How is the bureaucracy structured? Who are the key players? What do they look like? Where do they eat lunch? Go there and talk with them. Get to know their executive assistants. Attend public meetings.

## **4. Take Action**

Do something - anything is better than nothing. Bounce your idea around with friends, and then act. Start small, but think big. Organize public events. Distribute handbills. Involve youth. It's easier to ask for forgiveness after the fact rather than to ask for permission. Just do it! Be flexible. Roll with the punches and allow yourself to change tactics mid-stream. Think laterally. Don't get hung-up on money matters; some of the best actions have no budget.

## **5. Use the media**

Letters to the Editor of your local newspaper are read by thousands. Stage a dramatic event and invite the media - they love an event that gives them an interesting angle or good photo. Bypass the mainstream media with email and the World Wide Web to get the word out about your issue and to network.

## **6. Build Alliances**

Seek out your common allies such as other community associations, seniors, youth groups, labor, businesses, etc. and work with them to establish support. The system wins through Divide and Conquer, so do the opposite! Network ideas, expertise and issues through email lists. Celebrate your successes with others.

## **7. Apply Constant Pressure**

Persevere - it drives those in power crazy. Be as creative as possible in getting your perspective heard. Use the media, phone your politicians, send letters and faxes with graphics and images. Be concise. Bend the Administration's ear when you attend public meetings. Take notes. Ask specific questions, and give a deadline for when you expect a response. Stay in their faces.

## **8. Teach Alternatives**

Propose and articulate intelligent alternatives to the status quo. Inspire people with well thought out, attractive visions of how things can be better. Use actual examples, what's been tried, where and how it works. Do your homework, get the word out, create visual representations. Be positive and hopeful.

## **9. Learn From your Mistakes**

You're gonna make mistakes; we all do. Critique - in a positive way - yourself, the movement, and the opposition. What works, and why? What isn't working? What do people really enjoy doing, and do more of that.

## **10. Take Care of Yourself and Each Other**

Maintain balance. Eat well and get regular exercise. Avoid burn-out by delegating tasks, sharing responsibility, and maintaining an open process. Be sensitive to your comrades. Have fun. As much as possible, surround yourself with others (both at work and at play) who share your vision so you can build camaraderie, solidarity and support. Enjoy yourself, and nourish your sense of humour. Remember: you're not alone!

*"Ten Commandments" courtesy of Angela Bischoff and Tooker Gomberg*