



We Help You Focus Clearly,  
Organize Effectively,  
And Act With Courage

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## The Anatomy of a Change Agent

- A CLEAR MIND, one that is not cluttered with unresolved issues or unexamined motives.
- EYES that can see beyond today.
- EARS that can listen to other points of view.
- A NOSE that can sense opportunities and timing.
- A MOUTH that can speak out with honesty and respect.
- A HEART that can feel others' pain and respond with compassion.
- A FIRE IN THE BELLY – a sense of passion and responsibility that makes one want to rise each morning.
- SKILLFUL HANDS that can do scut work as well as strategy.
- LIGHT FEET that can move swiftly when the timing is right.
- The SOUL OF A WARRIOR, with a deep sense of honor, perseverance, and patience, along with the willingness to act decisively. □

## Agents of Change

By Cathy Perme

What makes a change agent different from someone who just raises hell and makes life difficult for everyone else? The difference lies in their sense of *responsibility* for the change itself and *care* for the people who must live with it.

I recently participated in an intensive research and study group on non-violent systems change that drove this message home. Within our small group in Bandera, Texas, were change agents from Northern Ireland, Albania and the Balkans, South Africa, and the U.S. Some held positions of power, some were community activists, and some simply found themselves in situations they could not ignore. Our conversations were intense, real, and immediate. Here is what I learned about change agents in the midst of change:

1. Real change agents have often had a “watershed moment” when they recognized, with keen perception, the entirety of a situation and what they could do to influence it. One of our group, a Protestant minister from Northern Ireland, once bore the casket of a young Catholic boy killed by extremists. His courage at that moment helped to avert further retaliation and bloodshed in his own community.
2. Real change agents are skilled individuals who are comfortable with whom they are. They are clear about their values, they understand their own motivations, they are confident in their own skills, and they know how to build coalitions and ask for help. They may be a product of their history, but they are neither blinded nor possessed by it.
3. Real change agents are willing to submit their egos to a larger goal. It was often not easy for the three folks from Northern Ireland who represented different interests to be in the same room together. But they had a common goal – sustaining peace – and were firmly dedicated to it.
4. Real change agents build energy and consensus, and do not divide and conquer. The allure of power politics is overwhelming and can often produce short-term results. Each of these change agents knew that long term, systemic change came from the people whose lives were affected by it. Their focus was on ways to build trust, dialog, and movement to help people let go of perceptions and beliefs that limit their future.

There are real change agents working everyday in our organizations and communities. Being a change agent is not about personality. It's not about leadership style. It *is* about awareness, conviction, humanity, and courage. It is a far cry from just raising hell. □ *CMP*