

IF YOU WANT TO CHANGE THINGS

For Mount St. Mary's University by Robert Porter Lynch – March, 2018



The world is in constant flux, like magnetic poles flipping and rotating. God is always moving things, transforming realities, shifting the ground under which we stand. While we all yearn for peace and harmony, often enclosing ourselves behind protective monastic walls, there will always be tension, stress, and turmoil. It is in God's design of divine nature; sunny summer breezes will be followed by cold winter winds, resurrecting in next spring's warmth.

As humans, we cherish stability -- we like assurance that change will only be beneficial. But no one wants the labor pains takes to bring new life into this world. No one likes learning to ride a bicycle, getting thrown onto the ground, being out of balance. To learn to ride the two-wheeled bike we need to learn new senses of balance, new alignments. We all know once we've mastered the bicycle, we stopped feeling like an alien creature astride the bike; we began to experience our bike as a sacred union between our body, our mind, and our bike.

Those too afraid to fall, afraid to fail, or afraid to join in holistic union with the bike, never master bike riding.

And so too with life itself. We all hope for wonderful harmonies and melodies of love all around, the sacred song of uplifting tones, symphonies of splendored "love all around, wonderful roses in sweet fragrant meadows of dawn."

Yet any civilization that believes in eternal harmony becomes flaccid, complacent, unquestioning, utopian, and unconnected with the inner and outer energies that are soon to turn, spin, split, and tear asunder our lives.

Uncertainty, ambiguity, turmoil, and adversity are the nature of things in this world. And today, more than any other generation, your world is changing faster, spinning farther from the centre, and producing more paradox and conflict than in any generation before you (except in times of war). There is more enlightenment today and more darkness. The forces of good and evil are battling in our midst every day.

You must know how to flow and master the energies of good to redirect or deflect the energies of evil. Just like the students of the Valentine's Day massacre in Parkland Florida, instead of wallowing in their victimness, they courageously chose the heroic path of championing a cause we know as #NeverAgain. They captured the energies of evil and transformed them into a cause célèbre.

If you want to change things, be aware -- it will not be easy, be prepared for a long journey -- you will need the character trait of *persistence*.

If you want to change things, you will need to be a champion true to the inner spiritual teachings of those wiser than you.

If you want to change things, you will need a clear sense of mission and purpose. Only those who intertwine their passion and reason with their mission will thrive.

If you want to change things, you will need to be collaborative; you cannot and shall not do it alone.

If you want to change things, you must be trusted; for if there is no trust, there will be no commitment, no teamwork, no influence, and no sustainable effort; for where there is no trust, everything defaults to politics.

If you want to change things, you must be courageous; having a heart filled with strong values and the willingness to sacrifice for your cause. You must be willing to suffer the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune, for those opposed to you may be manipulative schemers set on our destruction. I've had my life threatened, my home threatened, my financial security threatened, and my reputation sullied to stand for the causes I believe in. If you are not on the path of the highest destiny God has set forth for you, beware, for you will traverse a forsaken path.

If you want to change things, you must be able to plan your moves well in advance, knowing how to navigate through the rocks and shoals of indifference, resistance, and subterfuge. Then be ready to throw everything to the wind, starting over with worn out tools and limited resources if your plan didn't work.

If you want to change things, you must be able to build momentum, create teams, and deliver projects that demonstrate real results.

If you want to change things, you must realize your real strengths are not your innate talents nor your supreme knowledge, but you sense of purpose, your abilities to plan, organize, develop teams, adapt, and demonstrate the qualities of humility, graciousness, gratitude and courage.

If you want to change things, you must be willing to thrust everyone else into the forefront of accolades. Yet, if something goes wrong you must be the person that steps forward and takes the blame, the heat, the bitterness -- even when you don't deserve it.

If you want to change things, you'd better be able to produce value, real results, something worthy of people's admiration, and quickly. Few tolerate a slow drip of improvement; people's patience is tied to their timeline of expectations. Long, draining efforts get dull very fast.

If you want to change things, you will need a Godfather -- often more than one -- who will protect you when the cynics, naysayers, those looking in a rear view mirror, and those threatened by change demand your expulsion.

If you want to change things, you must learn the culture of your organization -- its values, its contradictions, its taboos, its power structure, its protocols, its styles, its language, and its values. Culture is the interconnected matrix you must master, tune into, and understand. For when you challenge the norms of the culture matrix, you must be seen as a champion of the culture's heart and soul, not a destroyer of what has been sanctified and cherished. You cannot be the interloper, but instead must be the next natural step in the culture's evolution.

If you want to change things, before tackling the contradictions and disgraces, you must communicate first by listening with respect, then by asking questions with appreciation. Change starts by understanding the strengths, visions and aspirations of the leaders before trying to fix the weaknesses. Strengths may be buried, unappreciated, or prominent. People are more successful when they work from their strengths, rather than from their weaknesses, inadequacies, or guilt.

If you want to change things, you must recognize you will be disrupting things, and that will be disconcerting, painful, and filled with anxiety for many of those affected as they stumble from one matrix to the next. You will be challenging the strategies and structures of the accepted ways. The more you can issue the painkillers of celebration and rewards and fun, the better people will feel about moving them out of their cherished ruts.

If you want to change things, someone will be angry, upset, and even vindictive. You will be challenged to search under this "anger volcano" to learn what deeper emotions are erupting -- it could be guilt, inadequacy, loss of esteem, insecurity, or a multitude of highly charged emotions.

You must dedicate your life to listening and learning, to asking layers of questions to understand, to enlighten your mind and heart. If you think you should deny the legitimacy of people's irrational emotions -- their fears, their angers, their hurt -- don't take up the cause for you are denying their unique, highly personal reality.

If you want to change things, you cannot expect a life of peace, predictability, serenity, comfort, balance, or steadiness. You will be embarking on a winding roller coaster, exciting, stretching, disappointing, elevating, discordant, and symphonic.

If you want to change things, it is not just your intelligence you will need, for there are far more intelligent humans on this planet that have chosen the path of the derelict. It is not just your eloquence you will need, for there are far more eloquent humans on this planet that have chosen the path into prisons. It is not just your talent you will need, for there are many humans on this planet that have chosen the path to perdition. It is not just your warmth and charm you will need, for there are far more humans with warmth and charm who have chosen to defraud and con their fellow man.

It is for none of these seemingly wonderful qualities you will need, it is for your unique purpose that will propel you to excel and change the world. That purpose, that mission, that inner spiritual drive -- given to you by the Almighty -- will be your compass through the trials and disappointments, keeping you on course, pointing true North.

If you want to change things, you must be prepared to attract both those who are like you and those who are not like you, those who would like to be like you, those skeptical of you, and those who intensely dislike you, and even those who would like to destroy you. You, must cherish, embrace, and love them all. For you, like every other human, are not holier, not better, and not more gifted than any of God's children; we are all flawed, damaged, and have our weaknesses. It is our gratitude and graciousness, our character and courage, our fortitude and forgiveness, and, above all, our empathy and humility that, in the sweep of things, will be our greatest gift that propels our vision, our commitment, and our trust.

For, *if you want to change things*, you must be willing to lead in a manner that embraces the good in people, draws forth their highest qualities, and celebrates their higher spirit. In other words:

It's not about ME -- It's About WE!