

Introduction

In 1929, a march was held for women's freedom that would damage the lungs of women around the world. Edward Bernays organized this Women's March to promote his client's product. Make a profit and break down the many social taboos weighing on women in the 1920's? A social entrepreneur's dream. Unfortunately, his client was the American Tobacco Company. What Barneys spun as "torches of freedom" lighting the way for women empowerment, can just as easily be described as the day "death sticks" were made commonplace for the almost half of American women smoking cigarettes only 50 years later. Bernays went on to define the American breakfast, destabilize governments, counsel presidents, and become the Father of Public Relations in recognition of his PR genius. Yet if I could sum him up in one word, it would be Changemaker.

Changemakers take an idea and embed it in the minds of the general population until that idea becomes unconsciously influential. They are driven by passion, good intentions, a sense of purpose, and most commonly, their own definition of Common Sense. Ultimately, they wish to do what few can: create lasting change. Unfortunately, as in the case of Bernays and the "torches of freedom, Changemakers are too often equipped to create change, not to steer it. What good is a leader if they lead you to your own eventual demise? The Foolish Genius can't tell the difference, leaving the blind to lead the blind.

Truthfully, Bernays was a man of conviction and regretted his decision to promote cigarettes. He became an activist of sorts, dedicating his time to fighting the monster he helped create. In his book *Propaganda* he wrote, "Truth is mighty and must prevail, and if any body of men believe that they have discovered a valuable truth, it is not merely their privilege but their duty to disseminate that truth." This was a man who had incredible knowledge and ability, and tried to do what was best, but couldn't always tell what best was. In the same book, Bernays admitted, "Men are rarely aware of the real reasons which motivate their actions."

The Foolish Genius is about shaping the leaders who can spark change, but more important, arm them with the tools and concepts to implement change responsibly. To be clear, this is not a book about how to create change. I won't go into detail about the strategy of any one social movement or breakdown the psychology of those such leaders. While creating Changemakers is important, I believe that the development and character of those Changemakers should be held at the same level of importance. As you read about how the Foolish Genius becomes a Wisdom-led Changemaker, you will notice a focus on five key concepts:

- Wisdom: The anchoring concept in this book and the only thing that separates positive change from misguided change. Wisdom receives guiding force through principles.
- Principles: The process by which we can “discover a valuable truth”. Learn how through a firm understanding of principles. A strange social outcast converted his people from complacent allies into steadfast abolitionists, forming the first religious anti slavery group in America. A concept not possible to hold onto without purpose.
- Purpose: A concept that not only drives the Changemaker, but the explosively creative innovation of groups.
- Creativity: How to operate the most powerful tool in the Changemakers toolbox. A tool that is either commonly used by the devious or commonly creates them, but can be used to create positive change, with the right approach.
- And the book concludes with the one concept that encompasses them all, striking at the very heart of wisdom. Read about a woman whose efforts and love for her community restored the self-respect and economic viability to a people that had forgotten their culture and were dependent on the good will of others.

Ultimately, the primary goal of this book is to give aspiring Changemakers the proper tools to determine if the change they create is truly leading themselves and their constituents to a rewarding and more equitable future. More than that, I hope you will see the significance your own personal development has on the society you are working towards shaping and be equipped to overcome the Common Dilemma.

Chapter 1: The Common Dilemma

If anyone, no matter who, were given the opportunity of choosing from amongst all the nations in the world the set of beliefs which he thought best, he would inevitably—after careful considerations of their relative merits—choose that of his own country.

- Herodotus, [The Histories](#)

Takeaways

- Common Sense is the accepted basis for creating change, but not the right one.
- Progress is directional change.
- Wisdom is the best guide for social change.