

**"THE ORIGINAL GAME CHANGER"**

*And, how you can join the club*

Perhaps more than ever before, Americans, particularly young Americans, are focused on achieving success, wealth and power. Their role models include the likes of Bill Gates (chairman of Microsoft), Warren Buffett (CEO of Berkshire Hathaway), Larry Ellison (CEO of Oracle), Mark Zuckerberg (co-founder of Facebook) and Marissa Mayer (CEO of Yahoo).

Many of these "movers and shakers" attained their stature by thinking "out of the box". They went beyond the traditional "we've always done it that way" mind set, and conceived an entirely new strategy to address situations. These visionary strategists used creative innovation that transformed the ordinary into the exceptional. In the parlance of the day they are "game changers".

In this context, if you think about all recorded history, who would you consider to be the original and most influential game changer of all time?

I think that a strong case can be made to designate Jesus Christ as that game changer.

The Gospels tell us that Jesus had no patience with the status quo, he challenged norms, broke conventions, and espoused a new way of life. He understood the greater purpose and had the willingness to go beyond himself to serve the will of his Father. And, talk about a transformational event, if his life, death and resurrection don't qualify, what does?

Here are some supporting quotations from the Gospel of Matthew.

"You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy'. But I say to you, love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you..." (5:43-44)

"Stop judging, that you may not be judged." (7:1)

"Whoever wishes to come after me must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me. For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it." (16:24-25)

"Whoever exalts himself will be humbled; but whoever humbles himself will be exalted." (23:12)

In each of these passages, Jesus is seeking to produce change, an earmark of a game changer.

Now, how do we utilize the attributes of game changers in our everyday situations to exercise good stewardship of our gifts and to accomplish evangelization?

We can join the club of game changers by considering intentions that are characterized by six qualities: Simple, Meaningful, Actionable, Relational, Transformational, Scalable. Call it the SMARTS plan.

Focus on simplicity; don't get entangled in complexities.

Make them meaningful; don't waste time majoring in the minors.

Make them real and concrete actions; don't lurk in the shadow lands of the ethereal and esoteric.

Enhance, extend and leverage existing relationships, and create new ones.

If you aren't changing, creating, improving or transforming, you're not a game changer.

Intentions should create change that can be sustained and built upon.

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