

Changemaker

As someone who loves great ideas and wants to make our world a better place you may face unique challenges – your optimism may be worn down by opposition, your creativity may stop working and your trust in other people's good intentions may become jaded.

The Changemaker has been developed to support the creativity, optimism and pure motivation of people of ideas from all walks of life, so that we can enjoy being at our best and keep giving our best.

Who is it for?

It is for creatives, social entrepreneurs, innovators, philanthropists, people of conscience – as well as the everyday changemaker in all of us as we go about our lives trying to make things better for the people around us. It is as much for those on the vanguard of moving society forward with new ideas, technologies, and solutions as it is for those of us trying to create better families, work places and communities.

What new skills will you learn?

'The Changemaker' has three essential tools at its heart:

Session 1 - Optimism in a Headwind - maintaining optimism and dealing with resistance

How to distinguish between constructive comments and resistance and keep optimistic feelings flowing strong as we take our ideas forward.

Session 2 - The Creative Headspace – taking your creativity to the next level

How to enter a state of mind that allows great ideas to incubate and come to the surface.

Session 3 - Make Good things happen

How to nourish ourselves and support others by entering an experience of love for all things. Giving positive energy to our projects and the people we are serving amplifies our efforts to bring about change.

Session Format

- 1 A presentation on 2-3 memorable insights, backed up anecdotes from the speakers own experience.
- 2 Step by step experiential meditations to explore new mindsets in a higher consciousness.
- 3 Reflective time to capture insights.
A series of reflective questions with time to mull over each question and jot down thoughts so that our deeper intentions can speak to us.

An overview of the content of each of the three sessions is on the following pages, along with ideas for practical meditations and group reflections that enable changemakers to experience a different mindset.

Session 1 Optimism in a Headwind - maintaining optimism and dealing with resistance

a) How to keep our optimism flowing

An optimist is the human personification of spring. ~ Susan J. Bissonette

No pessimist ever discovered the secrets of the stars or sailed to an uncharted land or opened a new heaven to the human spirit. ~ Helen Keller

We are by nature creative beings, so in one way or another, ideas are constantly forming in our mind. However, some ideas are particularly compelling, especially ones that can make a difference.

The moment an exciting idea forms in our mind can be an exhilarating experience. We see in our mind's eye beautiful and beguiling possibilities. Often that moment of creation carries with it a very strong sense of optimism that can feel quite extraordinary and infuse our whole being with high levels of energy, enabling us to work with great focus and inspiration.

Fresh ideas and new ways of working inevitably hit snags and challenges. So to be able to take any idea to completion, especially if a great deal of energy is needed to see it through, we need to be able to keep our optimism vibrant and strong over time.

Perpetual optimism is a force multiplier. ~ Colin Powell

Meditation to keep our optimism flowing.

Recall the feeling you had at the moment of creation for a particularly compelling idea, an idea that gave you a buzz of excitement when it first formed in your mind...

Recall that moment as vividly as you can with the full intensity of feelings you originally experienced.

Give yourself a few unhurried moments to fully savour that moment of creation. Allow yourself to become fully immersed in that feeling.

Was there a sense of excitement, of your mind soaring with unrealised possibilities?

Did you sense the future success of this idea?

Did you become so absorbed in the experience of creation that you were unaware of your surroundings? Or did your surroundings seem even more vivid at that moment? Savour this inner experience in all its fullness until you feel your optimism rising.

We can strengthen our optimism even more by connecting to the higher purpose this idea fulfils.

For a few moments right now, ask yourself what higher purpose this idea fulfils....

In what way does it contribute to something greater than yourself?

For example, does this idea involve the expression of excellence, compassion or giving delight to others?

Will it serve your community or even your wider human family?

Reflect on these questions until the answers appear in your mind....

If we practice these two things several times - re-experience the original energy of creation and connect with our higher purpose, our optimism will become stronger over time rather than fizzle out as challenges test our resolve. If you notice your optimism waning, practice these two exercises again, they only take a few minutes and can make a huge difference to your state of mind and ability to get things done.

b) Overcoming Resistance

Resistance to new ideas is not the same as feedback.

To improve anything we need to find out if it works for the people its designed for. So asking people for constructive comments is essential to make something really sing. Resistance is a very different matter, and we can tell the difference because resistance makes us feel that someone is trying to stop something from growing or happening for reasons that don't feel at all benevolent.

Essentially resistance is driven by ulterior motives and is usually a destructive force. Resistance feels very personal but in fact it isn't. It feels like its being directed at our very being, and the experience can feel as though its draining our creative energies, our hope, our self belief.

But in fact that resistance is entirely about the other person and their personal reasons for opposing us. Often this is tied up with their own unresolved issues that may never be revealed or knowable by us. So we need to be able to detach from the energy of resistance so that we do not become drained and buffeted by it.

Meditation to detach from resistance.

Just for a moment allow yourself to experience the feeling of this resistance being directed at you. Don't dwell on it for more than a few seconds, but quickly visualise that energy as a river flowing past you. You are on the river bank watching the energy flow by.... As a free flowing river it moves freely and harms no one. This energy is being directed at you but its nothing to do with you. ... You are now out of its way, let it flow past you freely.... Allow yourself a few moments to savour this feeling....

If you now imagine stepping back into the river and standing in the middle of the fast flowing current...feel the full brunt of its force buffeting you around...you would struggle to stay upright...so don't struggle...just step back onto the bank and watch the river flow by again.

Safely back on the river bank, the sun is shining down, warming and relaxing your whole being. You sense this is more than the warming rays of the sun, but a higher presence that understands and appreciates you. Savour this feeling for as long as you need.

Every time you feel effected by resistance, every time it comes into your mind, repeat this visualisation until it becomes second nature and you can feel free and unaffected in an instant.

Reflective time for session 1

These questions can be read out slowly, giving time after each one for each person to reflect and jot down their thoughts.

- 1 Remember an instance when you suggested an new idea or way of doing things to your colleagues, family or friends and they opposed your suggestions. Can you remember a time when you were able to help them overcome their resistance? How did you do that? How did things turn out?
- 2 Can you remember an instance when you experienced someone's resistance towards your ideas but you decided not to take it too personally? What did you say to yourself in order to think and feel differently?
3. When you meet with resistance from others it often corresponds with a resistance to something within yourself? Can you pinpoint that within yourself?
4. How do you talk to yourself on an inner level to overcome or transform that resistance?
5. looking back at the answers to the last 4 questions - can you see a thread in the qualities you use in dealing with resistance? Please list 3 of them.

Session 2 The Creative Headspace – taking your creativity to the next level

All of us are naturally creative at heart – whether its playing sport, dancing, cooking, building, making art, writing or inventing new ways of doing things. We create because its fun and enriching activity, but also because we are giving beings, we create to share. We want others to enjoy our creation.

At its best, creativity uplifts the spirit. This is as true for paintings hung on hospital walls as it is for a beautiful mathematical formula, a soaring poem or a soulful song. Even a twenty minute visit to an art gallery can take away our stress and bring us back to our best selves.

Knowing how to step into a creative state of mind is as useful to creating great art as it is for solving everyday problems. Or for that matter, solving the big questions of our time that can't be solved by conventional thinking.

Many creative people describe an experience where ideas just drop into their mind fully formed.

They know that ideas will 'appear' if they create an open state of mind that isn't busy with ordinary thoughts. Hence writers, artists and musicians often have routines to clear their mind so that new ideas can show up. These routines can involve long walks or morning runs, pottering about in the garden, relaxing by a fire or gazing out at the ocean.

The continually busy mind most of us feel to be normal doesn't allow this possibility to happen. So the first step to taking our creativity to a higher level is to learn to go beyond the chattering mind.

But to reach our potential for high level creative thought we need to go further than just experiencing inner stillness. We need to experience something higher in ourselves – a desire to use our talents to serve.

In his work researching levels of consciousness, David Hawkins discovered that sports people who play for their own glory cannot reach the levels of achievement of athletes motivated by higher goals – of serving their country or sport, or striving for a higher principle. This holds true for all endeavours - when we are motivated to work for something greater than ourselves our physical strength measures beyond our normal capacity and our consciousness measures beyond its normal level.

The experience of reaching a higher level of conscious is unmistakable, we experience remarkable heights of understanding and beauty of thought. And this can only be set in motion by awakening our motivation to genuinely serve others through our work. If we reflect on such thoughts and stay with them, we begin to tune into a higher energy. It doesn't really matter what your belief system is, since this higher consciousness ends up being a similar experience for all of us. In this state we feel that time stands still and we feel part of the underlying fabric of life that binds us all together. For some, that translates as a divine presence, for others its a deeply felt sense of compassion and concern for all life, the planet or humanity.

As extraordinary as these things sound, there are simple steps anyone can take to help our mind work at a higher level. A level that is naturally creative.

The first step we need to take is to detach from our ordinary, busy state of mind so that we can experience a still, calm and open feeling.

Then we need to immerse ourself in the desire to serve and contribute to something higher than ourselves.

Meditation take your mind into a creative headspace

Sit in a quiet place. Ask your mind if its ready to take a break from the sights and sounds of the material world for a few moments. We need to genuinely want that experience for it to happen.

Visualise a clear blue sky filling your mind.

This blue sky is open and full of promise. Allow this feeling to fill your mind for a few minutes.

Now remember whatever creative project you are working on, or problem you would like to solve. Think of that project as a single bird flying in this clear sky. You are being carried on its wings, you are above everything, unfettered and free. There are no worries about where the bird is heading, it knows where its going, you simply go along for the ride. Your mind feels wide and open like the sky. You are at one with everything. Eventually, all you need to know will reveal itself to you...

In this state go beyond any limited concerns and tune into a feeling of serving by giving the best of yourself. Without being motivated by praise or reward, but something higher than that - to delight, to uplift, to spread joy or understanding or create something of awe and beauty.

Feel that sense of wanting to give. Not of creating in order to receive. But giving for itself.

This is a higher mode of being, it feels light and free. It touches on the truth of your being. And allows us to feel connected to the flow of life....

Allow ideas to appear in their own time.

What you seek is seeking you. —Rumi

As you become more adept at entering this kind of creative headspace two things can happen that halt your growth. The demand for your work can increase and therefore you become very busy. And that busyness can translate into a busy mind which will not allow you back into the realms of your higher creativity. People describe this a 'creative block' or the 'muse' having left them. This is often caused by creating a pressure in our mind to deliver, and no longer giving ourselves time to just be.

It also means that increased success runs the risk that we become a little self-obsessed - praise and attention can lead to believing we are better and cleverer than everyone else. This means our consciousness drop down from genuine motivation to give and begins to get hooked into praise and reward. This mentality can also lock us out of higher levels of creativity.

If we remember these two steps to higher creativity- being detached from an ordinary busy way of thinking and using our creativity to serve – we can avoid these pitfalls and keep moving towards our potential.

Reflective time for session 2

These questions can be read out slowly, giving time after each one to reflect and jot down thoughts.

- 1 Describe the surroundings/environment that inspires your creativity.
- 2 Describe the state of mind that helps you be at your most creative
- 3 What do you do to get into that mindset?
- 4 What in the outer and inner environment can kill your creativity?
- 5 How do you ideally deal with those situations?

Summary... the 3 main attributes to my creativity are....

Session 3 - Make Good things happen

It's often said that the power of the mind is the greatest power. Yet most people don't realise they have this remarkable power at their disposal and so its potential for good goes unrealised. The reality is, that whether we realise it or not, our intentions and attitudes reach people and have a profound influence on them.

If you want to see this demonstrated try this small experiment.

Just before you are due to meet someone you have any negative feelings for – focus on thinking about their good qualities for several minutes until your feelings towards them change. Try to stay in touch with these good feelings as you meet them and see if it has an effect on the quality of exchange between you.

Now imagine this possibility for a moment.... that each one of us can experience a vibrant form of love for all things, quite naturally and on a daily basis. Those willing to explore the possibility soon discover that this is not just for people on a spiritual path but is available to all of us. For anyone interested in positive change, this opens up some very exciting possibilities.

It can allow us to reach out with our mind to share this energy of love in a quiet and incognito way with people in our field of work. The very nature of this high level love means that it cannot be used for selfish gain or controlled to bring a specific outcome. But we can be certain that its influence always supports growth, higher creativity and healing.

If we want to use our creativity for positive change then using this energy will greatly improve our ability to serve in a true and authentic way. The more often we connect ourselves to this energy of love for all things and silently share it with others, the more powerful a changemaker we can become.

Let's try this exercise. It may work immediately for you or you may try it a few times to enter the experience fully.

Meditation to tap into higher intentions

Gaze at an expanse of sky until you can feel its vastness.

Allow yourself to feel the same sense of openness as the sky stretching before you.

The same sky covers the entire planet...whether its cloudy or clear, day or night the sky covers all of us. It has no barriers. ... Despite all our differences, there are so many things we have in common, the desire in all of us to be understood, given respect and loved.

And in turn we all have the ability to understand others, give them respect and offer love and kindness.

Allow your heart to be like the sky...open and unlimited...flowing where it is needed without limits or boundaries ... able to give to all.

Where ever we stand on this Earth, the sun is always there, even though it may be out of view. So too at the heart of the universe is a sun-like radiance....and if we choose to become aware of it, we can feel the love for all things surrounding us.

For a few moments allow yourself to be totally open and feel this love for all ...

Allow yourself to radiate this love, especially to those you would like to serve with your work and creativity.

Let an immense and unlimited love flow through you reaching out to all.

Let it flow to all humanity

All are equal in needing the presence of love to thrive.... so immerse yourself in the feeling of wanting the best for everyone ... for everyone to find peace, to heal all damage and pain and to reach their potential for goodness.

As changemakers we can sometimes feel that we are ahead of the curve, seeing potential in new ideas before others accept their value. Very often other people aren't ready to move forward and embrace change and they can oppose us.

Sending loving thoughts out into the world and especially to the field our ideas are intended for, can soften opposition, reduce fear of change and open minds.

If our ideas are part of a greater truth we are moving towards, then by keeping these ideas surrounded with love and faith in goodness, everything will come into alignment and others will, in time, begin to see their value.

Using our mind to reach out with love will always help good things flourish. Authentic and unlimited love always has an effect even though we cannot see the results. But we can be sure that if our feelings are genuine they will have an impact on others, and that will always move things in a positive direction.

Reflective time for session 3

Think of beautiful thoughts you would like to share as a gift for the world.
Jot down 3 thoughts you would like to radiate out that express your love for the world.

Ask everyone in the group to share one sentence in their own time in a open-space commentary.