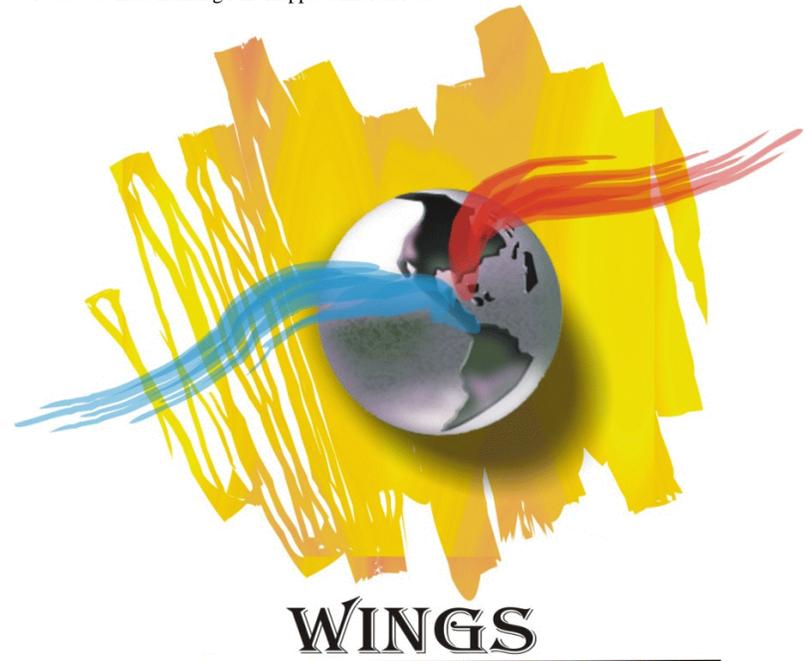


The role of social change agent is not appropriate in every situation and not all home economists will be comfortable with the role. AND... if you do not see yourself as a change agent, you will not be one, at least not intentionally.



Social change agents:

1. deliberately bring about events that alter people's daily lives
2. foster development and personal growth that enhances human capacity and human potential
3. strive to create conditions that foster sustainable futures for families and humanity
4. know that this work **takes a long time...**

On a personal level, someone who is a change agent:



- ➔ knows who she is and what she believes (**self-knowledge**)
- ➔ is **aware of her own biases** (inclinations toward something that inhibits judgement) that create prejudices, which may result in discriminatory actions
- ➔ is **aware of the assumptions** she brings to a situation (and can articulate ideologies and paradigms that inform things she would otherwise take for granted)
- ➔ **understands why she values things** (especially her guiding principles)
- ➔ understands why she brings **certain expectations** of people to a situation
- ➔ is conscious of how she and others are **framing issues** (this affects what gets presented as a problem (and how))
- ➔ is comfortable holding herself and others **accountable** for actions

Mind Virus

Everyone has a worldview that informs their work and

sometimes it prevents us from learning new things. Said another way, everyone has **mind viruses** that have entrenched themselves into their psyche. The spores of the virus work hard in our heads by pushing buttons, reinforcing stereotypes, entrenching biases - making it very hard to unlearn so we can learn new things - see the world differently.

Symptoms of a mind virus working hard to protect its territory, so things cannot be stolen away (comfortable world view), include:

- ➡ getting **angry** when reading something that does not resonate with what you think is true
- ➡ getting **confused** with new information or directions from others on how and why to do something

- ➔ seeking *distractions* from the event or idea that is making you uncomfortable
- ➔ getting *angry* when listening to ideas or suggestions that unsettle you
- ➔ feeling that work is *less meaningful* and that your life is *less focused* than before
- ➔ feeling like *something is wrong* but just cannot put your finger on it

When a person feels resistance when asked to do something, this usually means that the mind virus is working hard. But... these viral mental defenses can be *understood for what they are* - natural, normal reactions to changes in the status quo that is currently working for you.

The next step may be to **purge the mental viruses that no longer serve your purpose** in life (and no, you do **not** throw people away when you purge):



- ➔ read widely about paradigms shifts
- ➔ write your thoughts down (reflective)
- ➔ talk with like-minded people (dialogue)
- ➔ talk with people who have experienced a disorienting change in their life
- ➔ remain openminded

HOW DO CHANGE AGENTS GO ABOUT THEIR WORK?



- ➔ create structures that help **bring people together** - link like-minded people
- ➔ establish problem-posing and **problem-solving infrastructures**
- ➔ **keep a low profile** until or unless it is appropriate to do otherwise
- ➔ create **collaborative relationships** and networks
- ➔ **see change as necessary** rather than an obstacle, lessening need for stability, order and predictability; **chaos is order emerging**

- ➔ **focus on daily realities** of people rather than just your work reality
- ➔ find **opportunities for self-learning/insights**
- ➔ be patient with failures; **celebrate progress**
- ➔ learn how to **break bottlenecks** (learn non-violent, democratic peaceful approaches)
- ➔ share information and insights so it becomes **in-formation, created together**
- ➔ **project composure and confidence** so others will join you, or at least listen to your ideas
- ➔ **be consistent** - stand for something and stick with it!
- ➔ present and hold onto the **long-term big picture**, the future you envision
- ➔ appreciate that the **learning curve is steep** and the process is complex
- ➔ **learn to be assertive** - speak for yourself while not stepping on other people's toes - respect their boundaries and rights while protecting your boundaries and rights



THE WAVES OF CHANGE THAT YOU INITIATE WILL ONLY GO AS FAR AS YOUR WILL AND PROFESSIONAL WORK WILL TAKE THEM.

When your wave(s) of change is initiated, it gains momentum and grows as it rolls out over society and will keep rolling until it meets resistance.



Another wave(s) can press down on your wave of change, even become a juggernaut if it is powerful enough, stopping you in your tracks.

If you accept that waves go on until they meet another opposing wave, then you will appreciate that you have to continually initiative new waves of change that might even meet opposing waves and dissolve them completely.

