

Why do we need to constantly change our minds in this changing world?

Author: Kudzai Derera . March 2021

Over a lunch break, if you have ever lost an argument with an irritating colleague about why your point of view on a subject is the only rational one, you may have thought to yourself. I might have won this debate if I had been smarter. Maybe you also told yourself that before next time, you would sharpen your mind and refine your arguments. It seems to be a fair target, but what if it is incorrect? What if, rather than improving your mind, you should focus on improving your ability to change it?

Blackberry smartphones were all the rage in 2009. Everyone from Bill Gates to President Obama to Oprah Winfrey announced that they could not live without their Blackberries, and the company dominated nearly half of the smartphone industry. However, just five years later, the company's market share had fallen to less than 1%. What is the reason for this? Since Blackberry's creator, Mike Lazaridis refused to budge. Lazaridis continued to believe that most users would only want a smartphone that could make calls and send and receive emails after Apple's iPhone was launched in 2007 and started to gain market share. He could not imagine a world where people desired more than a Blackberry could provide. The main point here is that it pays to change your mind in a constantly changing environment.

But, before you pass judgment on Mike Lazaridis, remember that you might have made the same error. You probably take pride in sticking to your guns and sticking to what you believe in, whether you are a corporate owner or an entrepreneur. But the issue with sticking to your guns is that the world is evolving faster than it has ever been, and knowledge is becoming more available. For instance, in 2011, the average person absorbed five times as much information daily as they did in 1986. Because of the rapid speed of change, learning how to think is no longer adequate. You must also be able to rethink so that new information can be incorporated into your belief systems and strategies. But how do you go about doing that? Training yourself to think like a scientist is a great place to start.

Scientists are always curious about what they do not know, and they are always changing their perspectives to match new information. Scientists start with questions rather than responses. They put their ideas to the test and rely on proof rather than speculation. If you are a business leader, you should think like a scientist by treating your business plan like a hypothesis that needs to be tested. According to an Italian report, entrepreneurs who thought scientifically about their companies earned more sales and customers than those who did not. The researchers concluded that scientifically minded leaders were more successful because they were more scientifically minded.

The scientists concluded that scientifically minded leaders were more successful because they were more able to pivot and change their business models when things went wrong. The stuff we are not good at is, for the most part, our greatest blind spots. This may sound counterintuitive, but studies have shown that people who score the lowest on measures of rational thinking and sense of humour, for example,

also have the most exaggerated perceptions of their abilities in these fields. The main point here is that you do not realize what you do not know. Worse still, when you mistakenly assume you are good at something you are not, you are less likely to want to better your abilities.

Take, for example, a research project on emotional intelligence. People with the lowest emotional intelligence felt they were much more emotionally intelligent than they were, according to the study. It was discovered that people with the lowest emotional intelligence not only believed they were much more emotionally intelligent than they were, but they were also the least likely to want coaching to boost their emotional intelligence. So, how can we get rid of our incompetence blindness? Humility is a virtue. You open yourself up to learning new things and becoming more knowledgeable when you adopt a humble mentality and accept that you don't know anything. You may be concerned that adopting a humble attitude would compromise your self-esteem. Humility and trust, on the other hand, are not mutually exclusive.

Humility is about challenging whether you have the correct methods, while confidence is about self-belief. The most successful people are confident in their ability to accomplish their target in the long run, but they still have the humility to doubt whether they are using the most efficient strategies to do so. Another way to expose the blind spots is to indulge in a good old debate. We can change our minds and do things differently – and better – as we disagree over who is right. That said, the right kind of conflict is needed. Relationship conflict includes not only disagreement but also feelings and personal animosity, while task-based conflict contains disagreements over how to get things done.

The author, Adam Grant, discovered that the highest-performing Silicon Valley tech teams had moderately high levels of task-conflict, particularly early in their projects, during his study. This conflict was generally about how to proceed in the best way possible. But, most importantly, the highest-performing teams had no interpersonal conflict; they all got along, even though they disagreed on how to get things done. Throughout their tasks, the lowest-performing teams, on the other hand, had low mission conflict but high relationship conflict. The issue was that they despised each other so much that they were never at ease with each other. The issue was that they despised each other so much that they never felt secure enough to question each other's ideas.

To change people's minds, the best negotiators do three items. What is the best way to convince others that you are correct? Grant used to think that persuasion was just about presenting proof that the other person was incorrect. But he's learned that there's a lot more to negotiating and debating than slamming others in the face with logic. The best negotiators do three key things to change people's minds:

1. They find common ground with the other person

Most of us approach discussions and negotiations as if we're in a tug-of-war. We believe that if we can convince our adversary that we are right, we will be able to persuade them to join our side. The most experienced negotiators, on the other hand, treat the debate like a dance. They understand that stepping back from time to time allows the other person to take a step forward. So, while poor negotiators just have explanations why they're correct and the other individual is wrong, the best negotiators often bring

up topics on which they could agree. So note that you don't have to win every fight the next time you start a negotiation. Finding common ground with some of your partner's claims will potentially allow them to come over to your side.

2. Achieve more with fewer arguments

We also picture debates as being similar to standing on opposite ends of a pair of weighing scales: if you can weigh your side with enough reasons, you can tip the scales and win. The strongest negotiators, on the other side, do not just pour on the claims. Instead, they offer less, more effective claims in support of their position. This is because they understand that weaker claims dilute the impact of stronger ones. If you send your adversary a long list of reasons to support your points, he or she will simply ignore the weakest ones. It is much easier for them to dismiss your whole case after they've dismissed some of your claims. For example, when a group of researchers attempted to convince alumni to donate money to their alma mater, they discovered that when they were given two reasons to donate, only half as many people did so as when they were only given one.

3. Mediocre negotiators act like preachers and prosecutors, the best negotiators behave more like – you guessed it – scientists

Instead of merely preaching their own opinions or aggressively prosecuting their adversaries' positions, great negotiators approach their opponents with a scientist-like curiosity. They ask questions like, "Are you saying you can't see any validity in my proposal?" and "Are you saying you can't see any truth in my proposal?" According to a study, the best negotiators end 20% of their remarks with a query. That's twice as many as the average.

Even the most erroneous convictions may be disproved. Daryl Davis, a black guitarist, started speaking with members of the Ku Klux Klan in 1983. What is his mission? To persuade America's most racist people to change their minds. Davis has convinced many Klan members to reconsider their bigotry and leave the KKK after that day; one former klansman even asked Davis to be the godfather of his daughter. His performance reveals a lot about him. The main point here is that even the most irrational values can be modified. So, how can you persuade people to change their prejudiced views and beliefs? One of the most important ways, as Davis has discovered in his work with Ku Klux Klan members, is to demonstrate how subjective their views are.

During his interviews with Klan members, Davis looked into the possibility that their racial views were often the result of a genetic predisposition. What would their views be like if they were born into other families, families that didn't have a history of deliberately defending white supremacy, he asked the Klansmen? Davis encouraged the Klansmen to see that their convictions were based on false foundations by enabling them to focus on the origins of their racism. As a result, the Klansmen began to doubt their bigotry and, eventually, change their minds. Grant asked baseball fans to write an essay about how

random some of their disdain for the opposing team was to close the divide between the two classes. He urged Yankee fans to remember that if they had been born into a Red Sox-supporting household, they would have grown up cheering for the team as well.

Many baseball fans on both sides changed their minds after writing these personal essays; they started to say that their biases were silly and wrong. To summarize, showing someone, why their views are incorrect, isn't enough to make them reconsider their biases. Instead, it would be more successful to explain that their belief in these things is merely coincidental. By posing the right questions, you will convince others. As weird as it might sound, interviewing people may often be the most effective way to get them to reconsider their positions. Marie-Hélène, a young mother from Quebec, Canada, declined to change her mind in a hospital in 2018. Marie-Hélène was an anti-vaxxer who refused to vaccinate her premature daughter, Tobie, against measles.

The maternity ward staff knew there was only one person who could help. Dr Arnaud Gagneur nicknamed the "vaccine whisperer," is a rethinking specialist whose work includes valuable insights. Gagneur used a methodology known as motivational interviewing in his work with Marie-Hélène. The main point here is that by asking the right questions, you can convince others. Motivational interviewing is effective at persuading people to change their minds on a variety of topics, including vaccines, smoking cessation, increased physical activity, and gambling cessation. So, how does it function? It all begins with the idea that helping people find their motivations for rethinking is much more effective than actually telling them why they should rethink.

The interviewer approaches the subject with modesty and genuine curiosity about why they think the way they do and what could inspire them to change their minds. As a result, Gagneur started his conversation with Marie-Hélène by asking her open-ended questions about her feelings about the measles vaccine. Gagneur then went on to ask her how she felt about the possible repercussions of not doing so. When we're trying to convince someone, we usually do a lot of talking, but motivational interviews place a greater emphasis on listening. Instead of interrupting Marie-Hélène to disagree with her, Gagneur admitted that he shared her concerns about the vaccine. Reflective listening is recognizing another person's point of view and emotions.

Gagneur stressed at the end of the interview that Marie-Hélène had full autonomy in deciding whether or not to vaccinate Tobie. People are likely to refuse to reconsider because they don't agree with your claims. Instead, it's usually because they want to keep their freedom of choice. As a result, you must let the individual know that they are capable of improvement but also that they have the freedom to make their own decisions. Marie-Hélène agreed to vaccinate Tobie, as well as her other children, after the interview. There is no need for convincing. If a problem is viewed as black and white, people are less likely to reconsider.

Al Gore's award-winning documentary on climate change, *An Inconvenient Reality*, was released in 2006. It had a seismic effect, convincing governments, companies, and ordinary citizens to begin preserving the environment. But, 15 years later, has the environmental movement been active in changing Americans' minds about climate change? Maybe not as successful as it could have been. Just 59% of Americans felt climate change was a major issue in 2018, and 16% said it wasn't a problem at

all. So, what can climate activists' mixed success tell us about persuading people to reconsider their positions? If a problem is viewed as black and white, people are less likely to reconsider it. Activists like Al Gore often portray the climate change issue as though there are just two sides to choose from.

On one hand, there are scientists and the "reality," while on the other, there are "climate deniers" and their outrageous statements. This black-and-white strategy, however, does not work if you want people to rethink their positions. We slip into the pit of binary bias when we frame problems like this. It turns out that when a problem is viewed as nuanced, with several different viewpoints, people are more likely to change their minds. To put it another way, telling someone they're either wrong or right won't get them to reconsider. Instead, inform them that there are several different points of view to choose from. This strategy allows people to concentrate on real problems rather than the emotional, irrational business of taking sides. If environmentalists had been successful, more Americans would have been interested in science rather than the sides.

Of course, you might be concerned that admitting that there are different viewpoints on a topic would make you seem weak or uncertain of your position. However, evidence suggests that this isn't anything to be worried about. In reality, studies show that when experts convey scepticism, we find them more convincing, not less. The willingness of your team to reconsider is influenced by the culture of your company. Rethinking isn't just about people changing their minds; it's also about organisations as a whole. NASA's Columbia Space Shuttle launched in 2003. As a result, some foam fell loose from the shuttle. What was the reaction of NASA's ground crew? They soon realized that it wasn't a big deal. Before spaceships' foam had fallen off and nothing bad had happened.

If the ground team had thought about the value of the foam again, they would have known that it was a huge problem; the ship broke up when it reentered the atmosphere because of the foam loss. The seven astronauts died as a result. The takeaway here is that your company's atmosphere affects the team's ability to reconsider. NASA's culture was strongly focused on success in 2003. The most important thing was to get things finished – and to a high standard every time. There wasn't much room for rethinking with so much focus on performance. Instead, the company should follow a learning atmosphere if you want your team to be able to rethink and reassess their decisions.

Development is prioritized in learning societies, and rethinking is commonplace. Employees cultivate a sense of cynicism about their practices, and they are painfully aware of how little they know. This attitude allows them to remain humble rather than succumbing to overconfidence, as the NASA scientists did. You may think that businesses with a performance culture produce better results, but research shows that companies with a learning culture are more creative and make fewer mistakes. By providing psychological protection to your employees, you can instil a learning culture in your company. As team members feel mentally comfortable, they are more likely to take chances because they know they will not be disciplined. They have enough faith in their peers and bosses to realize that they have made mistakes. This ensures that errors and issues can be found and corrected.

Employees in performance environments, on the other hand, are regularly disciplined for failing, so they scramble to conceal their mistakes. Unfortunately, these mistakes are never corrected, and tragedies like the Columbia tragedy occur. Don't tell the team that failure isn't a choice if you want them to reconsider

when it matters. It's not only acceptable for teams to make mistakes and rethink their strategies; it's also the only way for your company to learn, develop, and succeed in the long run. Making a mistake, like harbouring doubt, does not make you weak or incompetent. True development and personal growth come from reevaluating your ideas and thoughts regularly, as well as cultivating a humble attitude toward knowledge. But the next time anyone tells you they're 100% positive they're right and you're wrong, you can almost guarantee they're the ones that need to reconsider.

Your values, not your views, define you. What do you use to describe yourself? If your sense of self-identity is based on your convictions, you may want to reconsider. It's much more difficult to change your views when your sense of self is based on them. Since they form the basis of your entire identity, you become defensive and cling to beliefs even though evidence shows they are no longer true. Rather than identifying with your ideologies, describe yourself in terms of your values. After all, though your core values, such as justice, honesty, and competence, will remain constant throughout your life, your convictions on how to advance will.

Kudzai Derera is a Consultant at Industrial Psychology Consultants (Pvt) Ltd, a management and human resources consulting firm.

LinkedIn: <https://zw.linkedin.com/in/kudzaiderera>

Phone: +263 242 481946-48/481950

Email: kudzai@ipccconsultants.com

Main Website: www.ipccconsultants.com

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