

# HOW TO BUILD TRUST AND AFFECT CHANGE IN OUR WORLD

*by Rabia Siddique*



# “WHAT KIND OF PERSON DOES IT TAKE TO CHANGE THE WORLD?”

**The simple answer is: one who is able to change him/herself.**

Many of you will be familiar with my journey and the reason why embracing our individual power to change our own life and the world around us is something I have committed my life to do and to share with others. Those of you who have heard me speak or come to one of my workshops will also know that one of my strongest sources of inspiration (and my personal hero!) is Mahatma Gandhi.

Gandhi was the man who led the Indian people to independence from British rule in 1947, and is one of the most influential spiritual leaders of our world. He set the tone for what kind of attributes we must have in order to change our world. Gandhi's teachings really resonate with me and I have found them to be transformational and empowering in my own life. That is why I would like to share with you Gandhi's 10 Rules for Changing the World, as well as the wisdom of another individual I greatly admire, and then to give you my 4 step process for effecting change in your own life and in the world around you.

## **GANDHI'S 10 RULES**

### **1. Change yourself**

In the words of Gandhi, “You must be the change you want to see in the world.”

All change must start from within. If you strive to change your outer world before focusing internally you may find yourself feeling unfulfilled and discontent when (and if) you reach your goal. Begin with yourself - who you are, how you function, what you think and feel. Changing your thought will affect your emotions. New emotions will affect your actions, and new actions will lead you to your success.

**History making humanitarian, author and international keynote speaker Rabia Siddique is a power house for change.**

**Having survived a hostage crisis in Iraq, Rabia garnered global attention for making the British military accountable for silencing her about her ordeal and role in releasing captured special forces soldiers.**

**Standing up for justice in the face of public ridicule, Rabia's brave action in suing the British Government for sexism and racism became a catalyst for policy change to ensure a fairer workplace for women and cultural minorities in the British military.**

**Drawing on extensive experience as a former criminal, war crimes, terrorism and human rights lawyer, military career, psychology training and business, Rabia is also a sought after media commentator and transformational mentor.**

# Gandhi's 10 rules



1. **CHANGE YOURSELF**
2. **YOU ARE IN CONTROL**
3. **FORGIVE & LET GO**
4. **WITHOUT ACTION, YOU AREN'T GOING ANYWHERE**
5. **TAKE CARE OF THIS MOMENT**
6. **EVERYONE IS HUMAN**
7. **PERSIST**
8. **SEE THE GOOD IN PEOPLE & HELP THEM**
9. **BE CONGRUENT, BE AUTHENTIC, BE YOUR TRUE SELF.**
10. **CONTINUE TO GROW & EVOLVE**

## 2. You are in control

Gandhi also said, “Nobody can hurt me without my permission.”

What you feel and how you react to the world around you is entirely up to you. The thoughts and feelings that affect your everyday are actually affected BY you – they are your creation. You are in control of all that occurs within.

There is a wise saying, ‘you are the expert of your own experience’. This has been taken further by some development programs that recommend one should create a force field of strength and reason around your being and never let it be penetrated.

There is another side of the coin, however, which involves the experiences of those around you. All of the choices and actions that are being made by others are entirely out of your control. Trying to manipulate or take power over someone else’s experience is immoral and should be avoided. The only power we have is over ourselves, and in order to reach true fulfilment we not only have to acknowledge and take responsibility for that fact, but also learn to master it.

## 3. Forgive and let it go

One of Gandhi’s most humorous but equally profound sayings was “An eye for an eye makes the whole world blind.”

Holding on to negativity, in any form, can be extremely dangerous to your being. The sooner you can confront an issue and release it from your experience, the better. Once you’ve let go of whatever it is that holds you back, you free yourself. You have no control over the past or the future. Let go and free your present.

I deliver a whole workshop around this theme of letting go; of identifying what it is that is holding you hostage, confronting it, overcoming it, and putting in place mechanisms in your life to ensure you don’t allow yourself to fall into the same trap of being held back by a past experience or individual in your life again.

## 4. Without action you aren’t going anywhere

Here’s one of Gandhi’s more debated pieces of advice: “An ounce of practice is worth more than a tonne of preaching.”

I believe the message behind this is without taking action very little can be done. However, taking action can be difficult, and there can be much inner resistance.

Focusing on the first three rules above can greatly aid this process. Once you have begun working to better yourself, take control and let go of that which is out of your control, you will feel more compelled to take action.

## 5. Take care of this moment

“I do not want to foresee the future. I am concerned with taking care of the present. God has given me no control over the moment following.”

What Gandhi is talking about here is being fully conscious in the present, which in my opinion can be

extremely liberating.

Resistance to action often comes from those who reflect both on past failures or negative future consequences.

When you avoid those limiting thoughts and eliminate the habit of creating them you will find that you have not only freed yourself from that which holds you back, but that you also have more time when you stop finding reasons not to do things.

This process is almost entirely mental, so focusing on and developing this habit lives in what is often called your intellectual life.

## **6. Everyone is human**

“I claim to be a simple individual liable to err like any other fellow mortal. I own, however, that I have humility enough to confess my errors and to retrace my steps.”

Gandhi believed that we humans are all on an incredible journey together. We are all connected, and through our experience we try to learn about each other and about ourselves. Making mistakes is only natural.

With freedom of choice comes responsibility, and responsibility can often lead to feelings of pressure.

Sometimes we find ourselves worrying about our actions, both the ones we have already committed, and the ones yet to come. This judgment skill is necessary, and important, to our reasoning. Without it we wouldn't know the difference between what is right and wrong or try to avoid making mistakes. We must, however, exercise caution when using it, and be careful not to cause ourselves distress over that which we cannot change, or let it hold us back from what we can change.

We are all human. Humans naturally err and holding yourself or others to unreasonable standards can create conflict within your world and yourself. Accept that which you are. Once you make this spiritual connection you will find that regretting mistakes or judging others for their errs can be incredibly limiting. Use your lessons as such, and allow yourself to learn and grow from all that you encounter. Each event in our lives helps to shape who we become, and how we decide to react to these events are the key to our happiness and success.

## **7. Persist**

“First they ignore you, then they laugh at you, then they fight you, then you win.”

When you find something you're passionate about it makes it much easier to be persistent and not give up. This is one reason Gandhi was so successful with his method of non-violence. He and his followers believed so strongly in their cause that they simply had nothing else to live for. They didn't give up.

When you know something is right for yourself, don't give up. Don't let temptation or lack of motivation hold you back from achieving what you want. You can have anything if you focus and persist.

## **8. See the good in people and help them**

“I look only to the good qualities of men. Not being faultless myself, I won't presume to probe into the

faults of others.”

As previously stated, we are all humans on a similar journey together. When we lose connection with others – when we begin to judge and criticise them for their faults or mistakes – we lose connection with ourselves.

One of the most difficult and most liberating tasks is acceptance, both of others and of the self, and they often go hand in hand. When you are secure, rational and compassionate you have no reason to pass judgment. You take people for who they are because you are comfortable with who you are.

When you are accepting and caring of yourself and others, you are more inclined to help when and where it is needed. Always remember, you get what you give. If you give criticism and negativity you can be sure you’re going to get it back. If you give love, positivity, security and encouragement you will be seen in that light.

## **9. Be congruent, be authentic, be your true self**

“Happiness is when what you think, what you say, and what you do are in harmony...Always aim at complete harmony of thought and word and deed. Always aim at purifying your thoughts and everything will be well.”

This is one of Gandhi’s mantras that resonates with me the most. When your thoughts and actions are in alignment you have achieved great creativity, which is simply a process of bringing thoughts into creation.

Creativity is one of highest forms of expression of who you are. Being congruent, authentic and discovering your true self is the ultimate balance.

One of the best tips for improving your social skills and connecting with those around you is to behave in a congruent manner and communicate in an authentic way. People seem to really like authentic communication. There is much inner enjoyment to be found when your thoughts, words and actions are aligned. You feel powerful and at one with yourself.

When you are aligned, it shows in your tone of voice and body language, which some say is 90 percent of communication. In other words, how you say things and how you physically present yourself means more in a conversation than what you are actually saying.

With these channels in alignment people tend to really listen to what you’re saying. You are communicating without incongruence, mixed messages or perhaps a sort of phoniness.

## **10. Continue to grow and evolve**

“Constant development is the law of life, and a man who always tries to maintain his dogmas in order to appear consistent drives himself into a false position.”

You can pretty much always improve your skills and habits or re-evaluate your evaluations. Living with an open mind allows you to see into the minds of others and gain insight. If you hold onto your beliefs too tightly it can end up limiting you.

You can maintain a belief about something and exercise curiosity and wonder about another without losing or weakening your values. As a matter of fact, in doing so you can gain a deeper understanding of yourself and the world.

## CHOOSE THE KINDNESS RIPPLE EFFECT

Mother Theresa once said, “I alone cannot change the world, but I can cast a stone across the water and create many ripples.” It is this ripple effect that I wish to focus on at this stage of my paper.

When a complete stranger performs an act of kindness toward another, it says to that person “I think you are important”. The child in most of us aches to hear those words, and the positive reverberations of such an unspoken statement are far reaching and unknowable.

Surprise is always a very significant part of the response. Kindness is unexpected, out of the ordinary, unusual. Sadly.

## “KINDNESS BEGETS KINDNESS.”

Remember the last time someone did something thoughtful for you? How did it make you feel? How long did you feel that way, afterwards? Did it make your day a little lighter, your attitude a little more compassionate?

I get a kick out of anyone who lets me through first in the Supermarket checkout queue. Warmth flows through me and I lose my frown, turn, smile and actually look at the perpetrator of such a small but thoughtful gesture. I forget the thirty things I still have to do, or the person who annoyed me earlier that day, or the fact that bedtime is still too many hours away. Often conversation ensues between us and we both walk away with smiles lingering on our lips. We then get home and we greet our loved ones with a little more warmth, and the ripple effect continues.

Now remember the last time someone was aggressive, thoughtless or angry toward you? It’s catching, isn’t it? Only the most saintly or philosophical among us can walk unshaken from any kind of negative confrontation.

Even if only in a small way, a thoughtless word, a pushy driver cutting us off in traffic...the moments afterwards are spent trying to find some kind of equilibrium. It adds to our own anger.

Kindness is defined as “The quality of being friendly, generous and considerate”.

As we all plunge headlong into our days with a frown and a ‘get-out-of-my-way’ attitude, a thoughtful act can be a moment of truly seeing between two people. A moment when time slows down and you actually stop and look into one another’s eyes, recognising the struggling human in each other.

It is at that moment that we hold all the potential to turn around a minute, an hour, a day, and lighten someone’s load. It is a powerful moment.

The busier we get, the more vital it is that we take this time to see each other through compassionate eyes. We need to connect more with others on a spiritual level. Who has time, I hear you ask? I know, and that is exactly why it is so important. It is a small exchange of energy with a large ripple effect.

We are all busy, all struggling, all fighting different degrees of hardship. Taking that moment to really see someone means you can see them as another soul, just like you, doing their best to get through another day.

## STEVENSON'S FOUR ELEMENTS

I'd like to now share some wisdom from another person that greatly inspires me - Bryan Stevenson. Stevenson is an African American human rights lawyer, who is the founder of the Equal Justice Initiative. He has dedicated his career to representing those marginalised by race, poverty, disability and age, and I had the great fortune to not only read his best-selling book "Just Mercy", but to hear him in person earlier this year.

When attending his keynote presentation I was struck by the chilling facts Stevenson shared with the audience such as, "The United States has the highest documented incarceration in the world," and that "One in three black male babies are expected to grow up and go to prison in their lifetime." The emotional response from all in the theatre where we had gathered continued to swell as Stevenson spoke about his grandfather's murder and how he still fights for justice, and continues to believe that "Each of us is more than the worst thing we've ever done."

Stevenson said there are four elements for creating greater justice, opportunity, and fairness within the justice system. First, he stressed the importance of getting proximate and close to the things we are passionate about changing. "Get close to the things that matter, get close to the places where there is inequality and suffering, get close to the spaces where people feel oppressed, burdened, and abused," said Stevenson. He continued, "See what it does to your capacity to make a difference, see what it does to you."

Stevenson's second element surrounds changing the narrative behind oppression, poverty, and racism. For him this means abolishing the fear and anger that propels inequities and violence to thrive.

His third point was about hope.

**"YOUR HOPE IS ESSENTIAL. TO CHANGE THE WORLD, YOU'VE GOT TO STAND UP WHEN EVERYONE ELSE IS SITTING."**

He also discussed how choosing to do uncomfortable things activates a power to make sustainable change against injustice.

Stevenson also shared that this year he had won a case for a man who had been on death row and in solitary confinement for 30 years. After working with the man for 15 years, and taking his case to the Supreme Court, he will soon be released. Stevenson described it as, "The day we finally won this long term battle to resurrect the will of justice for someone."

Stevenson is continuing to inspire awareness and activism against social injustice in a variety of ways. From his TED Talk that has more than two million views and counting, his book "Just Mercy: A Story of Justice and Redemption", and his work as founder and executive director of the Equal Justice Initiative, Stevenson is cultivating a new narrative against racial, socio-economic equality and mass incarceration.

Stevenson's message to all is clear: "Keep beating the drum for justice."



## MY 4 STEPS FOR AFFECTING CHANGE IN YOUR WORLD

I have benefitted greatly from the inspiration and wisdom provided by people like Mahatma Gandhi and Bryan Stevenson, and I have taken their words and teachings and applied them to my own life.

I'm certainly no Gandhi or Stevenson, but I'd like to share with you my interpretation on what I believe the four key choices are that we need to make; the actions we need to take, in order to be the change we wish to see in our homes, workplaces, communities and beyond:

### 1. Confront your reality

Don't be an ostrich. Get real and be honest with the challenges you are facing and issues that need addressing – in your life and in the world around you.

### 2. Change your perspective

Look at the narrative, how you perceive yourself, others and society and ask yourself, does it need changing. It's the only way to challenge the status quo and effect real and sustainable change.

### 3. Keep hope alive

Protect and preserve hope, optimism and the positive intention that things can change - it's what drives every thought leader and innovator in this world. Optimism, positivity and the belief that we have the ability to effect change are the tools to bring about real and lasting change.

### 4. Do something uncomfortable

In the spirit of the words of Stevenson - stand and step up when others remain seated. Be courageously unique and challenge the unfair, unjust, unworkable and unacceptable. Lead from the front, set an example, be true to your essence and values but choose your battles wisely!

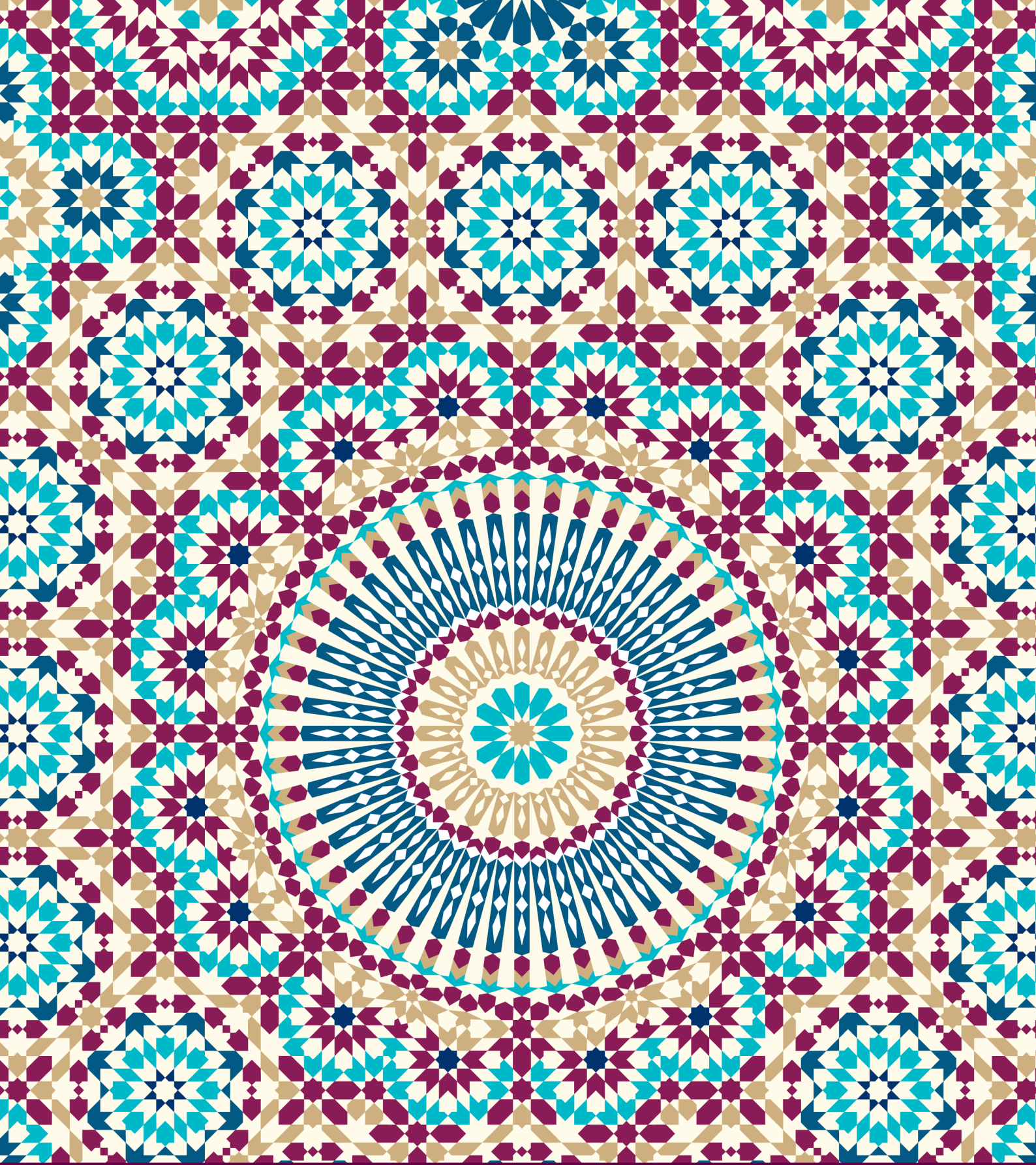
We, each one of us, have the ability to impact positive change. Our family, our team, our community, will become the desired family, team and community, when each member embodies and personifies the desired change. So let's – you and I – go first.

What is the change that you want to see in your world? More love? Gratitude? Trust? Forgiveness? Joy? Let it begin with you.

Be the change we wish to see - start your ripple effect!

Best wishes,

*Rabia*



*Rabia*  
SIDDIQUE

info@rabiasiddique.com  
www.rabiasiddique.com

