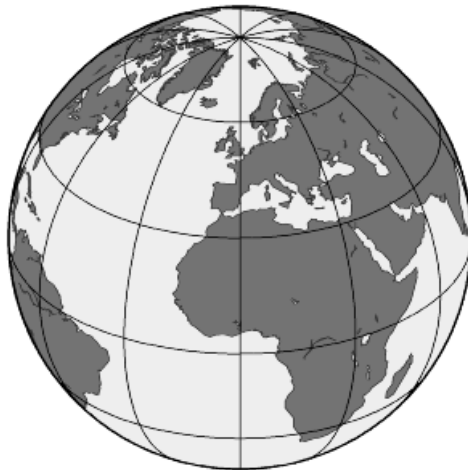


**Ciaran McHale**

---

A self-teachable training course to help  
you bring about significant change

# ***Skills You Need to Change the World***



**Notes Manual**

(formatted for A4 paper)

---

CiaranMcHale.com — *Complexity explained simply*



# Copyright

Copyright © 2009 Ciaran McHale.

Permission is hereby granted, free of charge, to any person obtaining a copy of this training course and associated documentation files (the “Training Course”), to deal in the Training Course without restriction, including without limitation the rights to use, copy, modify, merge, publish, distribute, sublicense, and/or sell copies of the Training Course, and to permit persons to whom the Training Course is furnished to do so, subject to the following conditions:

- The above copyright notice and this permission notice shall be included in all copies or substantial portions of the Training Course.
- THE TRAINING COURSE IS PROVIDED “AS IS”, WITHOUT WARRANTY OF ANY KIND, EXPRESS OR IMPLIED, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO THE WARRANTIES OF MERCHANTABILITY, FITNESS FOR A PARTICULAR PURPOSE AND NONINFRINGEMENT. IN NO EVENT SHALL THE AUTHORS OR COPYRIGHT HOLDERS BE LIABLE FOR ANY CLAIM, DAMAGES OR OTHER LIABILITY, WHETHER IN AN ACTION OF CONTRACT, TORT OR OTHERWISE, ARISING FROM, OUT OF OR IN CONNECTION WITH THE TRAINING COURSE OR THE USE OR OTHER DEALINGS IN THE TRAINING COURSE.

The globe logo is from [www.mapAbility.com](http://www.mapAbility.com). Used with permission.

## About the Author

Ciaran McHale holds a Ph.D. in Computer Science from Trinity College, Dublin, Ireland. Since 1995, he has been working in the computer software industry as a consultant, trainer and author of training courses. His primary talent is the ability to digest complex ideas and re-explain them in simpler ways. You can find some examples of his work at his website: [www.CiaranMcHale.com](http://www.CiaranMcHale.com). Ciaran lives in Reading, England with his wife, Bianca.

## Disclaimer

Some parts of this training course uses first names such as Fred or Mary in examples. All such persons are fictitious. Any resemblance to real persons, living or dead is purely coincidental.

**Last updated: August 18, 2009**

## **History**

21 August 2009 — Initial public release.

## **Acknowledgements**

The following people have helped in the preparation of this course in various ways, such as proofreading and acting as a sounding board for my half-baked ideas.

Bianca McHale, Adrian Trenaman, Jennifer Davidson.

## **Contributors**

The following people have made significant contributions to this training course.

Ciaran McHale — Author of the initial version of the training course.

# Contents

<b>I</b>	<b>Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>Introduction</b>	<b>3</b>
1.1	Purpose of This Training Course . . . . .	3
1.1.1	How Can This Course Claim to be So Good? . . . . .	3
1.1.2	Intended Audience . . . . .	4
1.2	Structure of This Training Course . . . . .	4
1.3	Downloading the Training Course . . . . .	5
1.3.1	Slides . . . . .	5
1.3.2	Slides manual . . . . .	5
1.3.3	Notes manual . . . . .	6
1.3.4	L <sup>A</sup> T <sub>E</sub> X Source of the Notes Manual . . . . .	6
1.4	This Training Course is Free . . . . .	6
1.4.1	Reasons for Making This Course Free . . . . .	6
1.4.2	An Imminent Change in The Copyright License . . . . .	8
<b>2</b>	<b>Notes for Instructors</b>	<b>11</b>
2.1	Introduction . . . . .	11
2.2	Preparing to Teach this Course . . . . .	11
2.3	Time Required to Teach this Course . . . . .	11
<b>3</b>	<b>Notes for Contributors</b>	<b>13</b>
3.1	Introduction . . . . .	13
3.2	Modifying Slides and Notes . . . . .	13
3.3	Producing PDF Manuals . . . . .	13
3.4	Interacting with Other Contributors . . . . .	14
3.5	Providing Feedback . . . . .	14
<b>II</b>	<b>Annotated Bibliography</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>Useful Websites</b>	<b>17</b>
4.1	Introduction . . . . .	17
4.2	Wikipedia . . . . .	17
4.3	Amazon . . . . .	17
4.4	YouTube . . . . .	18

<b>5</b>	<b>Songs</b>	<b>19</b>
5.1	Introduction . . . . .	19
5.1.1	Copyright Issues . . . . .	19
5.1.2	Choice of Song Lyrics . . . . .	19
5.1.3	Useful Websites . . . . .	20
5.2	Authority Song . . . . .	20
5.3	Crazy Dreams . . . . .	21
5.4	Glad to Be Gay . . . . .	21
5.5	I Am What I Am (Mark Dignam) . . . . .	22
5.6	I Am What I Am (Gloria Gaynor) . . . . .	23
5.7	In or Out . . . . .	23
5.8	I Saved the World Today . . . . .	23
5.9	It's Not Safe . . . . .	24
5.10	I Will Survive . . . . .	24
5.11	Little Plastic Castle . . . . .	25
5.12	My IQ . . . . .	25
5.13	Not a Pretty Girl . . . . .	25
5.14	One Day at a Time, Sweet Jesus . . . . .	26
5.15	Pick Yer Nose . . . . .	26
5.16	Power in the Darkness . . . . .	26
5.17	Something Inside So Strong . . . . .	27
5.18	The Only One . . . . .	27
5.19	The Spirit of Man . . . . .	28
5.20	Willing to Fight . . . . .	28
5.21	Working Class Hero . . . . .	29
5.22	Summary . . . . .	29
<b>6</b>	<b>Books and Movies</b>	<b>31</b>
6.1	Introduction . . . . .	31
6.2	Activism and Social Change . . . . .	32
6.3	Business . . . . .	35
6.4	Education . . . . .	37
6.5	Healthcare . . . . .	39
6.6	Innovation . . . . .	44
6.7	Oppression . . . . .	45
6.8	Self-Awareness and Self-Improvement . . . . .	51
6.9	Sports . . . . .	54
6.10	Miscellaneous . . . . .	55

**Part I**  
**Introduction**





# Chapter 1

## Introduction

### 1.1 Purpose of This Training Course

Nelson Mandela played a significant role in ending the system of Apartheid in South Africa, so you could say he is somebody who has “changed the world”. In Chapter 10 of his autobiography, *Long Walk to Freedom*, he explains how he learnt the skills necessary for changing the world.

No one had ever suggested to me how to go about removing the evils of racial prejudice, and I had to learn by trial and error.

You might ask: “He had to learn by himself through trial and error? Wasn’t there anybody who could teach him the relevant skills?” Actually, the quote concerns Nelson Mandela’s time at university. Even university lecturers were unable to provide him with the information he desperately wanted about how to change the world.

Most people who want to change the world face the same problem: it is difficult to find books or formal courses of study that provide skills or insight relevant to changing the world. So people try to pick up the skills by trial and error. A few succeed, but many “burn out” and give up before they can turn their goals into reality.

This training course addresses that skills-learning problem in two ways. First, some useful skills are really just insights that can be communicated quickly; this course teaches those. Second, some other useful skills are more demanding; they can take weeks, months or years to acquire. Thankfully, there are books and formal courses of education for some of those types of skills. This training course does not teach those demanding skills, but it *identifies* what those skills are, and explains why they are important. In this way, interested students can be motivated to look elsewhere to acquire those skills.

#### 1.1.1 How Can This Course Claim to be So Good?

Some readers may be wondering: “If it is so difficult to find books or formal courses of study about how to change the world then how can the author of *this* course claim to provide that knowledge?”

To answer that question, I must point out that it *is* possible to find skills for changing the world in books. The problem is that the useful information is fragmented across a great many books.

In doing research for this training course, I have read more than one hundred books in search of insightful nuggets of information. I found useful skills in books on a wide range of subjects, including psychology, leadership, activism, science, various forms of oppression (such as racism, sexism and homophobia), education, design, innovation, sales, marketing, linguistics, and sports. Some of those books have been “how to” books; others have been biographies.

Most of this training course is simply a convenient repackaging of the insightful nuggets of information that I have gathered from those many books. The slides in this training course summarise the useful nuggets of information, and the annotated bibliography lets interested readers know where they can find more detailed information.

### 1.1.2 Intended Audience

This course is intended primarily for people who want to change the world. Some of these people call themselves activists. Others self-identify as entrepreneurs, researchers, politicians, community leaders, documentary makers, concerned citizens, or perhaps some other label. Some may wish to bring about change on a global scale. Others wish to bring about change more locally, or perhaps within a particular industry or field of research. If you want to bring about change that can impact the lives of others then this training course is likely to be of interest to you.

Even if you have no intention of changing the world, you may still find this course interesting and useful. I say *interesting* because much of the content of this course provides a different way of viewing the world. I say *useful* because many of the skills required to change the world overlap with skills required to have a successful career or successful relationships with others.

## 1.2 Structure of This Training Course

The bulk of this training course is in the form of slides that can be projected onto a screen for classroom-style instruction. A knowledgeable instructor should be able to add value to the slides by providing ad-lib comments or facilitating group discussion. However, the use of an instructor is optional because the slides contain enough information that people can “self-teach” from them.<sup>1</sup>

The slides do *not* contain complete information. Making slides so detailed would result in them reading like a book. Instead, the slides contain an *outline* of information; enough to provide an overview of concepts. For more detail on a topic, self-teaching readers (or students in a classroom) can read a book or, in some cases, watch a movie, that provides more information.

---

<sup>1</sup>If you find some slides that are confusing or contain insufficient information to be self-teachable then please give such feedback to the author so such problems can be fixed.

This training course contains two manuals that should be printed out and given to each student. The *Slides Manual* contains a printout of all the slides (several slides printed per page). The *Notes Manual* (which you are currently reading) contains additional information to complement the slides. A significant part of this additional information is an annotated bibliography so readers can find relevant books and movies for further study.

## 1.3 Downloading the Training Course

You can download this training course from [www.CiaranMcHale.com](http://www.CiaranMcHale.com). The course is available in several different formats. The website enables you to download the format(s) most suitable for you. The following subsections explain the different formats that are available.

### 1.3.1 Slides

The bulk of the training course consists of slides that can viewed on a computer monitor for self-study, or be projected onto a screen for classroom-based teaching. The slides have been written using Microsoft PowerPoint 2000, which is usually obtained as part of Microsoft Office 2000. If you have PowerPoint 2000 (or a newer version) then you should download the slides in this format. Doing this will enable you to display the slides, and also modify them.

If you do not have PowerPoint then you should download the slides in PDF format. This will enable you to view, but not modify the slides.

Some readers who do not have PowerPoint may have another program that claims to be compatible with it, for example the *Impress* application that is part of the *Open Office* suite of applications ([www.openoffice.org](http://www.openoffice.org)). Unfortunately, the author's experience is that these applications tend to be about 99% compatible; and the 1% of incompatibility occasionally results in the content of slides being displayed badly. Use such applications to view the slides if you want, but consider yourself forewarned. As I discuss in Section 1.4.2, it is likely that slides in the next release of this training course will use OpenOffice Impress instead of Microsoft PowerPoint.

### 1.3.2 Slides manual

The *Slides Manual* is a PDF file that has several slides on each page, which reduces printing costs. You can obtain this manual formatted for US Letter paper (which is commonly used in the USA) with either 2, 4 or 6 slides printed per page. Alternatively, you can obtain the slides manual formatted for A4 paper (which is commonly used in other parts of the world), with 2, 4 or 8 slides printed per page.

If you have good eyesight then I suggest you download and print the 6 or 8 slides per page version of the slides manual. If your eyesight is not so good then the 4 or 2 slides per page version of the manual might be more useful to you.

### 1.3.3 Notes manual

The *Notes Manual* contain text-based notes to complement the slides. Currently, the bulk of the notes manual is an annotated bibliography of books, movies and song lyrics that are relevant to the course. The author hopes that, over time, the notes manual will grow to include essays that expand on ideas discussed in the slides.

The notes manual is available formatted for A4 paper and US Letter paper.

### 1.3.4 L<sup>A</sup>T<sub>E</sub>X Source of the Notes Manual

The notes manual is written using the L<sup>A</sup>T<sub>E</sub>X typesetting system. If you want to make changes to the notes manual and you know how to use L<sup>A</sup>T<sub>E</sub>X then you can download a zip file that contains the L<sup>A</sup>T<sub>E</sub>X source.

## 1.4 This Training Course is Free

I am releasing this training course under a *free* copyright license (what some people call an *open-source* copyright license). The term *free* does not refer to price, but rather to freedom or liberty. I will not bore you with a philosophical discussion about the benefits of free copyright licenses or the subtle difference between the terms *free* and *open-source*. Instead, I will just tell you what the free copyright license used with this training course means for you in practical terms.

The free copyright license on this training course means that if you get a copy of this training course then you are *free*—that is, you have the *freedom*—to do almost anything you want with it. For example, you are free to make copies of the course and give those copies to other people (either free-of-charge or for profit). You are also free to modify the course: you might want to fix some mistakes you find, add new material, or reuse some material from this course in another project you are working on.

The free copyright license I am using for this course places two restrictions on what you can do. First, you must not remove the copyright notice. Second, you agree to not sue me if there are any mistakes in the course.

A few paragraphs ago I mentioned that the word *free* in the phrase “free copyright license” refers to freedom rather than price. However, the electronic version of this course is also free in terms of price: you can download it free-of-charge from my website: [CiaranMcHale.com](http://CiaranMcHale.com).

### 1.4.1 Reasons for Making This Course Free

Some readers may be wondering why I am providing this training course free-of-charge and with a free/open-source license. Why not try to make lots of money by selling the training course? I explain why in the following subsections.

### 1.4.1.1 Why This Course is Free-of-charge

I read somewhere that about 90% of books sell poorly enough to make a loss for the publisher, another 9% of books break even, and the remaining 1% of books are bestsellers. According to those figures, if I had packaged the information of this training course into book format and published it in the traditional manner then there would a 99% likelihood that it would *not* be a bestseller. In turn, that means the book would *not* be read by, say, millions of people. Rather, it would probably be read by just a few thousand people—at most. By releasing this training material on the Internet free-of-charge and under a free copyright license, I think I have a good chance of reaching *significantly more* than the 2000 people I might reach if this course were packaged and sold as a book. Will I reach 10,000 people? Or 100,000 people? Or a million people? I cannot predict that. But if I can reach significantly more than a few thousand then I will feel that my gamble on distribution via the Internet has been a success.

You may be wondering: “But what about money?” In particular, am I foregoing the opportunity to make lots of money in royalties? The answer is no. From what I have read, it seems an author’s royalties are about 5% of the recommended retail price of a book. So, if a book sells for, say, £10 then the author will receive £0.50 for each copy sold. If 2000 copies of the book are sold then the author will receive £1000. When you consider that an author has probably spent thousands of hours writing a book, the amount of money received in royalties works out to be far less than minimum wage. I am happy to forego such a meagre amount of royalties if it means a lot more than 2000 people get to read this training course.

Ironically, giving this training course away free-of-charge might *create* some opportunities for me to make money. For example, I am guessing that most people will be happy to read the training course by themselves, but a small percentage of people will prefer to have it taught to them for a fee. If my guess is correct then I can make money by charging people who want to attend a training course. By running a training course a few times I will probably earn more money than from the royalties I would have received for a poorly-selling book.

### 1.4.1.2 Why This Course Uses a Free/Open-source Copyright License

Some people release documents with a copyright notice that says, in effect: “You may make copies of this document as long you do not try to profit from those copies; in addition, you may not modify this document.” In contrast, the copyright license used in this training course gives people the freedom to modify the training course and make money from it. There are two reasons why these freedoms are a good thing.

First, I do not know *all* the skills required to change the world. There are many gaps in my knowledge, and hence gaps in this training course. By letting other people modify the training course, I am providing a way for other people to help me *improve* this training course over time. That will be good for the training course, and good for people who read future versions of it.

Second, the free/open-source copyright license permits other people to make money from this training course. For example, you can download the training

course free-of-charge from the Internet, but if that sounds like too much trouble then perhaps somebody is willing to sell you a CD containing the training course. Likewise, if you have access to a printer then you could print the training course manuals yourself; but if somebody is willing to sell you a printed and bound copy of the course manuals for a reasonable price then you might be willing to pay for that convenience. Somebody else who has access to a room with a projector might run classes based on this training course for fee-paying students. What it boils down to is this: I put in four years of part-time labour to research and write this training course, and other people have the opportunity to make some money from my hard work. It may seem like I am getting a bad deal, but that is not necessarily the case. When somebody else makes money from this training course, they are also *promoting* this training course. In effect, they are my marketing department, helping me to promote this training course to (hopefully) *millions* of people. I certainly do not begrudge them whatever money they can make while doing promotion work on my behalf.

When other people find ways to promote this training course, I benefit in two ways.

First, my fame—as primary author of the course—spreads and that may help me attract more fee-paying students to my classes. Put simply, other people making money from this course helps me to make money too. That really is not so different from the concept that every time a copy of a book is sold, the author makes a little money (5% royalties) but the publisher and a bookshop also make money (probably more than the author).

Second, if widespread promotion of this training course helps a great many people to learn the skills required to change the world then I think the world will become a far better place, and *that* will greatly benefit me.

## 1.4.2 An Imminent Change in The Copyright License

It is likely that I will change the copyright license of this training course during the next few months. In this section I explain why I want to do this and what its ramifications will be so that the change will not come as an unpleasant surprise to anyone.

Let's assume you are writing a training course called *People Who Changed the World*. One day, while surfing the Internet, you come across this *Skills You Need to Change the World* training course. You notice there is an overlap in the subject matter of the two courses and you think to yourself: "I would love to reuse some of the slides from the *Skills* course in my *People* course." With the current version of this course, you are in luck; its copyright license explicitly states that you *can* reuse parts of this *Skills* course in your *People* course. You can do that even if your *People* course has a completely different copyright license, such as a non-free/non-open-source license that does not allow people to modify or make copies of your course.

I want to switch to using another copyright license that places a restriction on how you can reuse parts of the course. In particular, the new license will permit you to reuse parts of this course in your own course *only if* your training course

is also free/open-source. The intention is to ensure that this training course—and other people’s modifications of it—will *remain* free/open-source.

The replacement free/open-source license I plan to use is the GNU Free Documentation License (GNU FDL): [www.gnu.org/copyleft/fdl.html](http://www.gnu.org/copyleft/fdl.html).

You may be wondering why I did not use the GNU FDL license in this initial version of the training course. The reason is that the GNU FDL cannot be used for a document that is written in a proprietary file format such as Microsoft PowerPoint. I started writing the training course slides with Microsoft PowerPoint. When I belatedly realised that PowerPoint was incompatible with the GNU FDL, there was not enough time before the release date of this training course for me to switch to using OpenOffice Impress (an application similar to PowerPoint but with a non-proprietary file format). Over the coming months, I hope to learn OpenOffice Impress sufficiently well to enable me to switch to using it. At that point, I will switch to using the GNU FDL.





# Chapter 2

## Notes for Instructors

### 2.1 Introduction

This chapter provides information for people who wish to teach the *Skills You Need to Change the World* training course.

### 2.2 Preparing to Teach this Course

You do not need a certificate or license to be qualified to teach this course. If you think you have sufficient knowledge and confidence to teach it, and you can find some students who want to learn from you, then go ahead and teach it. Of course, when you teach this course, you will bore students if you just read the text on the slides verbatim. To make the course interesting, you need to be able to make ad-lib comments that complement and “flesh out” the information on the slides.

One way to add value to the slides is to read some of the books or watch some of the DVDs listed in Chapter 6. If you lack the time or money to acquire and read books and watch movies then that need not stop you from learning sufficient information to “flesh out” the details on the slides. In particular, you might find useful articles and videos on Internet websites such as Wikipedia and YouTube (those websites are discussed in Chapter 4).

Another way to add value to the slides is to talk about relevant experiences in your own life.

Yet another way to add value to the slides is to stop at the end of a chapter of slides and ask the students if they have had any experiences relevant to the topic just covered. This might lead to classroom discussions that help the students relate the principles taught in the course to the reality of their own lives.

### 2.3 Time Required to Teach this Course

Asking “How much time is required to teach this course” is a bit like asking “How long is a piece of string?” The answer depends on numerous factors.

- Do you intend to teach the entire course? Or just a part of it?

- Will you make many ad-lib comments to “flesh out” the information in the slides? Will you encourage the students to engage in discussions about the subject being taught?
- Will the course involve *just* the slides? Or will you and the students watch some DVDs during classroom time?
- Will you teach the course in an intensive manner, for example, six hours per day for several days? Or will you teach it one evening per week for many weeks?

The current version of the course has approximately 680 slides. One way to estimate the time required to teach the course is to multiply the number of slides by the average amount of time you take to teach each slide. For example, if you take one minute for each slide then 680 slides would take about 11 hours and 20 minutes.

If you teach all or part of this course then please send me an email to let me know how long you spent teaching each chapter of slides (you can find my contact details in Section 3.5 on page 14). If I receive such feedback from several people then I will be able to update this section with the information.

# Chapter 3

## Notes for Contributors

### 3.1 Introduction

This chapter provides information for people who wish to contribute to the *Skills You Need to Change the World* training course.

### 3.2 Modifying Slides and Notes

If you download the slides for this training course then you will notice a file called `advice-for-contributors.ppt`. That presentation provides some tips on how to modify an existing chapter of slides or write a new chapter.

The *Notes Manual* is written using L<sup>A</sup>T<sub>E</sub>X (www.latex-project.org), which is free typesetting software that is available for many operating systems. If you want to learn L<sup>A</sup>T<sub>E</sub>X so you can update the *Notes Manual* then you can look on Amazon for L<sup>A</sup>T<sub>E</sub>X-related books. Alternatively, you can use an Internet search engine to find a free book online. One such book is *The Not So Short Introduction to L<sup>A</sup>T<sub>E</sub>X 2<sub>ε</sub>*.

This training course uses English spelling as found in the United Kingdom. Please set your spelling checker dictionary accordingly when modifying the training course.

### 3.3 Producing PDF Manuals

It is easy to produce a PDF version of the *Notes Manual*: You simply run the `pdflatex` command on the following two files to produce manuals formatted for A4 and US Letter paper.

```
skills-you-need-to-change-the-world-notes-manual-a4.tex  
skills-you-need-to-change-the-world-notes-manual-letter.tex
```

Producing a PDF version of the *Slides Manual* is not so straightforward. Conceptually, this involves the following steps.

1. Generate a PDF file that contains the “front matter” (such as the title page and copyright notice).

2. Convert each chapter of slides from PowerPoint format into PDF format.
3. Create a table of contents as a PDF file.
4. Combine all the PDF files produced by steps 1, 2 and 3 into a single PDF file. In doing this, the PDF files produced by step 2 should be re-arranged so that several slides are printed on each page. In addition, this final step should ensure that the “header” of each page contains the chapter number, the chapter name and the page number.

Step 1 is easy because the front matter is held in  $\text{\LaTeX}$  files. I wrote some software utilities to carry out the remaining steps. Unfortunately, I have not yet had a chance to write a user guide for these software utilities. After I have written the user guide I will release the software utilities under a free/open-source license and free-of-charge. That will make it easy for other people to produce their own high quality PDF manuals for training courses. However, until then, I will be the only person who can easily produce the *Slides Manual* for the *Skills You Need to Change the World* training course. I apologise for any inconvenience that this might cause.

### 3.4 Interacting with Other Contributors

You can contribute to this training course by improving existing content, writing new content and proofreading content. If you would like to contribute then please join the *skills-dev* mailing list. You can find details of this mailing list at [www.CiaranMcHale.com/mailman/listinfo/skills-dev\\_ciaranmchale.com](http://www.CiaranMcHale.com/mailman/listinfo/skills-dev_ciaranmchale.com).

### 3.5 Providing Feedback

If you want to provide feedback on this training course then you can contact me in the following ways.

- Email: [ciaran\\_mchale@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:ciaran_mchale@yahoo.co.uk)
- Mobile/cell phone: +44-(0)7866-416-134
- Fax: +44-(0)118-954-6767

**Part II**

**Annotated Bibliography**



# Chapter 4

## Useful Websites

### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses some websites that can be very useful when you want to learn more about a topic that is discussed in the training course.

### 4.2 Wikipedia

Wikipedia ([www.wikipedia.org](http://www.wikipedia.org)) is a free online encyclopedia. The main website has links to language-specific versions of the website. At the time of writing (August 2009), the English-language version of Wikipedia has just over three million articles, and almost all of the 26 other language versions each have at least 100,000 articles.

The following example shows how Wikipedia may be of use to you. Let's assume that, having studied the training course slides, you decide you want to learn more about Gandhi. If you go to Wikipedia and search for Gandhi then you will find a long article about him. The majority of the information in the article is biographical, but other information is provided too, including references to books on Gandhi, some criticisms of Gandhi's actions and ideals, and a list of some famous people he inspired. If the Wikipedia entry satisfies your curiosity about Gandhi then that means you do not need to, say, buy a book about him. On the other hand, if the Wikipedia entry has aroused your curiosity about Gandhi then you will feel confident that reading a book about him is not likely to be a waste of time. Furthermore, the Wikipedia entry contains links to other websites that might provide you with additional information.

### 4.3 Amazon

Amazon is an Internet-based shop. Originally, it sold only books, but over the years it has expanded to sell other kinds of products including DVDs and music CDs. Amazon has several country-specific websites. One way to check if there is one for your country is to visit, say, the American website ([www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com))

and scroll down to the end of the web page where you will find links to Amazon's other country-specific websites.

There are several ways in which Amazon may be of use to you. First, if you would like to learn more about a famous person but you do not know if there are any biographies of that person then you could visit Amazon and do a search for the person's name. Second, Amazon has many customer-written reviews of products. You may find this useful to help you choose, say, one of several different biographies of a person.

## **4.4 YouTube**

YouTube ([www.YouTube.com](http://www.YouTube.com)) is a website on which you can watch short videos (most are less than ten minutes long) that other users have uploaded. Many people upload videos they have recorded themselves, but some other people upload music videos and clips from television shows. Uploading a video to which another person or organization owns the copyright is, of course, problematic from a legal viewpoint. Because of this, some videos that were uploaded to YouTube were later removed when the copyright owners complained to YouTube.

If you want to learn about a particular person—for example, Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Jr. or Malcolm X—then it can be worthwhile searching YouTube for videos related to them. The videos you find may complement the information you can obtain from a book or Wikipedia.



# Chapter 5

## Songs

### 5.1 Introduction

Love is probably the most common topic addressed in the lyrics of songs. However, some songs are written about other topics; very occasionally, songs are written about topics relevant to this training course. The purpose of this chapter is to expose you to—or, at least, remind you of—such song lyrics. My hope is that these lyrics will provide you with inspiration or comfort when you encounter difficulties in your mission to change the world.

#### 5.1.1 Copyright Issues

A fundamental principle of copyright law is that you cannot make copies of copyrighted material unless you first obtain permission to do so. However, copyright law includes the concept of *fair use*. One aspect of fair use is the ability to use short quotes of copyrighted material so you can critique it. To avoid bureaucratic delays associated with tracking down and seeking permission from the copyright holders of every song discussed in this chapter, I have decided to *not* include the entire lyrics of songs. Instead, I quote a small sample of the lyrics to give readers a flavor of the song.

#### 5.1.2 Choice of Song Lyrics

In choosing song lyrics to include in this chapter, I have tried to choose lyrics that are *not* tied to one particular cause. For example, song lyrics about overcoming racism might be inspiring to people who fight racism, but not relevant to people whose focus is on environmental or healthcare issues. Instead, most of the song lyrics in this chapter are general purpose: they are likely to be inspiring to people in many different fields.

Occasionally, I have made an exception. For example, the lyrics of *Glad To Be Gay* are clearly about gay oppression. However, the tactics of oppression mentioned in the song can be used to oppress other groups too. If you mentally replace “gay” with, say, “black” or “jewish” when reading that song’s lyrics then I think

you will agree that the theme of the song is not limited to one specific oppressed group.

### 5.1.3 Useful Websites

If you find some of the lyrics in this chapter interesting then I suggest you use some Internet websites to find out more about the songs and the songwriters.

There are many websites that provide song lyrics. If you type “lyrics” plus the name of a song into an Internet search engine (such as [www.Google.com](http://www.Google.com)) then you will probably be able to find the complete lyrics to the song.

If you search on YouTube (Section 4.4 on page 18) for the name of a song (or the name of the artist who recorded the song) then you may be lucky and find a video of the song. This can be a great way to “try before you buy”. If, after watching a video, you decide you like a song then you could buy the song from the following places.

- Perhaps a local CD shop sells an album that contains the song.
- Some Internet-based shops, such as Amazon (see Section 4.3 on page 17), sell music CDs.
- Some websites, for example, [www.iTunes.com](http://www.iTunes.com), sell individual songs as digital downloads.
- It is becoming increasingly common for singers and groups to have their own websites, and also common for such a website to sell CDs recorded by that singer or group. You could use an Internet search engine to try to find a website for an artist that recorded the song.

Another useful website is Wikipedia (Section 4.2 on page 17). Wikipedia contains articles on many singers and groups. Often, these articles provide some biographical information, a discography and links to other websites associated with the singer or group.

## 5.2 Authority Song

This song by John Cougar Mellencamp is on his 1983 *Uh-Huh* album. The lyrics are about fighting against oppressive authority. The fact that “authority always wins” might make you think the song is depressing. However, the tune is very upbeat. As the “I come out grinning” line in the chorus suggests, fighting oppression can bring you joy and satisfaction.

I fight authority, authority always wins  
 I fight authority, authority always wins  
 I’ve been doing it since I was a young kid, and I come out grinning  
 I fight authority, authority always wins

## 5.3 Crazy Dreams

This Paul Brady song is from his 1981 *Hard Station* album. If you want to change the world then you probably have a dream or vision of how you want the world to be. You may end up partnering with, or working for, somebody else who has a similar dream. This can be great *if* the dreams of you and your partner are very similar. However, if, over time, the dreams of you and your partner start to diverge then this can lead to frustration. The lyrics quoted below express this frustration.

You're tired of dreaming someone else's dreams  
 When they really don't include you any longer  
 ...  
 And lately you've been getting doubts  
 A voice inside keeps calling out  
 That someone else's dreams don't get you nowhere.  
 So shut the suitcase, kiss the year goodbye  
 Don't let nobody stop you at the doorway  
 And close the shutters on this empty room  
 Where these crazy dreams come crawling to devour you  
 ...  
 Tonight we'll go and paint this town  
 We're gonna drink champagne, till we both fall down  
 And we'll find some other crazy dream tomorrow

## 5.4 Glad to Be Gay

This song by Tom Robinson was originally released on an 1978 4-track EP called *Rising Free*. You can find this song on some live or "best of" compilation albums. Although verses in the song address forms of oppression faced by gay people, many of these forms of oppression affect other groups too.

The British Police are the best in the world  
 I don't believe one of these stories I've heard  
 'Bout them raiding our pubs for no reason at all  
 Lining the customers up by the wall  
 Picking out people and knocking them down  
 Resisting arrest as they're kicked on the ground  
 Searching their houses and calling them queer  
 I don't believe that sort of thing happens here

The chorus consists of the following two lines repeated twice:

Sing if you're glad to be gay  
 Sing if you're happy that way

To a casual reader, the upbeat lyrics of the chorus might seem to be at odds with the list of oppressions contained in the verses. However, the chorus lines are sung

in a sarcastic manner. Tom Robinson was frustrated with many people in the gay community being in denial over the high levels of homophobia within British society and thinking that the oppression did not really matter as long as it did not happen to them personally. If you look back at the first verse, you can see the denial clearly stated in the second and last lines. The song is a challenge to the gay community: stop passively accepting oppression and fight for your rights.

Many people viewed Tom Robinson as being a symbol of gay pride. When (much to everybody's surprise, including Tom's) he fell in love with a woman, some people viewed this as a betrayal of the symbolism they saw in him. Tom Robinson addressed his critics in a new verse of *Glad to Be Gay*, which you can find at the end of his 1996 *Having It Both Ways* album.

For 21 years now I've fought for the right  
 For people to love just whoever they like  
 But the right-on and righteous are out for my blood  
 Now I live with my kid and a woman I love  
 Well if gay liberation means freedom for all  
 A label is no liberation at all  
 I'm here and I'm queer and I do what I do  
 And I'm not gonna wear... a straitjacket for you

## 5.5 I Am What I Am (Mark Dignam)

This song by Mark Dignam is from his 1994 *Poetry and Songs from the Wheel* album. The song is about discrimination faced by people with disabilities, but the issues raised in the lyrics are common to oppression of many groups. One issue raised in the lyrics is the common practice of applying labels to people who are different in some way.

You give me a name 'cause I can't do what you do  
 But I don't label you 'cause you can't sing like me  
 I don't label you 'cause you can't love like me  
 And I don't label you 'cause you can never ever be like me

If you ask people what they think of the past systems of Apartheid in South Africa or racial segregation in the USA, most would express abhorrence and say that the world is a better place without such segregation. The following lyrics indicate that people with disabilities (often labelled "special") still endure forms of segregation.

Take a good look at me I'm a special child  
 Special child, offered alternative routes of travel  
 Special child, given special things to do  
 Special child, sent to special schools

## 5.6 I Am What I Am (Gloria Gaynor)

This song by Gloria Gaynor is from her 1984 *I am Gloria Gaynor* album. This song is about taking pride in yourself and ignoring the criticisms of others.

I am what I am, and what I am needs no excuses  
 I deal my own deck — sometimes the ace, sometimes the deuces  
 It's one life and there's no return and no deposit  
 One life, so it's time to open up your closet  
 Life's not worth a damn 'til you can shout out "I am what I am"

## 5.7 In or Out

This song by Ani diFranco is on her 1992 *Imperfectly* album. The song is about some people's attitudes to her bisexuality. Most of the lyrics can be applied to other people who have "membership to more than one club", such as a mixed-race (or mixed-religion) couple, or somebody who belongs to several oppressed groups, such as a person who happens to be both black and gay.

Guess there's something wrong with me  
 Guess I don't fit in  
 No one wants to touch it  
 No one knows where to begin  
 I've got more than one membership  
 To more than one club  
 ...  
 Somedays the line I walk  
 Turns out to be straight  
 Other days the line tends to deviate  
 ...  
 Their eyes are all asking  
 "Are you in, or are you out?"  
 And I think, "Oh man,  
 What is this about?"  
 I mean, tonight you can't put me  
 Up on any shelf  
 'Cause I came here alone  
 And I'm gonna leave by myself

## 5.8 I Saved the World Today

This song by Eurythmics is on their 1999 *Peace* album. The first verse of the song describes a person who has "burnt out" and is on the point of giving up their dream to make a meaningful change in the world.

Monday finds you like a bomb

That's been left ticking there too long  
 You're bleeding  
 Some days there's nothing left to learn  
 From the point of no return  
 You're leaving

The lyrics of the chorus appear to be cheerful, but they are sung in a world-weary manner. Imagine yourself being an anonymous superhero who has saved the world and are exhausted from the effort, but you cannot rest because you still have to do household chores and find money to pay the bills. On top of that, you suspect that, somehow, you will have to find enough energy to save the world *again* next week.

Hey hey, I saved the world today  
 Everybody's happy now  
 The bad thing's gone away  
 And everybody's happy now  
 The good thing's here to stay  
 Please let it stay

## 5.9 It's Not Safe

This song by Aimee Mann is on her 1995 *I'm With Stupid* album. The theme of the song is that your efforts to improve the world will be misunderstood and you will be criticized.

All you want to do is something good  
 So get ready to be ridiculed and misunderstood  
 'Cause don't you know that you're a fucking freak in this world  
 In which everybody's willing to choose swine over pearls  
 ...  
 You can play along, but you'll just end up wrong somehow, won't you  
 But you're the idiot who keeps believing in luck  
 And you just can't get it through your head  
 That no one else gives a fuck

## 5.10 I Will Survive

This song by Gloria Gaynor is from her 1978 *Love Tracks* album. The lyrics are about a woman who was dumped by her boyfriend and, in particular, her response when he tries to resume their relationship. In the lyrics, she tells him that she does not want him back and that she will survive without him.

Although the song is about recovering from a broken heart, many lines in the lyrics are relevant to anybody who is facing a tough time and is resolving to be self-reliant.

Did you think I'd crumble  
 Did you think I'd lay down and die  
 Oh no, not I  
 I will survive  
 As long as I know how to love  
 I know I'll be alive  
 I've got all my life to live  
 I've got all my love to give  
 And I'll survive  
 I will survive

## 5.11 Little Plastic Castle

This song by Ani diFranco is on her 1998 *Little Plastic Castle* album. The quoted lyrics express her frustration at people's confining and unrealistic expectations of her when they hail her as feminist icon.

People talk about my image  
 Like I come in two dimensions  
 Like lipstick is a sign of my declining mind  
 Like what I happen to be wearing  
 The day that someone takes a picture  
 Is my new statement for all of womankind  
 ...  
 I wish they could see us now  
 In leather bras and rubber shorts  
 Like some ridiculous new team uniform  
 For some ridiculous new sport  
 Quick someone call the girl police  
 And file a report

## 5.12 My IQ

This song by Ani diFranco is on her 1993 *Puddle Dive* album. The quoted lyrics echo the thesis of the *Non-stereotypical Skills for Activism* chapter of slides in this training course: if you think creatively then you can find ways to employ whatever skills and hobbies you have in activism.

I sing sometimes for the war that I fight  
 'Cause every tool is a weapon —  
 If you hold it right.

## 5.13 Not a Pretty Girl

This song by Ani diFranco is on her 1995 *Not a Pretty Girl* album. Some lyrics are about people misunderstanding your work to end oppression.

I am not an angry girl  
 But it seems like I've got everyone fooled  
 Every time I say something they find hard to hear  
 They chalk it up to my anger and never to their own fear

Some other lyrics in the song express the difficulty of being self-sufficient; often, you still have to work with those you consider to be your oppressors.

And generally my generation  
 Wouldn't be caught dead working for the man  
 And generally I agree with them  
 Trouble is, you gotta have yourself an alternate plan

### 5.14 One Day at a Time, Sweet Jesus

This 1974 country and western song, written by Marijohn Wilkins and Kris Kristofferson, has been recorded by hundreds of artists and is well known in many parts of the world. The lyrics of the song are, in essence, a prayer that asks God to help the singer make it through a tough time.

One day at a time, sweet Jesus  
 That's all I'm asking from you  
 Just give me the strength  
 To do everyday what I have to do  
 Yesterday's gone, sweet Jesus  
 And tomorrow may never be mine  
 Lord, help me today, show me the way  
 One day at a time

### 5.15 Pick Yer Nose

This song by Ani diFranco is on her 1993 *Puddle Dive* album. This short quote from the song provides excellent advice for anyone who wants to change the world.

I fight with love  
 And I laugh with rage  
 You gotta live light enough to see the humor  
 And long enough to see some change

### 5.16 Power in the Darkness

This song by the Tom Robinson Band is on their 1978 *Power in the Darkness* album. The song urges the listener to “stand up and fight for your rights”. The first verse lists freedoms that the activist singer thinks people should have. The second verse expresses the opposing opinion of a bigot who is giving a speech on



a national radio station. The speech makes a patriotic appeal to protect traditional symbols of British society and then makes the following claim.

What we want is:  
 Freedom from the reds and the blacks and the criminals  
 Prostitutes, pansies and punks  
 Football hooligans, juvenile delinquents  
 Lesbians and left wing scum  
 Freedom from the niggers and the Pakis and the unions  
 Freedom from the Gipsies and the Jews  
 Freedom from leftwing layabouts and liberals  
 Freedom from the likes of you. . .

The song lyrics illustrate several tactics commonly used by bigots. One tactic is to disguise bigoted views as patriotism. A second tactic is *guilt by association*. As the quoted lyrics show, various oppressed groups (such as people of different races, religions, and sexualities) are associated with crime (“criminals”), violence (“football hooligans”) and laziness (“layabouts”). A third tactic is to misuse a positive word or phrase to refer to oppression. The quoted lyrics show the word “freedom” repeatedly being used to refer to oppression of minorities.

With such tactics being widely used, it is no wonder that the chorus of the song warns listeners that there are “frightening lies from the other side”.

## 5.17 Something Inside So Strong

This song by Labi Siffre is on his 1988 *So Strong* album. He wrote it as an anti-Apartheid song, but over the years it has been used worldwide by many groups as an anthem of self-empowerment.

The higher you build your barriers  
 The taller I become  
 The further you take my rights away  
 The faster I will run  
 You can deny me  
 You can decide to turn your face away  
 No matter 'cause there's . . .  
 Something inside so strong  
 I know that I can make it  
 Though you're doing me wrong, so wrong  
 You thought that my pride was gone. . . oh no  
 There's something inside so strong  
 Something inside so strong

## 5.18 The Only One

This song by Stiff Little Fingers is on their 1981 *Go For It* album. The song is about being outraged at an (unnamed) social injustice, and feeling frustrated

because nobody else seems to care about the problem.

It makes you so angry  
 You rage and rage again  
 But you can't spit it outside  
 It's bottled in your brain  
 You feel it in the darkness  
 The rage inside you grow  
 And you know you're a stranger  
 In the room below

...

It makes you feel so angry  
 Why can't they see red?  
 Can no-one else imagine  
 What can't be said?

## 5.19 The Spirit of Man

This song by Chris de Burgh is on his 1986 *Into the Light* album. This is an upbeat song about remaining true to your dreams and ambitions.

I'm chasing a shadow, I can't see a thing  
 It's dipping and diving like a bird on the wing  
 And every time I get near it just seems to slip away  
 There's a fighter inside who will never give up  
 We are what we are and it's never enough

...

We may reach for the stars, and fall from the sky  
 Oh in the darkest hour the spirit of man comes to life  
 It's shining again — the spirit of man

## 5.20 Willing to Fight

This song by Ani diFranco is on her 1993 *Puddle Dive* album. The lyrics deal with several issues related to activism.

The philosopher Edmund Burke wrote “The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing.” The following lyrics echo a similar sentiment.

'Cause I know the biggest crime  
 is just to throw up your hands  
 Say this has nothing to do with me  
 I just want to live as comfortably as I can

Other lyrics in the song express the concept of a “chosen family” that activists can develop. The lead vocals sing these lines in a positive tone of voice while the backing vocals sing them in a more sorrowful and lonely tone. The result evokes

the bittersweet taste of being emotionally close to people but being geographically distant from them.

I got friends all over this country  
 I got friends in other countries too  
 I got friends I haven't met yet  
 I got friends I never knew  
 I got lovers whose eyes  
 I've only seen at a glance  
 I got strangers for great grandchildren  
 I got strangers for ancestors

If you try to change the world then you will discover that most changes occur very slowly. In fact, “your whole life” may not be sufficient time, so the singer’s advice is to start sooner rather than later.

You've got your whole life to do something  
 And that's not very long  
 So why don't you give me a call  
 When you're willing to fight  
 For what you think is real  
 For what you think is right

## 5.21 Working Class Hero

This John Lennon song is from his 1970 *John Lennon/Plastic Ono Band* album. The lyrics identify some tactics of oppression that are used to maintain classism. However, similar tactics are used to maintain other forms of oppression too, for example, racism and sexism.

They hurt you at home and they hit you at school  
 They hate you if you're clever and they despise a fool  
 Till you're so fucking crazy you can't follow their rules  
 ...  
 Keep you doped with religion and sex and TV  
 And you think you're so clever and classless and free  
 But you're still fucking peasants as far as I can see  
 ...  
 There's room at the top they are telling you still  
 But first you must learn how to smile as you kill  
 If you want to be like the folks on the hill

## 5.22 Summary

The song lyrics discussed in this chapter provide insight and advice that can be useful to people who want to change the world. For copyright reasons, this chapter provides just short quotes of the lyrics, but you can use an Internet search engine

to find the complete lyrics of the songs. Videos for some of the songs can be found on [www.YouTube.com](http://www.YouTube.com). If you like any of the songs then I urge you to buy them and listen to them regularly. In that way, they can provide you with inspiration and support as you work to change the world.

# Chapter 6

## Books and Movies

### 6.1 Introduction

This chapter provides an annotated bibliography of books (and a few movies) that are relevant to the *Skills You Need to Change the World* training course. Some of these books, such as *Mindset* and *Obedience to Authority*, are used as the basis for chapters of slides with similar names. Some other books, such as biographies of Gandhi and Malcolm X, are referenced in several chapters of slides. Still other books are not mentioned in the slides at all, but are included here because they deal with issues potentially of interest to students of this training course.

Some of the books and movies in this annotated bibliography provide inspirational stories. It is important to note that *all* of these inspirational stories are biographical in nature rather than being works of fiction. I made the decision to *not* include any fictional inspirational stories because of the risk that readers will think: “That was a great story but it was a work of fiction; I could never hope to do something similarly impressive”.

You should *not* feel obliged to read every single book and watch every single movie listed in this annotated bibliography. To do that would take a long time. Instead, a better approach is to read the training course slides and decide which topics are of most interest to you. Then look through this annotated bibliography to find books or movies that deal with those topics.

If you intend to teach this training course to other people then, obviously, it would be useful for you to know more than just the information written in the slides. But even under such circumstances, you should not feel obliged to read all the books in this annotated bibliography. In many cases, you will be able to find sufficient information on the Internet. For example, you might find useful articles on Wikipedia or relevant video clips YouTube. And, of course, you can use some anecdotes from your own life to add value to the information contained in the slides.

When discussing a biographical book or movie, I rarely say how the biography illustrates specific issues discussed in the slides because that would involve far too much cross-referencing and updating as the training course evolves over time. Instead, I generally just mention a few aspects of the person’s life to help you decide if the book might be of interest to you.

## 6.2 Activism and Social Change

**An Inconvenient Truth**, documentary by Al Gore

I have been using PowerPoint to write slide-based presentations since the late 1980s. I am well aware that most people use PowerPoint badly and produce boring presentations. Expressions like “Death by PowerPoint” were coined to reflect this state of affairs.

A few years ago, claiming that a slide-based presentation could entertain and inform millions of people worldwide would have lead many people to doubt your sanity. However, *An Inconvenient Truth* demonstrates that a slide-based presentation, if skillfully produced, can be an effective and scalable way to communicate a message to a wide audience.

Al Gore, a former vice president of the USA, was concerned about environmental issues. He expressed his concerns in a slide-based presentation that he wrote on his laptop computer, and then he travelled to many countries to give his presentation to groups of people. He estimates that he gave the presentation more than 1000 times. Some documentary makers who saw one of these presentations decided to turn it into a movie-length documentary. When the documentary was released in cinemas, it was watched by more than 2 million people and it gained widespread media coverage. It has since been released on DVD. Its message is also available in a companion book and website ([www.climateCrisis.net](http://www.climateCrisis.net)).

**Bridging the Class Divide**, book by Linda Stout

Linda Stout has been an activist for several decades. In this fascinating book she uses the story of her own life to discuss forms of prejudice faced by poor people and tactics she found useful to build support for community-based activism across divisions of class and race. The book is a goldmine of insightful information for grassroots organisers.

**How to Change the World: Social Entrepreneurs and the Power of New Ideas**, book by David Bornstein

Many people think of an entrepreneur as being somebody who wants to start a business to make money. Actually, many entrepreneurs want to start a business so they can create a great new product or service. It is the *creation* of that product or service that drives them; making money from it is just a side effect, albeit a welcome one.

An entrepreneur may want to create the world’s best running shoe, a superior Internet search engine, or a chain of coffee shops that serve high quality coffee and provide outstanding customer service. Those are all worthy goals. However, they are unlikely to change the world in a significant way.

A *social entrepreneur* is an entrepreneur who wants to create a product or service that *will* change the world. For example, a social entrepreneur might want to help people in a ghetto community to escape from poverty, introduce an improved safety feature in cars that can save thousands of lives per year, or introduce a reliable water supply in an area that frequently suffers from extended droughts.

A few social entrepreneurs manage to make a living wage from their innovations. For example, the *Equations for Change* chapter of slides in this training

course explained that Fábio Rosa developed a way to bring electricity and water to poor Brazilian farmers at a price that was 17 times cheaper than an alternative solution. This innovation was enormously beneficial for poor farmers, and Fábio Rosa was able to make a profit from it. However, profitable social entrepreneurs tend to be in the minority. Many social entrepreneurs tackle problems in which there is little opportunity to make money. Instead, they have to rely on grants or donations to fund their work.

The focus of *How to Change the World* is social entrepreneurship. Most chapters in the book provide case studies of social entrepreneurs in different parts of the world. A few chapters step back to explain the principles that underlie social entrepreneurship. The book does not offer a silver bullet for the problem of funding faced by most social entrepreneurs. However, the final chapter does provide some thought-provoking advice on how the funding problem *might* be addressed if sufficient change is brought about in society.

### **How to Save the World in Your Spare Time**, book by Elizabeth May

Elizabeth May has been an environmental activist for most of her life. In fact, she comes from a family of activists: in the 1950s her mother was one of the leaders in a successful campaign to get a worldwide ban on the atmospheric testing of nuclear weapons. Elizabeth May's many decades of experience in activism has given her a keen insight into the practical do's and don'ts of successful activism, and she shares those insights in this book. The book has 11 chapters on activism-related topics, such as organising a group of volunteers, interacting with the media, lobbying politicians, fundraising, and getting public support. Each chapter explains useful principles and illustrates them with examples from the author's activist career. The last chapter of the book focusses on an important but often-overlooked topic: the price you can expect to pay and the rewards you might reap if you dedicate a significant part of your life to activism.

### **Is That It?**, book by Bob Geldof

In the 1970s, Bob Geldof and some friends formed a band, *The Boomtown Rats*, that enjoyed musical success in Europe with some hit albums and numerous top-ten hit singles. By 1984, the band's fame had passed and he was broke. He saw a news report about famine in Ethiopia and decided to do something to help.

What could I do? I could send some money. [...] But that didn't seem enough. [...] What else could I do? I was only a pop singer. And by now not a very successful pop singer. [...] All I could do was make records that no one bought.

He asked other, more popular pop singers to join with him to form the Band Aid musical group and record a charity record called *Do They Know It's Christmas?* That became the biggest selling record of all time and it raised several million pounds for famine relief, but still Bob Geldof felt that was insufficient. So he organised Live Aid, a 17-hour concert in two continents that was broadcast all over the world, and raised an additional £150 million.

Bob Geldof's autobiography, *Is That It?*, is an entertaining book and worth reading from start to finish. However, if you are short of time then just read the last

five chapters. Those fascinating chapters focus on the months he spent organising Band Aid and Live Aid, and his interaction with politicians afterwards.

**McLibel: Burger Culture on Trial**, documentary by John Vidal

If you write something damaging to the reputation of a person or organisation then they might sue you for libel. Your best defence in court is to prove that what you wrote is true. Of course, if the person or organisation who takes you to court is much richer than you then they can try to bankrupt you with legal fees, and the threat of them doing so provides them with a (legal) way to blackmail you: “You must publicly apologise for what you wrote about us and promise to never criticise us again, or else we will bankrupt you in legal fees by taking you to court and dragging the court case on for as long as possible.”

For years, McDonald’s Corporation (that is, the McDonald’s chain of fast food restaurants) used that tactic to silence critics. Numerous television stations and newspapers publicly apologised rather than risk being bankrupted by legal fees to defend themselves in a court case. However, the tactic backfired badly when McDonald’s threatened to sue individuals in London Greenpeace who had produced and distributed a leaflet that was critical of McDonald’s. Two of the individuals, Helen Steel and David Morris, decided to resist what they felt was a bullying tactic, and they went to court. A barrister who sympathised with them donated some of his time free-of-charge, and they also managed to raise about £30,000 in donations towards their costs in defending themselves against the team of multimillion pound lawyers hired by McDonald’s. The court case dragged on for many years and became the longest-running legal case in English history.

This documentary DVD (a book version is also available) tells the story of this David versus Goliath legal battle. The result was a public relations disaster for McDonald’s, and it created an environment in which other people started to feel confident enough to criticise the company.

At the time of the court case, the British legal system stated that if you could not afford to hire a lawyer to defend yourself in court then you could get a lawyer through free legal aid. However, the offer of free legal aid did not apply if you were being taken to court for libel. Helen Steel and David Morris felt this was unjust because it provided a way for large companies to legally blackmail critical members of the public into silence. In fact, they felt it was a violation of their human rights (in particular, the right to a fair trial and the right to freedom of expression) so, after the court case with McDonald’s was over, they raised this issue in the European Court of Human Rights. The court agreed with them and ruled that the UK government must pay Steel and Morris money in compensation.

**The Story of Stuff**, documentary by Annie Leonard

Annie Leonard is an environmental activist. She used to travel a lot to speak to different groups about environmental issues. However, she got tired of travelling so much and sought an alternative way to share her message with people. To achieve this goal, she wrote a 20-minute speech called *The Story of Stuff*, and worked with a small team who provided cartoon-style animation to complement the speech. A video of the resulting speech and animation was made and placed on



an Internet website ([www.storyofstuff.org](http://www.storyofstuff.org)). The video was viewed over 6 million times in the first one and a half years of its release.

The video is very informative, but that is not why I am including it in this bibliography. Rather, I am including it as an example of a highly scalable and cost-effective way to communicate a message.

**The Lifelong Activist**, book by Hillary Rettig

This is a career advice book for activists. The author has done a remarkable job of stepping back from the specifics of her own activist career to document general principles that can be applied to activism for a multitude of different causes. Do not be put off if you do not self-identify as an activist: most of the excellent advice in the book is equally relevant as career advice, entrepreneurial advice or life-skills advice. I suspect that in years to come this book will be regarded as a classic in its field.

## 6.3 Business

**Banker to the Poor**, book by Muhammad Yunus

In 1974 Bangladesh was hit by a famine. At the time, Muhammad Yunus was a professor of economics at the University of Chittagong. Seeing people starve to death in the streets made him doubt the value of economics as he was teaching it. He decided to study the economic realities of poor people in a neighbouring village. He discovered that many people were in bonded slavery. One woman borrowed (the equivalent of) \$0.22 in the morning to buy bamboo canes, worked all day weaving them into stools, and in the evening had to sell the stools to the money lender for \$0.24, thus making a profit of just \$0.02 for her day's labour.

Muhammad Yunus realised that the villagers would have a chance to break free from bonded slavery if they could obtain small loans at affordable rates. Affordable loans would enable them to buy raw materials, make products and then sell those products on the open market for much more than they obtained as bonded slaves. The increased profit would enable them to pay back the loans and climb out of poverty. When he surveyed the village, he concluded that loans totalling \$27.00 to 42 villagers (an average of just \$0.64 to each person) could remove them from bonded slavery.

Traditional banks are not willing to offer such small loans to poor people, for a variety of reasons. First, a bank's overheads in processing a loan application would be greater than the value of the loan. Second, high overheads in processing repayments means a bank does not want to receive repayments on a loan at the rate of, say, a few cents per week. Third, most banks think it is too risky to loan money to poor people.

When Muhammad Yunus was unable to convince traditional banks to loan money to poor villagers, he decided to start his own bank—the Grameen Bank—to serve this market. From its humble beginnings, the Grameen Bank has grown significantly in size (it had \$174 million in revenue in 2008) and has provided micro-credit to millions of people. In 2006 the Grameen Bank and Muhammad Yunus were joint recipients of the Nobel Peace Prize.

**Business as Unusual**, book by Anita Roddick

Anita Roddick was most famous for being the founder of *The Body Shop*, which sold environmentally-friendly beauty products. This autobiography is of Anita Roddick as both a businesswoman and an activist. This book shows how her social activism was compatible with (and sometimes, necessary for) excellent, although unusual, ideas for running a business.

**Positioning: The Battle for Your Mind**, book by Al Ries and Jack Trout

This book is regarded as a classic in the field of marketing. It argues that a product should not try to compete head-on against similar products. Instead, each product should *position* itself as satisfying a particular niche need in the minds of consumers. For example, one brand of toothpaste might position itself for “healthy teeth and gums”, while other brands might position themselves for “fresh breath” or “sensitive teeth”. The basic concept of positioning is simple but it has subtle ramifications that can influence the success or failure of a marketing strategy. This book explores those ramifications and illustrates them with many examples.

**Slack**, book by Tom DeMarco

Many organisations strive to make employees as efficient as possible. The logic is simple: an employee who is busy less than 100% of the time is causing the company to earn less than 100% of its potential revenue. However, the logic is flawed: employees who are busy 100% of the time do not have any free time to reflect on how the business is run. Because of that, they cannot discover and implement opportunities to improve the business or help the business adapt to changes in the marketplace. If employees had some free time—some *slack*—in their schedules then the *efficiency* of the organization would decrease slightly but that would be more than compensated for by the organisation’s increased *effectiveness* due to better responsiveness and increased innovation.

A dictionary definition of *slack* is *not tight; not busy*, so it is easy to see how the term might refer to free time in an employee’s schedule. However, Tom DeMarco defines *slack* more broadly, as *the degree of freedom required to effect change*. In this slim and insightful book, Tom DeMarco identifies many common problems that hinder the ability of employees to bring about change. He also identifies some steps that can be taken to re-introduce slack in an organization.

**The Copywriter’s Handbook**, book by Robert W. Bly

This book is regarded as a classic by many people who work in advertising and marketing. Do not be put off by thinking: “I hate advertisements so I am not going to read that book”. If you want to bring about change in the world then you need to learn how to communicate your message effectively, and this book offers excellent advice for doing that.

**The Unemployables**, book by Chris Lewis

Chris Lewis interviewed 37 entrepreneurs to find out what are the characteristics of being successful. One characteristic he noticed is that many entrepreneurs consider themselves to be unemployable because they are far too independent-minded to be able to work for somebody else; hence the title of the book.

The case studies in the book are interesting, but perhaps the most valuable part is an introductory chapter entitled *The Success Factors*. In that chapter Chris Lewis summarises the traits that are common to many of those he interviewed. Unfortunately, this fascinating book is out of print. However, you may be able to buy a second-hand copy from Amazon. After writing this book, Chris Lewis himself went on to be a very successful entrepreneur. He is the founder and CEO of Lewis Global Public Relations ([www.lewispr.com](http://www.lewispr.com)).

## 6.4 Education

### **Be Cool... Stay in School**, book by Jason Summey

Jason Summey was a 13-year-old student in an American school that had the highest dropout rate in the area. Students who dropped out of school had a much higher than average chance of living in poverty or turning to crime. He challenged the students in his year to be the first in the school's history to all graduate from high school. This (very short) book tells his story of what happened.

Many people who write about their attempts to change the world use hundreds of pages to discuss obstacles they encountered, how they overcame them and the insightful lessons they learnt from the experience. Some people may be inclined to dismiss Jason Summey's book as being too short to provide useful insight. However, such an attitude confuses quantity with quality. The book *is* insightful. As a bonus, the book provides a concrete example of how a young person can successfully challenge the status quo.

### **Coach Carter**, movie starring Samuel L. Jackson

Richmond High School in Richmond, California, had a strong tradition of playing sports but a history of poor academic achievement: only 50% of students graduated and only 6% of those who graduated when on to college.

Ken Carter had been a student and star basketball player at Richmond. Thirty years later, he returned to Richmond as its basketball coach. Ken Carter made all the basketball players sign a contract at the start of the year. Among other things, the contract required the players to maintain a good academic record.

With Ken's coaching skills, the school team embarked on an impressive winning streak. However, part-way through the season, Ken discovered that some of his basketball players were skipping classes and failing subjects. In response, he locked the school gym to prevent basketball practice and cancelled games until the players' school grades improved. This tactic caused controversy, but it was effective. Within two weeks and with the help of tutors, the players' grades improved and they then resumed their basketball games. Their sports skills combined with their good grades enabled six players on the team to go to college; and five of those six received scholarships.

### **Escalante: The Best Teacher in America**, book by Jay Mathews

Jaime Escalante was an successful teacher with unorthodox teaching methods in Bolivia. However, salaries for teachers were very low so he moved with his family to California to seek better wages for his talents. Unfortunately, his Bolivian

teaching qualifications were not recognised in California so he took non-teaching jobs to earn a living while going to college in the evenings to re-earn his teaching qualifications. Eventually, he was able to return to teaching. He taught at Garfield High School in East Los Angeles, which had a mostly Hispanic student population.

Jaime Escalante was frustrated with the low expectations that Garfield High School had of students. He felt that with hard work and encouragement, many of the students could excel in mathematics. He started preparing his students to take the *advanced placement* (AP) test in calculus. The AP program consisted of university-level courses taught in high school. Passing an advanced placement test significantly increased a student's chances of getting into university. In 1979, two of his five students passed the AP calculus test. In 1980, seven of nine students passed. In 1981, 14 of 15 students passed the test.

In 1982, all 18 of his students passed the AP calculus test. However, controversy erupted when the Educational Testing Service suspected that most of the students had cheated. Their suspicion was based on the students making identical mistakes in some questions they answered incorrectly and using the same unusual variable names in formulas. Of course, this commonality of mistakes and variable names could also be due to the students all having the same teacher. Some people felt that the accusation of cheating was rooted in anti-Hispanic prejudice. Fourteen students were asked to retake the test. Twelve of them agreed to do so, and they did well enough to have their scores reinstated. A movie called *Stand and Deliver* was made about this 1982 controversy.

The controversy over the 1982 tests boosted Jaime Escalante's reputation and in the following years the number of his students who passed the AP calculus test increased. In 1987, 73 students pass the AP calculus test. The success of Garfield students in the AP calculus test encouraged some teachers at the school to prepare students for AP tests in other subjects. In 1991, 570 students at Garfield High School took AP tests. Unfortunately, Jaime Escalante and many of the other teachers who were offering AP classes became disillusioned with faculty politics and they left Garfield High School.

### **Marva Collins' Way**, book by Marva Collins and Civia Tamarkin

Marva Collins taught in a school in a run-down part of Chicago. Most teachers in the school had students who were badly behaved and had difficulty reading at a level appropriate for their age. However, Marva Collins' class was different. She used unorthodox techniques for teaching and interacting with her students. These techniques resulted in her students being well behaved and reading at a level well above their age. However, these techniques also meant that Marva Collins and her students stood out in a school in which almost everyone else expected, and settled for, mediocrity. The resulting friction between Marva Collins and the rest of the school staff eventually caused her to resign from the school and set up her own school.

She cashed in her pension fund to help pay the start-up costs for her school. Her husband converted the upstairs portion of their house into a one-room school and she went around the neighbourhood trying to find parents who were willing to pay \$60 per month to send their children to her school. Most of the students

she acquired were ones that had been failing at regular schools. Some of those students had severe behavioural problems. Many could not read. One had been labelled as mentally retarded. Within a few months, her unorthodox techniques had transformed the children into well behaved students who had a reading level several years higher than when they had started with her. Eventually, the student who had been labelled as mentally retarded went on to graduate from university.

Initially, Marva Collins' school struggled to attract sufficient students to pay the bills. But a journalist who visited the school was impressed by what he saw and wrote a very positive article about the school. After that, the school started to thrive and Marva Collins became one of the most famous teachers in the USA.

The *Marva Collins' Way* book tells her inspiring story. A made-for-television movie called *The Marva Collins' Story* is available on DVD.

## 6.5 Healthcare

**And They Shall Walk**, book by Sister Elizabeth Kenny

In the early part of the twentieth century, polio epidemics caused paralysis and sometimes death in hundreds of thousands of people. For decades, there was a fundamental flaw in doctors' understanding of the disease, and this misunderstanding resulted in a widely-used treatment that actually worsened the effects of the disease.

When Elizabeth Kenny was 14 years old, her younger brother was weak and lacked stamina. Her mother, who had already lost several other young children, feared that he would die. Elizabeth studied some books on human anatomy and muscle groups that she obtained from a local doctor. By studying these she became a self-taught expert on muscles and was able to devise exercises to help her younger brother grow considerably stronger. Later, according to her autobiography, Elizabeth Kenny studied for three years to obtain a nursing certificate. However, another biography, *Sister Kenny: The Woman Who Challenged the Doctors* by Victor Cohn, claims she probably faked her nursing credentials. Qualified or not, she became a nurse in rural Australia.

At the age of 23, Elizabeth Kenny encountered her first case of polio on a remote farm. She described the symptoms in a telegram that she sent to a doctor she knew in a city hospital and received back a reply that stated: "No known treatment. Do the best you can with the symptoms presenting themselves." Using her expert knowledge of muscle groups, she was able to successfully treat that case of polio and several more that occurred on other nearby farms. Soon afterwards, she served as a nurse in the Australian army during the First World War and was promoted to the rank of *Sister*. After the war, she returned to being a civilian nurse. It took her almost thirty years to convince doctors that her theories about polio and its effective treatment were correct. Years later, polio vaccines were developed that made people immune to polio. However, Sister Kenny's pioneering work in treating muscle paralysis has had a lasting impact in the field of physiotherapy (called *physical therapy* in some countries).

The book *And They Shall Walk* is Sister Kenny's autobiography. A biographical movie called *Sister Kenny* was made in 1946.

**Florence Nightingale**, book by Cecil Woodham-Smith

Florence Nightingale (1820–1910) was born into a *very* rich family. You might imagine that vast wealth would provide great freedom. However, Florence Nightingale encountered many sexist restrictions on what was considered to be acceptable behaviour for an aristocratic woman. The idea of such a woman seeking *any* type of a career was frowned upon. The idea of such a woman seeking a career in nursing was completely taboo. This taboo was rooted in stereotypes of nurses as being dirty, violent, alcoholic and promiscuous. In addition, a widespread lack of understanding of the need for sanitation meant that hospitals were dangerous places to work.

Florence Nightingale did not give up her childhood dream of becoming a nurse. Over many years she wore away at her parents' refusal to allow her to enter that profession. While fighting this battle against her parents' wishes she secretly visited hospitals while on holidays and she read as much as she could about hospital- and medical-related issues. Through these activities, she gained an expert level of knowledge.

When she was 33, Florence Nightingale's parents finally allowed her to take an unpaid administrative position in a hospital. A year later, a war journalist reported that British soldiers wounded in the Crimean War were dying due to lack of basic medical attention. Florence Nightingale assembled a team of nurses and travelled to Crimea. She encountered sexist opposition from the army doctors but eventually she was able to implement her ideas on caring for patients. Three months after she started her campaign to improve sanitation and food quality, the death rate in the army hospitals dropped from 43% to 2%. Although Florence Nightingale's understanding of *how* sanitation was important for health was flawed—germ theory had not yet been developed—her detailed record keeping and statistical analysis of those records enabled her to prove that specific sanitation techniques were effective. In fact, she was one of the pioneers in the relatively new field of statistical analysis.

When Florence Nightingale returned to England after the end of the Crimean war, she used her expertise to improve sanitation conditions in army barracks. This reduced the mortality rate of soldiers in peacetime Britain by 50%. When her principles were applied to army barracks in India, the mortality rate there fell by 75%. Her 1859 book *Notes on Hospitals* revolutionised the theory of hospital construction. In 1860 she established the first training school for nurses. The training not only improved nurses' medical knowledge; it also helped to eradicate the negative stereotypes of nurses that were common at the time.

None of Florence Nightingale's work was easy. She never properly recovered from the Crimean fever she contracted during the war. As a result of this, she was usually house-bound and often bed-ridden during the rest of her life. Despite her poor health, she was a prolific writer. She wrote 200 books and reports and an estimated 12,000 letters. Her successes in healthcare reforms came only after many years of determined campaigning.

**Jamie Oliver**, book by Gilly Smith

It often seems that bringing about significant social change is incompatible with having a successful and high-paying career. Jamie Oliver provides an interesting

counterexample.

In many countries, the population is making increasing use of fast food, and processed and precooked foods from supermarkets. What starts out as being a convenient way to eat occasionally can, if done excessively, result in older people forgetting the skills required to cook their own food and younger people never learning those skills in the first place. This has far-reaching health implications because convenience foods tend to be far less healthy than food cooked from scratch. Increasing obesity levels in many countries can be partially blamed on the use of convenience foods. Jamie Oliver's vocation is to inform the public that cooking your own meals is much simpler than most people imagine, and the results can be tasty and healthy. The following recap of his career shows how he has combined this vocation with his career.

Jamie Oliver's parents owned a restaurant-pub in a small town and, as a child, he became fascinated with the work inside the kitchen. At eight years of age he started earning pocket money by doing food preparation in the kitchen. At the age of 13, his father arranged for him to spend some time working in another restaurant so he could widen his skills. When he was 21, a television crew were filming a documentary in the kitchen of a restaurant where he was working, and the resulting footage showed that Jamie had a chemistry with the camera. This led to him getting his own television cooking series, *The Naked Chef*. This was his first opportunity to educate the public about recipes that are simple, tasty and healthy. The word *naked* in the title of the series referred to his preference for simple food that was not "dressed up" with sauces. Book and DVD tie-ins to the television series helped both his career and his vocation.

*The Naked Chef* ran for three series. However, after completing the first series, Jamie felt uncomfortable waiting to hear if his television show would be renewed so he decided to take more control over his own television career. He did this by setting up a production company and using it to record and release his own cooking DVD, *Pukka Tukka*.<sup>1</sup> This entrepreneurial streak gave Jamie Oliver more control over his own career so he would not have to submit to the interests of a television station.

By the time of the final series of *The Naked Chef*, Jamie Oliver's celebrity status meant he was often being invited to officially open new buildings. He always took the opportunity to give a short cooking demonstration at such events and he could see that the public enjoyed them, but he was frustrated at the limited time available to demonstrate. So, with the aid of a portable kitchen that he could wheel on and off a stage, he went on a national, and then international tour, giving two-hour shows in theatres that were more used to hosting plays and rock concerts.<sup>2</sup> Of course, he also released a *Happy Days Tour Live!* DVD of the tour, which

---

<sup>1</sup>*Pukka Tukka* is a slang term meaning "good food". *Pukka* comes from India. In the Hindi language, *pukka* means cooked rice, but British colonists used the word to mean something that is high quality or genuine. *Tukka* (also spelt *tucker*) is a slang term for food. Its origin may come from the Tuck family who owned popular food shops in England a few centuries ago.

<sup>2</sup>The portable kitchen was a set of waist-high kitchen units: storage cupboards, a sink with a cold-water tap that was fed by a pump from bottled water underneath, and some cooking rings fed by bottled gas. All of this was packaged to look like a long row of kitchen units found in a typical British home, but it had wheels underneath to provide mobility.

spread his message to a TV-bound audience while bringing him extra income.

Jamie Oliver's commitment to educating the public about the benefits of a healthy diet was most evident when he discovered that the lunch-time menu in many British schools consisted almost entirely of unhealthy convenience foods. He worked with the catering staff in one school to develop a much healthier yet cost-effective menu. His camera crew followed him for months as he developed the menu, tried it in one school and then worked with school authorities and politicians to roll out this new menu nationwide. The resulting 6-part television series (available as the *Jamie's School Dinners* DVD box collection) made for compulsive viewing and it shocked the nation with details of just how bad the diet of the nation's children was. For example, the series showed that many school children became hyperactive after lunch—due to all the sugar and E-numbers in convenience-food—and this made it impossible for them to concentrate in class during the afternoon. One doctor explained that some children visited the hospital every few months suffering from impacted constipation. That means the faeces had started to fossilise within the body so it could not be expelled easily. These children had to be given enemas to relieve the blockage. Such severe forms of constipation occurring regularly can increase a person's chances of getting cancer later in life. The school nurse in one school reported that cases of asthma virtually disappeared after the introduction of Jamie's healthier menu.

Another compelling television series (available as the *Jamie's Kitchen* DVD collection) was based around Jamie Oliver's belief that cooking is so simple to learn that he could train 15 unemployed or homeless teenagers who knew *nothing at all* about cooking to be professional-level chefs in one year. By way of comparison, a regular chef course in England lasts four years. He set up a new restaurant, called *15*, to provide employment for his newly trained chefs. Profits from the restaurant are fed back into a charity to train more unemployed and homeless teenagers to be chefs, and there are now several *15* restaurants around the world.

The achievements I summarised above—three series of *The Naked Chef*, the self-produced *Pukka Tukka* DVD, the *Happy Days* international tour, the overhaul of school dinners, and training unemployed and homeless people to be chefs—would be quite a set of achievements for one person's entire career. However, Jamie Oliver achieved all the above in just six years. In the process of educating British people about healthier eating habits, he has made himself a multimillionaire. This demonstrates that it *is* possible to bring about significant social change without having to forego a successful, high-paying career. However, to make this work you need to build your career around the change that you wish to bring about. It helps if you are self-employed and have a strong entrepreneurial streak so you have more control over the direction of your career. It is difficult to imagine an employer giving Jamie Oliver the freedom to work on some of the projects he chose.

Gilly Smith's very readable biography of Jamie Oliver has a few different names. *Jamie Oliver: The Kitchen Crusader* and *Jamie Oliver: Turning Up the Heat* are, confusingly, two titles for the same book (released in 2006). An updated version of the biography, with three new chapters, was published in 2008 under



the title *The Jamie Oliver Effect: The Man, the Food, the Revolution*.

**Lorenzo's Oil**, movie starring Nick Nolte and Susan Sarandon

At the age of six, Lorenzo Odone was diagnosed with having a rare disease called adrenoleukodystrophy (ALD). This disease, a metabolism disorder, results in the brain producing an excess of long-chain fatty acids that corrode the myelin insulator surrounding nerves. The result is that nerves cannot transmit signals properly to limbs and organs. Over time this results in loss of limb movement, speech, sight, and eventually death. Victims usually die within two years of being diagnosed.

ALD had been identified as a disease only ten years before Lorenzo's diagnosis and doctors did not have a good understanding of the disease. Lorenzo's parents tracked down some of the world's experts in ALD and enrolled Lorenzo in experimental treatments. When those proved unsuccessful, his parents—neither of whom had any medical background—decided that they should contribute to research into ALD. Many sceptics, including the organisers of an ALD support group, advised the Odone family that they were wasting their time and, indeed, were arrogant to think they could advance the field of research.

Lorenzo's parents ignored the sceptics. They went to medical libraries to learn about relevant concepts in genetics, biochemistry, microbiology and neurology. They soon realised that the few researchers doing ALD-related research were working in isolation from each other, so they organised and funded the first symposium on ALD research, a two-day event to which they invited 40 international researchers. The sharing of ideas at the ALD symposium led to a promising lead. If a *benign* long-chain fatty acid that was "similar enough" to the *harmful* long-chain fatty acids could be introduced into the diet of an ALD sufferer then this might trick the body into producing less of the harmful long-chain fatty acids.

The Odone family went in search of chemical companies that they might fund to make an edible oil rich in that benign fatty acid. By chance they found a company that had already produced such an oil—olive oil that was purified to increase its concentration of the relevant fatty acid. The company had made that oil to experiment with its potential for use as an industrial lubricant. When this oil was introduced into Lorenzo's diet, it significantly reduced but did not stop the body's over-production of harmful long-chain fatty acids.

Lorenzo's parents then went in search of a *second* benign long-chain fatty acid to complement the effects of the first one. They contacted over 100 firms trying to find one willing to develop a technique to purify rapeseed oil to extract this second benign fatty acid. Most considered the task to be overly difficult, if not impossible. However, one chemist—a man who had spent most of his career making face creams and cosmetics, and wanted to do something more meaningful before he retired in six months—rose to the challenge. He succeeded. The combination of the two oils brought the production of harmful long-chain fatty acids in Lorenzo's body under control and his body started to partially remyelinate his nerves. His parents organised another ALD symposium and raised funds for research into remyelination.

This inspiring movie finishes in 1992 when Lorenzo was 14. You can find up-to-date information at [www.myelin.org](http://www.myelin.org).

## 6.6 Innovation

### **Diffusion of Innovations**, book by Everett M. Rogers

This classic book is now in its fifth edition: a new edition has been published approximately every decade since 1962. The book discusses the issues that affect how innovations, such as ideas or products, diffuse (that is, spread) through a society. The relevance of the book to this training course is straightforward: if you want to change the world then you can consider the changes you want to make as an innovation that must diffuse through society.

The book explains the issues involved in diffusion of innovations, and also provides an overview of related academic research. This makes the book ideal for somebody who is new to the field and wants to do research in it. Somebody who is not interested in doing research and just wants a summary of the key issues may find the book too detailed in places, and may get frustrated with the book's size (it is almost 500 pages long). There are other books that discuss the key ideas as they apply to a particular industry. For example, *Crossing the Chasm* by Geoffrey A. Moore is about diffusion of innovations within high-tech industries. Such books tend to be shorter and easier to read than *Diffusion of Innovations*. However, I think it is worthwhile making the effort to work through this longer book; it has lots of useful insights to offer, and knowing that the insights are backed up by solid research gives the reader more confidence in their validity.

### **Six Thinking Hats**, book by Edward de Bono

This slim book describes a simple and very effective technique that can help you explore an idea from multiple viewpoints. You can use the technique by yourself or use it with others to make meetings more productive.

### **The Design of Everyday Things**, book by Donald A. Norman

This training course contains a chapter of slides called *The Status Quo is Flawed*. That chapter explains that there are many imperfections in the world (and hence many opportunities to make the world a better place). This book by Donald Norman follows a similar theme. It explores the design imperfections of many common objects, such as door handles, light switches and the controls on a cooker. When pointing out design flaws, the author makes suggestions for fixing those flaws. This interesting book can help awaken your mind to the endless possibilities for improvement that are all around.

### **The Innovator's Dilemma**, book by Clayton M. Christensen

Within any market, the market leaders usually retain their leadership position by giving consumers increasing more of what they currently provide. For example, if a car manufacturer is successful selling high-speed, luxury cars then bringing out ever-faster and ever-more-luxurious car models will probably ensure its continued success within that market. If an innovator within that company thinks of a way to make cars that offer a completely different value proposition—say, a car that offers half the speed and far less luxury but is twenty times cheaper—then the company is likely to reject the innovation on the basis that their existing customers would not be interested in such an inferior product. Sometimes, the employee whose idea

is rejected will leave and start his own company to manufacture the innovative but inferior product. Typically, this start-up company will have to find a completely new market for its inferior, low-cost product—a market that appreciates the low cost and considers limited speed and limited luxury to be acceptable. Such a market may be small initially (which keeps out competitors who think the market is too small to be worth competing in) but, over time, the product may mature and improve on some of its weaknesses, such as the limited speed and luxury. Eventually, the product may become good enough to compete successfully in the original mainstream market, and the former market leaders who had ignored this once-immature innovation may struggle against the low cost but “good enough” competitor. Often, the former market leaders are unable to compete effectively and go out of business.

Clayton M. Christensen researched the above type of scenario. He found that it occurred in a great many industries, including ship building, computer disk drives, motorbikes and earth-moving equipment. His easy-to-read book explores the circumstances in which such scenarios can occur and why market leading businesses tend to fall victim to them. The chapter of slides within this training course called *The Innovator’s Dilemma* focusses on an issue that is somewhat tangential to the main thrust of the book. However, if you found that chapter of slides interesting then it is worthwhile reading the book to strengthen your understanding of the underlying principles.

**Uncommon Genius: How Great Ideas are Born**, book by Denise Shekerjian

At the time of his death in 1978, John D. MacArthur was the second richest man in America. He left most of his vast estate to establish a foundation named after himself and his wife. He left simple instructions to the foundation’s board of trustees: “I figured out how to make the money, you boys figure out how to spend it”. One of the projects the foundation created was the MacArthur Prize. It works as follows. A group of anonymous nominators around the USA gather information on people who are doing high-quality, unconventional work. This information is passed on to a selection committee which decides which of these people should receive an award. Awards are announced once or twice a year, typically to between 20 and 40 people each year. Currently, the award is \$500,000 paid as quarterly instalments over five years. Could Einstein have written a grant application to discover his theory of relativity? Probably not. And that is why the MacArthur Award exists: to give highly competent and creative people the financial freedom to work on their speculative ideas.

Denise Shekerjian was interested in the question: What makes somebody creative? To find out, she interviewed forty recipients of the MacArthur Prize. The book *Creative Genius* provides the insights that those forty people shared with her.

## 6.7 Oppression

**A Long Walk to Freedom**, book by Nelson Mandela

Nelson Mandela grew up in the Apartheid system of South Africa. He became

a lawyer and joined the African National Congress (ANC), which campaigned for black rights. For many decades, the tactics of ANC were heavily influenced by those of Gandhi. However, the South African government kept introducing new laws to ban whatever forms of peaceful protest the ANC used. Eventually, some people within the ANC decided, out of desperation, to start using violence. Their plan was to initially destroy government-owned property and, if that proved insufficient then to slowly escalate to using violence towards people.

To prepare for the non-peaceful tactics, Nelson Mandela was smuggled out of South Africa and he went on a tour of countries in North African to seek support for this imminent armed struggle. After he was trained in tactics of guerrilla warfare, he returned to South Africa, but he and many other colleagues were arrested soon afterwards.

Knowing that the authorities had sufficient evidence to convict and execute them, the accused decided it was foolish to plead innocent in court. Instead, they freely admitted to their plans and used their time in court to explain *why* they had felt compelled to take up an armed struggle. By doing this, they put South Africa's system of Apartheid on trial to the world's media, which were present at this high-profile court case. By doing this, they felt their convictions and executions would achieve something useful.

The worldwide reporting of the trial caused international peer pressure to be applied to the South African government and, when the accused were found guilty, the judge reduced their sentence from death to life imprisonment. These convicted ANC members spent several decades in prison where they became living martyrs for the struggle against Apartheid. Continued activism within South Africa combined with continued international peer pressure eventually convinced the South African government to start negotiating with the still-imprisoned Nelson Mandela to bring about change in South Africa.

This fascinating autobiography was originally published as an 800-page book. However, since then it has been divided into two volumes, which makes it easier to carry in a pocket or bag.

#### **A Time of Terror**, book by James Cameron

In 1930 in the USA, after an armed robbery went bad, three teenage black boys were accused of killing a white man and raping a white woman. While they were in jail awaiting trial, a local radio station announced plans to lynch the accused teenagers. 15,000 people gathered to witness, and take part in, the lynching. Two of the accused were hung from the branches of a tree. The last of the accused, James Cameron, was dragged from the jail cell by people who, just a few days earlier, he had known as friends and neighbours. As a rope was put around his neck and he was saying a prayer before he was hung, he heard a voice (which he ascribed to a heavenly source) saying that he should be released. The rope was removed from his neck and he was lead back to jail to face trial.

This book by James Cameron is probably the only first-hand account of somebody who has survived a lynching. It is a fascinating and disturbing account of racism and mob mentality.

#### **Black Like Me**, book by John Howard Griffin

In 1959, a white American author called John Howard Griffin artificially darkened his skin and lived as a black man for several weeks. He experienced racism in ways that most white people had never experienced. Afterwards he wrote this book about his experiences. It became a best seller, was translated into many languages and is required reading in many schools in the USA. Many of the reviews on Amazon describe the book as “life changing.”

A movie based on the book was released in 1964. Unfortunately, a DVD version of the movie is currently out of print.

The second edition of the book, released in 1977, contains an extra chapter called *Epilogue* that provides fascinating details of the author’s work in human rights since the book was originally published.

**Defiance: The True Story of the Bielski Partisans**, book by Nechama Tec

Literature from the Second World War contains many stories about courageous *non*-Jewish people saving the lives of Jews who were fleeing the Nazi holocaust. There were very few stories of *Jewish* people saving themselves. This imbalance has resulted in a widespread assumption that Jewish people passively went to their deaths during the Nazi holocaust.

This book tells a different story. It is a story of three Polish Jewish brothers, the Bielskis, who hid in the forests to escape extermination. Some groups hiding in the forests felt the best way to survive was to contain only a small number of young adult men; they viewed old people, children and women as liabilities. Likewise, they kept their group size small because they felt that growing in size would make it more difficult for them to remain hidden. Some groups became guerilla fighters and attacked German soldiers.

The Bielski brothers decided to use different tactics. They felt there was safety, rather than liability, in numbers and so they accepted everyone, regardless of age or sex, into their group. This resulted in the group having people with a wide range of skills that were useful for survival. The brothers concentrated on saving lives rather than fighting; they said they preferred to save one Jewish life rather than kill 100 German soldiers. The group set up a camp with workshops where they made clothes, shoes and fixed weapons to barter with fighting groups in exchange for food. During the war, the group had a mortality rate of only 5% and, by the end of the war, had grown in size to 1200 people. In contrast, mortality rates between 33% and 95% were common for many smaller groups of Jewish refugees.

A movie based on the book and called *Defiance* was released in 2009.

**Ethics into Action: Henry Spira and the Animal Rights Movement**, book by Peter Singer

Henry Spira’s activist career started with socialism and trade unions. Later, in his mid-forties when he became vegetarian, he decided there were lots of activists working for human rights but far fewer working for animal rights, so he switched the focus of his activism. He understood that to be an effective activist, it was not enough to have a passionate belief in your cause; you also needed to pick your targets well, research them and use good marketing techniques to get across your message. The preface of this biography summarises Henry Spira’s effectiveness.

For more than a century, anti-vivisection societies had been campaigning against animal experiments without having the slightest impact. [...] While they put out their strongly worded leaflets condemning animal experimentation, the number of animals used in research grew from a few hundred a year to an estimated 20 million. Yet in his very first campaign, Henry brought to an end a series of experiments that involved examining the sexual behavior of mutilated cats. From there he went on to tackle such organisations as Revlon, Avon, Bristol-Meyers, the Food and Drug Administration, and Proctor & Gamble. [...] In twenty years, his campaigning methods have done more to reduce animal suffering than anything done in the previous fifty years by vastly larger organisations with millions of dollars at their disposal.

Even if you do not have much interest in animal rights, you can learn a lot about effective tactics for changing the world from this biography.

**How to Suppress Women's Writing**, book by Joanna Russ

Joanna Russ had an extensive knowledge of literature and was frustrated that literature written by women was often dismissed as being inferior to literature written by men. Through research, she identified several techniques that have been used during the past few centuries to suppress women's writing. She published her findings in this book.

Although Joanna Russ's research focussed on the suppression of women's writing, she notes in this book that some of the suppression techniques have been used to suppress literature written by gay and black authors as well.

**Jesus and Nonviolence: A Third Way**, book by Walter Wink

This is a very short book: about 100 pages with large type and large margins on novel-size paper. The author's thesis is that several statements made by Jesus Christ have been mistranslated in modern versions of the bible. This mistranslation has resulted in a widespread belief that Christians should submit passively to injustice rather than fight injustice with violence. The author argues that a correct translation of the words of Jesus provides a third way to react to injustice. This third way is, in essence, the Satyagraha tactics used by Gandhi. The first half of the book argues that these tactics should be used for the pragmatic reason that they are effective; the second half of the book presents more spirituality-based reasons for using the tactics.

Many people assume that Satyagraha works in only rare cases, such as for Gandhi and Martin Luther King. However, this book argues that the tactics have been used successfully in many revolutions in the twentieth century. He argues that the death toll in successful Satyagraha-based revolutions have been hundreds or even thousands of times smaller than the death toll in revolutions that have used violence.

The basic thesis of this book is covered in an essay by the author entitled *Jesus & Alinsky*, which is published in an anthology called *The Impossible Will Take a Little While: A Citizen's Guide to Hope in a Time of Fear*, edited by XXX. That

essay is also available on the Internet at [www.commondreams.org/views04/1216-30.htm](http://www.commondreams.org/views04/1216-30.htm).

**Lowest of the Low**, book by Günter Wallraff

In 1983, a West German journalist called Günter Wallraff decided to do a *Black Like Me*-style experiment. For two years, he pretended to be a Turkish immigrant in Germany and experienced a lot of racism. Afterwards, he wrote *Lowest of the Low* to record his experiences. The book sold more than 2 million copies in Germany alone, was translated into most European languages, and forced the German government to enforce laws regulating the treatment of immigrant workers.

**Obedience to Authority**, book by Stanley Milgram

Many Nazis accused of war crimes used “I was just following orders” as their (unsuccessful) defence. Stanley Milgram was curious about this line of defence so he conducted a series of experiments to see if ordinary members of the public would follow orders to inflict pain on another person. In this fascinating and easy-to-read book, Stanley Milgram describes the variations of his classic “obedience to authority” experiments and the very surprising results they yielded.

**Passion and Power**, book by Shay Cullen

Shay Cullen is an Irish priest who has been working as a missionary in the Philippines since 1969. His missionary work has focused on fighting for human rights rather than saving souls. The vast quantity of success he has achieved in his work is of epic proportions. When I was one-third of the way through reading this book I thought to myself that Shay Cullen had already achieved much more in 12 years than most people can ever hope to achieve in a lifetime. Knowing that the pace of his work and successes would not let up during the remaining two-thirds of the book (which covers another 21 years) was both inspiring and humbling. It is not surprising that Shay Cullen has been nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize several times; the only surprise is that he has not won it.

**Roots**, book by Alex Haley

During his childhood, Alex Haley heard oral history from elderly relatives that traced his ancestors back six generations to Kunta Kinte, a Gambian who was captured by slave traders in the mid-eighteenth century. Alex Haley researched historical documents to verify details in the oral history. He also researched Gambian village customs, slave-trading and the history of African Americans. He wrote what he called *faction*—a mixture of fact and fiction—based on the oral history and his research.

The book *Roots* was an international best seller. It was turned into two massively successful television mini series—*Roots* and *Roots: The Next Generations*—which are available on DVD.

**The Autobiography of Malcolm X**, book

Malcolm X was originally known as Malcolm Little, but he changed his last name to “X” to reject the family name of the slave owners to whom his ancestors belonged. Later, during a pilgrimage to Mecca, he changed his name, again, to

El-Hajj Malik El-Shabazz. He grew up poor, drifted into a life of crime and spent seven years in prison. While there, he used the prison's extensive library for self-education on an extensive range of subjects, including philosophies, ideologies and histories of oppression in many countries.

Like Martin Luther King, Jr. (MLK), Malcolm X rose to fame in the 1950s and 1960s in the struggle for black rights in the USA. However, unlike MLK, Malcolm X did not adhere to Gandhi's Satyagraha tactics. Rather, he encouraged black people to defend themselves against attacks. This, combined with his forceful condemnation of racist acts by white people resulted in many people viewing him as being militant and accusing him of reverse racism.

**The Autobiography of Martin Luther King, Jr.,** book

Martin Luther King, Jr. (commonly abbreviated to MLK), rose to fame in the 1950s and 1960s as a campaigner for black rights in the USA. His tactics were heavily influenced by Gandhi. Although MLK was a prolific writer, he did not write a comprehensive autobiography in book format. In 1998 *The Autobiography of Martin Luther King, Jr.* was compiled from many of the late MLK's writings, speeches and sermons. It is a fascinating and informative book.

**The Life of Mahatma Gandhi,** book by Louis Fischer

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, 1869–1948, is more commonly known as Mahatma Gandhi (Mahatma is a Sanskrit word that means “great soul”). He was born in India, obtained a law degree in England, spent two decades working for human rights in South Africa, and then spent three more decades working for human rights in India. He is perhaps most famous for peacefully ending British rule of India.

There are a great many biographies of Gandhi, including some that run to 8 or 10 volumes. This one is a very readable, single-volume biography. A movie called *Gandhi*, heavily drawing on this particular biography, was released in 1982. This fascinating 3-hour movie was directed by Richard Attenborough and stars Ben Kingsley in the title role.

**The Mis-education of the Negro,** book by Carter G. Woodson

This classic book was first published in 1933 and has sold over 1 million copies. The central thesis of the book is that the curriculum in American schools: (1) taught derogatory stereotypes of black people, and (2) censored any positive information about black people. This racist curriculum (mis-)educated white people to hate black people and, more significantly, (mis-)educated black people to hate themselves. The book explores numerous ways in which that internalised oppression resulted in dysfunctional behaviour of black people. For example, many black people had internalised the stereotype that “black people are dirty” and hence were reluctant to buy items from a shop owned or managed by a black person.

One might imagine that the subject matter of this book is only of historical interest. After all, didn't Martin Luther King, Jr., win equal rights for black people in the 1960s, so surely there are no significant racist problems in modern-day America? However, the recent edition of the book I bought has an introduction by Dr. Jawanza Kunjufu that uses statistics to show that many problems highlighted



in this book are still prevalent in American society. That view is supported by many of the readers' reviews on Amazon.

## 6.8 Self-Awareness and Self-Improvement

**Confirmation Bias: A Ubiquitous Phenomenon in Many Guises**, by Raymond S. Nickerson

This academic paper appeared in *Review of General Psychology* 1998, Volume 2, number 2, pages 175–220. If you type the title of the paper into an Internet search engine then you might be able to find a PDF copy online. This paper provides an easy-to-read overview of academic research into confirmation bias. The paper also provides examples of confirmation bias from history and modern-day life. The *Confirmation Bias* chapter of slides in this training course draws heavily from this paper.

**Influence: The Psychology of Persuasion**, book by Robert B. Cialdini

In this excellent book, Robert Cialdini explains many important findings from decades of psychology research into influence and persuasion. Do not let the phrase *psychology research* put you off: the simple writing style and use of real-world examples makes the book accessible to a non-academic audience.

The psychological principles underlying effective persuasion tactics can be used for good or bad purposes. An example of a good use is a person persuading others to lead a better lifestyle, for example, to give up smoking or to be more efficient in their household energy use. An example of a bad use is a confidence trickster who uses the tactics to gain a person's trust and then steals from the person. Many sales people consider this book to be a classic because it explains many effective tactics that can be used to convince a person to purchase a product. That quality makes the book relevant to anyone who is a consumer, as it will help you to identify and deflect underhanded tactics used by some sales people.

The relevance of the book to this training course is simple: when changing the world, you will almost certainly need the ability to influence other people and persuade them to do what you think is important.

**Metaphors We Live By**, book by George Lakoff and Mark Johnson

A metaphor expresses one concept in terms of another. For example, here are some sentences based on the metaphor of expressing *time* as *money*.

How do you *spend* your time? That flat tire *cost* me an hour. This gadget will *save* you many hours. I *invested* a lot of time in her. You need to *budget* your time. He is living on *borrowed* time. You must use your time *profitably*. You are *wasting* my time.

Most people think of metaphor as being a linguistic device that is of interest mainly to poets. However, the authors of *Metaphors We Live By* discovered that metaphors are much more pervasive than most people realise, and they argue that metaphors are fundamental to how people perceive the world. Or to put it more simply: metaphors can shape how we think.

When the authors wrote this book in 1980, their thesis about the ubiquity and importance of metaphors challenged long-held views in the fields of linguistics and philosophy. So, to argue their case convincingly, they provided countless examples of metaphors and discussed many of them in pedantic detail. This ensured the book would be of interest to linguistic scholars but, unfortunately, it also made the book less accessible to a lay audience. Despite that, it is possible for a non-linguist to read the first few chapters of the book and then skim the rest to understand and appreciate the central thesis.

Since the book's publication, one of its authors, George Lakoff, has used its thesis to explore how metaphors are used extensively in politics, for example, how appropriate metaphors can be used to justify a war. One of his more recent books, *Don't Think of an Elephant: Know Your Values and Frame the Debate*, puts forward his thesis that right-wing politics are built around one particular metaphor, while left-wing politics are built around a different, and incompatible, metaphor. These competing metaphors, which powerfully but subconsciously influence thinking, can make it very difficult, if not impossible, for people with left-wing views and people with right-wing views to have productive conversations or debates: often each side thinks the arguments of the other side are stupid and lack common sense.

The relevance of these books to this training course is as follows. When trying to change the world, you may discover that some people are unable to understand the arguments you make for change. It can be tempting to dismiss such people as idiots. However, the problem may be that their worldview is shaped by fundamental metaphors that are quite different to your own fundamental metaphors. If you can discover the metaphors that they use then you stand a better chance of being able to communicate with them in terms they can understand.

**Mindset**, book by Carol S. Dweck

Through many years of research, Carol Dweck has identified two common but opposing mindsets.

People with a *growth mindset* think that no matter what is their current skill level, they can improve through continued practice. They think that making mistakes or failing at a task provides opportunities to learn.

In contrast, people with a *fixed mindset* think that a person's ability is fixed and cannot be changed much through practice. The self-esteem of people with a fixed mindset is likely to be based on whether they see themselves as being more skilled or less skilled than other people.

This book explains how a growth mindset leads people to be well-adjusted, but a fixed mindset can result in dysfunctional behaviour across a wide range of life activities: education, work, sports, leadership and relationships. The book also explains how people in a position of power (such as parents, teachers and managers) can strongly influence the mindset that others adopt.

In an attempt to make the subject matter accessible to a lay audience, the book is written in a somewhat meandering style. For example, a chapter might start by outlining the purpose of an experiment, then tell some anecdotes before going back to discuss the results obtained from the experiment. This back-and-forth writing style is likely to delight some readers and annoy others, particularly those

from an academic background. If you find the writing style annoying then you might prefer to read an earlier book by the same author, *Self-theories: Their Role in Motivation, Personality and Development*. That book covers much of the same ground as *Mindset* but it is written in a more academic style.

**The Gentle Art of Verbal Self-defense**, book by Suzette Haden Elgin

Many verbal attacks follow a particular grammatical form. For example:

Even a \_\_\_\_\_ like you should be able to \_\_\_\_\_.

You can fill in the first blank in the above sentence with a type of person or occupation (such as “woman”, “secretary” or “student”) and fill in the second blank with a task that was performed poorly. Such a sentence does not just criticise a person for performing a task badly; it also implies that there is something wrong or deficient in being the specified type of person.

*The Gentle Art of Verbal Self-defense* identifies and dissects many such grammatical forms of verbal attack. It does this, not to teach you how to make such attacks, but rather to help you identify and defend yourself against them. Unfortunately, this excellent book is out of print. However, the author has written several other books with titles like *The Gentle Art of Verbal Self-defense at Work* that tailor the content for specific audiences. You can do a search on Amazon for the full range of such books.

**The Lucifer Effect: How Good People Turn Evil**, book by Philip Zimbardo

In 1971, Philip Zimbardo set up an experiment to study the psychological effects of becoming a prisoner or prison guard. An unused corridor of offices at Stanford University was remodelled into a makeshift prison. Volunteers in their late teens and early twenties were recruited to play the roles of prisoners and guards for two weeks in the mock prison. The volunteers underwent psychology tests to ensure they all fell within limits of normal behaviour (for example, to ensure that none was a sadist or psychopath) and then they were randomly assigned to the role of guard or prisoner.

Philip Zimbardo was mainly interested in how the prisoner volunteers would cope with the stress of being imprisoned. What he had not expected was the transformation of the volunteers who were assigned to play guards. They treated the prisoners in an increasingly sadistic and dehumanising manner. The experiment was halted after just six days because it had gotten out of control. Before the experiment was cancelled, two prisoners had been released on medical grounds: the guards’ treatment of the prisoners had been severe enough to cause severe stress-related disorders; in fact, the first prisoner had been released after just 36 hours. A third prisoner had gone on hunger strike to protest the inhumane conditions in the prison.

The first half of *The Lucifer Effect* provides a diary-like discussion of what happened during those six days of the Stanford Prison Experiment (SPE). The author explains the lessons he learnt from the SPE. One important lesson is that if you put good people into a bad, dehumanising situation then they will behave in bad, and perhaps even evil, ways. The second half of the book discusses how the lessons of the SPE have been verified repeatedly in evil situations that have been

widely reported in the media. For example, in numerous wars, good people in the role of soldier or prisoners-of-war guard have committed acts of evil. Likewise, dehumanisation plays an important role in acts of genocide.

**The Luck Factor**, book by Richard Wiseman

Richard Wiseman is a professor of psychology who has conducted research into, among other topics, luck. He discovered that a person's luck is largely determined by certain aspects of the person's attitudes and behaviour; by changing some of your attitudes and behaviour you can increase your luck. And since luck is closely associated with success, you can increase your chances of success. This slim and easy-to-read book summarises Richard Wiseman's research findings into luck.

## 6.9 Sports

**The Flying Scotsman**, book by Graeme Obree

Some talented cyclists are able to attract sufficient sponsorship to provide them with a steady income and access to state-of-the-art sports equipment. Despite his obvious talent, Graeme Obree found it difficult to obtain such sponsorship. And with high unemployment rates in Scotland, he often had to survive on little income. Despite this, he broke national and world records and was the individual pursuit world champion twice.

Graeme Obree built his own bicycle that incorporated many innovations to improve its aerodynamics. Some of his innovations were so successful in improving speed that they were banned by the UCI, which is an international cycling association that oversees competitive cycling events. Normally, UCI gives several weeks or months notice about changes in their rules so that cyclists have time to adapt their bicycles but, on occasion, they gave Graeme Obree as little as one hour's notice.

*The Flying Scotsman*, published in 2003 is his autobiography. A movie based on the book (and with the same title) was released in 2006.

**Bruce Lee: Fighting Spirit**, book by Bruce Thomas

Bruce Lee was born to a Chinese family while they were on tour with the Cantonese Opera Company in America, so this gave Bruce Lee the right to claim dual citizenship. When he was a teenager in Hong Kong, he formed his own street gang that often fought with other street gangs. He started taking lessons in martial arts to enable him to win more street fights. However, when his skills had improved sufficiently, he started to appreciate martial arts for its own sake. Despite this, he continued street fighting and, at the age of 17, his mother advised him to move to America to escape the increasing likelihood that he would end up in prison.

While in America, Bruce Lee went to university to study philosophy, got married and started teaching others his skills in martial arts. The fact that he was willing to teach the skills to non-Chinese people angered other Chinese martial artists who considered the skills to be a secret national treasure. Bruce Lee also bucked convention by not sticking to one form of martial arts; instead he blended

together the best moves of different forms of martial arts and invented his own moves.

Bruce Lee encountered a lot of anti-Chinese prejudice in America. He felt the world could benefit from a knowledge of Chinese martial arts and Chinese philosophy, and he viewed himself as an unofficial ambassador for these aspects of Chinese culture. Bruce Lee got a break in television by playing the role of Kato in *The Green Hornet*.<sup>3</sup> When filming fight scenes, Bruce's lightning-fast reflexes and fighting style turned out to be too quick for the cameras. This resulted in the innovation of filming fight scenes with a high-speed camera and showing the action in slow motion. This technique has since been used in many other television shows and movies.

Despite Kato's character receiving the bulk of fan mail sent to the show, racial prejudice in Hollywood prevented Bruce Lee's career progressing further. Even though he was the originator of the concept for the *Kung Fu* television series, he was judged to look "too Chinese" to play the role of the lead character (a Chinese martial artist), and the role was instead played by the American actor David Carradine.

During a visit to Hong Kong, Bruce Lee discovered that his role as Kato had made him a household name in China. This resulted in him being given the opportunity to make martial arts movies in China. At that time, the Chinese movie studios produced most movies from start to finish in less than a week; this resulted in lots of low-quality movies and poor salaries for actors and film crews. Bruce Lee injected a much-needed dose of quality and pay rises into the Chinese movie industry. His movies were very popular and helped to raise national pride because his character in some of the movies destroyed symbols of Chinese oppression. One week before the release of his fourth martial arts movie, he died (due to an allergic reaction to a painkiller) while in the apartment of an actress whom many believed to be his mistress. Attempts to cover up the location of his death backfired and fed conspiracy theories that claimed he was murdered or had died as a result of a curse placed on him and his family.

## 6.10 Miscellaneous

**Bad Science**, book by Ben Goldacre

You will find scientific claims almost everywhere: in newspaper articles, in advertisements, on product packaging, and from the mouths of self-proclaimed experts. However, many of those scientific claims are false. Sometimes this is due to honest mistakes. Sometimes it is due to incompetence. And sometimes it is due to deliberate lies. In this book, Ben Goldacre uses many examples of incorrect scientific claims to explain to readers how they can use some basic knowledge taught in school and a bit of common sense to spot many of the false scientific claims. The book is very informative, quite funny in places and will give you a healthy scepticism for the scientific claims you encounter on an everyday basis.

---

<sup>3</sup>*The Green Hornet* is likely to be before the time of many readers. Such readers can think of the Green Hornet and Kato as being predecessors of Batman and Robin.

The relevance of the book to this training course is as follows. If you want to change the world then you may need to do some research and make claims based on what you find. There is a chance that you will make the kind of silly mistakes that Ben Goldacre warns about in this book. By reading this book, you will learn useful tips that may help you to avoid making those mistakes.

**Risk: The Science and Politics of Fear**, book by Dan Gardner

One part of the human brain processes information rationally. Another part acts in a more instinctive manner. Unfortunately, sometimes that instinctive part of the brain makes bad decisions, especially when it comes to accessing risk. One reason for this is that the instinctive part of the brain uses a simplistic heuristic: the easier it is to recall examples of something happening, the greater the likelihood of that thing happening.

To illustrate this, consider the following. You probably heard years ago that air travel is much safer than driving. That claim is true. But consider the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 in which hijackers flew aeroplanes into the World Trade Centre in New York. If you were living in America during the year following that attack then the instinctive part of your brain—which would have been saturated with media discussions about terrorism and aeroplanes—might have convinced you that flying was very risky. As a result, you probably would have driven a car from one city to another instead of flying. Millions of people in America made that switch from flying to driving. This extra traffic on the roads made driving riskier than usual. In fact, statistical analysis showed there were 1,595 *extra* road fatalities that year compared to other years. Is driving riskier than flying? Yes. *Especially* in the months after high media coverage of an aeroplane tragedy, but the instinctive part of the human brain finds it difficult to believe that.

The book *Risk: The Science and Politics of Fear* summarises the results of many research experiments that shed light on the issues that affect how people perceive risk. The book also explores how companies, the media and politicians can manipulate the public's perceptions of risk.

The relevance of the book to this training course is as follows. If you want to change the world then you may have to change the public's perceptions of risk. For example, environmentalists try to convince the public of the *risks* associated with pollution and climate change. A tactic used by some vegetarian activists is to try to convince people of the *risks* associated with a meat-based diet. It is common for the public to think that members of an oppressed minority pose *risks*: "Aren't they likely to be paedophiles, rapists or terrorists?"