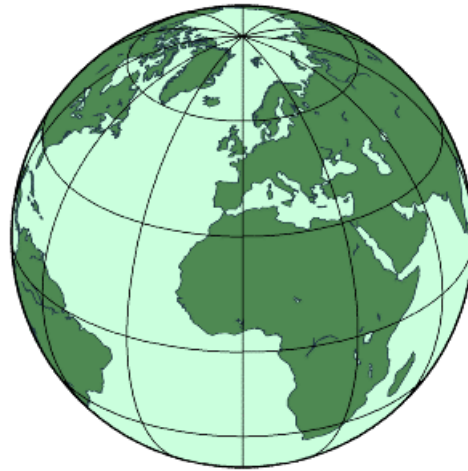


# Criticism and Rejection



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# Introduction

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- If you try to bring about significant change then you *will be* criticized unjustly:
  - Some of the reasons for unjust criticisms have been discussed in earlier chapters
- This chapter:
  - Summarizes the reasons for unjust criticisms given in earlier chapters
  - Discusses some forms used for unjust criticisms
- It is useful to be forewarned that you will face unjust criticisms:
  - Knowing that other people have faced similar, unjust criticisms takes some of the sting out of the criticisms
  - You can view the existence of unjust criticisms as a sign that you are making progress

# 1. Recap of reasons for unjust criticisms

# Recap: The Status Quo is Flawed

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- The following quote was used in the chapter *The Status Quo is Flawed*:
  - “The reasonable man adapts himself to the world; the unreasonable one persists in trying to adapt the world to himself. Therefore, all progress depends on the unreasonable man.”  
— George Bernard Shaw
- The quote is relevant because:
  - People who are viewed as being unreasonable are criticized
  - Therefore, people who bring about progress are criticized
- Some of the criticisms you will face include:
  - “If that was a good idea then somebody else would have thought of it already.” → Your idea is stupid
  - “The current system was designed by experts. Apparently you think you know better than the experts.” → You are arrogant

# Recap: The Innovator's Dilemma

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- Organizations serving an established, mainstream market sometimes reject innovations:
  - A rejected innovation might succeed in a smaller, niche market
  - Success in the niche market enables the innovation to mature
  - The matured innovation might then succeed in the mainstream market
- The initial rejection often comes with criticisms:
  - If you believe in your innovation then do not take the criticisms to heart
  - Instead, look for a niche market

# Recap: The Confirmation Bias

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- The confirmation bias says:
  - People form an opinion based on first impressions
  - Afterwards, they tend to:
    - Listen to data that confirm their already-held opinion
    - Dismiss data that contradict their already-held opinion
- The confirmation bias can result in two types of criticism:
  - Criticism of your innovation because it contradicts people's opinions of the status quo
  - Criticism of your personality and integrity. This occurs because:
    - It is difficult to dislike a person for one reason but like them for another reason. We tend to like (or dislike) a person in their entirety
    - Your being “unreasonable” will make some people dislike you for one reason, and therefore assume you are uniformly dislikeable

## 2. Unjust criticisms may take different forms



# Criticisms may come in the form of accusations

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- Marva Collins:
  - Was a teacher in a school in America
  - Her innovative teaching style worked very well with her students
  - She was unable to convince other school staff of the benefits of her innovations. So...
  - She converted half of her house into a small school and taught there
- She encountered a criticism: “You are experimenting on the students”
  - The accusation was true: she was experimenting to improve her teaching techniques. And the experiments were very successful
  - The accusation had some hidden assumptions that were false

# Assumptions about your motivations

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- Some people will criticize you, not for what you have done
  - But for what they *assume* are your motivations
- Bob Geldof:
  - Was the lead singer of The Boomtown Rats
  - They had many hits, but by 1984 they were no longer popular
  - They had finished recording a new album and wanted to promote it
  - Bob Geldof was moved by a news report about famine in Ethiopia
  - As a result, he spent many months organizing Band Aid and Live Aid
  - This meant The Boomtown Rats could not promote their new album effectively, and its chances of success slipped away
- Some people assumed Bob Geldof organized Band Aid and Live Aid as a gimmick to promote his music career

# Accuse first, ask questions later

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- Some people will make accusations based on assumptions
  - They can't be bothered to ask questions to discover the facts first
- David Bailey is a famous photographer:
  - He released a charity book entitled *Imagine: A Book for Band Aid*
  - Sales of this book raised £200,000 for Band Aid
- At the launch of the book, a journalist:
  - Assumed he had travelled to Ethiopia first class at Band Aid's expense
  - Attacked him for wasting money that could have been used for charity
- In fact, David Bailey:
  - Had travelled in the hold of a cargo plane
  - Paid all his own travel and living expenses
  - Gave his time and talent free of charge for the project

### 3. Summary

# Summary

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- Newton's third law of motion:
  - "To every action there is an equal and opposite reaction"
- A variation applies to people who try to bring about change:
  - "To every action there is an equal and opposite criticism"
- If you try to bring about change then you *will be* criticized
  - Some criticisms may be justified, but much will be unjustified
  - It is likely that the greater the change, the greater the criticism
- There is no magic shield to defend you from such criticism:
  - Criticisms always sting
  - But understanding that "criticism happens" helps to deflect some of the sting