



Course 1: How Social Transformation Occurs

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3. Stages of Successful Social Movements

WATCH THE VIDEO HERE: https://youtu.be/cJuZ_YqSvK0

We discuss Bill Moyer's Movement Action Plan: The Eight Stages of Successful Social Movements, including the political environment of each stage and the tasks of the movement in each stage.

Slides:

Goals of lecture

After this lecture, you will be able to:

- Explain that social movements go through expected stages.
- Describe the various stages.
- Understand the tasks of each stage.



Why Stages Matter

"Within two years after 'take-off', most activists inevitably perceive that their movement is failing, and their own efforts are futile. This leads to burnout, dropout, and the dissipation of movements. Astoundingly, this happens even when social movements are progressing reasonably well along the road normally taken by successful social movements in the past! Consequently, many activists keep repeating the cycle of 'take-off' to 'despair and burnout' with each succeeding new movement."

- Bill Moyer, Movement Action Plan



Eight Stages of Successful Social Movements

- Stage 1: Normal time
- Stage 2: Prove the Failure of Institutions
- Stage 3: Ripening Conditions
- Stage 4: Social Movement Take-Off
- Stage 5: Landing, Identity Crisis of Powerlessness.
- Stage 6: Majority Public Support and Building National Consensus
- Stage 7: Success National Consensus Turns the Tide, Endgame
- Stage 8: Continuing the Struggle



National Consensus

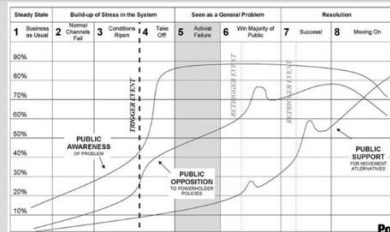
To achieve success the public must be convinced of three things:

- That there is a problem (Stage 4)
- To oppose current conditions and policies (Stages 4, 6 and 7)
- To want and not fear alternatives (Stage 7)

Source: https://www.wri-irg.org/sites/default/files/public_files/06%20The%20movement%20action%20plan.pdf



Bill Moyer's Movement Action Plan (MAP)



<http://3dprintingindustry.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/movement-action-plan.jpg>



Stage One: Normal Times

Environment:

Values are being violated, but it is accepted
The issue is not in the spotlight
Opposition is small and ridiculed

Tasks:

Document the problem
Maintain the opposition



Stage Two: Prove the Failure

Environment:

The problem and policies of the power holders continue.
Little dissent or attention
Feels like the problem will exist forever

Positive results are not expected
This is a difficult stage



Stage Two: Prove the Failure

Tasks:

Document the problem
Document the power holders' involvement in the problem
Document that normal channels of advocacy fail
Become experts by producing research
Build small opposition organizations



Stage Three: Ripening Conditions

Environment:

More people are aware of the problem
Public opinion for opposition increases to 30%
Population of discontented and allies grows
New waves of opposition, especially at local level
Issue is still not on society's agenda



Stage Three: Ripening Conditions

Tasks:

Recognize the historical forces at play
Create, inspire and prepare new wave groups, new networks and new leadership
New groups criticize professional groups that work with power holders
Activate pre-existing networks
Personalize the problem
Begin a new small prototype nonviolent action project



Stage Four: Take-Off

Environment:

A new social movement bursts on the scene and seems to take the public by surprise
Everyone seems to be talking about the problem
"Trigger event" occurs that reveal the problem
Action campaign follows – mass rallies, dramatic civil disobedience
Local action campaigns follow
People understand official versus operative policies
Opposition gains majority public support



Stage Four: Take-Off

Tasks:

Create a new grassroots-based social movement
Put the power holders' policies in the public spotlight
Have a public platform to educate population
Create public dissonance on the issue
Win public support
Become recognized as the opposition
*Not trying to get power holders to change policies yet



Stage Five: Landing

Environment:

High hopes turn to despair because change did not happen
Movement is viewed as weak and the power holders as strong
Problems continue
Movement is reported to be dead
Beware: Activists may become more militant
In reality, success was putting issue on national agenda and creating a new movement



Stage Five: Landing

Tasks:

Show a long-term strategy
Create support groups to avoid despair
Adopt strategic nonviolence
Adopt empowerment models of organization and leadership
Move from protesters to social change agents
Expect and take actions to diminish infiltration



Stage Six: Building National Consensus

Long process of eroding the social, political, and economic supports that enable the powerholders to continue their policies. It is a slow process of social transformation that create a new social and political consensus, reversing those of normal times.

The movement's chief goal is to nurture, support, and empower grassroots activists and groups because the power of professional opposition organizations in Washington, DC are only as powerful as the power of their grassroots.



Stages Seven and Eight

In Stage Seven, "Success," the long process of building opposition reaches a new plateau in which the new social consensus turns the tide of power against the powerholders and begins an endgame process leading to the movement's success.

In Stage Eight, "Continuing the Struggle," the movement now needs to address some hard questions: What is success? What needs to be done next? The movement needs to recognize successes achieved, follow up on the demands won, raise larger issues, focus on other demands which are in various stages, and propose larger alternatives and a new paradigm.



Relevant sections from Bill Moyer's "Movement Action Plan":

STAGE ONE: NORMAL TIMES

In this first stage—normal times—there are many conditions that grossly violate widely held, cherished human values such as freedom, democracy, security, and justice, and the best interests of society as a whole. Moreover, these conditions are maintained by the policies of public and private powerholders, and a majority of public opinion. Yet, these violations of values, sensibilities, and self-interest of the general society are relatively unnoticed; they are neither in the public spotlight nor on society's agenda of hotly contested issues. Normal times are politically quiet times. Some past normal times were the violations of Blacks' civil

rights before 1960; the Vietnam War before 1967; and U.S. intervention in Central America and support for Marcos, Duvalier, and apartheid before 1985.

Opposition

The opposition of these conditions and policies is small and receives more public ridicule than support. Consequently, its efforts are relatively ineffective. There are three major kinds of opposition: professional opposition organizations (POOs), ideological or principled dissent groups, and grassroots groups that represent the victims.

The professional opposition organizations are centralized formal organizations, often with national offices in Washington, D.C., which try to win achievable reforms through mainstream political channels such as the electoral process, Congress, and the courts. They are hierarchical, with a board of directors, strong staff, and a mass membership that carries out nationally decided programs. These efforts have little success because they do not have sufficient public support to provide the political clout required to create change.

The principled dissent groups hold nonviolent demonstrations, rallies, pickets, and occasional civil disobedience actions. These groups are usually small, little noticed, and ineffective at achieving their demands. Through their symbolic actions, however, the principled dissent groups are a shining moral light in the darkness.

The grassroots groups are composed of local citizens who oppose present conditions and policies but do not yet have the support of the majority local population. They represent the victims' perspective, provide direct services to victims, and also carry out programs similar to those of the other opposition groups.

Powerholders

The powerholders often promote policies that support the interests of society's privileged and powerful, and which violate the interests and values of the society as a whole. The powerholders maintain these policies primarily by keeping them out of the public spotlight and off the society's agenda of contested issues. They

have to keep these policies hidden from the general public because they know that the populace would be upset and demand changes if they knew the truth. The powerholders are able to maintain these policies and keep them hidden from the public by successfully carrying out their two-tact strategy of highly proclaiming their official doctrine and policies, stated in terms of the society's values and interests, while hiding from the public their actual or operative doctrines and policies.

Public

A political and social consensus supports the powerholders' official policies and status quo because the public does not know that the government is actually functioning according to the opposite operative doctrine policies. Consequently, the general populace is unaware that the social conditions and public policies violate their values and self interests; or, when they do know, they believe the justifications as to why they can't be changed or are needed to protect a higher cause or value. As a result, the public is not aware that there is a serious problem. Possibly only 10 to 15 percent of the population disagrees with the powerholders' policies.

Goals

The goals at this stage are:

- to document that a serious problem exists,
- to maintain an active opposition no matter how small, and
- to move to the next stages.

Pitfalls

The main danger is to be stuck in normal times indefinitely because of political naivete, not knowing the realities of political and social life, and feeling powerless to create change.

Conclusion

Normal times are politically quiet times because the powerholders successfully promote their official doctrine and policies while hiding their actual operative

doctrine and policies, thereby keeping the violations of conditions and their policies out of the public consciousness and off society's agenda. The opposition feels hopeless because it seems that the situation will continue indefinitely, and they feel powerless to change it. Beneath the calm surface, however, the contradictions between society's values and the powerholders' actual, operative policies hold the seeds for popular discontent that can create dramatic changes.

STAGE TWO: PROVE THE FAILURE OF INSTITUTIONS

The intensity of public feeling, opinion, and upset required for social movements to occur can happen only when the public realizes that the governmental policies violate widely held beliefs and values. The public's upset becomes especially intensified when official authorities violate the public trust by using the power of office to deceive the public and govern unfairly and unlawfully. Hannah Arendt wrote that "people are more likely driven to action by the unveiling of hypocrisy than the prevailing conditions." This was clearly shown by the dramatic turnaround of the American public's opinion of President Reagan after Irangate exposed that instead of acting on his official policy of leading the world's defiant fight against terrorists, his operative policy was actually cooperating, supporting, and making deals with terrorists.

Opposition

The opposition must prove both that the problem exists and that the official powerholders and institutions perpetuate the problem. Therefore, the opposition must:

- Undertake research to prove that a problem exists which violates social values and sensibilities.
- Prove that the official doctrine and policies of governmental powerholders and institutions violate society's values and the public trust. This must be not only from researching the facts but also from actually trying every avenue for official citizen participation in the democratic process for deciding on social policies and programs, and proving that they do not work.
- Testify, undertake challenges, and file complaints in every branch of the bureaucratic machinery at the local, state, and federal level of both public

and private bodies that are supposed to be open for citizen participation and redress.

- Prove that they are "kangaroo courts". Go to every decision-making body whether welcome or not.
- File suit in the courts.
- Take their concerns to city council, state assembly, and national Congress. These programs are usually primarily carried out through the auspices of professional opposition organizations.

Positive results are not expected now. The point is not to win the cases, but to prove that the powerholders are preventing the democratic system from working. Eventually, however, some of these cases might actually be won and have the powerful impact of creating a movement and social change. After twenty years in the courts, for example, the NAACP Legal Defense Fund's case of *Brown vs. U.S.* was won in the Supreme Court in 1954. It established the principle that "separate but equal" was no longer the law of the land, which became a legal basis for the civil rights movement.

Powerholders

The powerholders fight the opposition through the normal channels, usually winning easily while continuing their operative policies and programs. The powerholders do not feel much threatened or concerned, and they handle the situation as a problem of bureaucratic management rather than a crisis of public confidence and power. Through the mass media, they easily promote their official policies while hiding their operative policies thus successfully keeping the whole potential problem out of peoples' consciousness and the public spotlight, and off of society's agenda.

Public

Public opinion and social consensus continues to support the government's official policies and status quo, as the consciousness of the general population remains unchanged. Yet, even the low level of evolving conditions and opposition causes public opinion against these policies to rise from about 10 to 20 percent. Except for the rare media coverage of opponents' activities, the problem is still

neither in the public spotlight nor on society's agenda of contested issues.

Goals

- Document the problem, including the involvement of the powerholders.
- Document the citizens' attempt to use the normal channels of citizen participation and prove that they did not work.
- Become experts.
- Build small opposition organizations.

Pitfalls

- Holding the belief that social problems can be corrected by POOs using mainstream institutions and methods without building a new social consensus, mobilizing widespread grassroots opposition, and engaging in a long struggle, which uses extra-parliamentary nonviolent action that changes the present imbalance of power.
- Continuing to feel powerless and hopeless.

Conclusion

This stage can be particularly disheartening. The problem and the policies of powerholders continue unabated, there is little dissent or publicity, and the situation seems like it might continue indefinitely—as indeed it might. Yet the efforts of this stage can eventually be used to prove that the emperor has no clothes and is a prerequisite for any future social movement. Nevertheless, this stage is for the stout-hearted, determined, and persistent.

STAGE THREE: RIPENING CONDITIONS

The "take-off" of a new social movement requires preconditions that build up over many years. These conditions include broad historic developments, a growing discontented population of victims and allies, and a budding autonomous grassroots opposition, all of which encourage discontent with the present conditions, raise expectations that they can change, and provide the means to do it.

The historical forces are usually long-term, broad trends and events that worsen the problem, upset subpopulations, raise expectations, promote the means for new activism, and personify the problem. They are mostly outside the control of the opposition. For example, some of the historical forces that made the 1960s ripe for the Black civil rights movement included the emergence of independent Black African countries, the large Northern migration of Blacks who maintained their ties to the segregated South, the rising black college student population, and the 1954 Supreme Court's *Brown vs. U.S.* decision that provided a legal basis for full civil rights.

Opposition

A tremendous unheralded ripening process happens within the opposition:

- There needs to be a growing consciousness and discontent among subpopulations of victims and their allies, providing them with a new level of understanding about the seriousness of the problem, the values violations, how they are affected, and the illicit involvement of the powerholders and their institutions. The discontent can be caused by (1) either perceived or real worsening conditions, which creates many new victims, such as in the 1970s when hundreds of new atomic plant sites upset millions of Americans who lived nearby; (2) rising expectations, as when the new wave of Black college students felt themselves to be full citizens but were refused the simple civil rights of service at local lunch counters; or (3) personalization of the problem, in which the problem is revealed through the experience of real victims, as when four church women were killed in El Salvador in 1980.
- The growing numbers of discontented local people across the country quietly start new autonomous local groups, which as a whole form a "new wave" of grassroots opposition, which is independent from the established POOs. These groups soon become frustrated with the official institutions, channels, and powerholders, which they realize are totally biased in support of the status quo; and they become The Movement Action Plan 15 increasingly upset with some of the established POOs, whom they see as working in a dead-end process with the powerholders.

- Small local prototype demonstrations and nonviolent action campaigns begin to dramatize the problem, put a dim public spotlight on it, and set a precedent for future actions.
- A few key facilitator-visionaries provide the new-wave local opposition with information, ideology, training, networking, hope, and a vision of a rising opposition.
- Pre-existing networks and groups, which can provide support, solidarity, and participants for a new movement, need to become available to be used in the new movement. The nonintervention movement, for example, had available for its take-off church networks, which had lots of experience in Central America, and activists who had been in the nuclear weapons and energy movements, both of which had just got out of their own take-off stages.

Powerholders

Though irritated, the powerholders remain relatively unconcerned, believing that they can continue to contain the opposition through management of mainstream social, political, and communications institutions. The official policies remain publicly believed and unchallenged, and the operative policies continue to be hidden from the general populace.

Public

A public consensus to support the powerholders' policies, and the problem remains off society's agenda. Yet, the growing public awareness of the problem, discontent, and new wave opposition, primarily at the local level, quietly raises the public opinion opposing current powerholder policies to 30 percent, even though the issue remains off society's agenda.

Goals

The purpose of this stage is to help create the conditions for the take-off of a social movement. The goals are:

- Recognize historical conditions that help make a new movement possible.

- Create, inspire, and prepare the new wave groups, including the formation of new networks, leadership, and expertise that will spearhead the new movement.
- Prepare pre-existing networks to be concerned about the issue and involved in the upcoming movement.
- Personalize the problem.
- Begin a small prototype nonviolent action project.

Pitfalls

Some of the key hazards of this stage include:

- Not recognizing the ripening conditions for a new social movements.
- Having the bureaucracy, legalism, and centralized power of the POOs squash the creativity, independence, nonviolent methods, and spontaneity of the new grassroots groups.

Conclusions

The stage is set for new social movement. There is a critical problem that appears to be worsening, proven violations by the powerholders, many victims, spreading discontent, historical conditions, available pre-existing networks, and an emerging new wave of grassroots opposition. Yet, no one—the public, powerholders, or even the new wave activists—is expecting the emergence of a new movement.

STAGE FOUR: SOCIAL MOVEMENT TAKE-OFF

New social movements surprise and shock everyone when they burst into the public spotlight on the evening TV news and in newspaper headlines. Overnight, a previously unrecognized social problem becomes a social issue that everyone is talking about. It starts with a highly publicized, shocking incident, a "trigger event", followed by a nonviolent action campaign that includes large rallies and dramatic civil disobedience. Soon these are repeated in local communities around the country.

The trigger event is a shocking incident that dramatically reveals a critical social problem to the general public in a new and vivid way, such as the arrest of Rosa

Parks for refusing to move to the back of a Montgomery bus in 1955, NATO's 1979 announcement to deploy American Cruise and Pershing 2 nuclear weapons in Europe, or the Marcos government's shooting of Ninoy Aquino as he arrived at the Manila airport in 1983. Trigger events can be deliberate acts by individuals, governments, or the opponents, or they can be accidents.

By starkly revealing to the public that a social condition and powerholder policies blatantly violate widely held cherished social values, citizen self-interest, and the public trust, the trigger event instills a profound sense of moral outrage in the general populace. Consequently, the general population responds with great passion, demanding an explanation from the powerholders and ready to hear more information from the opposition. The trigger event is also a trumpet's call to action for the new wave opposition groups around the country.

Opposition

A new social movement is created only when the opposition organizes a dramatic nonviolent action campaign immediately following the trigger event and when the nonviolent action campaign is repeated in local areas across the country. The nonviolent action campaign keeps the public spotlight on the problem and builds social tension over time. This "politics as theater" process becomes a social crisis, which turns the problem into a public issue. The shooting of Aquino, for example, was followed the next week by a million people in a Marcos-banned funeral march down the streets of Manila, and the NATO Cruise and Pershing 2 decision was followed by gigantic protest demonstrations in the capitols of Europe.

The success of nonviolent action campaigns is based on sociodrama demonstrations. Sociodrama demonstrations are simple demonstrations that:

- are dramatic and exciting;
- enable demonstrators to put themselves into the key points where the powerholders carry out their policies;
- clearly reveal the values violations by the powerholders;
- show the movement supporting and representing the values, symbols, myths, and traditions of the society; and

- are repeatable in local communities across the country.

These are dilemma demonstrations in which the powerholders lose regardless of their reaction. If they ignore the demonstrators, the policies are prevented from being carried out. If, on the other hand, the demonstrators are harassed or arrested, it puts public sympathy on the side of the demonstrators and against the powerholders. For example, during the sit-ins when Blacks sat at the lunch counters to eat, if angry white crowds attacked them or the police arrested them, the public got upset and sided with the demonstrators; if the police did nothing, the Blacks would either have to be served or, just by sitting there, prevent business as usual.

The new movement takes off as the nonviolent action campaigns are their sociodrama actions are repeated in local communities throughout the country. The demonstrations in Manila, for example, were followed by demonstration throughout the Philippines. The 1977 Seabrook reactor occupation created immediate spontaneous support demonstrations across the country, and, within months, hundreds of new grassroots antinuclear energy groups started up, who soon began occupying their own local nuclear power plants.

Scores of new independent local action groups spring into being, forming a new wave decentralized grassroots autonomous opposition that is based on non violent resistance. Movement take-off is the result of thousands of people across the country taking spontaneous actions and forming new protest groups (or revitalizing old ones). These new groups usually adopt loose organizational structures that are based on direct participatory democracy, little formal structure, and loosely defined membership. Together these groups form a new wave of movement because they are a new force and are not connected to either the established POOs or principled dissent organizations. Why do social movements take off? Some of the reasons why movements take off are:

- The right conditions were created by the earlier stages. The Movement
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- The public, altered by the mass media because of the trigger event and nonviolent action campaigns, is outraged by the contradiction between its values and the social conditions and powerholders' operative policies.
- The new movement groups join the powerholders as the keepers of society's values and symbols.
- The new climate of social crisis gives hope and inspires action by many citizens.
- The repeatability of the nonviolent action campaign in local areas provides grassroots activists with an effective means for involvement, which they believe can be effective.
- Participation in the new movement gives meaning to many peoples' lives because it gives them an opportunity to act out their beliefs, feelings, and spirituality.

Powerholders

The powerholders are shocked, upset, and angry. They realize that the genie is out of the bottle. They have lost on the first law of political control: keep issues out of people's consciousness and the public spotlight, and off society's agendas. They take a hard line in defending their policies and criticizing the new movement, calling it radical, irresponsible, and even communist-inspired. While some liberal politicians support the movement's position, mainstream Republicans and Democrats alike continue to support existing government policies.

Public

Within a year or two, public opinion opposing government operative policies rapidly grows from 30 percent to 50 percent, as for the first time the general populace sees the operative policies and hears views countering those of the powerholders. The public is upset and concerned by the stark contrast between what they see and hear in the news and what the government tells them. That is, they begin to see for the first time the difference between the official and operative policies revealed to them by the trigger event and the movement.

Goals

The overall goal of this stage is to get the whole society to begin seeing, thinking, and acting on the social problem. A movement take-off gets the whole society moving on the issue. The specific goals are:

- Create a new grassroots-based social movement.
- Put the powerholders' policies in the public consciousness and spotlight and on society's agenda of contentious public issues.
- Create a public platform for the movement to educate the populace.
- Create public dissonance on the issue. That is, force the general population to have to think about the issue by having two contradictory views of reality presented to them constantly.
- Win the sympathies and the opinions of the public.
- Become recognized as the legitimate opposition. Getting the powerholders to change their minds and policies is not a goal of this stage!

Pitfalls

The main pitfalls of this stage are:

- political naivete;
- burnout from overwork, not seeing progress as success, and unrealistic expectations of immediate victory; and
- arrogant self-righteousness and radicalism.

Conclusion

The take-off stage is an exciting time of trigger event, dramatic actions, passion, a new social movement, public spotlight, crisis, high hopes and output of energy. Both a previously unrecognized social problem and official policies become a public issue, and within two years a majority public opinion is won. But take-off is the shortest stage. After relatively rapidly achieving the goals of this stage, the movement progresses to Stage Six. However, many activists don't recognize this success. Instead, they believe that the movement has failed and their own efforts have been futile; consequently, they move to Stage Five.

STAGE FIVE: IDENTITY CRISIS OF POWERLESSNESS

After a year or two, the high hopes of movement take-off seems inevitably to turn into despair. Most activists lose their faith that success is just around the corner and come to believe that it is never going to happen. They perceive that the powerholders are too strong, their movement has failed, and their own efforts have been futile. Most surprising is the fact that this identity crisis of powerlessness and failure happens when the movement is outrageously successful—when the movement has just achieved all of the goals of the take-off stage within two years. This stage of feelings of self-identity crisis and powerlessness occurs simultaneously with Stage Six because the movement as a whole has progressed to the majority stage.

Opposition

Belief that the movement is failing

Many activists conclude that their movement is failing because they believe that:

- The movement has not achieved its goals. After two years of hard effort, which included big demonstrations, dramatic civil disobedience, arrests, court scenes and even time in jail, media attention, and even winning a majority of public opinion against the powerholders' policies, the movement has not achieved any of its goals. The government is still waging the war in Vietnam, building five nuclear weapons a day, or sending aid to the contras. The problem, however, is not that the movement has failed to achieve its goals, but that expectations that its goal could possibly be achieved in such a short time were unrealistic. Achieving changes in public policies in the face of determined opposition of the powerholders takes time, often decades.
- Judging that the movement has failed because it has not achieved its goals after two years is analogous to parents criticizing their daughter for not graduating after completing two years in college with straight "A" grades. Parents don't do this because they know that achieving a B.S. degree is a four-year process. The movement, therefore should be judged not by whether it has won yet, but by how well it is progressing along the road of success.

- The movement has not had any "real" victories. This view is unable to accept the progress that the movement has made along the road of success, such as creating a massive grassroots-based social movement, putting the issue on society's agenda, or winning a majority of public opinion. Ironically, involvement in the movement tends to reduce activists' ability to identify short-term successes. Through the movement, activists learn about the enormity of the problem, the agonizing suffering of the victims, and the complicity of powerholders. The intensity of this experience tends to increase despair and the unwillingness to accept any short-term success short of achieving ultimate goals. "What difference does it make that a majority of the American people and Congress oppose contra aid, when people are still being killed in Central America?" This is another version of judging the movement for not having achieved its ultimate goals rather than by whether it is making reasonable progress along the road.
- The power holders seem too powerful—they have not changed either their minds or their policies, but defiantly proclaim them louder than ever, totally ignoring the protests of the movement and the objections of half of the populace. The failure of the central powerholders to change either their minds or policies is a poor indicator of the movement's progress. The central powerholders will be the last segment of society to change their minds and policies. The longer that the public sees that the powerholders are violating social values and ignoring the democratic majority opinion, the higher the political costs to the powerholders for continuing those policies. Continued use of public exposure of the powerholders upholding these policies in the face of public opinion, therefore, can be an indicator that the powerholders' original goal of keeping the issue out of public consciousness and off the society's agenda is failing. For example, with increasing worldwide media coverage of President Botha's proclamations of apartheid and the effects of this policy, the world's resistance to apartheid increases.
- The movement is dead because it no longer looks like the take-off stage. The image that most people have of successful social movement is that of the take-off stage—giant demonstrations, civil disobedience, media hype, crisis, and constant political theater—but this is always short-lived. Movements that are successful in take-off soon progress to the much more

powerful but more sedate-appearing majority stage, as described in the next section. Although movements in the majority stage appear to be smaller and less effective as they move from a national to local focus, and from mass actions to less visible grassroots organizing, they actually undergo enormous growth in size and power. The power of the invisible grassroots provide the power of national social movements.

- The powerholders and mass media report that the movement is dead, irrelevant, or non-existent. The powerholders and mass media not only report that the movement is failing, but they also refuse to acknowledge that a massive popular movement exists. Large demonstrations and majority public opposition are dismissed as "vaguely reminiscent of the Sixties", rather than recognized as social movements at least as big and relevant as those 20 years ago. And when movements do succeed, they are not given credit. The demise of nuclear energy is said to be caused by cost overruns, high lending rates, lack of safety, Chernobyl and Three Mile Island, rather than from the political and public opposition created by the people power.

Battle Fatigue

By the end of take-off, many activists suffer from "battle fatigue". After two years of virtual 'round-the-clock activity in a crisis atmosphere, at great personal sacrifice, many activists find themselves mentally and physically exhausted and don't see anything to show for it. Out of quilt or an extreme sense of urgency, many are unable to pace themselves with adequate rest, fun, leisure, and attendance to personal business. Eventually, large numbers of activists who were part of movement take-off lose hope and a sense of purpose; they become depressed, burn out, and drop out.

Stuck in Protest

Another reason why many activists become depressed at this time is that they are unable to switch from protesting against authority in a crisis atmosphere to waging long-term struggle to achieve positive changes. Many activists are unable to switch their view of the process of success from one of mass demonstrations to

that of winning the majority of public through long-term grassroots organizing. Consequently, being active in Stage Six feels like they are abandoning the movement. In addition, many principled dissenters believe that the majority stage movement is not pure enough. The new movement organizations are seen as a new oppressive authority. Many other activists originally joined the movement assuming it was a short-term time of crisis and are not prepared for long-term involvement. Finally, another reason why many activists are unable to switch to Stage Six is that they do not have the knowledge or skills required to understand or participate in the majority stage. For example, nonviolence trainers play a critical leadership and teaching role during the take-off stage, but virtually disappear in the majority stage because they lack the understanding and skills to train activists to participate in this stage.

Rebelliousness, machismo, and more "militant" action and violence are some of the negative effects of feelings of despair and powerlessness.

Some activists at this time adopt more militant, even violent, actions. They believe the nonviolent methods used to date have failed because they were too weak. New splinter groups are started to carry out the militant strategy, such as the Committee for Direct Action at Seabrook in 1979. These efforts are often reckless and defiant acts of despair, frustration and rage, which stem from the collapse of unrealistic expectations that the movement should have achieved its goals within the first two years. Because they turn off both other activists and the general public, militant actions invariably do more harm than good. These methods are also advocated by outside groups who want to use the movements to pursue their own ends, or by agent provocateurs.

The movement needs to make deliberate effort to undercut this problem. First, it needs to reduce the feelings of despair and disempowerment by providing activists with a long term strategic framework, such as MAP, which helps them realize that they are powerful and winning, not losing. Also, it is important that the movement adopt clear guidelines of total nonviolence, which are widely publicized and agreed to by all groups and activists which officially participate in the movement. The nonviolent policy must be enforced by having nonviolent guidelines and training for all demonstration participants, and by having adequate

"peacekeeping" at all demonstrations.

Widespread Burnout

The feelings of failure and exhaustion, the organizational crisis, the calls for militant actions, confusion, hopelessness, and powerlessness all contribute to widespread burnout among activists.

Organizational Crisis

The loose organizational model of the new wave local organizations begins to become a liability after six months. The loose structure promoted the flexibility, creativity, participatory democracy, independence, and solidarity needed for quick decisions and nonviolent actions during take-off. But after six months, the loose organizational structures tend to cause excessive inefficiency, participant burnout, and an informal hierarchy.

Toward Empowerment

Movement activists need to realize what the powerholders already know—that power ultimately lies with the people, not the powerholders. They need to recognize the power and success of social movements—including their own. Some ways in which activists can overcome their identity crisis of disempowerment are the following:

- Use an analytic framework of successful social movements, such as MAP, to evaluate their movement, identify successes, and set strategy and tactics.
- Form personal/political support groups that enable activists to participate in movements as holistic human beings, take care of their personal needs, reduce guilt, have fun, and provide support (and challenge) in doing political analysis and work.
- Adopt a strict policy of nonviolence.
- Adopt "empowerment" models of organization and leadership at both the national and local levels. The empowerment model is a third way that tries to maximize the positive and minimize the negatives of both the hierarchical and the loose models, trying to blend participatory democracy, efficiency, personal support, and effectiveness. This model of leadership

more resembles the nurturing mother than the strong patriarchal father. While the national organization leadership need to coordinate and represent the whole movement, their primary goal should be to nurture the empowerment of the grassroots and foster democracy and non-elitism within the whole movement.

- Help activists evolve from protestors to long-term social change agents. Provide social change agent training, which includes not only nonviolence but all the skills for understanding and organizing successful social change movements. Powerholders
- Continue a hardline strategy, including escalating their policies to prove that they are in charge and that both the movement and public have no effect.
- Infiltrate the movement to get intelligence and to confuse, disrupt, and discredit the new activism. Agent provocateurs promote wild schemes, violence, structurelessness, disorganization, rebelliousness, machismo, and schemes to dominate organizations.

Public

The general populace experiences dissonance, not knowing who or what to believe. While many agree with the movement's challenges, they also fear siding with dissidents and losing the security of the powerholders and status quo. The alternatives are unclear to them. The general citizenry is about evenly divided, 50 percent to 50 percent, between the powerholders and the movement. Movement violence, rebelliousness, and seeming anti-Americanism turn people off and tend to frighten them into supporting the powerholders' policies, police actions, and status quo.

Goals

The overall goal is to help activists become empowered and move on to Stage Six, to catch up with their movement. They need to learn what the long road of success looks like, and how far they have come along that road. Some specific goals are to help activists:

- become strategists by using a framework such as MAP,

- form political and personal support groups,
- adopt nonviolence,
- adopt empowerment models of organization and leadership, and
- move from protesters and long-life social change agents.

Pitfalls

The chief pitfalls of this stage that must be overcome are:

- Disempowerment—feeling the movement is losing when it is succeeding
- The "tyranny of structurelessness" and anti-leadership
- Rebellion, machismo, and violence
- Despair, burnout, and dropout

Conclusion

The crisis of identity and powerlessness is a personal crisis for activists. After the experience of a movement in take-off stage, their view of the world and themselves is transformed. They come to realize that the problem is more serious than they had thought, the governmental institutions, powerbrokers, and democratic processes which they thought would help solve social problems were actually part of the problem, and that the problem can only be resolved if they are part of the solution. Rather than feeling depressed and powerless, activists now need to recognize the power and success of themselves and their movement. The need to realize that their movement has successfully progressed to Stage Six, to the majority opinion stage, and they need to catch up to it by finding a role for themselves and the group in waging Stage Six.

Suggested Reading:

[The Movement Action Plan: A Strategic Framework Describing The Eight Stages of Successful Social Movements](#) by Bill Moyer, 1987