

## **Change Your Mind about Changing the World**

By: Reese Fernandez

President, Founding Partner of Rags2Riches

Count from 1 to 60 before moving on with this article.

Done?

While for you, it was just a minute, for 20 children around the world, that minute marked the end of their lives, the end of their dreams, and the end of the world's potential to have 20 citizens who should have made a difference.

My point is, time is of the essence. The issues of the world need to be treated with urgency. NOW is the best time to do something.

Unfortunately, we have been told a lot of things when it comes to changing the world. Some may be helpful, some just plain ambitious. Some are just convenient, and others are discouraging. Most of what we are told somehow gives us the excuse to slow down and not see the urgency of our situation. What I would like to share with you in this article are morsels of realizations that I gathered along my way as an aspiring social entrepreneur. The world needs help now, and the earlier we realize what needs to be done and what we could do about it, the better.

### **MYTH #1: Do not try to save the world; you could make a difference in your own little way**

to a certain extent, I agree. I agree that all of us must do our small part in making a difference. For instance, if we want to build the nation in our own small ways, we should start with reading the signs and following traffic rules. But come to think of it, these things are given. We don't need signs to follow them and we certainly don't need praise or great recognition when we do follow them. Little things are necessary but not quite enough for our big problems. Little things are the sparks that leads to big things but only when the flames are fanned. Try "Start Small, Dream Big" instead. That kind of paradigm shift may spell the difference between just "following traffic rules" to "revolutionizing the entire commuting systems to reduce carbon footprints" even if it just starts with your current circle of friends.

### **MYTH #2: You need a LOT of money to start a social enterprise and change the world**

If you have a great and revolutionary social enterprise idea, the money will follow. Don't get me wrong. It is still easier said than done. But it is not impossible and it is not even as difficult as it may seem. Rags2Riches started with PHP 10,000 (around 200USD) and a lot of heart. Sure, most people wait their

entire lives to earn a living in order to retire and eventually become a philanthropist. Some people also plan to work 2-5 years in corporate, get an MBA, and then start a business that would give livelihood to people. Those paths are noble, good, and perfectly fine. However, if you have a great idea NOW and you think it is needed NOW, don't be discouraged just because you don't have money and "everyone else" is doing something else other than taking a risk in something like this. Remember, time is of the essence. What you could do now, you must do now. And you are not alone and there are creative and innovative ways around this.

**MYTH #3: Great organizations start with great, charismatic founders and leaders. I'm not great and not that charismatic. I could not possibly start my social enterprise idea**

No "founder" could ever make something work alone. Sure, having a really charismatic leader who could bring people together would help. But a great team is what makes all the difference. So, find in you the right motivation, draft a good summary of your idea, get one or two believers, present to a strategic partner, and you are already off to a great start. It is also useful to know that the best social enterprises that are actually sustainable and that actually work were because of the collaboration of excellent teams comprised of passionate individuals. You don't need to be an actor, politician, or a celebrity, to be able to create change and be a beacon of positive influence.