



## CHAMPIONS OF CHANGE: CRAZY OR BRAVE?

"The ones who are crazy enough to think they can change the world are the ones who do."

— STEVE JOBS

**T**his issue of *CRST Global | Europe Edition* highlights a variety of topics related to change. The subject matter led me to contemplate the concept of change, an area I personally value, appreciate, and embrace. What factors influence change? More importantly, what characterizes the individuals who drive it—the champions of change?

Although there is often a clear need for change, as during the COVID-19 pandemic, there are also instances when it arises unexpectedly or initially seems unnecessary or by consensus impossible to achieve. A prime example in ophthalmology is phacoemulsification, a technique pioneered by Charles D. Kelman, MD, a man absolutely convinced that removal of a cataract through a small incision could be achieved. He tried and tried and by chance in a dentist's chair found a solution. The rest is history, and ophthalmology was completely transformed as a result. Similarly, thanks to the innovative thinking and perseverance of Gerrit Melles, MD, PhD, Descemet stripping automated endothelial keratoplasty and Descemet membrane endothelial keratoplasty have revolutionized corneal transplantation. These examples represent significant black swan events. It is important, however, not to overlook smaller changes that can gradually lead to considerable shifts in practice and thinking.

What drives people to effect change? Are they wired a little differently? These individuals likely have clear goals and a deep understanding and knowledge of the issues they aim to address. Their vision may be inspired by personal values or beliefs, a sense of compassion, or personal experiences of injustice or hardship generating a desire to ensure the same does not happen to anyone else.

Given the effort required to actualize their vision, champions of change must be willing to dedicate time and energy to achieving their goals. In other words, they are passionate. They are also risk-takers, unafraid to challenge dogma and the status quo. Undoubtedly tenacious, they are like a dog with a bone and refuse to let go despite setbacks, which can sometimes fuel their drive. Champions of change learn from their experiences, both positive and negative, and grow accordingly.

For change to be effective, collaboration and support are essential. As discussed in previous articles on innovation, building relationships and working toward a common goal can accelerate progress. Those involved in changes with a more social focus likely have a deep sense of empathy, an understanding of the needs and perspectives of others, and a strong ability to connect with them.

Overall, whether change is technological, social, or humanitarian, a common trait among the individuals leading it warrants admiration: bravery. To all those who have championed change or continue to do so for all the right reasons, please take a bow. We salute you! ■

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