Fundamentals of Social Entrepreneurship:  
Change the World Through Coaching and Social Action

New York University  
Robert F. Wagner Graduate School of Public Service  
Leonard N. Stern School of Business  
Fall 2009

Adjunct Professor: Ellen McGrath, Ph.D.  
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Tuesdays: 11:00 am – 1:45 pm, Tisch UC19  
Office Hours: Email to schedule

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course will introduce students to the social entrepreneurs, innovators, and visionaries who are creating new strategies for solving society’s problems. Students will examine traditional and contemporary methods of social change from history. These innovative case studies will highlight the successes of social change advocates in restoring the environment, resolving conflicts, curing diseases, overcoming poverty, and addressing other problems of social injustice. A pertinent course reader provides an overview of the current issues, challenges, and opportunities in the quickly changing field of social entrepreneurship. Best practices for profit, not-for-profit, and NGO’s will also be explored and discussed.

In the process of studying these examples, students will also learn and practice the skills and strategies for becoming an effective change agent and a successful social entrepreneur. Specifically, they will learn and have a chance to practice state-of-the-art coaching strategies to become more effective connectors, communicators, contributors, and strategists. Throughout the course, students will use a Transformative Coaching Portfolio to help them develop these skills and strategies discussed in class to apply in their own lives and better support their social action projects. At the end of the course, each student will be responsible for developing an original Blueprint for Social Innovation, a creative proposal for solving a societal problem, which they will be able to continue pursuing even after this class ends.
PROFESSOR BIO:

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Dr. McGrath, a clinical psychologist currently practicing in New York City, is consistently rated as one of America’s “outstanding” psychologists. Author of three books on stress and depression management, Dr. McGrath is the only Senior Media Consultant to the American Psychological Association. She was the psychology expert on ABC’s “Good Morning America” for two years, and continues to appear on ABC News, 20/20, and other national media. She is a past President of both the Media Psychology Division and the Division of Psychotherapy of the American Psychological Association, and an APA Council Representative.

Listed by three magazines as one of the top therapists in the country, Dr. McGrath was honored again in 2001 as the Outstanding Psychologist of the Year by the Psychotherapy Division of the American Psychological Association. In 1995, she was chosen “Business Woman of the Month” by Orange Coast Magazine. She was selected to be the retreat leader for the Women’s Young President Organization (YPO), a group of female company presidents and CEOs who are interested in successful coaching strategies.

With over twenty-five years of experience, Dr. McGrath also works as a coach and consultant for a number of Fortune 500 companies and their executives, as well as family owned businesses and individual executives. She has assisted executives in screening key prospective employees for hidden psychological problems, and has helped executives and executive teams to achieve their potentials. She is the President and Founder of the educational and training center, Bridge Coaching Institute, and has led numerous CORE 4 trainings for various profit and not-for-profit organizations, both nationally and internationally.

Dr. McGrath spent twelve years on the faculty at the University of California Irvine Medical School, in addition to four years at the University of Rochester School of Medicine. Currently, she teaches as an adjunct professor at New York University, dually appointed in the Wagner School of Public Service and the Stern School of Business. She teaches three courses on social entrepreneurship: an introductory course, an advanced course to support students starting social ventures, and a field study course offered on-site in various locations abroad. In these classes, she works with gifted young leaders to explore innovative models for creating positive social change in the world. She has found the CORE 4 skills to be particularly useful to her students, as an empowerment tool to both give them confidence in themselves and help them create the change that they envision. Her Advanced class, taught in the spring of 2009, was rated #1 by the students and received feedback such as, "This class changed my life!" and "This class is the best at NYU!" Her new book, CORE 4: The 4 Essential Skills to Transform Your World, Inside and Out, is used as one of the textbooks for the classes.

Dr. McGrath is an inspiring presenter and teacher who is able to genuinely connect with her audience, while making her classes and workshops fun! A mother of two now-grown sons, Dr. McGrath combines a warm, motherly energy with the knowledge and wisdom of 30 years of experience to bring out the best in all of her students.
REQUIRED READINGS:


McGrath, Ellen. (2008). *Core 4; The 4 Essential Skills For Changing Your World Inside and Out*. (Not available in the bookstore. Will be available to students in class on the first day at a discounted rate.)


Course Reader with various articles (see Reader Table of Contents for Citations)

(Not available in the bookstore. Will be available to students in class on the first day at a discounted rate.)

Recommended:


COURSE SCHEDULE:

PART 1: Theory Of Social Change & Social Entrepreneurship

Week 1
Sept. 8

Introduction to the Course - a brief history of social change strategies, and introduction to social entrepreneurship and the role of coaching in creating change.

Today we examine many of the most popular social change strategies that have been used in the past. We look at how ordinary people have attempted to fight the power and influence government decisions.

We look at many inspirational success stories of people who have won battles against Fortune 500 corporations and governments. However, we also look at the limits and challenges of the strategies that have been used in the past.

We will also introduce the concept of coaching as a tool for solving problems and creating change in one’s own life and society at large.

Readings: Course Reader: Sections 1-4 (pages 1-17)

McGrath, *Core 4: Introduction*

Scott Sherman, “The Theory of Transformative Action”
Week 2  
Sept. 15  
**Principles of Transformative Action & CORE 4 Coaching**

Transformative action is a new method of social change that turns enemies into allies, competition into cooperation, and hatred into goodwill. It has its origins in the ideas of nonviolent social change pioneered by Gandhi and King. Gandhi said that these strategies of social change were “a force more powerful than the atomic bomb.” Today we will explore how this new method of social change works.

In addition, we will look at the innovative CORE 4 coaching model that combines essential skills training and best-practice approaches to problem solving and support of goal completion, in any field. The “CORE 4,” which include connection and communication skills, bottom-line/boundary skills, conversion of negative to positive energy, and strategic skills for effective planning and execution, have been proven to help individuals and organizations reach new levels of productivity, balance, and success.

This class will look at how these two models can be used and applied by social entrepreneurs to create positive social change.

Readings:  
Course Reader: Sections 5, 7, 8 (pages 18-62, 86-93)  
Kristof & WuDunn, “The Women’s Crusade”  
(Handout in class and available on blackboard)

Homework:  
Transformative Coaching Portfolio questions: 5-6  
Class contract – sign in class today

PART 2: Social Entrepreneurial Models and Techniques for the Successful Social Entrepreneur

Week 3  
Sept 22  
**New Models of Sustainable Social Change**

Today’s businesses and organizations are faced with various challenges in our fast-paced, quickly changing, interconnected world, and many struggle to stay afloat. Social entrepreneurs and innovators must be able to think on their feet, be creative, and utilize best practices of both the for-profit and not-for-profit sectors. Today we will look at some examples of successful social ventures and the powerful leaders behind them.

Readings:  
McGrath, *Core 4*, Section 1

Homework:  
Transformative Coaching Portfolio questions: 7-8

**SPECIAL EVENT – TEAM BUILDING AND CONNECTION DINNER OUTSIDE OF CLASS** (Optional, but we encourage everyone to come) – Dr. McGrath will host this first class-bonding dinner at her Brooklyn Heights brownstone (right across from Wall St. and centrally located for all trains). Everyone is invited and encouraged to come Friday, Sept 25th, at 7:00pm. Please try to make it!
Week 4  
Sept. 29

**Conflict Resolution and Transformative Communication; Using Connector Skills to Aim for a Bullseye**

Social change strategies of the past have often fostered antagonism, division, and an adversarial stance of “us versus them.” Yet, in the past two decades, there has been a growing emphasis on conflict resolution through consensus, collaboration, negotiation, and the “mutual gains” approach. Today we look at some of the landmark literature in the field from scholars at Harvard and MIT, and discuss how to apply connector strategies. This will be a workshop in transformative action, conflict resolution, transformative communication, and the first strategy of the Core 4.

Readings: McGrath, *Core 4, Section 2’*

Homework: Transformative Coaching Portfolio question: 9-12

Week 5  
Oct. 6

**Overcoming Obstacles to Social Change**

There are many good reasons why people don’t get involved in social change: everything from a feeling of powerlessness, to the belief that it will take too much time and energy. In today’s class, we examine how people overcome such obstacles to social change. How is it that some people become social innovators, entrepreneurs, and agents of transformation? Many social change advocates are attempting to get people to transform their behavior – whether through changing environmental practices, or protecting public health, or influencing other lifestyle and consumer decisions. However, most people are resistant to change. Today’s class will discuss the scientific basis behind how people actually do change, and the best practices of change agents.

McGrath, *Core 4, Section 3*

Homework: Transformative Coaching Portfolio questions: 13-19 (continue in Week 6)

Week 6  
Oct. 13

**Positive Psychology; Flipping the Switch**

Positive psychology is an emerging new field that looks at scientific evidence of how people perform at their best. It studies how people most effectively find happiness, peace, compassion, optimism, hope, joy, and resilience to adversity.

Today we look at the studies that document how people are most successful in transforming their own lives and their communities. Key principles include flow and positivity.

During this class, we also engage in a session of “Appreciative Inquiry,” an approach to change that focuses on strengths and assets, rather than deficits and pathologies.

Readings:  
Course Reader: Sections 10 & 11 (pages 107-125)  
Zimbardo, P. (2009)

Homework: Transformative Coaching Portfolio questions: (continue with 13-19)
**Week 7**
*Oct. 20*

**How People Change Their Behaviors**

Many social change advocates are attempting to get people to transform their behavior – whether through changing environmental practices, protecting public health, or influencing other lifestyle and consumer decisions. However, most people are resistant to change. Today’s class will discuss the scientific basis behind how people actually do change, and the best practices of change agents. In addition, we will work more with the second skill of the Core 4 – Liner. By learning the strategies of setting good boundaries, we make sure to understand and respect our own limitations and needs when interacting with others. We will also do more practice in Connector and Converter skills, which can help us to more positively influence others.

Readings: Course Reader: Section 9 (pages 94-106)

Homework: Transformative Coaching Portfolio questions: 20-22

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**Week 8**
*Oct. 27*

**Resilience, Optimism, and the Ability to Overcome Setbacks and Failures; Taking Action and Risks**

Any movement for social change is inevitably going to face obstacles, setbacks, and failures. Campaigns for social justice often take years or decades. A crucial issue for social change advocates, therefore, is how to respond effectively to failure, and how to overcome barriers to progress. Today’s class will examine this issue from the perspective of both social movement theorists and practitioners of social change. Case studies include a young woman fighting for human rights in Burma, one of the world’s most brutal military states; another woman working for gay and lesbian rights; and a third woman who started the Global Fund for Children to take on child poverty worldwide. In each case, the social entrepreneurs had to face tremendous adversity, but were able to succeed in their ambitious campaigns.

Another one of the strategies of successful social change agents is the tendency to try new things, experiment, take risks, and leap into action. Rather than becoming stuck in the “paralysis of analysis,” effective social entrepreneurs and activists take chances and learn from their mistakes.

Readings: Bornstein, D.

McGrath, *Core 4*, Section 4

Homework: Transformative Coaching Portfolio questions: 23-25

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**SPECIAL EVENT – HALLOWEEN OPEN HOUSE FOR SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURS**
(Optional, but please try to come) – For this event, current students are highly encouraged to come and we will also be inviting students from last year’s classes and social entrepreneurs from the community for a meet-and-greet with various social entrepreneurs. The Open House will be held at Dr. McGrath’s home on Saturday October 31st from 2:00-5:00. And if you are interested in seeing the pretty amazing sights and scenes of Halloween on Garden Place, including hundreds of creatively dressed neighborhood kids, please stick around for Trick-or-Treating from 5:00-7:00.
PART 3: The Strategies for Effective Social Transformation

Week 9  
Nov 3  
**Becoming a Successful Social Entrepreneur: Transformative Leadership, Bold Visions, and Strategic Planning**

Transformative action has a very different view of power than traditional activism. Today most social change agents try to fight the power, or influence those people in power to coerce them to make changes in society. Transformative action is based on the principle that ordinary people already have the power to make changes in their lives. Today we look at new perspectives on empowerment, leadership, and authority, and explore how successful leaders take the initiative and action as a powerful force in society.

Historically, strategic planning has been an area studied in business schools and management consulting firms with regards to large corporations. Recently, however, nonprofits and citizen advocates have begun to recognize the importance of strategic planning in crafting initiatives for social change. Today we review some of the best ideas on the subject, and see how the principles of strategic planning have begun to transform grassroots strategies for change. We will look at making statements of need, goals, objectives, measurements, and budgets.

Many scholars have recently begun to question the effectiveness of traditional social change organizations. While many of these groups have relied on anecdotal evidence to prove their claims of efficacy, there is a new demand for accountability: more rigorous standards for measuring and assessing the results of nonprofit and social change strategies. Today we look at the latest theories and practices for creating accurate feedback systems. We will also incorporate the fourth skill of the Core 4, Strategist, which will help us to establish, maintain, and complete the goals that we set.

Reading: Course Reader: Section 12 (pages 126-end)  
Homework: Transformative Coaching Portfolio question: 26  
Blueprint 1, 4, 6, 7, 8

PART 4: Creating a Blueprint for Social Transformation

Week 10  
Nov. 10  
**Relationship-building: social networking and finding allies**

One of the keys to success in social change is finding allies who can help you achieve your goals. Studies indicate that grassroots organizations and initiatives for social change often succeed or fail to the degree that they are participatory and involve alliances with key stakeholders.

The power of cooperation and synergy is very important. In transformative action, the idea is that all people – including people commonly thought of as “the enemy” (e.g., corporate executives, government officials, etc.) – are potential allies and supporters. Today we show you how social change agents find common cause with other people, identify their most important areas of self-interest, and win them over so that everyone can work together. We will examine the case study of how this relationship building helped transform one of the most polluted cities in America into a model for environmental sustainability.

Readings: McGrath, Core 4, Conclusion  
Homework: Transformative Coaching Portfolio question: 27-28  
DUE NEXT WEEK!  
Blueprint 5
Week 11
Nov. 17

**Student presentations of Transformative Coaching Portfolios**

**FULL, FINAL PORTFOLIOS DUE TODAY!**

Today will be a day to share your portfolios with the members of your small groups and with the class. We will also continue to talk about your projects for social transformation, which will be our main focus during the final 3 weeks of the class.

Homework: Review all course readings for next week’s exam
Continue working on Blueprint, incorporating feedback from today’s workshop

Week 12
Nov. 24

**Part 1:**

**Reading Quiz**

**READING QUIZ!** Could cover the major themes from any of the readings in Course Reader, CORE 4, and Handouts. If you have been doing the reading and participating in class discussions, this shouldn’t be a difficult quiz.

**Part 2:**

**More Portfolio Presentations**

After finishing the reading quiz, we will use the remainder of the class to continue with presentations of the transformative coaching portfolios.

Week 13
Dec. 1

**Fundraising and financing for social change**

According to social movement theory, groups will be most successful in creating social change to the degree that they can mobilize resources. Yet most nonprofits, social activists, and community advocates have historically lacked sufficient funds to promote their agendas fully. Now a new generation of scholars and practitioners are creating innovative methods for generating funds, from Bill Shore’s “community wealth ventures” to Jed Emerson’s “blended value” model. Today we will review several of these emerging models in detail. We will explore how social entrepreneurs, innovators, visionaries, and problem solvers find the money to fund their organizational projects.

Homework: Blueprint 2, 9, 10
BE PREPARED TO PRESENT ELEVATOR PITCHES!

Week 14
Dec. 8

**Blueprint for social change and communicating your vision**

One of the most important skills for social innovators and entrepreneurs is to articulate a clear, compelling vision of a better future. Although many activists are very good at protesting and demonstrating against what they don’t like in society, it is even more important for them to put forth a positive alternative. In today’s class, students will get to practice giving a 30 second elevator pitch to communicate their vision to others and will get feedback on how their pitch comes across to listeners.
In addition, we will check in on the progress of the Blueprint for Social Change assignment, answering questions and providing any support needed before final reports are submitted.

Homework: Blueprint 3

Week 15  
Dec. 15  

**Summary of what works in Social Entrepreneurship and future applications**

**FINAL BLUEPRINTS DUE TODAY!**

We conclude the course by talking about the possibilities for widespread change and transformation in the world over the coming decades. Is it really possible for ordinary people to solve the huge crises that face us in the future? Together, we will reflect on what we have accomplished over the course of the term and discuss future possibilities for using coaching and transformative action as social entrepreneurs and to change the world.

**SPECIAL EVENT – END-OF-TERM CELEBRATION PARTY!!!** After our final day of class, Dr. McGrath will host a small holiday party for members of the class to celebrate our accomplishments of the term. The party will be held at her brownstone in Brooklyn Heights at 6:00 pm Friday May 1st.

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**CLASS REQUIREMENTS**

1. **Class Participation**

The success of this course depends on the active, enthusiastic participation of each student. Students ought to display great initiative, motivation, and a passion for learning. It is essential that students be here every day, especially because we only meet only 14 times throughout the fall semester. It’s also imperative that you come to class on time and come to class prepared. Please do the assigned readings before class and keep your portfolio up to date. In order to have the greatest chance of successfully influencing other people and changing the world, you need to be professional!

2. **Experience with social change outside the classroom**

This class is not just about theory. You can have excellent intellectual discussions about how to change the world, but you also need to get involved in a project and learn important skills necessary to create effective change and make the world a better place.
During the thirteen weeks of the term, you will be engaged in four hours per week working on a campaign for change in your community. Perhaps most of you are already doing this: You may be involved with a student environmental group on campus, or you may be working to increase diversity at NYU. Perhaps you volunteer at a nonprofit organization; perhaps you mentor children, or you are working for a political cause.

Choose an issue about which you are passionate. Choose something that would be deeply meaningful for you, a cause in which you believe deeply. Choose something you would love to spend at least 4 hours each week helping to promote.

You will have a chance to apply what you are learning in this course to your own project for social transformation. You will be learning about how the most effective social change organizations win people over to their cause, how they overcome conflicts, how they gain power, and how they exercise leadership.

Throughout the quarter, we will be reflecting on our experiences with the different social change organizations. Do you think your group, your project, or your campaign is effective? Why or why not? How could it improve? Your responses will form part of your portfolio.

3. Accountability Groups

Because of the size of the class, we will do many activities and discussions in smaller, breakout groups. Within these groups, you will encourage each other to excel and will challenge each other to be accountable to your classmates and to yourselves for both the work in this class and your social change projects outside the classroom. Working with an accountability and support team like this can help you achieve dramatic results in personal and social change, in a supportive “win-win” atmosphere.

4. Transformative Coaching Portfolio

This is a class about both social change and personal change. The two are interconnected. As Gandhi said, “You must be the change that you wish to see in the world.”

Therefore, you will be keeping a Transformative Coaching Portfolio throughout the term. This portfolio will measure your ability and progress to transform problems into opportunities, overcome adversity, and work towards achieving your goals and dreams.

The portfolio is a record of your progress in this class. Every class you will be given several questions. These are meant to be fun, intellectually stimulating, thought provoking, and exciting. You will put your responses together in a portfolio that represents the best of your dreams and visions for social change.

Many students have called the portfolio the most meaningful and significant educational assignment they have ever had. We hope that you will agree.
5. Blueprint for Social Change

In this class, we will be teaching you the fundamental principles for solving problems, fostering innovation, and creating social change. Then we want each of you to apply these lessons. You will write up a blueprint for solving some problem in your community. It is a strategic action plan for change.

6. Reading Quiz

Any of the required course readings are fair game for this reading quiz. You are not expected to memorize any statistics or minor details from the readings. Rather, this quiz will address the major topics and themes from the readings. It is to encourage you to read and understand these important concepts that will support you, both now and later in life, in becoming a successful social entrepreneur. If you keep up with the reading and participate in class discussion, you should have no trouble with this quiz.

GRADING POLICIES

What is most important in this class is that you learn the skills and action strategies to help you change the world. The reading is to support this change process and will greatly enhance your learning experience, but you are not expected to memorize every detail of the texts. The reading quiz is meant to be reinforcement for you on major themes and concepts from the reading, but it is hardly the emphasis of your grade. Instead the grade breakdown is as follows:

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We will not accept late work.

GRADING CRITERIA

Participation grading scale:

A - You are an outstanding, invaluable contributor to class discussions. The class would be considerably poorer without your presence. You speak often, engage your fellow students, and always offer intelligent, thoughtful opinions. Your level of energy and enthusiasm is very high. You are passionate about learning and come to class with an open mind to new ideas; you always show great motivation and interest. You complete all the assignments, and you do an excellent,
thorough job on each one. You come to every class session and you are always on time. You know the names of all of your fellow students and empower other people to do their best. You care about your classmates and how they are doing in class.

B - You are an active participant in class discussions. You seem to be showing a great deal of interest, even if you are a naturally quiet person. You are a very active listener, and you appear to respect the opinions of your fellow students. You often contribute many intelligent ideas to the class discussions. You complete all the class assignments, and it appears that you put a great deal of thought and effort into them. You go beyond what is required of you. You are absent or late to no more than 2 classes. You know at least 80 percent of your classmates’ names.

C - You have an acceptable level of class participation. You occasionally participate in a class discussion, although not very much. If you are a naturally quiet person, you at least seem to be paying attention and showing interest. You complete all the assignments and you do what is required of you. You are absent or late to no more than 4 classes. You know at least 67 percent of your classmates’ names.

D - You are physically present in class, but your mind seems to be somewhere else. You do not seem to pay attention (or even to disguise your boredom). You rarely participate in class discussions. Even when called on to answer a question, you have very little to say. Sometimes you seem to be on the verge of sleeping, or melting into your chair. You complete the assignments, but it appears like you put little time or effort into them. You are late or absent more than 4 times. You know less than 67 percent of your classmates’ names.

F - You miss class often. You do not participate at all. You show no interest whatsoever in the subject matter, the readings, or the opinions of your fellow students. You do not complete many of the assignments. Overall, you put no effort into the class. You are absent or late to class more than 7 times. You know less than 50 percent of your classmates’ names.

OTHER CLASS RULES:

Out of respect to the professor, guest lecturers, and your classmates:

1. Cell phones must be turned off during class.

2. Computers are not allowed in class; though sometimes helpful for note-taking, we find that they provide too much distraction because of the internet, email, etc. and disrupt class discussion and participation. (Please see instructor if you have any special needs that require you to use a computer for note-taking, rather than hand-writing notes, as per our policy below.)

3. Please arrive on time to the start of class and return from breaks in a timely manner.
POLICY ON DISABILITIES:

I encourage students with disabilities, including “invisible” disabilities to discuss with me after class or during my office hours appropriate accommodations that might be helpful to them.

Terms and Limitations:

By enrolling in this class, you agree to all the terms and limitations of the syllabus, which serves as a legally binding contract between the party of the first part (hereinafter referred to as "the professor") and the party of the second part (hereinafter referred to as "the students."). This contract will be in accordance with all federal and state regulations, pursuant to the rules set forth by New York University, and any applicable statutes of the United States or the county of New York, except where the professor decides otherwise. The rules, requirements, and benefits of this contract are subject to change at the end of the first week of classes, or at any other time by the University or other governing authorities, including, but not limited to, the professor and the administrators of the educational department under which this course is offered. The professor reserves the right to change the terms of the contract at will, and may exercise his personal discretion in revoking all rights of the students without just cause. No person is authorized nor entitled to refute the terms of this contract, nor subject the policies described herein to any form of strict scrutiny or critical questioning.