

# HOW TO WIN A REVOLUTION WITHOUT KILLING ANYONE

“The first duty of a revolutionist is to get away with it. The second duty is to eat breakfast. I ain't going!” Words from American activist Abbie Hoffman - over bacon and eggs in a coffee shop - to cops arresting him in Chicago.

Abbie was right on the first count. You have to get away with it. At school I was 20% class and 80% rebellion. My round pegs didn't fit in the square holes most teachers were shoveling. Then I got kicked out of school at 17 because I became a Dad. Forty years later I am, by invitation, a governor on the school's board - irony as sweet as Audrey Hepburn in Roman Holiday.

There's a moral there somewhere – along with 40 years in global business - and so some thoughts on insurgency.

Getting to the future first is important. The fastest route is reinvention, and that takes revolution. As a restless spirit, I've championed the idea that nothing succeeds like excess. To get ahead in life - to fight tyranny, conformity, apathy and mediocrity - nothing beats revolution.

Take business. Five revolutions are carving out incredible value:

1. **The Consumer Revolution** – a power shift to consumers fomented by technology, competition, and choice. Now that the consumer is boss, she's demanding companies do what's right, or get out of Dodge.
2. **The Velocity Revolution** – Product and purchase cycles are shortening. With technology de-zoning time, speed to market separates winners from losers. Just-in-time retailers like Sweden's Hennes & Mauritz and instant home heroes like podcasters are remodelling business.
3. **The Sisomo Revolution** - Consumers find Sight, Sound and Motion on screen irresistible. TV was the greatest selling medium ever. Now we're seeing new screens make story telling richer. The new TV is in your pocket. The new company connects the family of screens.
4. **The China Revolution**. Extraordinary manufacturing capability and price are being up-skilled by creativity and design. Italy won't beat China on price, so join them as partners, mentors, inspirers.
5. **The Hybrid Revolution**. Ignore Egon's safety tip for Ghostbusters: “Don't cross the streams.” Hybrids ideas are the future. Hybrid cars. Hybrid kids. Hybrid teams. Hybrid cultures. Hybrid countries. Bring what is different together, and you can get to a better place. The strategy is worth revisiting:

**Peter:** Excuse me, Egon, you said crossing the streams was bad.

**Ray:** Cross the streams...

**Peter:** You're gonna endanger us, you're gonna endanger our client. The nice lady who paid us in advance before she became a dog.

**Egon:** Not necessarily. There's definitely a very slim chance we'll survive.

**Peter:** I love this plan! I'm excited to be a part of it. Let's do it!

I've started revolutions. The trick is to isolate the cynics, get your rebels charging in the right direction (forward to progress!!), and avoid bloodshed.

Violent conflict is unhelpful. As the world's premier philosopher, Homer Simpson says: "If he's so smart, how come he's dead?" But if the choice is lion or lemming, I'm growing a mane. Russell Crowe inspired this point in the movie *Gladiator*. David Ben-Gurion underlined it with reality when questioned on Israel's aggressive defence strategy, "The absence of alternatives focuses the mind."

Revolutions demand courage and optimism, sometimes in the face of impossible odds. Few know it, but the most decorated servicewoman of WWII, and the Gestapo's most-wanted person was Nancy Wake, a New Zealander. She led an army of 7,000 Maquis troops in guerrilla warfare to sabotage the Nazis. She once cycled an incredible 500 km in 72 hours - across German checkpoints - to deliver messages critical to supply drops. Now 94, Nancy lives still, in a London nursing home.

Most of you will relate to the struggle for a better life, without the violent extremes. If you're not disrupting your status quo, chances are it's holding you back. The Chairman of Toyota once told me: "Kevin, I am not at all satisfied with the current Toyota I see in front of me. Toyota doesn't need to change itself - it needs to overthrow itself." So five ideas to overthrow you:

1. **If you can't break the rules, change them!** It's much better to make the competition irrelevant than go to war with them. This bloodless coup is a fantastic book on reinvention, *Blue Ocean Strategy* by W.Chan Kim and Renée Mauborgne. The key is to eliminate what's taken for granted, reduce what's unnecessary, overcome what's been compromised and create what's never been offered. Cirque du Soleil got rid of the animals and three rings, glamorized the tent and added theme, flair, intellect, music, dance and multiple productions. They busted up the market boundary of theatre and circus. Whatever you're revolting against, costs fall, attraction increases and people will flock to your cause. Best of all, there's no death for breakfast.

2. **Make it Fun** Every joke is a tiny revolution, said George Orwell. The bigger point is that joy builds momentum that can disrupt hegemony, orthodoxy and suppression. Just ask the DIY Inspirational Consumers in the Consumer Revolution. The opportunity to design their own trainers, build websites, mix music CDs, make state of the art movies, invent characters in games and then tell everyone about it is irresistible and - as big business has found - irrepressible. Apply this where you like. In Italy women spend on average 21 hours a week on household chores other than cooking compared with just four hours for Americans. Time for revolution now. Come on ladies! Someone design a vacuum cleaner with a TV screen, football channels and headphones.... and put your husband to work.
3. **Lead with Inspiration** The problem with the simple leadership model is that leaders need followers. Most rebels don't have "born to follow" tattooed on their buttocks. Inspiration is uplifting, emotional and best of all, contagious. Think of the movements inspired by Martin Luther King, Ghandi, Dylan. The key is to help your believers do the things they thought were just beyond their grasp. Continuously inspire them to exceed personal best in pursuit of the dream. That takes courage, but in turn transforms your life with fun, adventure, passion and commitment. A mate of mine is a life skills expert. John Wareham, who has a stutter, has created a life-altering program for inmates at New York's Rikers Island prison, the world's largest penal colony. What is inspiration? A guy with a speech impediment teaching public speaking to a bunch of felons! When people are at their lowest, inspiration is the light at the end of a dark tunnel. As Saul Alinsky - the touchstone of 1960s revolutionaries and author of *Rules for Radicals*, put it: "Last guys don't finish nice."
4. **Believe in the tipping point** Since the publication of Gladwell's book *The Tipping Point: How Little Things Can Make a Big Difference*, the idea has grown wings. It takes time for revolutions to catch on, but when they do, they catch on like fire. Kevin Kelly, "senior maverick" at *Wired* magazine believes there will be more change in the next 50 years of science than in the last 400 years. The most successful immigrant in America was a Neapolitan street food. In the 1940s pizza was slow to catch on. By the late 1950s it was taking over America. Today 93 percent of Americans eat pizza at least once a month! Don't ever give up on your revolution. Like water wearing away a mountain one drip at a time, there are few problems that can't be solved if enough people commit themselves. We saw it

happen with Band Aid. We see it with removal of land mines in Africa. Not all at once, but one landmine at a time.

5. **Keep the safety on** On the front lines of the Pepsi v.s Coke Battle, in the late 1980s, I machine gunned a Coca-cola vending machine in a Toronto hotel. We had people diving under tables and heading for the doors. But we also had blanks and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police riding shotgun. In the early 90s, at Australasian brewer, Lion Nathan I brought a live lion to my first meeting with analysts. It was on a leash - I think!! Last year in a public speech (also in Toronto), a worldwide creative director said there aren't more female creative directors "because they're crap" and they eventually "wimp out" and "go off and suckle something." He resigned. Guys, if you have to oil your barrel going over the ramparts, don't shoot yourself in the backside.

Back to my opening thought on getting kicked out of school. When told to leave, the headmaster took away my rugby jersey. As the team captain, I was humiliated. Four years ago the school's principal tracked me down. He convinced me to go back to the school and inspire the kids. I went to a rugby game there and afterwards the boys took me into the dressing room. The captain took off his jersey and handed it to me to replace the jersey taken off me 40 years ago. I was deeply moved. That's revolution for you.

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