

INSTITUTIONAL RESISTANCE WHEN INITIATING CHANGE



DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT & CHANGE

By Barry Cassidy

People think that when change happens, it happens quickly and swiftly. That is not the case in most situations. Being an agent of change, I have gotten used to it and try not to take it personally when I am attacked for “not knowing what I am doing.”

Most cases, I know exactly what I am doing. But not always, as change is an ever moving and illusive concept at times. Change is done through a stochastic process which produces random events “in” and results “out,” which are influenced by that input. The random events “in” are not planned events, and they do have an effect on the final outcome in some way.

When I wrote about this in a previous article, I used the example of the people living above the stores in downtown Phoenixville, putting their garbage in the trash cans in front of the stores. When I removed all of the garbage cans, dirty diapers started appearing in every nook and cranny as a result of a woman with a new born who had an inadequate trash disposal process. These kinds of incidents happen all the time. Someone is affected by change, and they have to adapt or react.

These are normal issues when implementing change. Sometimes stuff happens that is symptomatic of a broken situation, but in many cases, it’s just a case of someone not recognizing change, and having to deal with it when it is initiated.

There is a more real threat to implementing change, which happens before the change takes place. There are rarely “zero sum” effects from change. There is

something that is more in favor of one way of doing things than another. In many cases that is what is considered someone’s ox being gored.

I look at why we cannot, as a country, address the immigration issue. My guess is that you cannot change the current immigration system because it is too lucrative to too many people. The hospitality and agribusiness lobbies are very powerful. Does anyone still think that the drug cartels with billions and billions of dollars earned, which cannot be reported, are also not part of the scenario? People are making a lot of money on the current scenario and resist a change because it impacts them monetarily.

We live in a world where capitalism or what is currently passing for capitalism is king. Amassing money is what it is all about and really be damned with the public good. There are covers for the public good such as arguments that personalize the fight to somehow justify it. Take for example the tactic of putting women and children in “harm’s way” to charge the border recently. So, you have some women carrying babies charge the border while men stand behind and throw rocks at the border guards. The border guards

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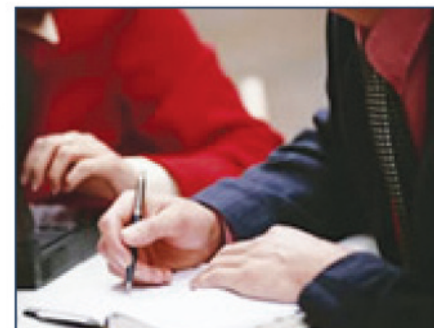
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shot tear gas and the women and kids were impacted. The story is not about how some nitwits used women and babies as a shield for their attempt to illegally enter the country. It was more concentrated on the fact that the kids were impacted. This is a cover story.

You have to wonder why the press would cover the story like it did rather than look at why women and children thought they could get past border guards with riot gear, barbed wire and guns. Why women and babies were up front while the men were in the rear throwing rocks? One could say that it worked at the Mexican border, why not here in the USA? It has nothing to do with the attempt. It has to do with the powerful influences that make the story be covered the way it was covered.

Monied interests control things far beyond your imagination — the news, the government, and although we consider ourselves free, we are in a very confined wealth framework. Ninety-nine percent of the wealth is controlled by one percent of the population. Of the remaining one percent, 85 percent of that wealth is controlled is controlled by 15 percent of the

population, who many call the costal elite. In government and business, there are ways of doing things that are governed by regulations and protocols that are often (well more than often... but for the sake of this column we will use often) to the benefit of those who want to keep that wealth.

I am not trying to rock anyone's world here because most of you reading this are part of that 15-percent group that are living off the 85 percent of the remaining one percent of the wealth. If I am to make full disclosure, "it is me too." I live in that world, and I do quite well living in that world.

Recently I initiated a train project a process that pretty much eliminates the hocus pocus of government studies, which spend large sums of money spread out over decades, spent studying something that will never happen. The backlash has made me realize recently that I have become the enemy. I relish the role.

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