

# Connecting to Change the World: Harnessing the Power of Networks for Social Impact

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HARNESSING THE POWER OF  
NETWORKS FOR SOCIAL IMPACT

## CONNECTING TO CHANGE THE WORLD



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**Peter Plastrik, Madeleine Taylor, John Cleveland : Connecting to Change the World: Harnessing the Power of Networks for Social Impact** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Connecting to Change the World: Harnessing the Power of Networks for Social Impact:

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. RareBy Pat BrandesIrsquo;ve just finished the book, Connecting to Change the World. WOW, i sat down to read it and actually stayed sitting for several hours over two days. Doing anything for several hours in a row is rare these days, but itrsquo;s been over a decade since Irsquo;ve read a book

about the theory of social change work that I actually enjoyed! It's wonderful to see the practice of networks which I followed closely for many years, synthesized so brilliantly. The distinctions and logic make the book enormously practical for all those who are engaged in networked work. Plus, it's rare to find writing that concisely conveys strategic concepts while weaving in the essential practice tactics. Not to mention, it's written like a captivating narrative. I'm usually bored by these kinds of books but I was totally engaged because of the depth and breadth of the author's practical and theoretical knowledge and the good writing.

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. "Connecting..." is actually fun to read. Given the wicked problems the world faces, and the need to build networks to address them, this book is invaluable. I've worked in, and with social change non-profits, networks and associations for over 30 years, and but still learned a ton. "Connecting..." is actually fun to read, and chock full of practical stories, insights, processes and guiding principles for servant leaders and members to build member-driven, continuously improving networks. It addresses why there are inherent difficulties in networks made of organizations. It provides a high-power lens with which to examine and precisely improve network functions (and reduce dysfunction). "Connecting..." raised and largely answered provocative questions:

1. Are we collecting the right kind of information often enough?
2. How might our value proposition need adjustment (again)?
3. Key network nodes can come to feel like they are "faced with insurmountable opportunities," to quote Walt Kelly's Pogo. How can networks manage this overload so as to avoid its many, serious negative consequences? What about when it's difficult to simply engage less, the interactions keep escalating, and additional resources are not available?
4. Most people, organizations and funders want to support doers, not servant leaders whose work is indirect. How can networks find sustained resources to support their "unsexy" intermediary role? Networks commonly experience failures of leadership, are over-whelmed by factors outside participants' influence, and are even intentionally destroyed by those who find them a threat to their interests and/or personality. The authors have such rich depth of experience and research, can a subsequent edition or an article offer case study analyses, and lessons learned from such challenges?

This book can even help the millions of interconnected individuals and organizations working for social change which aren't part of formal networks. May they find and use it!

Paul Lipke  
Senior Advisor, Energy Buildings, Health Care Without Harm

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Lead to Be A Social Change Network Magician

By Regular Reader

Anyone can connect people for social change, but only a few know how to build a powerful social change network from these connections. Connecting to Change the World gives away all the secrets along with illustrative stories of how social entrepreneurs have got it done. If you read this book, you will understand better how to use networks for social change. I studied with these masters for years (my network is highlighted in the book). They have put all they know in one place. I am sharing this book with everyone who asks me how I built a vibrant social change network.

Something new and important is afoot. Nonprofit and philanthropic organizations are under increasing pressure to do more and to do better to increase and improve productivity with fewer resources. Social entrepreneurs, community-minded leaders, nonprofit organizations, and philanthropists now recognize that to achieve greater impact they must adopt a network-centric approach to solving difficult problems. Building networks of like-minded organizations and people offers them a way to weave together and create strong alliances that get better leverage, performance, and results than any single organization is able to do. While the advantages of such networks are clear, there are few resources that offer easily understandable, field-tested information on how to form and manage social-impact networks. Drawn from the author's deep experience with more than thirty successful network projects, Connecting to Change the World provides the frameworks, practical advice, case studies, and expert knowledge needed to build better performing networks. Readers will gain greater confidence and ability to anticipate challenges and opportunities. Easily understandable and full of actionable advice, Connecting to Change the World is an informative guide to creating collaborative solutions to tackle the most difficult challenges society faces.

"The hard truth is, every organization is facing complex social problems that they can't solve on their own. The good news is, every organization can build networks that will help them create solutions together. Connecting to Change the World is the must-read manual that will teach you how to put this strategy to work if you really want to make a difference."