**What we should think about when we think about change**

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“The philosophers have only interpreted the world, in various ways: the point, however, is to change it.” Karl Marx, *The German Ideology*

1. What’s wrong with this quotation?

A philosopher’s answer: trying to change the world without some kind thinking, interpreting, reflecting, is either impossible, or likely to make things worse.

In order for us to do anything, we need to set ourselves some goal, *and* we need to figure out how to achieve this. But these two things don’t guarantee that we ought to act in that way. What if our goal is a bad one, or our plan is mistaken? So if we are to act well, we will have to do some thinking and reflecting, to try to ensure that our goals are not bad, our plans as good as we can make them.

2. What should we think about when thinking about change?

What goals should I have so that I can change the world for the better?

What can I do in order to achieve these goals or make these changes?

* Do we have good reason to bring about changes in areas where we have experience or expertise or knowledge?
* What if we don’t have such experience or expertise?

3. Different kinds of goals, vectors of change

*Trivial – Important*

* Should we always aim to do the best we can? (If so, why?)
* Is it alright for us to just have relatively trivial goals? (If not, why not?)

*Easy – Difficult*

* Is it unwise to have goals that are, if not impossible, very difficult to achieve?
* Should we restrict our goals to things that we can (easily) do?

*Local – Global*

* Is there good reason to focus on local goals?
* Is there anything wrong with focusing on local and not global changes?

*Personal – Impersonal*

* Are personal goals really personal, and impersonal goals really impersonal?
* What should we do if the personal and impersonal conflict?

*Short-term vs Long-term*

* Are long-term changes more valuable than short term?
* Is there a right balance between short-term and long-term?

4. Other distinctions, interesting questions

We have been talking about changes we bring about. But some changes happen to us. To what extent are the things we want to change the result of changes that happen to us?

How much of your character, personality, habits, traits, do you think is changeable, and how much is fixed? Are there any changes to your character that would result in the you being no longer you?