

A Brave New Reality: Changing the Bird Cages of the World

Contributed by Robert Lobitz
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There are a lot of changes taking place in the world today that are making those who are comfortable with the way things work uncomfortable. The argument you sometimes hear is that when things get disrupted you don't know how things will turn out -- an excuse to keep the status quo.

Among my pursuits and businesses are the caring of birds as protected pets, including via bird cages. It has got me to thinking about humanity and the mind in a fashion that others may never arrive at.

The philosopher Socrates once compared the mind to bird cages. He pondered that perhaps knowledge is like a bird, moving about within the cage and some times when you try and catch it, you end up grabbing the wrong one. When looking at the ideas that we are confronted with everyday it is easy to become complacent in our belief and understanding of how the world works. However, as the brilliant author and historian James Burke points out in his television series *The Day the Universe Changed*, we are constantly evolving as a society to new understandings and without doing so we will be left behind. This is true whether looking at the sciences, media, government, or even entertainment.

The problem is we often will hold on to the way we do things because it is something we are familiar with and trust. Even though this seems to be a part of human nature, we are beginning to see people crossing all cultures who seem to be willing to accept new information. There is an old Chinese proverb that says, "May you live in interesting times." This is a wish cast upon someone that can be a double-edged sword, and to this point we can see that this truly applies to the world we live in today. We certainly do live in interesting times, to say the least, and right now you are seeing the world groaning with growing pains as we try to adjust to a different version of society.

As we are evolving through these changes we are seeing major shifts as a result of the capabilities made possible with the use of the internet, and the United States seems to be the seed bed for what is taking place around the rest of the world. Technological advancements have made it so we now have the smallest world in history, making it possible to not just communicate in ways that were unimaginable just even a short decade ago, but also instantaneously.

Consider for a moment the Middle East. There are countries and cultures who have been trapped under the power of authoritarian governments for generations. In order for the United States military to address just one of these concerns it took as much as \$1 trillion dollars, 4,485 U.S. military casualties, 32,219 U.S. wounded, and over 10 years to overthrow the Iraqi government and help them establish a new "democracy." This was the old way of doing things.

Now consider what is happening around the Middle East using new social media technology and protests. After the Egyptian people had spent 30 years under the oppression of president Hosni Mubarak it took the use of a free U.S. based web service and only 9 months, from the beginning of the uprising until the scheduling of the first parliamentary election voting, for the Egyptian people to remove a tyrant from power and establish a new order.

History is full of examples where society changes in a new and unexpected way, and it sends shockwaves through out the world causing us to adjust our thinking. Burke points out that someone had once mentioned to the philosopher Wittgenstein that the contemporaries during the time of Copernicus must have been really stupid for looking at the sky and thinking that the sun was rotating around the earth. Wittgenstein is believed to have told the observer that this may be true, but he then returned by asking what the sun would have looked like if it had been rotating around the earth? Burke points out that the point of this was that it wouldn't have looked any different, regardless of how the planets were rotating around each other. The change that has occurred is our understanding of how it all worked.

The world is having to adjust to a new technological state, and as we do so we have to also be willing to look at both new and old information in new ways. The establishments that we once knew, media, government, entertainment, and even spiritual beliefs, are all subject to these changes, and only those who are willing to change and evolve into a new understanding will be able to survive. If it means that we must look at how we understand economics, voting, government secrets, who we conduct business with, or offer entertainment, we will have to do so if we want these areas to succeed or be reformed. The revolution came, so it is time to focus on our evolution and clean out the mental bird cages that are our minds. It doesn't matter if we are a part of the 1% or the 99%, for the world is at our fingertips and it is up to us to use the power available to us to do the remarkable. There are no longer limits to what we thought was possible.

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