

REINVENTING “NONPROFIT ORGANISATIONS” TO CREATE THE FUTURE OF OUR WORLD



Hildy Gottlieb

Hildy Gottlieb is author of **The Pollyanna Principles- Reinventing “Nonprofit Organisations” to Create the Future of Our World.**

It's an insightful, practical, and transformative book that challenges us to lift our heads and look beyond our immediate day to day work and create the future we want to see.

“The work being done by boards in this sector is new compared to the work of the business or government sectors. It is overpowering to consider the possibilities if every board of every organisation in our sector saw its role as not only leading/governing the organisation, but adding to the bigger discussion of what is possible, all the time.” Hildy Gottlieb.

Hildy shares her own vision for the future she wants to create....

“A future where my home, this planet earth, is at peace.. A future where our planet is physically healthy. A future where we value our collective potential and responsibility as much as we value our individual potential and responsibility. A future where the true meaning of humanity, in all its ability is present.” (Abridged)

Is it airy fairy to believe that we can achieve this future? Or is it visionary and provide us with reason to believe we can strive for a better future?

I met the author on her recent trip to New Zealand. I was very privileged to be part of a small group who spent a week with Hildy exploring her pathway to visionary change and I was convinced that what she's on about isn't a load of gushy platitudes, rather she's a passionate, intelligent, experienced and gutsy activist for our sector and just what we need to challenge us to move out of our comfort zones.

There were plenty of 'Hildyisms' shared during that week and her book is full of them. Like this one...“If we assume that poverty will always be among us we will expect that we can neither eliminate poverty nor create an equitable world.”

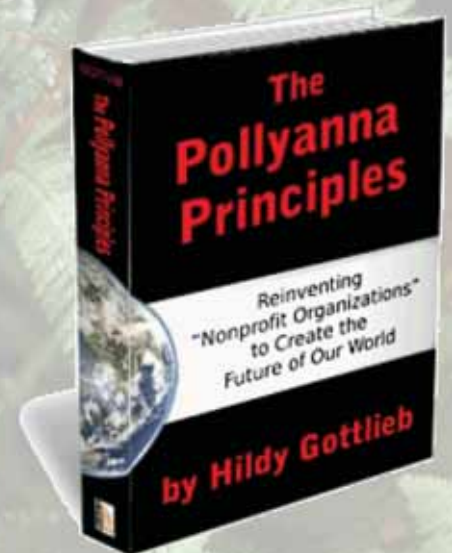
But how many of us assume just that? Not consciously necessarily but in the way we think and the way we provide our services. Are we bedding in poverty – taking the hard edges off it rather than changing the world for the better?

Hildy urges us to aim for our highest possible potential to work from a cultural base of 'can' not 'can't'. A strength based approach that urges us to aim for our highest potential and to take seriously the potential to achieve our visions.

The Book opens with a quote I found very thought provoking from British Historian Arnold J. Toynbee who lived between 1889-1975. It goes like this...

“The twentieth century will be chiefly remembered by future generations not as an era of political conflicts or technical inventions, but as an age in which human society dared to think of the welfare of the whole human race as a practical objective”

This quote gave me a real sense of how our work over time is transformational. We might not see transformation in our work in the short term but taking a longer term view of our works can show how our contributions are making the world a better place over time.



Hildy's book is based on a set of principles called The Pollyanna Principles

The Pollyanna Principles

THE ENDS

#1 We accomplish what we hold ourselves accountable for.

#2 Each and every one of us is creating the future, everyday, whether we do so consciously or not.

THE MEANS

#3 Everyone is interconnected and interdependent, whether we acknowledge that or not.

#4 Being the change we want to see means walking the talk of our values.

#5 Strength builds upon our strengths, not our weaknesses.

#6 Individuals go where systems point them.

These seemed pretty self explanatory except perhaps for number 6. Here she is telling us that if all the systems used by our sector organisations were aligned behind creating visionary community change (that includes our governance, planning, programmes, resource development, and all the other systems we use) we would be providing the leadership that individuals and groups would be inspired to follow.

Hildy's book is an important tool for anyone involved on a board or working in a community agency. It makes sense of so much of what we do and it provides plenty of constructive challenges to do it better.

She encourages all of us sitting on boards to really look at what we are doing and to ask ourselves the question, 'Did I come on to this board because I was excited about approving financial reports and internal policy development or did I want to be part of this organisation to make a difference, to be part of creating an exceptional future? She urges us to do better at supporting our leaders, to teach leadership.' How many of us go onto our boards without any training or support in leading an organisation?

She also challenges us to asks questions of ourselves and our organisations that need asking. If we are going to lead change, here are a few...

- How is our community going to be amazing because we exist?
- What is our highest possible potential?
- What would our board look like if it was fabulous?
- When we have a tough decision to make how do we make the right one?
- How do we measure our actions against our code of values?
- What undergirds our actions?
- Are we walking the talk that we want to see in the community?

If you didn't get a chance to see Hildy when she was in Aotearoa she is well worth looking up on her website: hildygottlieb.com She's written a number of very useful resources for our sector and you can purchase copies on line. But most of all she's a visionary for our sector and what I most appreciated from her visit was the reinforcement that we are doing ok here in little Aotearoa.

Here's what Hildy had to say about us on her blog site about the power of New Zealand culture.

"Around the world, one of the more positive things for which Americans are known is our can-do optimism. The frontier culture that says, nothing is impossible." We can accomplish anything we put our minds to. I'd put New Zealand's can-do against our can-do any time. The legendary image that captures NZers pride in their ingenuity is the #8 wire that was used to tame the land for agriculture and sheep herding. The #8 wire culture is one in which nothing stands in the way of getting things done. It is a culture that knows in its bones that there are practical ways to accomplish just about anything.

Combine the Pollyanna Principles practical approaches for creating visionary social change, with a culture where #8 wire makes anything possible and you have nothing less than an unstoppable force for changing the world!"



Community
Waikato

"Supporting strong communities"

Hurahia te whakaaronui

33 Victoria Street, P O Box 391, Hamilton 3204.

Ph: 07 838 1583 Fax: 07 957 1981

www.communitywaikato.org.nz