Following excerpt taken from: ***Deep Change: Discovering the Leader Within*** by Robert E Quinn (1996). Pgs. 217 – 218

Over the years, I have become a strong believer in the fact that the external world can be changed by altering our internal world. The popular theory is that for a successful change to occur, it must come from the top down. I fully acknowledge it as a valid theory. However, I also accept a seemingly opposing theory that postulates that an organization and the world can be changed from the bottom up. Here is the story of how one person can make a difference. Consider, by way of example the story of John Woolman.

John Woolman was an American Quaker who lived in the 1700's. His journal is considered a literary treasure and is still studied in many English classes. His most memorable accomplishment, however, had to do with the process of deep change. During the eighteenth century, many Quakers were wealthy, conservative slave owners. Woolman dedicated his adult life to eliminating the practice of slavery among his brethren.

Woolman pursued this effort by using the art of gentle persuasion. He spent more than twenty years visiting Quakers along the East Coast. He did not criticize people, nor did he make them angry. He merely asked questions like. "What does it mean to be a moral person? What does it mean to own a slave? What does it mean to will a slave over to one's children?" Driven by his vision, he persisted, visiting farm after farm.

By 1770, a century before the Civil War, not one Quaker owned a slave. The Quakers were the first religious group to denounce and renounce slavery.

Woolman hated the idea of slavery and found it intolerable. He was determined to change the minds of his fellow Quakers. His vision, courage and persistence changed the church.

There comes a time when we all question whether something is right. At such times, we have to listen and follow our inner voice even when it means tackling the system and enlisting some unconventional procedures and techniques. One person can make a difference.