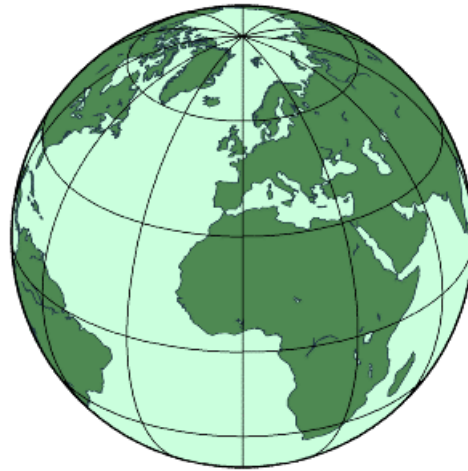


The Status Quo is Flawed



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Negative reactions to proposals for change

- Let's assume you propose a way to improve the world
- Some possible negative reactions from people:
 - “If that was a good idea then somebody else would have thought of it already”
 - Translation: “Your proposal is obviously flawed”
 - “The current system was designed by experts. Apparently, you think you know better than the experts”
 - Translation: “You are arrogant to think you can make a contribution”
- Such reactions suggest that the world is perfect

Ways in which the world is not perfect

There are countless ways in which the world is imperfect...

- On a global scale:

- Wars, famine, global warming

- Within your own country:

- Corrupt politicians, unethical business practices, pollution, high taxes, high unemployment, poor health care

- You can probably think of imperfections:

- Within your local town or community
- Within the industry in which you work
- Within families (mom and dad keep arguing, your brother just split up with his girlfriend, your sister got fired, your son is failing subjects in school)

The status quo is flawed

- Imperfections are *everywhere*. In big things and small things
- It is strange that people react negatively when you say
 - “The status quo is flawed. I think I can improve it”
- Possibility 1: Some people:
 - Realise the status quo is imperfect but do not have energy to try to improve it
 - Feel guilty about doing nothing
 - Criticize you to hide their guilty feelings
- Possibility 2:
 - The biggest flaw in the world is that many people passively accept imperfections, rather than attempt to improve matters
 - Some people think this flaw is part of human nature
 - Others think it is a result of social conditioning

Advice for want-to-be entrepreneurs

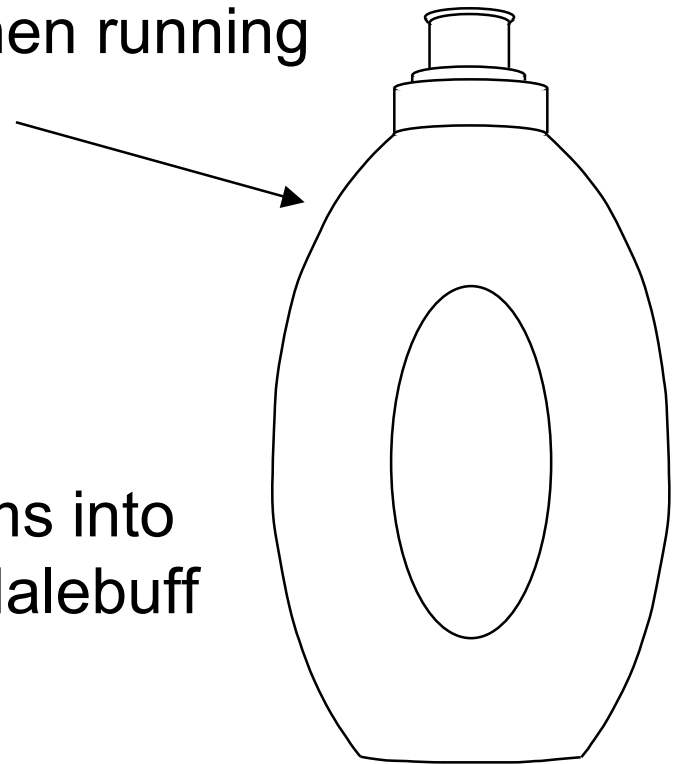
- Many people dream of starting their own business
 - But don't because they cannot think of a product to make or sell
- There is a simple way to think of business ideas
- First, realize the following:
 - "The status quo is flawed" means "there are lots of problems"
 - "Whenever there is a problem, there is an opportunity"
 - So you can find opportunities by analysing problems
- Second:
 - Get into the daily habit of analysing things you think are irritating, flawed or problematic
 - Try to think of an improvement or a better alternative
 - Could you build a business around this improvement or better alternative?

Example: invention of Velcro

- In 1941, George de Mestral noticed something sticking to his clothes and his dog's fur:
 - It was the burrs (prickly seeds) of burdock
- He examined a burr under a microscope:
 - He saw the burr had lots of hooks
 - These were catching on anything with loops, such as fur or clothing
- Most people would see only the *problem* of burrs:
 - They stick easily and are difficult to remove
- George de Mestral saw an *opportunity*:
 - The result was Velcro (the hook and loop fastener)

Example: innovations in sports water bottles

- Problem: glass bottles can break easily
 - Solution: make bottles from plastic
- Problem: awkward to unscrew bottle cap when exercising
 - Solution: a pull-up top that can be opened and closed with teeth
- Problem: bottles are difficult to grip when running
 - Solution: make bottles with a gripping hole
- An interesting book on turning problems into opportunities is: *Why Not?* by Barry Nalebuff and Ian Ayres



Summary

- The status quo *is* flawed:
 - There is nothing wrong with wanting to improve upon the status quo
 - Ignore people who accuse you of being foolish or arrogant for trying to make improvements
- Remember: “Whenever there is a problem, there is an opportunity”
- Relevant quote:
 - “The reasonable man adapts himself to the world; the unreasonable one persists in trying to adapt the world to himself. Therefore, all progress depends on the unreasonable man.”
— George Bernard Shaw
- Learn to take the following as compliments:
 - “You being unreasonable”
 - “You are arrogant to think you can improve upon the status quo”