

Movements that Spread

Image



And what they can do for us

“I believe movements do what no other vehicle or container can do — they influence and ultimately change people’s opinions, beliefs, habits and what they think,” Canadian social entrepreneur and author Al Etmanski said in a webinar he hosted on thinking and acting like a movement yesterday.

“No social enterprise, non-profit business, government agency, politician, funder or institution can accomplish that on their own. Movements create receptivity, favourable public opinion and political will.

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— Al Etmanski

“Movements embolden our politicians, our policy makers, our funders and our superiors to make the decisions that will improve justice and reduce inequity in the world.”

Al's belief is that we all belong to at least one movement and he invites us to ensure we are intentional about supporting those to which we already belong. “My belief is that spending some of our time and budgeting some of our resources, ... in supporting them will in fact help us in achieving our organizational and institutional goals,” Al said.

Al brings experience in [igniting large-scale change](#) through the co-founding of [Planned Lifetime Advocacy Network](#) (PLAN), which facilitates the creation of social networks around people who have a disability to secure their futures.

His insights on movements have also been significantly shaped by the evolution of [La Leche League International](#), the world's foremost enabler of breastfeeding as a preferred and respected practice. In the webinar, he interviewed La Leche cofounder Marian Tompson on her experiences with seeing La Leche and what it represents become a global movement.

“I feel the grounding force of a movement is love,” Marian said. “It’s love first for yourself — not burning yourself out and sacrificing yourself to whatever this important thing is. And then it’s loving the people who are close to you and who will be impacted by your work — not forgetting about them.

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— *Marian Tompson*

“And finally, it’s love for what you’re doing.”

Both Al and Marian also mentioned [John McKnight](#) and the asset-based approach as inspirational and influential in how they’ve gone about their work.

Axiom News has also been shaped by the work of John McKnight, so we find a resonating chord in the work and language of both Al and Marian in that respect.

We also look forward to learning more from Al’s work on movements and how that might entwine with our intention to hold a field for change over time through a combination of generative hosting and narration.

Al and Marian’s conversation is rich in insight and definitely worth a listen. To access a recording of it, click [here](#).

To sign up for the rest of the series on movements hosted by Al, click [here](#).

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