



**Social Science of Behavior  
Change**

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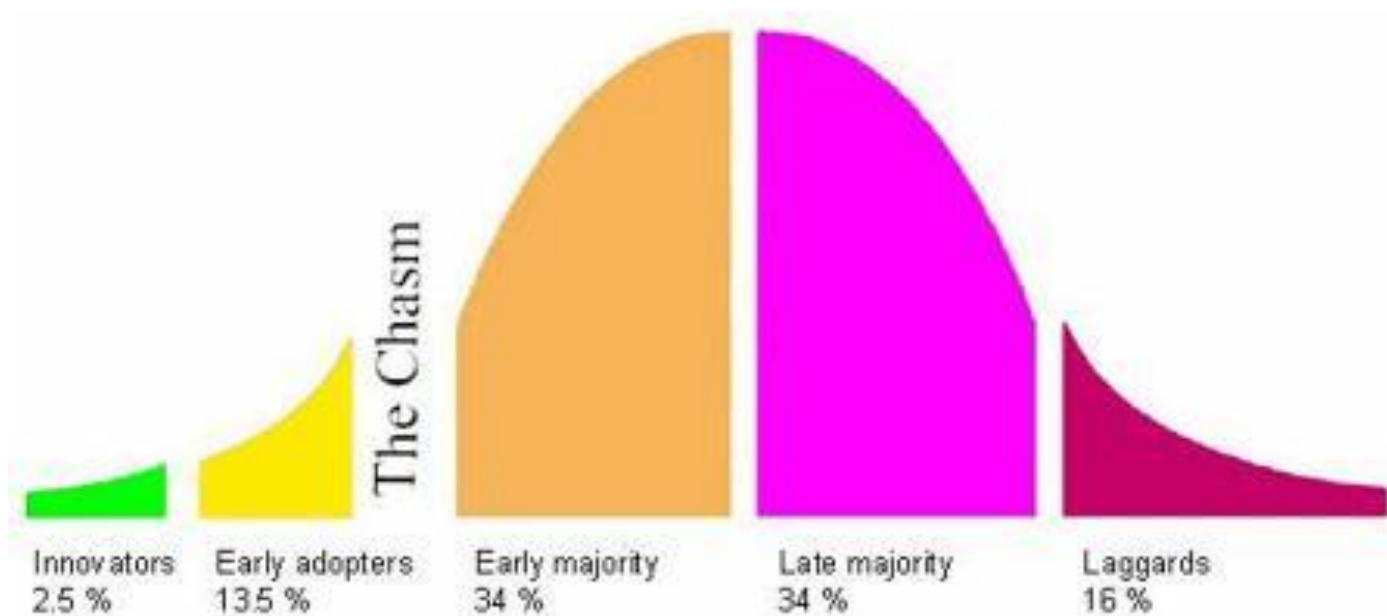
# Current challenges

1. Ask WRONG questions
2. Failure to OBSERVE
3. Thinking EDUCATION changes BEHAVIOR
4. Try to CHANGE ATTITUDES
5. Think people know what motivates them

# #1 Asking the Wrong Question

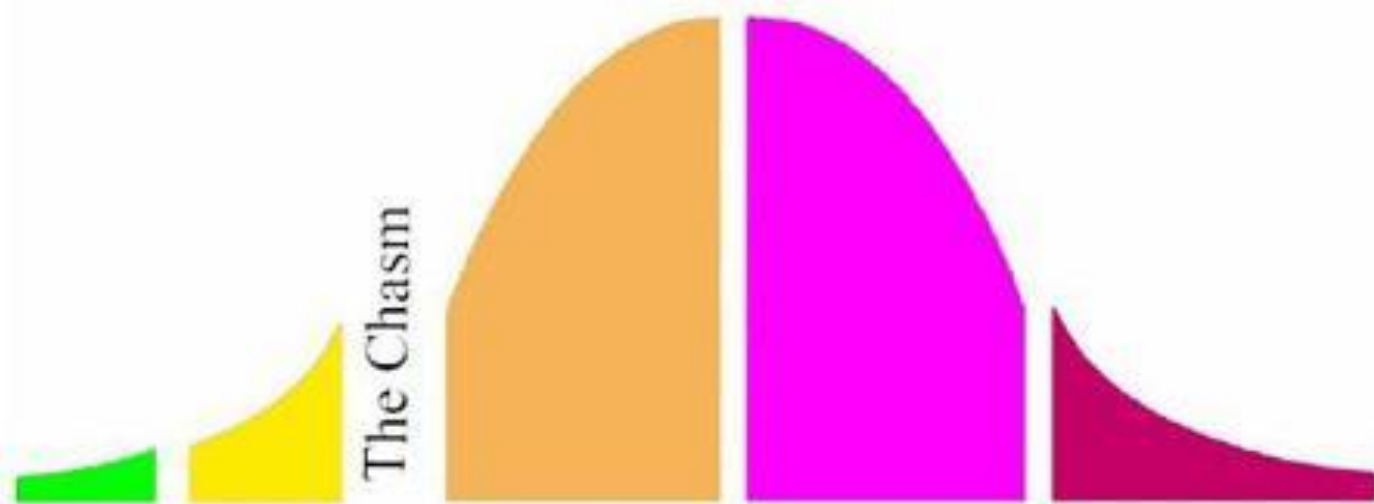
How do we convince the skeptics?

**YOU DON'T!**



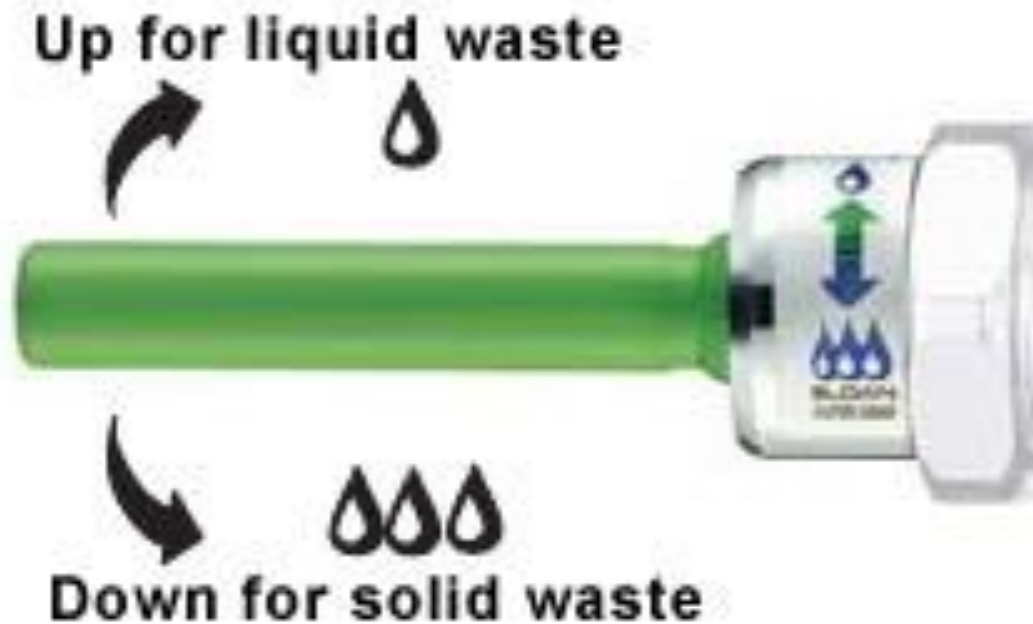
# #1 Solution

## CHANGE THE QUESTION



How do we cultivate the innovators/early adopters and use them to influence the majority?

# #2 Failure to OBSERVE Human behavior



## #2 Failure to OBSERVE Human behavior



35-70% flush  
with their feet

# Signage Helps Bad Design

Model = 67%

Actual = 39%



# #2 Solution = Good Design





# #3 Thinking Education is ENOUGH



Audits educate the consumer, but do they bring about change?

<20% weatherized home

# #3 Solution = Social Science

Gonzales et al. (1988)

## Quasi-Experiment

> 60%  
weatherized homes



# Vivid Examples



Make  
Information  
Tangible

# Personalize Information





# Frame Loss vs. Gain



# Induce Commitment



# #4 Trying to change ATTITUDES



How do we convince people climate change is real, so they will care about recycling?



# Tell people WHAT TO DO

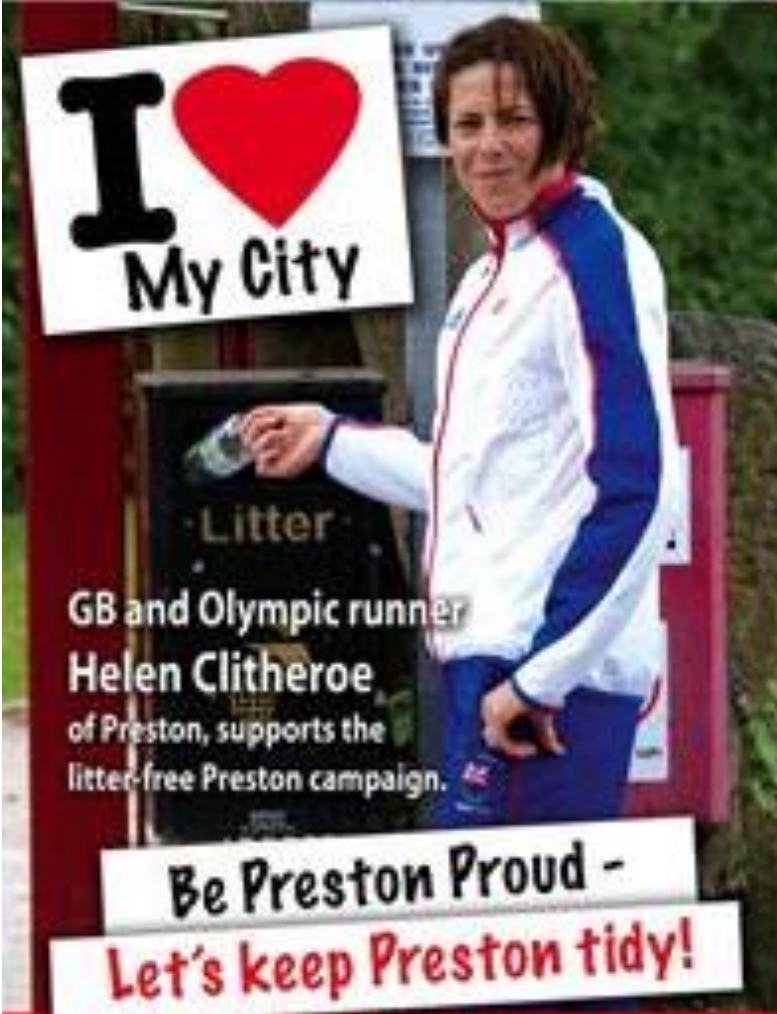




# Location, Location, Location



# Use Social NORMS




**I ❤️ My City**

Litter

GB and Olympic runner  
**Helen Clitheroe**  
of Preston, supports the  
litter-free Preston campaign.

**Be Preston Proud -  
Let's keep Preston tidy!**

Dropping litter is an offence.  
You could be fined up to £2,500





# Make it EASY

## What goes in curbside recycling?

**Yes**

Empty, clean, and discard lids



Plastic bottles (with caps on)



Milk-style cartons



Phone books



Glass



Mail, magazines, mixed paper and catalogs



Metal cans (labels ok)



Aluminum cans



Newspaper & inserts



Plastic dairy tubs (no lids)



Paper boxes (no liners)



Cardboard (must fit in cart)



Paper or frozen food boxes (no food residue)

**No**

**DO NOT** recycle at curbside



Plastic bags



Shredded paper (OK in yard waste cart)



Styrofoam



Glassware & plate glass



Batteries



Clear clamshell containers



Plastic cups



Amber colored prescription vials



Toxic product containers



Chip bags



Ceramics



Foil



Light bulbs



Frozen food bags



Aerosol cans



Juice boxes (foil lined)



Plastic plant pots



Metal hangers



Food contaminated paper plates, napkins and pizza boxes

# #5 Asking people what Motivates them





# #5 Solution = Mini Experiments

## WHAT PEOPLE THINK

1. environmental protection
2. benefits to society
3. saving money
4. other people are doing it

## WHAT WORKS

1. Other people are doing it

# Closest Reference Group

Message about the importance of environmental protection without referring to any descriptive

**%75** of guests in **this hotel** usually use their towels more than once

**%75** of guests in **this room** usually use their towels more than once.

# Recommendations

- OBSERVE
- DESIGN for people
- ASK for specific behavior
- PILOT tiny experiments





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