No, I'm not 'just tired and bored with myself’ but I know we can’t ‘go to bed feeling the same way’. I have also learned that 'you can’t start a fire without a spark’. Changes are necessary – in the world, our country and in our profession – or we will continue to ‘dance in the dark’.

Jonathan Mead on the web site “PAID to EXIST” (https://paidtoexist.com/), amongst other things, has a piece on how to start a revolution. He describes it as “the secret to being excited about waking up every day” and attributes this excitement and energy to changing his mindset from ‘What can I gain? How can I turn this into a business that will support me?’ to focussing on something bigger than himself, to create something worth remembering, to be connected to the community. Defining what is necessary is described as the first step and it must be something you care deeply about and would be willing to devote your life to; that will help other people and that will have a long term impact and; that is distinctive but leads to a collective movement created by similar values. The second step is to decide what to do, what revolution to start, and realising that mistakes will be made on the way to the answer. Generating many ideas is essential, but the end vision can only be reached through practice and discarding non-functional ideas along the way. On the same web site another very relevant phrase is posted: “Get paid so you can do what matters – …. You deserve to be compensated for the value you bring to the world, so you can exist, so you can serve the world. This isn't about entitlement, it's about taking the reins to create the life you want.”

When I read the above blog I thought that much of it could actually have been written for us, for pharmacy in South Africa. I must however admit that I have never seen myself as a revolutionary and for me the answer would always be evolution – no need to throw everything out and start anew, rather review and enhance what works or what is necessary, and build on that. At this stage, for pharmacy in South Africa and with major ‘potholes’ in the road and on the horizon, a fast-paced evolution is required and there is definitely no time for long winded processes – some revolutionary thought and process is probably necessary. This brings me back to the spark we need to start the fire; be it NHI or even the things we have been struggling with for a few years and which is now being driven to a point (remuneration model, SEP, medical aids, etc.). We need to start the fire, and control it in order to create the fast-paced evolution necessary to ensure the future and viability of Pharmacy in South Africa.

We would like to think that we can change the world, but we have to accept that we can only do it by making the changes around us. For us as pharmacists and the PSSA, the revolution or evolution will have to be in the profession; how we see ourselves and what our future role in the health care environment in South Africa will be. We will have to let go of some of our closely guarded paradigms, not think and respond reactively, but act with the greater good and long term future of pharmacy in mind.

We will not succeed by fighting the current and, within the current paradigm, but will have to provide a new practice model that could replace the old. We will have to think big and out of the box, but still do the small things right every day to deliver the service our community needs and depend upon. One thing I am sure about – starting this fast paced evolution from the inside is the only way to success.

No, I don't have the answers, putting the thoughts and questions out there might however provide the spark for our evolution and maybe even a well-controlled revolution (if there is such a thing).