

People Changing the Way We Live

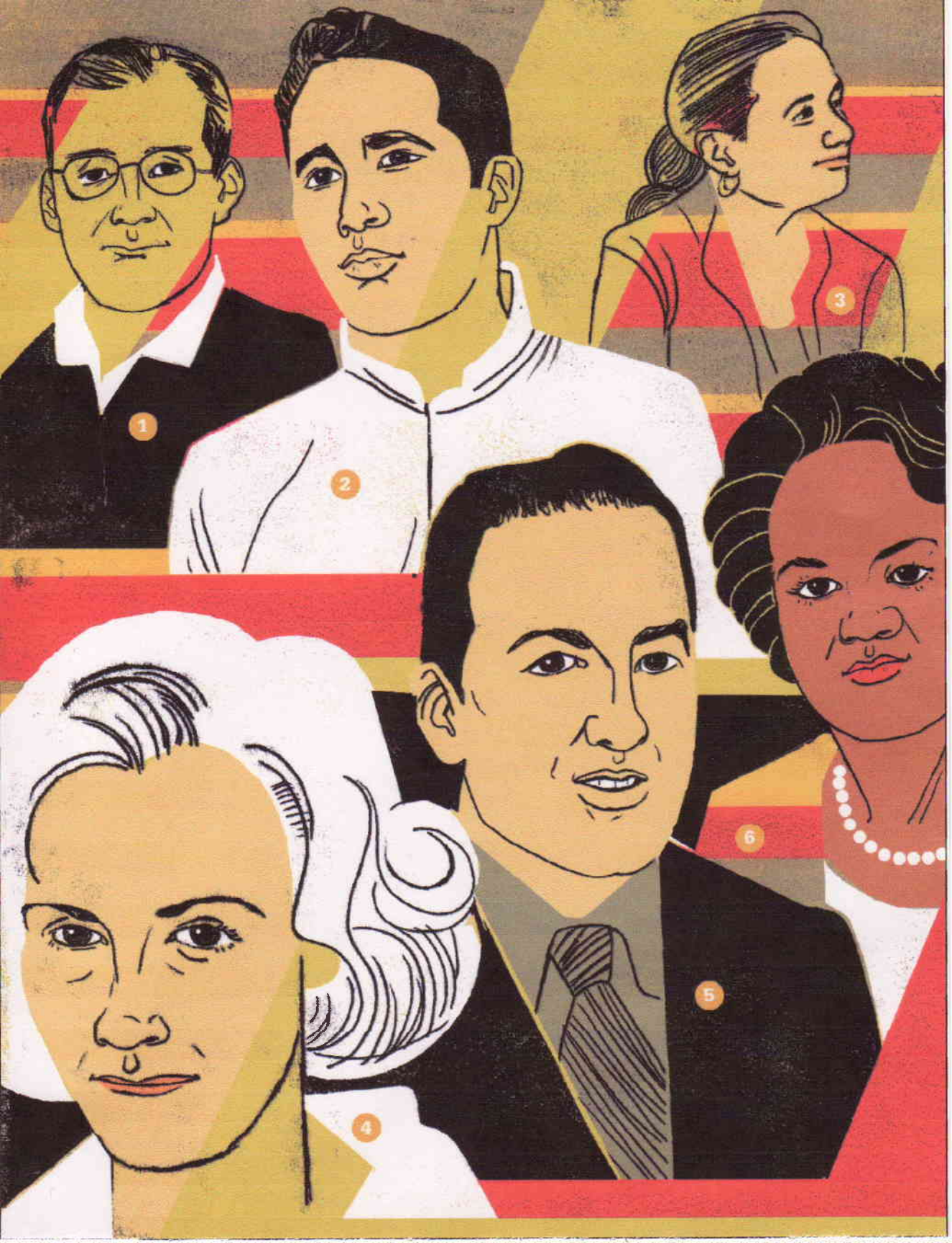
We're all in this together, but these folks make it feel less crowded

BY KRIS FRIESWICK

1. Scott Griffiths
2. Christopher Lee
3. Sarah Ruhl
4. Victoria Meyers
5. Daniel Nissanoff
6. Deborah Wright

We're not sure if it's the war, the talk of climate change or the constant political wrangling in Washington, but something has sparked heightened attention, especially in urban areas, to two rules that we all should have learned in kindergarten: share and play nice.

These six people—through their business ventures, their messages or their examples—are showing us that sharing and playing nice isn't as big a drag as we thought it was when we were 5 (and sometimes think it is as adults). The rules are there to keep the invisible filaments that bind us together from snapping. By strumming them, these six remind us that the filaments are there.



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Share and Share Alike Scott Griffiths

CEO, Zipcar

As a business consultant and former Internet company owner, Scott Griffiths had long been intrigued with Zipcar, a car-sharing service launched in Boston in 1999, because he was the target customer. "I'd lived in Boston, New York, Los Angeles, Atlanta, Seattle—all cities where you live *and* work, and your need for a car is pretty limited," says Griffiths, who joined Zipcar as CEO in 2003. "Yet, I was ingrained with this idea that I couldn't live without a car."

Zipcar charges members an annual fee and allows them to rent cars, which are parked at strategic locations throughout major cities, by the hour, day or longer. The fee includes gas, parking, maintenance and insurance. Until Griffiths joined, it was marketed as an environmentally responsible alternative to car ownership, but Griffiths saw a bigger story. "I thought this could really be a lifestyle brand," he recalls.

He led a rebranding initiative and took the Zipcar concept mainstream, marketing it as a cost-effective alternative for people who only need a car a few times a month for errands, short trips or weekends away. It worked like a charm. The company had its first profitable year in 2004 and now boasts more than 80,000 members. The company also has expanded to London and is building its Z-to-B business, which offers reduced rates for city-based businesses that want employees to use public transport but that need wheels for client visits and deliveries.

The Relationship Banker Deborah Wright

Chairman, president and CEO,
Carver Bancorp Inc.

As a new analyst at investment bank First Boston in the mid-1980s, Deborah Wright had a hard time finding anyone willing to help her crack the Wall Street boys' club. Wright's challenges convinced her to put



her joint business and law degree from Harvard to work "making life better for people who weren't born into wealth."

She joined the New York Partnership, a collection of Fortune 500 and nonprofit executives working to get an embattled New York City on its feet. There, she was surrounded by willing mentors—CEOs, bank presidents, legendary financiers—contacts that her former Wall Street peers would have killed for. In 1999, after more than a decade of success in a variety of community and housing advocate roles under mayors David Dinkins and Rudy Giuliani, she was asked to helm Carver Federal Savings Bank, the last remaining minority-owned bank in Harlem, which had been crippled by loan defaults totaling nearly a third of its assets.

She took the top job. "The organization was disconnected from the rest of Manhattan," Wright recalls. "It required a set of relationships that the people at the bank didn't have." But now, she realized, she did. She called on her mentors, who lent their expertise and became her advisers. Some even moved assets to Carver to help the balance sheet. Wright upgraded the bank's technology and improved "high touch" service to the bank's customers, many of whom still have passbooks. Today, Carver Bancorp is the largest minority-owned, publicly traded bank in America. By nurturing relationships on



CEO Scott Griffiths rebranded Zipcar as a cost-effective alternative for people who don't need a car every day.

both sides of the income gap. Wright went from a young woman with no Wall Street network to one of the most well-connected businesswomen in New York.

Lease Nation

Daniel Nissanoff

Consultant and author of *FutureShop: How the New Auction Culture Will Revolutionize the Way We Buy, Sell and Get the Things We Really Want*

In his 2006 book, *FutureShop*, Daniel Nissanoff argued that before the Internet auction sites like eBay let us sell everything, people bought things and owned them until they broke or became obsolete. Today, consumers can easily find buyers for used items before their value dissipates. He predicts that in the future we'll become a nation of "leasers"—consumers who view the value of an item based on its original cost minus what we'll make when we resell it. If his theory plays out, the paradigm shift would place the consumer, not the manufacturer or retailer, in control of a product's supply chain.



The book has become a must-read in the business world, especially the retail industry, which was "totally blindsided by this trend," Nissanoff says. "They stood on the sidelines watching eBay and they never understood the level of connectivity that consumers have with one another. Consumers are taking control of the supply chain, and ultimately, the brand." His provocative theories have made Nissanoff a regular speaker and consultant at companies hoping to prepare for a future in which consumers won't want a single product, but access to a stream of constantly upgraded products and a forum to resell them. "It's better for society and consumers to shift to a more efficient way of living which involves sharing of resources," Nissanoff says.

Assumption Junction

Sarah Ruhl

Playwright, MacArthur "genius grant" recipient

It's been a heck of a ride for Sarah Ruhl, and it just started. The new mom was nominated for a 2005 Pulitzer Prize and a \$500,000 MacArthur "genius grant" in 2006 for her play *The Clean House*, which explores an uptight, white doctor couple, their fiery Brazilian housekeeper who dreams of being a stand-up comedian and the assumptions that finally fall apart to reveal their true natures. The play completed an acclaimed run at the Newhouse Theatre at Lincoln Center in January. Her work *Passion Play* also deals with role-playing, theatricality and typecasting, this time literally, and charts

the production of the *Passion* play in three different times and countries.

As an undergrad at Brown University in Providence, R.I., Ruhl, whose mother was a theater actress, fancied herself a poet. But after taking a playwriting class with a professor who promised to be her thesis adviser if she wrote a play, she was smitten.

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Christopher Lee's Tuna Wellington has been dubbed a "reinterpretation of an old classic."



She went on to get her MFA in playwriting, also at Brown, and began to create work that explores stereotypes, identity and the rules we impose on ourselves and those around us. Ruhl says she's not entirely sure why her work resonates so

powerfully with people, but suspects it's because "it means that we are all more similar than we are different. I don't write with the audience in mind when I'm writing. I assume that most of the population will have similar experiences."

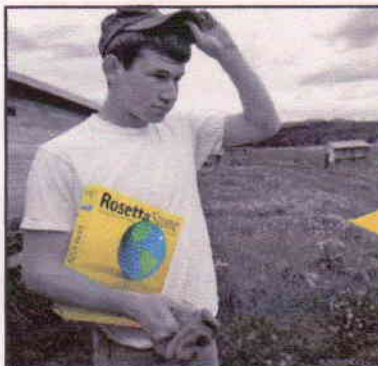
It Takes a Village (to Raise a Soufflé)

Christopher Lee

Head chef, Gilt at the New York Palace Hotel

Even the most brilliant chef is only as great as his ingredients and culinary team, and Long Island native Christopher Lee, winner of a 2005 Gallo Sonoma "Rising Star Chef" award at the James Beard Awards and named one of the "Ten Best New Chefs of 2006" by *Food & Wine Magazine*, embraces the interdependent nature of his art every day. "No man or woman is great by themselves," Lee says. "You have to have the heart and soul to lead a team, but you also have to have all the other elements in line to have a success . . . Some young chefs don't understand that. It's not just about the chef."

Lee, who loves takeout soup when he and his wife get a rare night at home in front of the TV, started at top-end restaurants in New York (Daniel, Jean Georges



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


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Architect Victoria Meyers incorporates light and nature into her projects, including this Manhattan apartment.

and Oceana) before decamping to the Striped Bass in Philadelphia. There, he focused on locally grown and raised ingredients prepared simply but flavorfully. Today, as head chef of Gilt, the restaurant in the space once occupied by the legendary Cirque 2000, he creates locally sourced culinary symphonies rather than precocious, intimidating solo acts, on one of the most highly visible stages a chef ever gets. Lee looks forward to one day forming his own restaurant group. "I'd like to give back to the industry some of what it's given me."


Creating a Clean, Well-Lighted Forest

Victoria Meyers

Architect/furniture designer/
environmentalist, Hanrahan Meyers

Growing up surrounded by the wide spaces and light of Abilene, Texas, for half the year, and densely forested, rural Pennsylvania the other half, award-winning architect Victoria Meyers developed a lifelong craving for nature and light. In her work she strives to bring both those elements into the projects

designed by her and her partner Tom Hanrahan. A devotee of architect Frank Lloyd Wright, Meyers says her modernist, minimalist designs "create spiritual spaces that put you in direct contact with nature."

Finding a way to do that in urban spaces like Battery Park City or a 1,600-square-foot urban loft in midtown Manhattan may seem impossible, and that's why her work has won so many architectural awards. The firm's latest concept, a 60,000-square-foot community center near Ground Zero, is being designed as a platinum LEED-certified building—the highest designation of environmentally sustainable construction—and will manifest Meyers' design goal. The community center, which is slated for completion in 2010, boasts a 500-foot-long "Wall of Light" that will pour natural light into all of the building's primary spaces. A preliminary plan also calls for music, based on the songs of extinct and living bird species. It "reaches out to the rest of the environment in a very vocal way that says this is part of what we need to be as a civilization," Meyers says. "Maybe a forest or a bird species is more important than having 24 different jackets, each of which is disposable at the end of the season." 



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