



CIVIC ENGAGEMENT MANUAL FOR ORGANIZERS

Building Power to Win

spirit in action

CHANGING THE WAY WE DO CHANGE



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Building Power to Win

The **TAKE 10** Model



“I have come to see more and more that one of the most decisive steps that [we] can take is that little walk to the voting booth. That is an important step. We’ve got to gain the ballot, and through that gain, political power.”

—Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.

Books by Linda Stout

Bridging the Class Divide

Bridging The Class Divide tells the inspiring story of Linda Stout's life as the daughter of a tenant farmer, as a self-taught activist, and as a leader in the progressive movement. It also gives practical lessons on how to build real working relationships between people of different income levels, races, and genders. This book will inspire and enrich anyone who works for change in our society.

Collective Visioning: How Groups Can Work Together for a Just and Sustainable Future

Collective Visioning is the first visioning method to address these hurdles in the organizing process and to fully enable members to share their opinions without hesitation. Linda Stout uses her background and her own personal experience of marginalization within the organizing community to show how trainers can be more mindful of the diversity of their members as they strive toward a common goal.

TAKE10 Workbook

The workbook highlights 11 exercises to deepen and strengthen a group's civic engagement, issue-based work and leadership. The exercises are designed to help groups think more deeply about their organizing and how to build leadership with an engaged and committed group of volunteers.

In it, we share strategies for strengthening a group's organizing work around issues that affect their community. From goals to messaging to avoiding burn-out, we discuss the challenges they face. Throughout our training and coaching process and now with this workbook, we support them to find leaders and volunteers so they can win on the issues they care about most.

El Libro de Trabajo TAKE10

El libro de trabajo TAKE 10 está diseñado para ayudarle a pensar más profundamente y creativamente en su trabajo para justicia social. Ofrecemos once ejercicios detallados para fortalecer su trabajo organizativo y el liderazgo. Los ejercicios muestran cómo construir un grupo de voluntarios involucrados y comprometidos que puedan movilizarse en torno a problemas que afectan a su comunidad. Desde las metas hasta los mensajes y evitar el agotamiento, analizamos los desafíos a que los activistas se pueden enfrentar y discutimos cómo apoyarlos para ganar en los temas que más les importan.

Facilitating Circles of Change Curriculum Guide

The collective wisdom gathered from the Circles of Change formed the foundation for the Spirit in Action *Facilitating Circles of Change Curriculum Guide*, published in 2005. The four main sections of the curriculum guide embodied the understanding of the core strategies for building a broad-based movement that achieves transformational social change. These core strategies continue to evolve from the insights and understandings of those who are using them.

What people are saying about TAKE 10:

“The get-out-the-vote training is uplifting and informative, full of great stories along with tools and strategies that build powerful change. If you’re getting ready to mobilize around the elections, take this training first, and your work for the election will also build long-term power, for the next election and beyond.”

—Sarah van Gelder, PeoplesHub founder



“The training was great — just such **a wonderful mixture of spirit, mind, heart and techniques**. The mix of methods, speaking to our whole selves — and all in a reasonable amount of time — very rich!”

—Karimah Stauch, United Religions Initiative-Europe

“We are so grateful that Linda Stout and her TAKE 10 model has come to Maine. In this political moment, **it’s critical that grassroots community leaders are supported** to do deep organizing work in their own communities that builds leadership and infrastructure for the long term. Linda helped us understand that when low-income communities can connect relationships, the power of stories, and the lifeblood of culture with new systems for mobilizing, powerful things can happen!”

—Kate Brennan, organizing and community outreach director,
Maine Equal Justice

“It’s not very often that you walk out of a training or workshop feeling that both your intellect and emotions were stimulated by the experience you had with your facilitator and other participants. Spirit in Action’s workshop provided just that (and in an online setting!): **a deeper understanding of how to run a GOTV campaign**, as well as the impassioned urgency to act.”

—Julieta Vitullo, author and playwright

“Differences of identity, of idea, of agenda — seeing it all, gently calling it out and finding structured ways to work through it without falling apart is, in my mind, successful movement building. All of these very complicated forces are held in balance, somehow. **There is a defined growing and building together space that is, somehow, sanctified**. And that ‘somehow’, I am quite convinced, is Spirit in Action training.”

—Gopal Dayaneni, community organizer, early childhood educator, lecturer and philanthropist

Dedication

This book is dedicated to:

Connie Fitzgerald (1954–2019)

Connie Fitzgerald was my best friend, sister, mentor and someone I went to for everything. We shared 35 years of social justice work, plus gardening, cooking and visiting beautiful places.

Septima Clark (1898–1997)

Septima Clark (called the mother of the Civil Rights Movement) was a mentor and teacher. She always believed I could be a leader. When I told her nobody talked to me at the NAACP meeting because I was white, she said dismissively, “Of course not! Now, next time you go....”

and to all the people who have been told they’re not good enough, not smart enough or not educated enough to ever be a leader!

Spirit in Action Board and Staff

Cheri Britton Honeycutt
Board Member

Tom Louie
Board Member

Anthony G. Rominske
Administrative and Finance Director

Bethsaida Ruiz
Board Member and Trainer

Kathleen Sharkey
Consultant

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Trainer

Linda Stout
Executive Director



**Board members (left to right):
Tom Louie, Cheri Britton Honeycutt,
Bethsaida Ruiz and (front) Linda Stout**

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*Today
We March...*

*Tomorrow
We Vote.*



What Is the TAKE 10 Model and Why Is It Successful?

HISTORY OF TAKE 10

It all began in 1984, when I received my first paid job as an organizer at North Carolinians for Effective Citizenship. I worked in the western part of North Carolina, from Rowan County to Appalachia and the Great Smoky Mountains. The following year, I started Piedmont Peace Project (PPP) to reach out to low-income folks in 12 counties in the Piedmont area of North Carolina.

Building Our Community

Our congressional district was the size of the state of Connecticut in square miles. It was a very rural community made up of primarily textile mill towns and subsistence farming. Often, someone in the family worked at the mills to help ends meet. The largest town in the 12 counties at the time was Kannapolis — the home of Cannon Mills (with 13 textile mills) and the town was still owned by the Mill. It was a very patriarchal, racist system. White people usually lived in mill towns in tiny houses or in trailer parks, while the majority of the African Americans primarily lived in poor, subsistence housing or trailers.

It was also an area dominated by racist violence with three Ku Klux Klan paramilitary training camps. KKK members were in every county, in elected offices and even in the schools. At first, our small group was no threat to them, but as we grew and our power became stronger, we became a major threat to them. We suffered violence as a result. Fort Bragg, one of the largest military installations in the world, was also in our district. We learned years later that servicemen who

worked there were stealing weapons and supplying them to members of the KKK

Congressman Bill Hefner represented our congressional district. He was a very conservative Democrat, gospel singer and television performer. Hefner sat on the Military Budget Committee in Congress and chaired the New Military Construction Sub-Committee. Most of his campaign money came from defense contractors. As a result, the Anti-Nuclear and Peace Movements¹ at the national level targeted him. He was a conservative Democrat with a lot of power and was an important vote for Peace Movement issues. These groups became interested in PPP's work because we were in Hefner's district.

Before I became an organizer, I had been working in the Peace and Anti-Nuclear Movements. As a Quaker, I had been brought up to advocate for social justice. I believed that the only way to win on issues of peace and justice was to link issues affecting us low-income people to the federal budget — of which, at the time,

¹ This consisted primarily of the Nuclear Freeze Campaign, the Committee for Sane Nuclear Policy, American Friends Service Committee, Physicians for Social Responsibility, International Physicians for Prevention of Nuclear War and numerous smaller organizations.

more than half went to the military (today, it is 52 percent).²

When PPP first started organizing, Hefner's voting record was zero percent in favor of peace issues and only about 30 percent in favor of social justice issues.³ We knew that to change that, we had to teach people in our district about peace and justice in a very different way. We needed to speak to people's concerns, with materials and concepts that people could understand and relate to their own lives.

This is how the TAKE 10 model of organizing started. It wasn't called TAKE 10 at the time — that name came later when I used this model with Maine Equal Justice.

A Model of Exponential Growth

PPP trained volunteers to go out into their neighborhoods to reach out, connect with people on the issues they cared about and ask people on their street to register to vote. Then we asked those same volunteers to get 10 times the number of people registered the next year. To do that, they needed to try to get the people they registered to volunteer in the following year — with the challenge to register at least 10 more people to vote. They attended PPP trainings to learn how to do that. This resulted in many of our first-time volunteers becoming leaders and increased our numbers exponentially.

By the second year, we were registering and getting out the vote of more people than Congressman Hefner's margin of victory. We never let him forget it! We lobbied him constantly, both in Washington, D.C. and at home. It took five years to change his voting record on peace and justice, but he soon had to listen to us. We just represented too much people power! His voting record gradually changed to 83 percent in favor of peace issues and 98 percent in favor of social justice issues.

Building Leadership

We believed deeply in shared leadership and encouraged people to step into that role. In some cases, they

had never done anything like this before. They were apprehensive, and didn't believe they had the qualities a good leader needed.

One technique we used to change their minds was to draw a large circle in the front of the room, divide it into equal sections, and ask people to identify all the qualities they believed made a good leader. I would write one quality in each section. No matter what they identified — speaking, media expertise, fundraising, being a good listener, making food or cleaning the office — the qualities were all equal in our eyes.

Then I would ask, "Who in here has all of these qualities of a good leader?" No one answered that they did. I would explain that all of us had at least one of these qualities. Only by working together as a whole — adding up all the sections to complete the circle — could we be a strong organization. Some people offered to clean the office or do yardwork. They all kept coming to trainings so they could advance in their skills and take on other roles. It was important that they all saw a leadership task they could do in the chart.

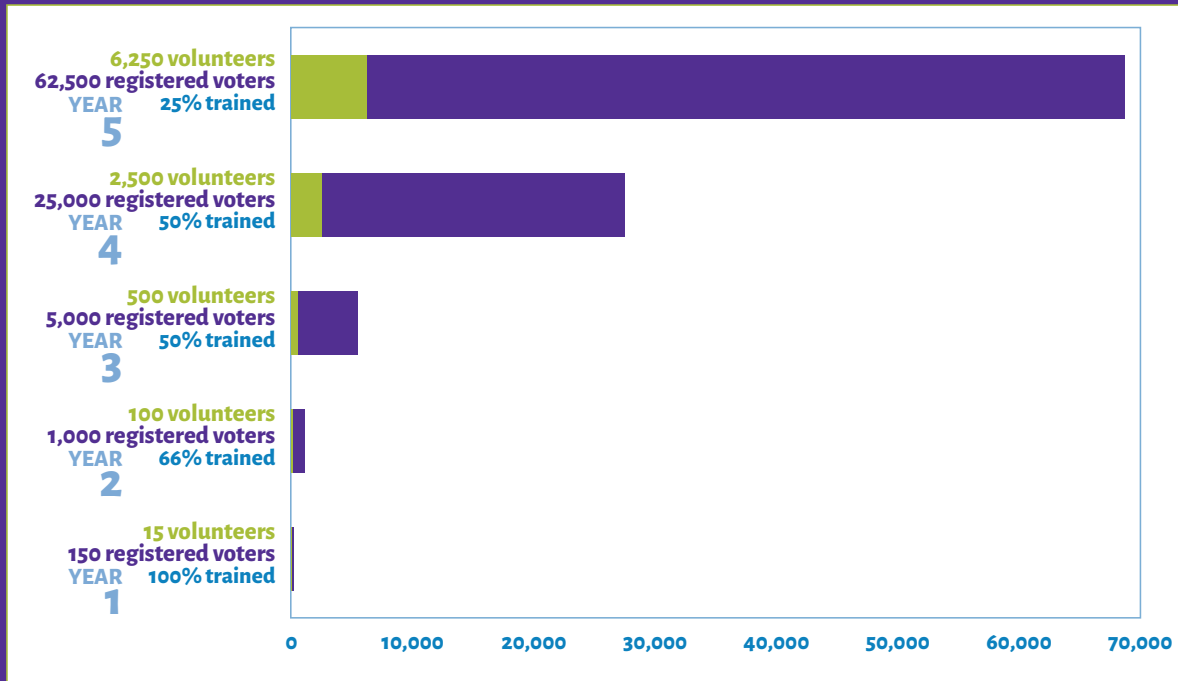
All of us have at least one of these qualities.



² As calculated by the National Priorities Project.

³ As rated by the Council for a Livable World and the AFL-CIO.

Voter Registration — 5 year campaign



How TAKE 10 works exponentially

Sharing Leadership

Often, when I would go to a big city or other places to do fundraising, people would ask why I was always saying “we.” It was the way that we all thought about the work. With shared leadership, there isn’t an “I” but it’s always “we.” Not that we all didn’t have our own leadership and individual strengths, but it was important to know we could not do this work by ourselves. In fact, if someone suggested doing something alone because, “I went to school with the mayor. I’ll go ask him to do this for us,” we would always discourage that. It might have achieved our goal faster, but going slow together was how we built our strength and leadership.

In year one, PPP went from one and a half staff people working in one county that turned out 150 people to the polls to 10 staff people who worked in

a whole congressional district five years later. Each year we identified people to be volunteers and trained as leaders to join our effort around issues the community identified.

PPP became one of the largest multiracial groups in the Southeast, building grassroots power by winning at the voting booth as well as holding officials accountable. We also began to elect people of color to local offices for the first time. White supremacists who had controlled their county and town offices were unseated. Getting more than 44,000 people to the polls was much more effective than the massive dollars spent by those who said they represented us.

Even if it was an off-election year, we continued to mobilize disenfranchised people to participate in the electoral process and build upon that pre-work to run a successful and empowering Voter Registration

campaign while building long-term volunteer leaders and infrastructure. We didn’t just ask them to vote once. We were in it for the long haul.

If you want to go fast, go alone.
If you want to go far, go together.

—an African proverb

Results and More Lessons Learned

As word of our successes became known, we won a national Grassroots Peace Award from Peace Development Fund. It carried with it a large grant and a media consultant to work with us to do a press conference. At first, we declined the media consultant and asked for the cash instead. We told them that the conservative media sources in our area don't agree with our point of view and have only done negative stories about us.

Luckily, Peace Development Fund turned down our request. Media Consultant Jane Wholey came to work with us for several weeks. After that, we knew media would play a critical role in how we changed people's minds! We hired her to work with us over the next several years.

As more people learned about our work, we were asked to do trainings all over the country and abroad.

We began to develop training for other organizations to help mobilize disenfranchised people to participate in the electoral process while building long-term volunteer leaders and infrastructure.

What made our work unique at that time was funders only supported the work during election years. We had to do a lot of education with our donors to support the work in off-election years. By doing this, we weren't reinventing the wheel every year but building on what we had accomplished year after year, not just in the Piedmont of North Carolina but in places like Swannanoa, eastern and western North Carolina, and in states like South Carolina, Louisiana, Maine and Georgia.

Now many organizations have adopted similar models of deep, sustainable work, such as the Working Families Party, People's Action and many others. We even trained people in South Africa after apartheid ended.



While you can use this book for information on how to do a one-year campaign, the purpose of TAKE 10 is to develop a sustainable, long-term Voter Registration and Get-Out-the-Vote campaign that continues to build on itself and grow exponentially. Some of the ideas in this book might not work in your community, but it is a model that can change and adapt to new circumstances or different localities. Test, update, rearrange and find out what works best for you.

You will find many stories in this book that are, in some cases, a composite of experiences drawn from different organizations with which I've worked. I teach by storytelling, so each chapter is followed by a story or reflection to illustrate experiences related to the preceding chapter. Develop your own stories that will make each step you take relevant and relatable to what you are teaching your volunteers.

The Resources and Materials section of this manual gives you ideas for sample presentations and trainings. Use these PowerPoints as appropriate for your group and the culture of your community.

The TAKE 10 model of organizing is not an exact formula but it does work.

Introductory Session

What does it take to win?

See Resources and Materials for the Introductory Session PowerPoint presentation on page 112.

Transform The World

dream your dreams with open eyes and make them come true

Secular, Spiritual, and Religious People Unite to Replace Selfishness and Materialism with Love, Kindness, Generosity, Open-Heartedness, Nonviolence, and Radical Amazement at the Grandeur of the Universe.

(t.e. Lawrence)

Naked



Hope

Revolution

Progressives

BELIEVE

Free World

Peace

CONNECTIONS

Winning

Heal

TOGETHER
Celebrate
Vision

Network

Relationship
dreams

HEART

Justice

POWER

Global Consciousness
and Ecological Sanity

YOU HAVE THE POWER
TO CHANGE THE WORLD
now more than ever

new ways of working

imagine

earth
now!

Living
SIMPLICITY



LIFE

EVERY FAMILY DESERVES A SAFE, DECENT HOME.



Variety makes us strong...
...Harmony makes us successful

For Trainers: Getting Started Making and Managing Your Get-Out-the-Vote Plans

*You have within you the strength, the patience,
and the passion to reach for the stars and change the world!*

—Harriet Tubman

Congratulations! You've decided you want to make change in your community's civic engagement and at the ballot box. You will take this program on and offer TAKE 10 training in your community. Next you will be recruiting trainees and preparing this program for in-person or virtual participants. What is your vision? You will need an action plan.

Having a vision of what you are hoping to create is important, but as a famous Japanese proverb says, "Vision without action is a daydream. Action without vision is a nightmare."

Before you begin, create your own vision. If you can find other trainers or have co-workers wanting to do the same thing, you can establish a training cohort and learn from each other as you move through this process. If not, I highly recommend finding a co-trainer to do this program with you who either represents or understands your community.

You can adapt this plan for your own use and add or change as needed for your group or community.

FIRST THINGS FIRST

Start with your own visioning exercise. Personal visioning often helps those working or preparing to work for change get a clear vision of what you need to be doing in the work. It will also help you find balance in your life. I've learned to use visioning to help me set goals for myself, both to keep a balance of work and play and to address health and family issues. It allows me to continue to work for change for the long haul and be joyous and energized by the work I do.

You will find an exercise in Chapter 3 for you to lead a collective vision. Personal visioning has to be connected to a larger vision that is collective. You can do visioning for anything personal. In this case, it will be about your work and what you want to accomplish. To create your personal vision, start with a guided meditation.

Exercise — Your Personal Vision¹

1. Close your eyes or look down with soft focus.
2. Take three breaths (together, if with others).
3. Be aware of your body, the weight of it, the fullness of it, the edges of it.
4. Now think of the goal you want to achieve and imagine the achievement of the goal seeping into your body, starting at the head or growing up from the earth into your legs. Imagine that you have achieved it.
5. How does your body feel?
6. Has anything changed in your relationships with friends, a partner, family members, co-workers?
7. How do you feel when you get up in the morning?
8. How do you feel when you go to bed at night?
9. What is different for you now that you have achieved your goal?

After about 10 minutes, return to the present time. Draw or journal about your experience of having achieved that goal. Answer the following questions:

- What have you achieved?
- How did you do it?
- Who helped you? How? When?
- What were the barriers and how did you overcome them?
- What has changed for you since you achieved this goal?
- What else would you like to tell us?
- What was the first thing you did (in the first day/week) after the first visioning session when you made this goal?
- Who was the first person you turned to for support on your journey?

Take your time. Your personal vision could take you a whole day to do. A personal vision, just like a collective vision, has to be inspiring and exciting, but reaching it starts with steps that are realistic and doable. Ask yourself, “What are the small steps I can take today, next week, next year that will lead me to my vision?”

Then create a vision board that depicts what you’ve accomplished or the goal you want to achieve. This vision board can be a poster, drawn simply (I draw with stick people), or you can cut out pictures from magazines, use photos or informational flyers to find images that reflect your vision.

This vision board is only for you, but I keep mine where I can look at it and refer to it all the time.

From your vision board, you can create your action plan.

¹ Meditation exercise developed by Jennifer Ladd

WHAT'S YOUR STORY

Visioning to Action

Of course, visioning is not useful without an actual plan to make it happen! You can have a vision of traveling to an exotic place in the world, but without a plan — deciding how to get there and when to go, making sure you have the funds to pay for it, buying tickets and packing to get there — it would just remain a dream.

Creating your personal vision is the first step in determining how you will achieve your goals. Stay in the future time you envisioned and imagine you are being interviewed by a reporter who is doing a story about your life. The time is in the future, where you have accomplished your personal goal. Look back and reflect on how you accomplished it. The reporter asks you about what you have achieved, how you did it, who helped you? Were there barriers and how did you overcome them? How did you stay focused on your goal? What changed once you achieved this goal and what are the benefits of those changes? There might be new challenges and opportunities that open up for you as a result, or you may have had to give up something. What have you learned? What advice can you give others?

Most importantly, What was the first thing you did after creating your personal vision? Who was the first person you turned to for support on your journey?

Taking action on a personal vision can pave the way to action on a larger vision. For example, a woman in one of our groups envisioned she wanted to clean out the junk from her garage because she felt it drained her energy from focusing on her social justice work. It had been piled up for years! The group ended up volunteering to come and help her one weekend to achieve her goal. A month later, she reported that she was able to park her car in the garage and no longer had to clean snow off it on a regular basis during the winter. A year later, when I did a follow-up with the group, she had become the leader and they had won a major victory the community had envisioned the year before.

I usually plan all projects — big and small, even projects in my home — by visioning what I want it to look like first. Just this past weekend I envisioned the simple need to clean out my freezer so I could find things. I decided if I waited, I would not get it done, so I planned to do it on Sunday. I decided to go to the discount store on Saturday to get the organization bins I needed and now I can now find everything in my freezer easily!

Exercise — Plan it!

I don't use this chart for tiny projects like my freezer, but any long-term plan needs something like this.

My Personal Vision/Goal:

What are the tasks to accomplish your goal? <i>(List each task)</i>	How will you accomplish these tasks? What will you do to make it happen?	When is it due? What is your timeline for each step? <i>(Be realistic!)</i>	Who do you need to involve? Who else will help?	What resources do you need to make this happen <i>(i.e. training, people, research, money)?</i>	How will you get these resources and what will you do if you don't have all of them?
TASK #1					
TASK #2					
TASK #3					
TASK #4					
TASK #5					



What is Your Timeline?

Make a calendar of your action plan timeline, from recruitment to training to keeping the momentum going after the election. Check with your Board of Elections to discover when early voting starts and add the key dates you need to keep in mind for your plan. Make sure you include celebrations and the follow-up you want to do after the election.

Just like your budget, your timeline will change; as things come up, changes need to be made. By having a plan and timeline you can still keep on track. For example, after the COVID-19 pandemic started, our TAKE 10 groups were providing food, vaccines and testing sites, and assistance to those out of work. So, we made voter registration part of the COVID-19 response. Volunteers handed out hundreds of bags of food as cars lined up for help, and each bag had a flyer describing how to register to vote and how to do it during the pandemic.

Of course, the pandemic affected our door-to-door work, but we taught people how to become efficient at using Zoom and carried out our trainings virtually. There are many ways you might have to make adjustments to your plan, but always keep the mission in mind and go forward with your plan.

Annotate your timeline. Determine the best time of day and when during the week to conduct your

voter registration. For some communities, early evening is best; for others, the weekend is better. In rural communities for example, you often find people out working in their yards and playing with children during the weekend. The same community might be feeding their children, doing homework and helping them to bed on weeknights.

Scope out the area and talk to people who live there to find the most appropriate time to knock on doors. Note what time it gets dark in early evening in the Fall. In rural areas with no street lights or sidewalks, it is important to create plans that help your volunteers feel safe. We usually had cars driving along with the volunteers and parking at the top of the street. People also carried flashlights and wore safety lights that flashed before them and after them as they walked down the street.

A Target Map

You want to develop a targeting area. This can happen in several ways. You are most likely focusing on areas of the county or district that are most disenfranchised. If you are a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, you cannot just target by political parties (Democrat, Republican or other parties), but you can target places like underserved communities. This could be a community of color, or it could be a low-income,

working class area. You can also find out where the fewest registered voters are, usually in those same areas the communities I've already mentioned are located. You might also target a group of people or an area that has been divided among groups along different constituencies or issues. For example, in Asheville, NC I worked with a coalition of groups and they took on different sections of the county. One group took on teachers in public schools, one group took on the colleges, one group worked in the projects. We took on the trailer parks and another low-income, rural community.

You can decide whether you're focusing on rural or urban areas. Often rural areas tend to be overlooked (because it takes more time, energy and resources to register and get-out-the-vote.) While the numbers in rural areas are not as large, that can often be where elections are lost or won.

Rural organizing is also very family-focused. Often you see two or three generations working together in local organizations. Sometimes you see entire families working together. Many have family members on their boards. Executive director's and volunteer's mothers or grown children, nieces and nephews are involved as volunteers, staff or board members. Having family members on the board or as staff can lead to complex problems, but is prevalent among rural organizations, and it works for them.

Often, the language you use in rural areas is also different. Some rural organizers do not use words like "needs assessment," "strategies and tactics," or "environmental and climate justice" with their communities. Low-income people do not relate to the terms most often used by organizers.

You may also decide to focus on a particular constituency: people in trailer parks, folks in nursing homes, churches, and those who are unhoused or homeless. Make sure you have a plan for how to reach those who may be more transient for follow-up and turnout, like teenagers who will turn 18 by Election Day, college students (check local laws on whether they can vote absentee or if they should register in your town), formerly incarcerated people who have

served their sentence and are now free to vote (they often don't have information that they may be able to vote now, but the laws differ from state to state).

Your plan will vary depending on your target area.

Recruit Your Volunteer Team

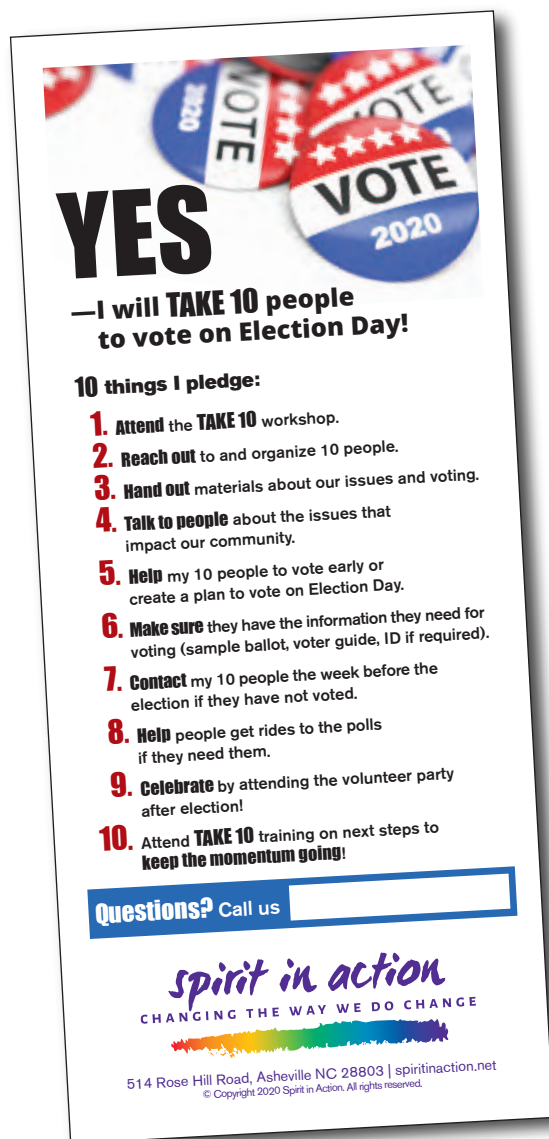
Once you've identified your target area, you can begin to recruit your volunteers. If you are part of a group or organization, you will have a ready-made audience for recruiting. Also, consult with others when possible. For example, if you decide to target unhoused people, talk to a local organization that works with them for ideas of how to reach them. There are many reasons why they may be homeless, but there are also many people who can vote.

Avoid recruiting another organization's volunteers. During election seasons, groups and campaigns will often come into your area and offer to pay your volunteers, especially if your state is targeted as a battleground state or the race is hotly contested. While you can't avoid this, it can become problematic after the election. The volunteers then expect to be

... always keep the mission in mind and go forward with your plan.

paid for everything they do. I warn my volunteers that people will come in (usually from outside) who will pay them, and if they need the money, I understand if they want to work for them. I ask them to just please come back to us as a volunteer when they are finished. "We can't afford to pay you," I tell them, but "We're here 24-7 and are working with you to improve our communities."

Since you are trying to get folks to volunteer for your training program, use the TAKE 10 handout (as shown here) to recruit them. You can also create a flyer that has the time and place of a gathering for people who commit to attending an introduction or initial training.



Think through how this first meeting will unfold and what you will need. Do you have enough chairs? Can people find you if you are in a big building? Where should people park or what train or bus stop should they use? Name tags? Opening questions or introductions?

Make the first meeting FUN! Always include enjoyable activities for younger children, food and diversions that will keep people involved. Have a raffle, asking people to fill out their name, address, phone and email (a great way to capture information!) Local restaurants and supermarkets will often donate gift certificates, so plan ahead and ask for what you need.

TAKE 10
volunteer
pledge card



Organizational Check-Up: Is Every Day a Crisis? Where Are You Now, Where Do You Want to Go and How to Get There

In times of turmoil, organizers and activists rarely have the time to think about how to take advantage of the opportunities before us and build on our organization's strengths. It seems like we are putting out fires every day, whether it is personnel turnover, fundraising requests, a financial squeeze or a pandemic! I have found that particularly during times like these, there are strategies we can use, and steps we can take, that will help us survive and thrive.

A Quick Assessment

This check-up is designed to help you get to the heart of the matter quickly and find where you can best propose, evaluate and select new strategies to encourage your organization to grow stronger. Answering “yes” or “no” to one of the questions does not imply a judgment. It is a guide to provoke thought, conversation and ultimately, action that is right for you and your group.

What Are We Thinking?

In most organizations, some participants live and breathe the mission and vision. Others aren't sure how the steps you are taking connect to the vision your group holds. It's easy to get distracted by new ideas that sound good but may not be appropriate for your group's resources or capacity. Good work that is focused on just one goal suddenly ends because it is not grounded in a larger vision. Movement-building requires engendering a sense of shared identity and creating a collective vision which emerges only through talking with each other.

Take the opportunity to ask each other:

1. Do people on all levels of your organization understand your mission and vision?
2. Are all activities connected to your mission?
3. Do you make decisions based on your mission?

If you can answer “yes” to these questions, great! Most groups I have worked with are somewhere in the middle — “Our activities are USUALLY connected to our mission!” Taking time to review your mission and vision and be sure everyone is on the same page will set you up stronger for the coming year.

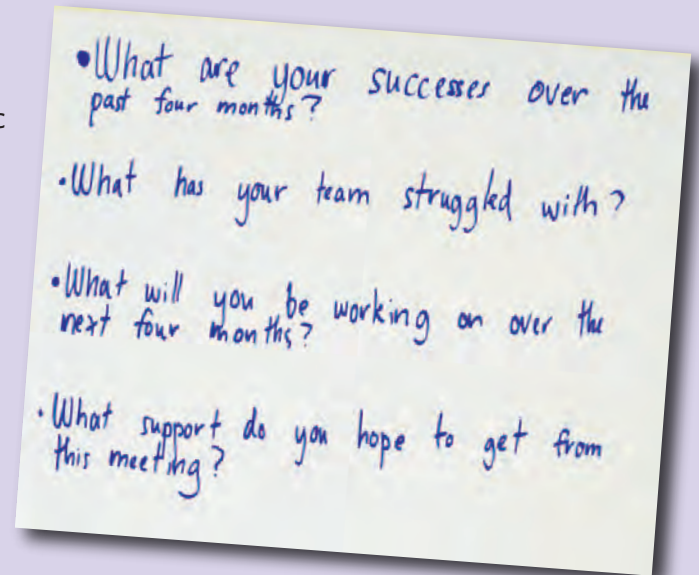
Dreaming and Scheming

The opportunity in a crisis is to recognize and consciously take advantage of our inherent interconnection. Because we cannot escape from the web of life, we are called to see how we can intentionally weave new threads and strengthen old ones so that we ALL can thrive. As people try out new ways to work together, a vast and yet powerfully aligned collective vision of the future is co-created. Returning periodically to discuss your core values allows everyone to remain “bought in” to your organization.

1. Does your organization have a clear and broadly accepted set of core values?
2. Do individuals within your organization behave in sync with each other?
3. Do you take the time to evaluate your work and celebrate your accomplishments?

We want to hold firm to our commitment of building trust, community, and especially fun and celebration. This helps us stand up to an activist culture of going right to work on the issues before building the foundation of core values needed to carry out the work.

Transformational change can happen when we take the time to build a force for healing and change that is multi-issue, broad-based and diverse, a force that begins from a place of deep knowledge, trust in each other and positive vision.



When There is Never Enough

Do some things just never get done? Scarce resources and a difficult fundraising environment are common to many non-profits. We often take on too much. We over-promise. Evaluating what resources you need to accomplish your plan is an important first step to then finding those resources.

1. Does your organization have **the right kind of resources**: i.e., financial, staff, volunteers, time, technology to achieve your goals?
2. Does your organization have **a diverse funding base**?
3. Do you have **a plan to attract new donors** that you are implementing?
4. Do you see **increased gifts from people who have been giving** to your organization from the beginning?
5. Does your organization have **an ongoing capacity to attract sufficient financial resources**?

These are the hard questions we need to answer honestly, to avoid what I call “magical thinking.” That is, if we just believe and hope that things will work out, that the resources will somehow be there and that everyone is working together, it will happen.

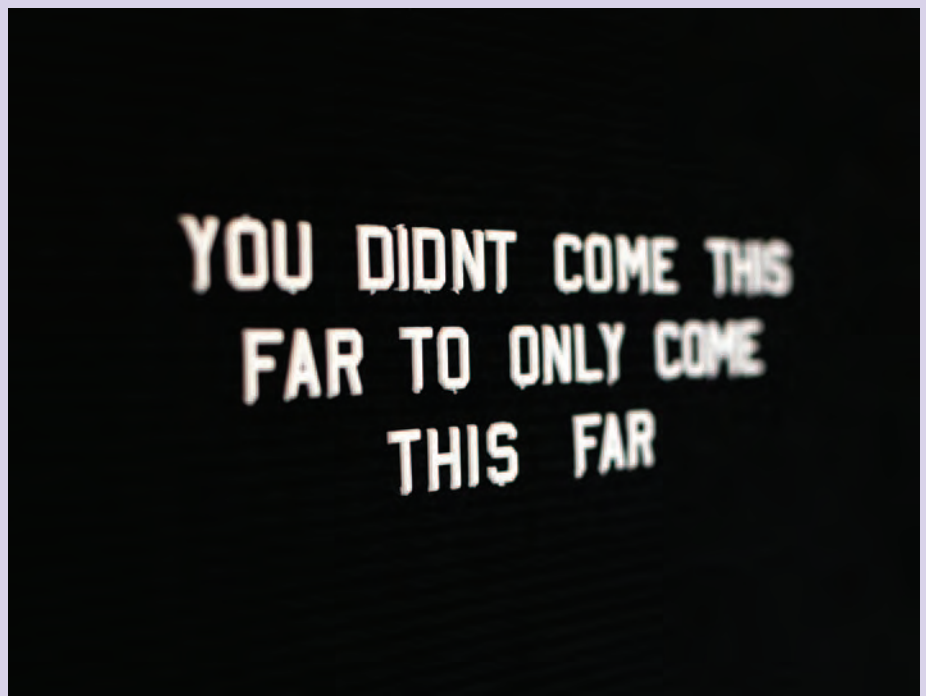
Remember you can't do everything. I have a method I use that is truly helpful. I use it for myself and for the organization I run. Everything I have on my to-do list is prioritized. You may have heard of the 3-Ds:

- **Do** These are things that stay at the top of your list. Sometimes they are a quick phone call or note. Other times it's a longer project and your work on it is ongoing.

- **Delay** You might decide this is important but it can wait two weeks or even six months. Just make sure how and when you will finish stays in your plan until completed. Don't delay it indefinitely.

- **Delete** This is probably the hardest for organizers to do, but in reality, you can't do everything and at times you just have to say no. This includes a request from foundations that might be offering you funds to take on a new project. I've seen many groups fall into this trap and it takes them away from their mission and main purpose. I have been able to clearly say NO to these foundations and as a result, raised more money from others because we're doing a great job on what we're already doing. In other instances, I've had the same foundations give us money anyway, after we said no, in order to support our work. I always feel great after I've deleted something from my to-do list, as it lifts one more boulder off my shoulders.

We know there will be roadblocks to achieving our vision. Our experience tells us that. Identifying the roadblocks, and developing an action plan to circumvent them, keeps us moving forward!



Linda Stout

We want to hold firm
to our commitment of
building trust, community,
and especially fun and
celebration.





DREAM
BIG.



COMMUNITY
IS
STRENGTH.

BE STRONG. LET'S LOOK OUT FOR ONE ANOTHER.

Building our Community: Vision, Goals and Volunteer Leaders

The TAKE 10 Training Program is a key tool for building power to win on issues affecting our communities. This training will help you run a successful and empowering Voter Registration and Get-Out-the-Vote campaign while building long-term volunteer leaders and infrastructure. The workshop exercises will show your volunteers how civic engagement will help build organizational membership, empower leaders and empower your community. It will also enable you to better understand how to practice self-care during times of uncertainty and suffering.

BUILDING OUR COMMUNITY

We know that civic engagement will help build organizational membership, empower leaders and empower your community. Combining organizing and popular education, for example, we significantly changed the voting record of our congressman in North Carolina.

As you continue to grow, you will find you want to incorporate the TAKE 10 model into all parts of your organizing. Helping folks learn about issues affecting low-income and poor people gives them equal access in the democratic process, so voters must also feel confident in their knowledge of the issues and the solutions that will be affected by their decisions.

Purpose and Expectations

It is important if you are working with a group over time, or in a community, to help people understand purpose — why we are here — and expectations. The purpose is usually communicated in advance so people know what they're coming to learn, but should also be restated at the beginning of the training. Although you are the trainer, you also want to ask people about their expectations. You will find this informative to your training — it will guide you in topics you need to cover.

1. Purpose: *To learn a different, proven effective, way to engage people in civic engagement.*

2. Expectations: *We are here to participate in a 10-week course to be able to learn the TAKE 10 methodology and to train volunteers to do the work.*

Agreements

Do not fall into the old way of just putting up agreements on the white board that you believe are needed or that you have used before. First of all, agreements are very cultural. What works for one group, may not work for another. Class, race, age and other cultural factors all play into how people learn to trust each other.

Helping folks learn about issues affecting low-income and poor people gives them equal access in the democratic process.

For example, when I went to Massachusetts to work, I was surprised that people always listed on agreements: “Don’t interrupt.” Where I come from in the South, we always interrupted! It was our way of engaging, being interested, acknowledging and adding to the discussion. We did not consider it disrespectful. Both are legitimate ways of doing things, but we need to understand each other’s background and begin to learn from one another’s ways.



See Resources and Materials for the Group Agreements PowerPoint presentation on page 117.

OPENINGS

We always begin with an opening to bring the group together. This also begins to build trust and knowledge of each other. In many of these chapters, I will give an example of a different opening but feel free to use whatever you think works for your group.

Example: *Say your name, pronouns, organization, where you live and one thing you do for relaxation.*

We need to understand each other’s background.

Exercise: GROUP AGREEMENTS — How to create “living” agreements

Questions to ask participants to create agreements:

1. *How do I want to show up and be seen? If I brought my best self to the meeting, what quality would you see?*
(one word each, list answers in front of group)
2. *What do I need from this group to be able to step into my full power and to feel free to speak my full truth?*
(one word each, list answers in front of group)

Read the list aloud and ask if anyone has questions for clarification. The facilitator can also ask clarification questions (What does honesty, transparency, etc. mean to you?) Once everything is clear, get everyone’s verbal agreement that this is your working list. For example, if someone says, “safety,” there may need to be a short discussion of what it means. White people mention this often, while people of color might say this is a way of shutting them down.

This is a living document. Let people know to alert you if they feel people are deviating from the agreements, or if you need to add one. Each agreement must have everyone’s affirmation.

Put the agreements up in front of the room and bring it out for every future meeting (if doing as a virtual meeting, use a recurring slide.)

I have also done this exercise as a “mingle,” where each person pairs with someone they don’t know or don’t know very well, and shares their answers. Then they change partners and find another person. This is repeated three times. Then ask people to share what they heard. This takes more time but people must listen to others more deeply and carefully, resulting in building a stronger sense of trust.

VISIONING

Visioning is critical to helping people understand where they are going and why we're taking the steps we do. It helps them keep up hope if one campaign or election is lost. A vision gives people excitement, energy and optimism. It engages their emotions. A vision is the one key ingredient that I think can never be left out of a campaign. Even if you aren't a visionary yourself, don't underestimate the power of visioning in groups.

It is important to explain to the group that people vision in different ways. Some people see things clearly;

others feel things, or hear things or even smell things. You can say, "Whatever happens for you is right... please know whatever your experience is, it is 'just right.'"

It's good to encourage people to sit comfortably and take some deep breaths. Turn down the lights and even play quiet, meditative music in the background. Speak calmly, but make sure you project loudly enough so everyone can hear you. Read the vision exercise very slowly and clearly, with at least 10-second pauses between each question (I actually mentally count 10 seconds.)



Exercise — A Collective Vision

1. Close your eyes, get comfortable and take three deep breaths.
2. Imagine you go to sleep one night and have a beautiful dream about a wonderful future you want for yourself and children. You wake up and the month is January, five to twenty years in the future. (You can decide how many years depending on the organization.)
3. You walk out of your house. What do you see? What does it smell like? How's the weather? What's different?
4. You walk into the center of your town (or community) and look at the newspaper. The newly elected president is being sworn in today. What do they look like? Do you know their name? What are people in your community doing?
5. Because of the work you've done over the past few years, your organization or community has grown from a few people to thousands of leaders working for positive change. What kinds of things have you been able to accomplish?
Take a one to two-minute pause. (Encourage people to journal if that helps them.)
6. What does your organization (community, church) look like?
7. As you walk around your community greeting those you know, nodding to those you don't, you meet a young person you knew from five to 25 years ago. This person started working for your group doing Get-Out-the-Vote at the age of 10. They have a message for you from the future.
8. As you return back to the current year, you are an ambassador for the future. You have seen what is possible and can let people know what can happen with their help.
9. What is the message the young person you met wants you to take back to the current time?

As they come back to the present, ask people to take deep breaths to return, open their eyes and focus on things around them.

10. Think about one of the first things you did in that first week as a result of your vision that was a stepping stone toward the future you helped create.

Put them in small groups of two to three people. Ask them to share what they saw with the others in their group, and the first step they took to move toward the future. Give each about three minutes to share. Assign someone to keep time so everyone gets to talk. Tell them you will give a one-minute warning before each small group ends.

Everyone should then return to the large group and you ask a new set of questions:

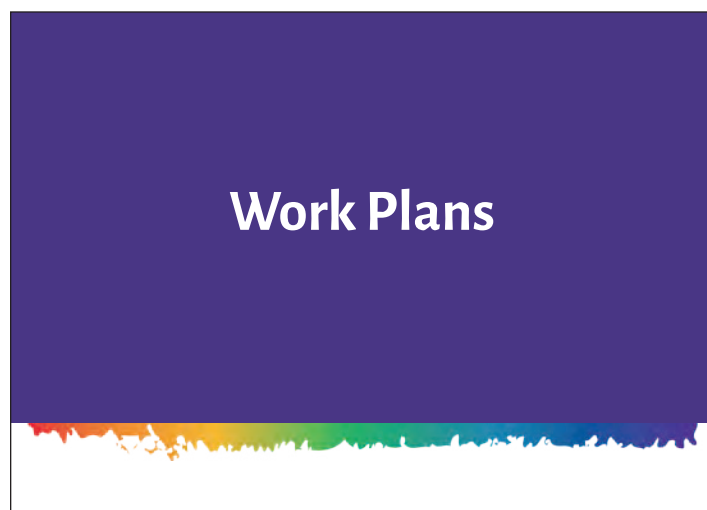
1. What was one nugget (something you saw, you felt, heard or a memory) that you brought back from visiting the future?
Capture responses for the whole group to see.
2. Did you identify any themes from what we heard from the group?
3. How did individual hopes and dreams align with other people's hopes and dreams?

End by saying, "Now we will talk about how to make these hopes and dreams fit into our collective/group hopes, goals and dreams." This will lead you to the next exercise.

GOALS

Setting goals is another important component of building community. It keeps people positive and moving forward to achieve those goals. Share your own goals with your volunteers and remind them of theirs. Sharing goals may empower others to help you achieve those goals.

S Strategic	M Measurable	A Achievable	R Relevant	T Time-bound
State what you will do • Be specific and clear • Use action words (who? what? where?)	Provide a way to evaluate • Figure out how you will measure your goal • Use number targets (how much? how many?)	Within your ability or your organization's ability • Possible to accomplish in timeframe	Makes sense within your life • Is it realistic? • Improves your organization or group (does it match other needs and efforts?)	State when you will get it done • Be specific on date or timeframe (when? —create some milestones.)



Setting goals keeps people positive and moving forward to achieve those goals.

See Resources and Materials for the Work Plans PowerPoint presentation on page 119.

Exercise — Setting Goals

Based on the prior visioning exercise, encourage people to think about the kind of power they would need to build in order to make their hopes and dreams come true. Ask them to write down three thoughts on post-it notes. You can say:

We assume people are coming to this training understanding that elections are one way to win — therefore, voter engagement is one way to build power. We know there are other ways and it is fine if people mention those ways. But for our purposes, this training, this group, we're here to impact civic engagement.

After people have written down their ideas, ask them bring them up to the front of the room. Invite two to three people to help sort the post-it notes into categories. This is a good time for a break while this is being done.

After the sorting is finished, ask people to look at the categories and think about what can be done realistically to create goals for their group for this year. Maybe it's the number of people they want to get to the polls, or maybe just the number of people they want to talk to by knocking on doors.

As the trainer, you can ask questions, like, do you really think you can do six events this year with current resources and volunteers? If yes, great, but sometimes groups have to face reality and take smaller steps first. One group, Kinston Teens for instance, started with a "TAKE 5" strategy the first year and then moved to TAKE 10.

Make sure their goals are **SMART** or **Strategic, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound**. For example, it should relate to the vision — it's **Strategic**. It should be **Measurable**: we will recruit and nurture 100 volunteers this year.

Achievable: you must be able to do it with the resources you have. For example, if you said, "We want 100 volunteers" and you only had two people doing outreach, you might need to reevaluate. Make sure your goal is realistic for your current people and resources. (You could also assess this and say, our first goal is to recruit eight more people to do outreach, so we can reach 100 volunteers, for example.)

Relevant just means it is within your group's power to achieve it — it's realistic. **Time-bound**: You want this to happen in 10 months or one year. Don't set goals that you can finish in one month or would take several years. Keep it within a year.

Remind the group that they are here to increase civic engagement, a primary goal. TAKE 10 is an exponentially increasing numbers strategy: each person in the group gathers 10 committed volunteers each to do 10 things over the next year. Some people might only be able to reach three people, some 15. It requires person-to-person contact.

Other, less successful strategies have depended on leafleting. Volunteers may have given TAKE 10 flyers to hundreds of people, but only found one recruit. Be strategic to whom you give your flyers. Make sure there is an interest in your audience first.

There needs to be more to civic engagement than passing out flyers. You need conversations to recruit people to do this work.

VOLUNTEERS WHO ARE LEADERS

During four decades of training, we worked with other groups to do the same sort of visioning, setting goals and relational organizing — what we call “really listening.” The best part of this type of organizing is how it develops leadership, grows a volunteer base and keeps people engaged year-round. You don’t have to reinvent the organizing wheel every election or start from scratch, as many national Get- Out-the-Vote models do.

TAKE 10 relies on teaching people how to be leaders, recruit volunteers, educate voters and develop the deep listening skills and personal contacts that keep people motivated and energized over the long haul. That is why from North Carolina to New England to South Africa (where TAKE 10 was used after apartheid

fell and Black people could vote for the first time), the TAKE 10 model continues to be used nationally as well as internationally.

It’s really very simple, what it takes to win. It takes people, bringing in more people, building up their knowledge of the issues that affect their lives, organizing and then taking action, 10 people at a time. As one TAKE 10 participant said, it is like “putting all our positives together.”

Civic engagement is a long-term process. It does not stop after an election. In the next chapters, you will find ways to keep your volunteers continuously involved and engaged.

Civic engagement is a long-term process.
It does not stop after an election.



See Resources and Materials for the Building Political Power PowerPoint presentation on page 121.



It Can't Be Just Pretend

Vision without action is “just pretend,” as a young activist once told me.

A vision works only if we create a plan for how to accomplish it—a road map to get to our goal. Because we know the place we’re moving toward, we have more patience if the road detours or if we encounter flat tires, dead batteries, or other stops and starts as we move toward our vision.

Fear of Planning

Sometimes people are resistant to making long-term plans because they think doing so locks them into one way of working and does not leave the flexibility to change in the moment. This is not true: we can respond to urgent unexpected emergency situations while moving toward our vision. It’s the vision that inspires and motivates people to stay in it for the long haul, leading us toward lasting, pro-active, positive action for change.

Of course, sometimes we need to shift in order to respond to a current situation, whether it’s a public health crisis or the loss of a major foundation grant or contract. But it is easier to make critical decisions like this in the context of a long-term strategic plan based on our vision.

When the Piedmont Peace Project created its annual plan (based on our longer vision), we laid out all of our work for the coming year and created goals and strategies for achieving it. During the last couple of days of our planning retreat, we had to stop and redo the plan because we learned that the U.S. would be bombing Iraq within a month. We knew that the war would affect us disproportionately, since so many in our community served in the military. We changed our

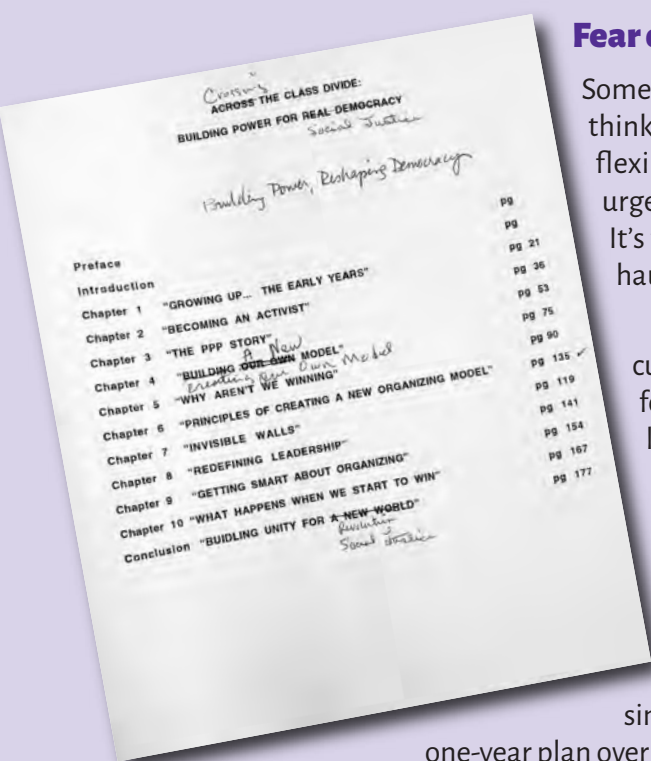
one-year plan over a two-day period, but we were able to do it in such a way that we still accomplished all our visionary goals for the year, although with a different strategy that responded to the crisis now facing us.


Had we not had a vision, goals or even a plan, we would have responded reactively, rather than moving forward in a way that helped our group strengthen and grow in an organized way, while responding to the critical moment.

Make It Happen

Go from a place of vision to creating a realistic, doable plan of action. Go from what you *want* to *how to get there*. Then be prepared for potholes and learn how to swerve!

Linda Stout





The future is an
infinite succession of
presents, and to live
now as we think
human beings should
live, in defiance of all
that is bad around us,
is itself a marvelous
victory.

—Howard Zinn



Finding, Training and Engaging Volunteers

Volunteers are the linchpin of the work we do. They are on the frontlines, listening and responding to the realities of the issues they live with every day, in some cases decades of racism, poverty and voter suppression. The most successful organizing is led by people who are most directly impacted.

This workshop is designed for you to teach your group how to recruit and train their 10 people, and gain the skills and tools your volunteers need in a constantly changing society. We've done this with organizations, churches and in some cases, just a group of people who really want to make something happen. Our TAKE 10 model of organizing propels grassroots leadership that rural and low-income voters seek to develop and support their activities for civic engagement.

RECRUITMENT

The first thing you will need to do is recruit those volunteers you will train. Because of the work I do, I have the privilege of seeing huge wins and changes happening when people join together and follow their vision toward big transformations. We need to continue to focus on the positive, our strengths, our greatest inspiration and to celebrate our victories. Only from this place can we hold hope and move forward confidently and with purpose.

Once you have decided who your group will be, they need to commit to joining you in a series of TAKE 10 workshops, maybe over a period of a few weeks, or, if you add in coaching (see Chapter 8), a few months. You can introduce them to the “why” in Chapter 1, and help them to do visioning and goal setting in Chapter 3.

Finding Volunteers

How do you find these people to work with? Just yesterday I was talking to a friend of mine who is a pastor of a multiracial church. She was so upset

OPENINGS

Think of a time you were an enthusiastic volunteer. Who was it for and what were your tasks? (We will revisit this later in the “Why Volunteer?” exercise.)

about our political situation in this country and wanted to know what she could do. I told her if she could put together a multiracial group from her church (we require a minimum of 50 percent people of color in our trainings) and if they were willing to go outside of Asheville into surrounding communities, I would help them take action for the mid-term elections. Asheville is a liberal bubble but only a couple miles away are working-class communities that are very conservative and a lot of white supremacists live there. Needless to say, they have not supported issues we feel are urgent and affect their lives, like Medicaid expansion, healthcare and the homeless or unhoused. Based upon the issues her church cares about, she could recruit volunteers.

Overcoming Hesitation

Many trainers I have worked with hesitate to schedule that first workshop so that people can come and hear what this training is about. Folks have “other things on their calendars” or concerns about getting together in person. They need to “take a break after a busy period” or don’t want to schedule themselves too far out.

But the longer you wait to schedule that first meeting, the more extended the training will have to be, and the less time you will have to work on voter engagement and Get-Out-the-Vote. If you are hesitating, find a co-host — maybe another trainer interested in doing the same program — or meet virtually. Just get going!

Identifying Your Ten

When you have completed Chapters 2 and 3, it is time for your group to learn how to recruit their own volunteers. As I stated before, some people will think they can just ask for volunteers at their church or pass out flyers hoping people will sign up. This almost never works. Your team will need to talk with each person they want to recruit and explain why they are excited about this program. Their passion and engagement will get people interested in participating.

That’s why we do the introduction and visioning work before your team starts recruiting their own 10 people. Your group can talk to others about their hopes, and what they’ve learned in this program that was successful.

As you recruit your volunteers, keep the information positive and clear. You will ask them to pledge to do 10 things:

1. Attend the TAKE 10 workshops.
2. Reach out to and organize 10 people.
3. Hand out materials about our national and/or local issues and voting.
4. Talk to people about the issues that impact our community.
5. Help their 10 people to vote early or create a plan to vote on Election Day.
6. Make sure they have the information they need for voting (sample ballot, voter guide, ID if required).
7. Contact their 10 people the week before the election if they have not voted early.
8. Help people get rides to the polls if they need them.
9. Celebrate by attending the volunteer party after election! Show recognition for their work.
10. Attend TAKE 10 training on next steps to keep the momentum going!

Passion and Commitment

The next exercise is designed so that your team can enthusiastically convey to others what drives them to volunteer for TAKE 10.

See Resources and Materials for more slides from the Volunteers PowerPoint presentation on page 124.

Volunteer Recruitment Strategies

- Volunteer training
- Show the benefits of becoming a volunteer — i.e., improving your community
- Tap into their passion — gauge them on their interest/connect it to their interest
- Recognize volunteers — i.e., certificates, gathering when we can get back together again
- Build relationships with leaders and staff
- Help volunteers with resources
- Peer recruiting
- Build trust with volunteers
- Have a fun activity
- Write job descriptions for volunteers
- Invite to monthly Volunteer Orientation Meet’n Greet

Exercise — Why Volunteer?

Questions to ask participants about volunteering and to share aloud:

1. *Think about a time when you've been excited to volunteer, and when you came back to volunteer again.*
2. *What was it that got you to join?*
3. *What were some of the things that made it exciting?*
4. *What was it that brought you back to keep volunteering?*

Ask people to share their volunteer recruitment strategies with the group. This often helps people think of other things they might want to try as well.

You can also add some strategies to keep volunteers involved. This is an important tool if, at first, your group is shy about participating. Often after you start sharing ideas, people will come up with more.

Here are a few strategies I use:

- Getting them excited by the possibilities. “I hold on to hope because I hold onto my vision of possibilities: realistic, achievable possibilities. I hold on to hope because I am seeing all the things we can and are changing, step-by-step.”
- Self-interest. Learning what issues they care about and talking about how working on Voter Registration/Get-Out-the-Vote can help with that. “Not only is it our vote, but politicians begin to listen to us when we reach a certain number of voters.”
- Recognition and celebration. “At the end of the year, we always have a celebration for the volunteers who participated and hand out award certificates.”
- Professional development. “Get training and experience you can use in your job or job search.”
- Personal growth. After this year, “You can be trained as a Trainer to lead a workshop like the ones you are participating in now.”

Putting It on Paper

Ask your group to make a list of people they want to ask to volunteer for Get-Out-the-Vote. They should have more than just 10 as some people will decline to join. Ask them to write down:

1. What are their names?
2. Where are they? Address? Phone? Email?
3. Describe how you will get them excited about joining your program.

Have them make a plan of when they will meet with them (face-to-face is always best). Show them the flyer (adapted for your group/community, see Resources and Materials) and get their 10 people to pledge to

participate in 10 activities. These activities will largely depend on the group, type of election season or time within the election season, and current legislation. One of the reasons that it is so important to obtain information on all the volunteers and their 10 people is so the next time around, you are not starting from scratch.

Your volunteers should assure their 10 people that they will be with them every step of the way and encouraging them. If they are meeting as a group it will be easier and keep people more engaged, but it is not necessary.

In this day of cellphones and voice notes, it is hard to find people who will actually take notes and capture data that can be gathered and analyzed. But this

information is critical to your ongoing success. It is essential to use for follow-up, Get-Out-the-Vote and for building your organization. Without this information, your organization cannot keep track to reach out to invite people to take the next-step as volunteers.

Providing participants a form to fill out will remind them to capture all the information—like name, address, email and phone number. It's also good to note how they most like to hear from you—phone, text or email. There are cellphone apps that you can use to keep this information. You may want to check this out when you're looking for a database. If you are part of a State Table (a coalition of groups working on issues and civic engagement in many states), they can give your organization the software and training with a list of registered voters to use. This software can track newly registered voters as well as your members for use on cell-phones.

There should be a place to turn in all this information for your database. Do not depend upon volunteers to input this themselves! You almost always lose valuable information.

Paper or email, however, is no substitute for the face-to-face conversations we need to have.

Safety Concerns

When going door-to-door, we always train volunteers to avoid places with signs like “No Trespassing,” “Beware of Dog” or any other indications that it might not be a safe place. What a candidate sign means to someone in one election year and a subsequent year may be two different things (or people may forget to take it down!). Listening to people and their concerns often helped people make decisions about who represented them.

We don't turn away from people who disagree with us, but listen to them respectfully and try to find common ground. For example, I might hear someone say, “I don't want my guns taken away.”

Even though my personal view is that I don't believe in guns, period, I ask them: do they believe in gun safety or putting automatic weapons in the hands of everyone? If they say no, I feel I can talk about what common ground we share as we both believe that. Or, if they express interest in healthcare, I can always find common ground there, as that's an issue that affects me very personally.

If someone starts arguing with you at the door, it's best to respectfully walk away. Don't try to engage. You won't convince them that way, and it can put you or someone else in the house you're visiting in danger.

If you find your group or events disrupted by white supremacists, racists, anti-women activists or other hate group, this can turn into a dangerous situation. We have seen how white supremacists and racists come

to polling places in order to intimidate voters. Let your volunteers—and their 10 people—know that others might try to stop their vote through intimidation. Assure them, however, that you have people watching at the polling places (if you or another organization does). When people in Georgia knew that their vote was under threat, more people than ever showed up in the mid-term primaries.

It is important to provide a safe space for people at polling places that are likely to be

targeted by voter suppression. Most often this is in communities of color and in certain states, like Arizona, Florida, Georgia, North Carolina, Texas, as well as others. In North Carolina and in many other areas, we erected safety tents where people monitored what was happening. We had lawyers on call (usually state organizations provide this service.) We let people know if they were told by poll workers that their voter registration was not on record, they have someone to talk to and with whom they can problem solve. One solution may be that voters can request a provisional ballot.

Let's get on with
technology as a way
of connecting us to
people and places
we have never known
and have never seen.
But let us not give up
the power of plain
ol' human talk to
do the same.

—Johnnetta B. Cole



Intimidation at polling place in Chatham, North Carolina

You can also provide snacks and water at the tent (some states don't allow you to distribute water or food to people in line, so check the voter laws in your state.) This is helpful for folks made to stand patiently for hours, so they can get what they need to keep up their energy. Having games going on right outside of the polling area for kids to participate in helps parents who are waiting in long lines.

A sympathetic news outlet to call if problems arise is also very helpful. Use social media to alert folks to issues at the polling place.

A Different Kind of Evaluation

We must constantly evaluate and learn from what doesn't work. Asking volunteers to reflect on what they have learned gives them the sense that there's so much more they can do — rather than giving up — and it keeps them motivated.

Every time you knock on a door or talk to people, share that information among your group and adjust what volunteers are saying, if needed. When they reach out to voters and don't get responses, we need to analyze why. Ask the volunteers to strategize on responses. Just going back and talking to people can be very informative. Here are a few responses I've heard:

Times: "They always knock when we're having dinner or getting children to bed." If folks say they are busy, ask when is a good time to come back? This is another reason to keep notes and plan for next time.

Spaces: If you hold an event and no one comes, ask people what they think the reason was? One time we had a visioning event for the community and had positive response from the Latinx community about attending. However, when we held our event, not one person from that community turned out. When we talked to them about it later, we learned that the church where we chose to hold our event was a place where the police always parked looking for people who were undocumented. We had no idea! But next time we asked where people felt safe meeting — something we should have done in the first place.

We do not ever discuss what we did wrong, but how can we do it better. We found focusing on what was wrong just made people feel bad about themselves. So, we always asked ourselves, how could we improve? If something didn't work, how could we do it differently? Evaluation does not have to be a "critique" but a way to keep learning. It also allowed volunteers not to get too disappointed by what they saw as a failure — we refused to use that word — but as a way to keep improving.

Scaling Up to Win

The importance of the TAKE 10 program is being able to scale up every year. The volunteers from this year will receive Training of Trainers instruction next year (see Chapter 12), and begin to train their volunteers to reach 10 more people. This is what allowed PPP to go from approximately 100 people to 44,000 people within a period of five years. We were able to go from one staff person to 11. Many of the staff were previously volunteers who had been trained and who had taken on leadership roles.

It may feel overwhelming and impossible to think about organizing that many people, but if you do this training step-by-step, you will find you can raise money for staffing and expenses to grow your organization, so that more and more volunteers are trained and training others.

Becoming an Organizer

I am often asked, “How did I become an organizer?” And how did I get to where I am today? As you shall see, many people were part of this journey. So I begin with the beginning, about 40 years ago.

Leaving Home

Ku Klux Klan harassment of me grew to a threatening, intolerable level in 1977, so I left North Carolina and moved to Charleston, SC. I was the only white woman living in the low-income housing projects.

I got a job at an attorney’s office. I noticed that the buses dropped us off several blocks away from downtown Broad Street where many of us worked. I asked my neighbors why, since most of them worked even beyond Broad Street as gardeners, servants, maids or nannies. I learned that the residents in the wealthy neighborhoods where folks worked didn’t want buses filled with Black people coming onto their streets. I was told repeatedly to get in touch with Mrs. Clark if I wanted to do anything about it.



Sitting At Kitchen Tables



One day I tentatively knocked on Mrs. Clark's door. I met an elderly woman, who took me under her wing, and taught me organizing, fundraising and many other lessons. She was so welcoming, she invited me in to share dinner with several other people there. She became my mentor.

At the time I did not know Septima Clark¹ was a famous civil rights hero!

Septima Clark taught me about door-to-door work. Her first instructions to me were to go out and talk to people in the community. Ask them about their needs and wishes.

At first, I was afraid to knock on strangers' doors, but she lovingly pushed me. I soon learned that if people knew I was there to listen to them, they were much more willing to open up their homes and tell me their stories.

It not only encouraged people to join our efforts, I made friends and they fed me often! I even became the "go-to" person for kids struggling with their math homework. Mrs. Clark also persuaded me to ask for money for our organizing efforts from the attorneys where I worked. That was my next lesson from Mrs. Clark: how to fundraise.

As a 13th generation Quaker, I was also part of starting a Quaker Meeting in Charleston. There, I became interested in the Peace Movement, starting with advising conscientious objectors as part of the Meeting's mission. I also began working with a civil rights attorney, Ray McClain, who worked with conscientious objectors and on other civil rights issues.

Another Decision

Gaining experience from organizing and winning (we got buses to drop us off at Broad Street and all the way to the end of the peninsula at the Battery!) I went on to start the Charleston Peace organization. This is where I really cut my teeth at organizing.

Francie Close, an organizer against the Savannah River Site (a nuclear power plant) in South Carolina, showed me that you could make organizing a full-time profession. I was thrilled and decided that I would become a full-time organizer. It was consistent with my values, my dreams and my wish to make change in the world.

But I began to encounter many barriers to becoming an organizer. As a person who grew up in poverty, the daughter of a farmworker, who lacked a college education, I was always made to feel inferior in the primarily middle-class, white Peace Movement and feminist groups. I, in turn, believed I wasn't smart enough or good enough to do this work. I didn't understand that these were class barriers for many years.

However, I knew from my experience in Charleston that I could work with poor people like myself. Since I often had a hard time with ways that things were taught in workshops for social justice that I attended, I figured others did too. Words and language used in those workshops were not the way I talked. I decided I needed to reach out to people like me and made a decision to go back home and do that in North Carolina.

¹<https://kinginstitute.stanford.edu/encyclopedia/clark-septima-poinsette>

A New Way of Thinking

I started looking for a job as an organizer, and I fell into a conversation with a peace activist in North Carolina. She told me that an organization in Charlotte was hiring. I lived about 90 minutes away, but I applied anyway. North Carolinians for Effective Citizenship hired me to do non-partisan Voter Registration/Get-Out-the-Vote work, traveling and organizing from the Piedmont to western North Carolina.

It was my first opportunity to organize volunteers doing door-to-door work for Voter Registration and Get-Out-the-Vote. I had always voted, but until then, I had not been involved in linking the political issues we cared about to the power of voting. I learned so much from that job and mentors like Cathy Howell, John Wancheck, James Andrews and Si Kahn. Even though we weren't successful in electing the candidate we hoped for at a national level, there were many wins at a local level.

During this time, I flew on a plane for the first time at age 30 and attended meetings where I was part of people thinking about political power. I went to workshops that showed me the link to economic issues affecting my life. I began to see how to use political power to make change. I also learned the power of truly listening and not making assumptions.

Listening to Build Power

In Charlotte I also organized a group of middle-class peace activists to go out into the African American community to ask about people's concerns. When our group came back to share what they heard, they said people wanted more policemen to provide safety.

I was very curious about this. I knew police violence toward people of color was an issue. So I wanted to explore further exactly what people in the community had said.

Most stated things like, "We have too many people selling drugs on the streets and our children aren't safe." Or, "There's violence in our neighborhoods." No one had actually said they needed more police. That was an assumption.

So, the next weekend I sent our folks out into the same community to ask, "What do you think the solution is to drugs and violence?" We heard very different answers than, "We need more police." They said, "We need more playgrounds and places for our children to gather." They said they needed more education about problems with drugs. They said their children needed guidance counselors. That kind of listening was an awakening moment for folks in our group.

It was an awakening moment for me as well. I realized I could not work for social justice without including voter engagement, and really listening, as an important strategy. The next year, I started the Piedmont Peace Project.

Linda Stout

I realized I could not
work for social justice
without including voter
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important strategy.





I
Voted

Community Listening Project and Outreach with Volunteer Leaders

A lot of people can't vote. They're unable to take time off from work. They have childcare issues, or no transportation to the polls or ballot drop boxes. Some people don't want to vote. As one volunteer told me, "Folks say, 'My vote is with Jesus and I don't need anybody else.'" Others feel disempowered, that their vote will change nothing or don't understand how the issues affect them. They feel that no one is listening.

In recent years, organizing in a small community outside Asheville, NC called Swannanoa, we discovered that we could reach almost no one we made previous contact with through social media blasts or email. Every single person needed to know who we were first and what we were trying to do before they would engage in conversation.

CREATING A COMMUNITY LISTENING PROJECT

OPENINGS

When were you asked a question and were really listened to? How did that make you feel?

As Piedmont Peace Project volunteers began to spread throughout our 12-county district, our model of organizing became centered around "listening." We would go into a neighborhood and ask people if we could just listen to their concerns about their communities and for themselves. We started with very oppressed areas. We asked people what they loved about their community. We asked them to tell us their worries and fears. We began to call these our "listening projects."

Almost everyone wanted to express their views! Then we would ask them to come to a meeting to talk about what we could do about these issues. At the time, white people rarely talked to people of color.

Most people lived in very segregated communities. But our meetings were at least half, and often more, African American. Of course, that has drastically changed in many of the communities today.

As we got to know the neighborhoods better, we would discover who people looked up to as the natural leader. It was never an elected official, but usually an elderly woman down the block. We made sure we got her involved and she would help reach others, most often going with us door-to-door to reach their families and neighbors with the right information and propel voter turnout. People also warned us about homes to avoid because we would definitely not be welcome.

While these conversations can take up to 30 minutes, it's a way to begin to get to know people, and to understand what it will take to get them to register and turn out the vote. We also made sure we kept going back to them. Most of all, we begin to empower a large group of leaders who can exponentially increase our ability to register and turn out large numbers of people.

Issue-Based Organizing

Every county, every neighborhood, every group has their own set of issues. At PPP, we always connected those issues to how our governments — federal and local — spent our tax dollars. We identified very racist spending policies in local governments and linked them to the military budget on national issues. Many of our people at PPP were veterans and/or had children who were active military or veterans. This was a primary way for poor and disenfranchised people to obtain job training and education. They were not anti-military, but they saw for themselves the wastefulness of the military and how money was spent for unneeded things and not in support of veterans or people from our communities.

In one of our first meetings, all the white, low-income folks sat on one side of the room and all the Blacks sat on the other side, even though we originally had all the chairs in a circle. Listening and storytelling became the way to bring folks together. We asked the first question: “Tell us about your concerns for your children and their future.” As everyone began to talk about their children, they realized they had many things in common. A lively, engaged conversation followed, where they found they were more alike than different. Similar conversations took place around housing, healthcare and the local environment.

As always, we followed up a meeting with food, usually a potluck, and singing. People built even closer relationships with each other as a result. We never held a meeting without storytelling, food, childcare and fun!

Creating a Script

The volunteers should always begin their Community Listening Project by asking questions.¹ The way we

communicate with others is a huge part of what it means to be doing this work. A “script” in this context means an agreed upon way to communicate at the onset of a visit when we go canvassing door-to-door. Typically, a script is written down and on a clipboard. Some people put their scripts on a tablet or cellphone.

Volunteers should introduce themselves by saying:

“I’m with the XYZ organization/TAKE 10 program to learn about issues in your community and what we can do about them. But first, I want to talk to you about what you love about your community.”

Listen intently ... Ask if they mind if you take notes. Continue with:

“Oh, that sounds wonderful. What are some of your concerns about your community?”

If someone talks about problems with healthcare, volunteers might respond with something like:

“Wow, I’m really concerned about healthcare too! My mother is unable to get the medicines she needs because ... (use a real-life example that applies to you if possible). Did you know that Medicaid Expansion is on the ballot this year and we need to elect people who are going to protect us? Are you interested in hearing more about it?”

Or, reflect back their issue by suggesting an informational meeting.

“Are you interested in coming to a meeting to learn what to do about (the environment, reproductive rights, education, etc.)?”

You and your volunteers will write your own scripts depending on what the local issues are in the community that people might discuss, or what’s on your local ballots if you have them. (If you don’t know all the issues, there are organizations and organizers



¹ Be sure your organization has liability insurance before sending out volunteers.

who could help your group identify what is of local concern on the ballot.) If you are part of an organization that is a tax-exempt non-profit 501(c)(3), you can freely talk about issues. If you are not, you can talk about politicians if you wish. Even as a 501(c)(3), though, you can educate people about politicians' statements and voting records as long as you represent all sides.

Language Matters!

As you talk to people, and they recruit 10 volunteers who will be going out into the community to engage with people, the "language" the volunteers use will be particularly significant. I'm not talking about a foreign language, but about the colloquialisms of the region that people use daily.

This is so crucial to learn, as without it, you can lose people you would otherwise engage. It is especially true if it's not a volunteer's familiar community, or because of race, class, politics or education their language and assumptions are different. Using the wrong words, saying certain expressions, or making assumptions about people can turn others off pretty quickly.

At PPP, we worked to develop our own materials about issues. We wrote our text the way people talked when we interviewed them (see Chapter 6 for how we did this.) This is essential. Too often, materials handed out for voting use college level language, and many of our folks did not have a lot of formal education. This did not mean they weren't smart. In fact, many of the quotations and words they used that we put in brochures and flyers became a national tagline. People understood the issues and their implications very well, but it needed to be put in their own way of talking.

During a family reunion at the height of the Occupy movement, my conservative Christian family side started berating the protesters: they were "destroying our country." When their tirade ended, I told my family that I had written a story for *In These Times* about the Occupy movement where I wondered if people knew what "99 percent" really meant.

"Well, what does it mean?" my aunt asked. I went on to explain who the 99 percent were, the issues of the increasing economic divide and how working-class people were facing worse conditions while rich people were continuously getting richer. My family (all working-class or poor) nodded their heads at this familiar and gut-felt story. I told them that the Occupiers were just trying to get that message out through the protests and sit-ins.

My aunt said, "Well it's not a very good message, if no one understands it, is it?" I had to agree with her. Remember, just one word can make a difference.

OUTREACH

Working in Pairs

It is a valuable tool to work in pairs when volunteers go out into the community. This could be someone from the group, or they can find someone to help them. As I said in Chapter 4, it's also extremely important to capture information from the person you're talking to on paper, on your cellphone or tablet for later input into your database. As a pair, while one person is asking questions, the other could be taking notes. Debrief after each visit, to be sure you have complete information on the person you visited.

You want to make sure everyone you speak to is registered to vote. Especially in areas where votes have been challenged in court, many people have been taken off the voter rolls due to voter suppression. So even though they may think they are registered, they might not be. Make sure you have the list of registered voters from your statewide table² or if not, your Board of Elections. If you are not a 501(c)(3) non-profit, you can ask for voter registration lists from campaigns. When potential voters say they are registered, you can then let them know if they have been deleted from the list or not. Remind them where they need to go to vote. Tell them you will be back in touch about where to go to vote early.

² Several states across the country have a group of non-profits who work together to make the biggest change possible when it comes to civic engagement. That state's "table" is also a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, but it works like a backbone for all the other nonprofits to reconnect, get centered and share resources. One of the most exciting resources that it offers is the Voter Activation Network (VAN), an online database. It is very expensive to buy the ability to access VAN on your own, so groups typically use a state table. However, there are partisan and non-partisan groups that use a similar database, and depending on whether or not you are partisan, you will have different kinds of access.

Four very important things!

1. Everything has to be filled out exactly and thoroughly on the voter registration card. This is the most common mistake that we find. If you miss something, or they forget to sign, it will be grounds for throwing the voter registration card out. The person will think they are registered, but are not. This is critical to teach to your volunteers.

2. Make sure your volunteers collect all the cards to turn in, to mail or to get to the Board of Elections. This might be the Town Clerk or Clerk/Registrar in other states. Each state has different rules, timelines and administrators. Sometimes it varies by county.

3. Who is in charge of collecting the voter cards? It is vital that you collect them because often folks forget to mail it or don't have a stamp. Also, by having the voter registration card, you can double check the data you've collected. (Some states have made it illegal to do this, so make sure you know your state election laws.)

4. If your area is targeted for voter suppression, the district or state will often limit the number of voting machines in precincts of color or university neighborhoods, resulting in long lines and hours of waiting. In another part of town that is a white, middle class community, voters can walk in and

out with no wait. **It is important to be prepared for this as you make your plans. That is why we try to do as much early voting as we possibly can.**

Door knocking is often a highlight for folks, as they fall in love with the people they talk to and meet. Especially in the South, we have to be careful that volunteers not stay more than 30 minutes! I've had volunteers stay in one home for an hour or two.

OUTREACH LESSONS

Checking Your Assumptions

The next step once people start going out into the community to engage people is to get feedback from others on your team. What are the pairs saying that works to open doors? What issues are being presented to them? Where is there agreement? Where is there overlap? This is also where we have to watch our assumptions. For instance, we can't just drop off some materials and assume people can read. So, pictures and people must be able to tell the story we want folks to hear and understand. We also need to be careful with labels.

When I first went to Massachusetts in the early '90s, some people asked me, "How can you live in the South with so many rednecks?" I was both shocked

Exercise — Practice First

Even with a script in hand, it is important for your team and their volunteers to role play talking to people and to practice filling out the voter registration form and a sample ballot with folks. When they are familiar with the process, there are many fewer mistakes.

1. Find a neutral training location near where you will be canvassing.
2. We often train in parking lots, church basements and sometimes nearby libraries. This is intentional. It increases turnout to the training and listening project since they are done together instead of as two separate events. If it is a particularly inexperienced group, we often train ahead of the day we will be "door knocking" and review it again on the day we send people out.
3. Have people practice "knocking on doors" with each other in the meeting place and getting used to the script. Make sure to ask for and answer any questions before people depart.

This step takes extra time, but it pays off in the long run. Then your volunteers can relax and have fun meeting new people. If they're offered something to eat or drink, volunteers should accept that hospitality, even if they end up just taking a sip of the tea or taking the cookies home!

and horrified, not understanding what they meant by the term.

Before moving north, I had thought of the term “rednecks” in two ways. Often farmers in the Piedmont region of North Carolina were referred to as rednecks because of always having a red neck behind their heads because of working all day out in the fields or on a tractor. My father was one of those people.

The second was when I learned the history of my grandfather, lovingly referred to as PawPaw. In the 1930s in Appalachia, he was a worker and an organizer for the labor unions in the furniture factories. People wore red bandannas to let people know they were in the union. The term first began from the nation’s largest labor uprising, the Battle of Blair Mountain in West Virginia in 1921, when a multiracial group of 8,000 miners fought coal company operators to unionize.

My PawPaw wore a red bandanna. As a small girl, I would sit on his lap, as he sat in his rocker on the porch, while he played spoons and sang old union songs. He, like most union organizers, were called communists, much as liberals are today. They were building a multiracial union with Blacks, whites and immigrant workers. Eventually, my PawPaw was blacklisted.

This is why I say we need to be careful with labels. Many poor people who consider themselves rednecks are not bigots, as they are called in many parts of the country. They are working-class people, many poor, who are my family. Yes, a few of them are conservatives, but many of them are not. Many vote progressively. Many work side-by-side with friends and neighbors who are people of color. Like me, they could be the child of a hillbilly and a farmworker, and the grandchild of a union organizer

Staying in the Conversation

Volunteers may find that the people they talk to repeat misleading stories from the media, from people on their Facebook feed or Instagram, or even from their

church. This can be frustrating. Of the many lessons we have learned from the pandemic, one is clear to me: we don’t listen to each other enough. We don’t listen to scientists or public health experts. We don’t listen to people with whom we disagree. We don’t allow people to talk without jumping in with our own opinions before they can even finish.

Identifying and creating ways your volunteers can ground themselves in why we do this work strengthens us and our organization. It enables us to deal more effectively and compassionately with those who challenge us and with those close to us as well. The

more we understand “what we are up against,” the more we can sustain ourselves when the unanticipated or shocking comes our way.

Here are two things we can do, rather than walk away from difficult conversations. One, find someone in your community with whom you can problem solve.

Brainstorm the question, “What happened to this person that they would say this?” We might express our own trauma and insecurity by demeaning and belittling others. Or perhaps the individual is being pressured by political or corporate interests. What are they and who are they?

Two, identify a person/ally with power who can help you, if needed. Think about how you may go about finding someone. Perhaps it is a family member who knows this person well, or a colleague who has worked with this person for a long time. Can they help you understand why she behaved like this? Have they figured out a better way to work with him? Do you need a new approach?

Sliding into being rude or arguing, or he said/she said/they said, is not a solution. The foundation of effective action is supportive and collaborative relationships with others. Sometimes it just takes more — much more — effort on our part to keep those conversations going. And there is always a time when we just choose to walk away. If people don’t want to respond or listen to us, then we need to let it go.

Of the many lessons we have learned from the pandemic, one is clear to me: we don’t listen to each other enough.

Storytelling

Indigenous communities have used stories for teaching and passing down information for thousands of years. Today, science is catching up and starting to understand the importance of storytelling.

Storytelling isn't just a better way to connect with your audience or team: it also improves their retention of your presentation. Data shows that all audiences retain emotions and stories better than facts and figures.

I believe that to be a good organizer, it is important to use storytelling. I've used stories to break logjams, to explain concepts that are difficult to understand and to help with fund-raising.

To get people comfortable telling their own stories, one exercise I use is called "The Three Stepping Stones." It involves people identifying three stepping stones, or life events that have brought them to working for social justice today.

I started using it when I faced a logjam of my own.



Some time ago, I was asked to lead a workshop for media communicators at the last minute. As I drove to the gathering, I wondered why I had ever agreed. I had no idea what I was going to do with these experienced communicators.

I arrived in a panic but then I saw a garden filled with river stones. I gathered a bunch of stones in my shirt, intending to return them all at the end of the workshop.

When the group came into my workshop, I asked them each to pick three stones and to think of three stepping stones, or life events, that brought them to the work they were doing for justice. Then people went into small groups of four, with 15 minutes each to tell their stories.

Afterwards, many people talked about how powerful it was for them to hear each other and to tell their own stories. One woman asked if she could take the stones home with her to tell these stories to her husband of 30 years and her family. She had never shared her powerful, life-changing moments with them.

Here's another story I often share about making assumptions. When I first started working with Piedmont Peace Project, we had many gatherings at the trailer I shared with my mother. Blacks and whites were constantly pouring in and out of our home. Two young white men who helped us with yardwork and repairs around the house were often there. They were always included in our many dinners, picnics and celebrations.

Many times, PPP members encouraged them to join our efforts — to come to our trainings and conferences. One day, Billy, the oldest at 20, pulled me aside. He said, "You know, I don't think y'all would want us to come because we're both Klan members."

It took my breath away. Don't I hate these people who had attacked me and others close to me? But I loved Billy, just like I had once loved my two uncles who were part of the Klan.

After taking a deep breath, I said to Billy, "You don't believe what you've learned as a Klan member, or you wouldn't be hanging out at our house." So finally he and his friend started coming to our meetings.

In one workshop, we were talking about what it meant to trust each other as whites and Blacks working together.

One young African American, William, said indignantly while looking pointedly at Billy, "Well I would need to know that if one of you saw me outside of these meetings, like at the grocery store, you would speak to me."

"Well," said Billy, "Just maybe that person was with their father and couldn't."

After a pause, William leaned forward and asked him, "What would happen if you went home tonight and told your parents what you had been doing in this workshop with us today?"

Billy spoke quietly and solemnly, "I wouldn't wake up in the morning."

Stepping stone stories are not linear pathways. They take us back and forth across the contradictions and challenges in our lives, making us appreciate that there are turning points, sometimes only to be realized later.

Telling each other our stories is one of the most powerful things we can do to organize deeply and profoundly. It reinforces the importance of our work in a way that people can connect to and understand.

And just for the record, I did return the stones to the garden at the end of the media communicators workshop, though minus several stones people took back home with them!

Linda Stout



Issue-Based Messaging

*If you talk to a man in a language he understands, that goes to his head.
If you talk to him in his own language, that goes to his heart.*

—Nelson Mandela

One of the common mistakes we make is talking to all of our constituencies as we would to each other. I have heard many times that a group of people are uninterested or apathetic towards civic engagement. But let's consider that we may not be using the right type of message to reach them.

Few of us understand that the education level of many of the disenfranchised people we want to reach does not include being able to use college-level language. There are ways of talking and writing that are unfamiliar, as is the use of graphs and percentages. This way of messaging does not reach many of the folks we most need to participate in our voter engagement. Without this group of people, we can never win on the issues for which we are fighting.

This is why the way we use messaging is critical to a winning movement.

POPULAR EDUCATION

When I first started organizing in my community in North Carolina, other organizers would say, "Oh, you're using the Paulo Freire¹ model of popular education." I had never heard of him at that time. When I tried to read his book, it was so academic that I didn't understand a word.

What I learned over the years for myself is that I am a living example of what I'm talking about. I have a hard time with a lot of articles and books written about the issues I care about most. Even if I can understand or look up the words, academic writing uses different sentence structure than plain, everyday speech, so I find it almost impossible to read and comprehend.

I took a leave of absence from Piedmont Peace Project to write my first book about my formative years and our organizing work. My first editor revised my book to make it third person and took out the "we" of the book, including deleting the names of the people I worked with who were so important to my growth. When I read the final copy — a month before it was to publish — I was overwhelmed. I didn't recognize my own writing.

The editor, who primarily worked with academic books, changed not only my words, but how I talked. I stopped the publication and spent nearly another year working with friends (especially Stan Markowitz)

¹ The educator Paulo Freire defined popular education as an approach that "collectively and critically examines everyday experiences and raises consciousness for organizing and movement building, acting on injustices with a political vision in the interests of the most marginalized."

to restore the text to my way of speaking. I told the publishers they could fix my grammar, but not the way I talked or expressed myself.

The House of Words

I realized, in working with and organizing low-income people in the rural South, that we had to learn from them “in their own words” about their experiences. We could help them understand the messages we wanted to share through their own ways of speaking. Pastor Larry Brown, who participated in our TAKE 10 program, says, “I know that words have power. I call it the House of Words. You don’t learn how to be something until those words come to you and fill your mind.”

At PPP, we also used pictures and flyers that showed folks talking about the issues, and teaching them in clear ways that broke down economic issues.

For example, we demonstrated how their tax dollars were being spent by using real pennies. We held a press conference with very large fake pennies 12-inches across by 1 1/2-inches thick that we made from styrofoam and we painted them with copper-colored paint. We stacked them up, showing how many pennies were spent on the military, healthcare, education and housing. At the press conference, we gave out regular rolls of pennies and asked people to spend their 100 pennies by voting, putting their pennies in four large cylinders marked with the spending categories. As you can imagine, it was very different than how our dollars were actually being spent.

We then created an 8-foot by 6-foot report card exhibiting how our two senators voted on these issues. Our folks were very shocked about the results and said things like, “But I thought he cared about poor people!”

It was a great educational tool and changed many people’s minds regarding who they would vote for in the election. Since we weren’t telling people how to vote, we were staying within our 501(c)(3) non-profit status guidelines.

In another example, after asking people why they didn’t vote, we realized that their evasive answers had nothing to do with apathy or thinking it made no difference, but in fact many disenfranchised voters, especially first-timers, were intimidated by the process.

So, we set up a mock election, borrowing from the Election Board all the equipment necessary and using the school gym where people would normally vote. We developed a skit where our members played the roles, and explained every step of the voting process including how to call for a ride if they needed it. This, plus a brochure explaining it all (with pictures), increased our first-time voters by 75 percent.

Many years later, I taught a group of college students. They spent a whole semester learning about culture and language in order to go door-to-door to do voter registration. The students were developing a brochure on “How to Vote” because once again, many people were hesitant to vote. They won’t tell you this. We discovered it when we saw a lot of new voters not going to the polls. We went to visit them one more time and learned that they didn’t know what the procedure was and it felt scary to them.

The brochure walked them through voting step-by-step (it varies in different voting districts, precincts and states.) The Board of Elections let us set up a voting machine so we could take pictures of someone going through the process. That, and the culturally appropriate language, went into the brochure.

When we started using flyers that showed the voting process, the numbers increased significantly. You can view a sample “How to Vote” flyer in the Resources and Materials chapter, but each flyer will be unique to your district. There are different kinds of machines, ways of voting or rules. One last tip: Make sure you offer to provide rides to the polls and give a phone number people can call for a ride.

OPENINGS

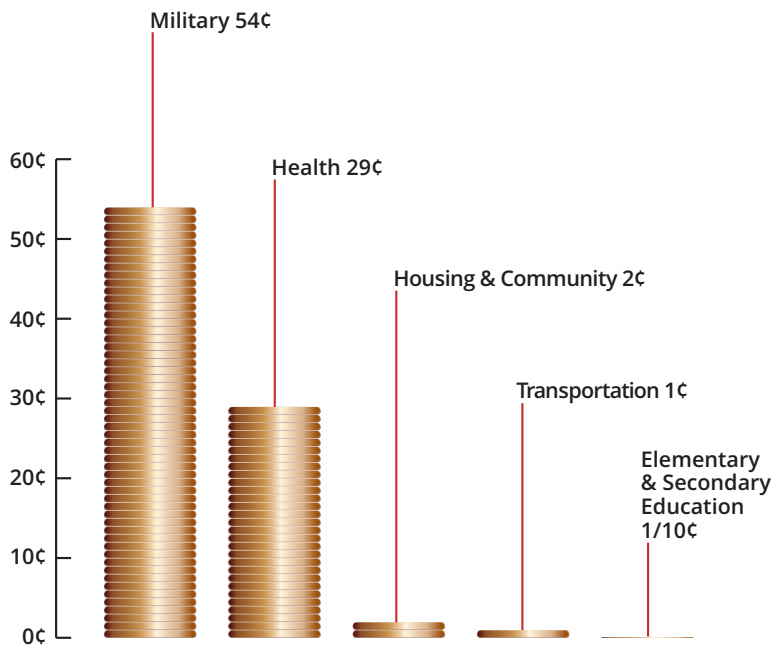
- *When have you seen a flyer or brochure about an issue that really caught your attention and you went on to read it — what was it that caught your eye? What made you want to read it? What was the title or the wording? Colors? Graphics? Was it easy to read?*
- *Discuss and list what characteristics you want to include in your materials.*



*How is your
tax dollar spent?*

Let's break it down.

(cents on the dollar)



More Popular Education Methods

Popular education involves storytelling: stories about people's lives and the concerns that affect them; stories that we hear and can repeat to neighbors about others' concerns; religious teachings and/or stories that we tell that help educate people about issues they've identified and they care about.

At PPP, we began to look for written materials that would explain issues to our folks (the average reading level was third grade, as measured by University of North Carolina.) Finally, on my way to a national conference, I met Randal Forsberg, who in 1974 founded the Institute for Defense and Disarmament Studies (IDDS) as well as to launch the national Nuclear

Weapons Freeze Campaign. I explained to her that we needed educational materials that were accessible to low income, non-college educated folks. Her first response was, "Why don't you get third graders to help you write the materials?" I was shocked, but went on to explain that these adults were very intelligent and I felt they grasped the complicated connections better than most educated, middle-class people I knew. They just hadn't been taught to read. Then she told me she thought we should write the educational materials ourselves and that if I wrote a proposal, she would help raise the money to do it.

So, we set out to write our own materials. We went to our volunteers asking them to help. Some people would say, "Well, I can't see very well," which we learned was code for they couldn't read. So, we would say, Great. You can help make sure the pictures tell the story!"

It took about a year, but we developed four-page flyers that centered on housing, healthcare and childcare, and linked to the military budget. All ended with a call to action, including registering and going to vote. We explained that if people couldn't read, they could bring a family member or friend into the voting booth with them. It greatly increased our ability to register people.

One of the most surprising things was how many middle-class groups adapted our flyers for their own groups and organizations. A national peace organization started using our simple, issue-based flyers written by our own members to canvas in wealthy communities in San Francisco, CA. They found these straightforward and easy to understand messages worked much better than the materials they had been using with much more complex messages.

Learning how to do this is not hard, but does require us to think differently.

Learning from Experience

No matter where you are training, you always need to be aware of making assumptions. I start my trainings saying I speak only from my experience. I tell them I need to learn about your experiences. So, if it seems I'm using the wrong words or make a reference or example they have questions about, always let me know. It's the only way we can truly be effective.

Although I have primarily spoken of cultural differences in my own part of the country, I've learned that in different areas words take on entirely different meanings. I was training farmworkers in Central Florida and I was using the term "farmers" to mean the small subsistence farmers who are in my region. I could sense I was losing people, though, so I paused the training and asked what was going on. At first, people were very hesitant to say anything. Finally, one young woman asked, "Why do you put farmers in the same category as us who are struggling to survive?" They saw "farmers" as the big agricultural landowners who were denying them basic human rights.

In an international training with people from the Middle East and Africa during a visioning exercise, I asked them to go through a tunnel to get to a future time. In war-torn countries, tunnels are places where

an enemy hid and sometimes, where people had to hide for safety. "Tunnel" had a negative connotation.

In Arizona, I learned from Diné (Navajo) organizers, that not only did they have to travel many miles often from one house to the next, they could always stay with kin. In their door-to-door organizing, it was important that they first introduce themselves with their kinship lines: their parents, grandparents and clans. This gains trust and shows respect, and therefore it requires volunteers who know the language and are from the community.

Culture and words change according to where you are in the world.

Documenting Power

Many people look at a ballot that lists the offices people are running for and wonder, "What's that?" More importantly, they don't know what powers the Water Supervisor or a District Attorney have and how it affects them. Take time to go through each position and describe what each official does and what authority the job has. You can ask volunteers to research the different positions and report back to the group on the roles and responsibilities.

Exercise — Successful Messaging

When developing messages, ask your group:

1. Who is your target audience?
 2. What are their values, and how do these values connect to what's happening in politics?
 3. What issues are most relevant to their lives?
 4. What unique needs may they have?
 5. What is the general level of formal education of people in this area/of this demographic?
-

For example, a lot of people don't understand that Secretaries of State are typically responsible for implementing a state's voting procedure, certifying elections and that "election deniers" are running for this seat. Attorneys General are the ones who decide whether to enforce election laws, an abortion ban or file a lawsuit to block policies on immigration reform, gun control and student loan forgiveness.

The Importance of Positive Messaging

When developing flyers, posters, memes or yard signs, keep your message clear and positive.

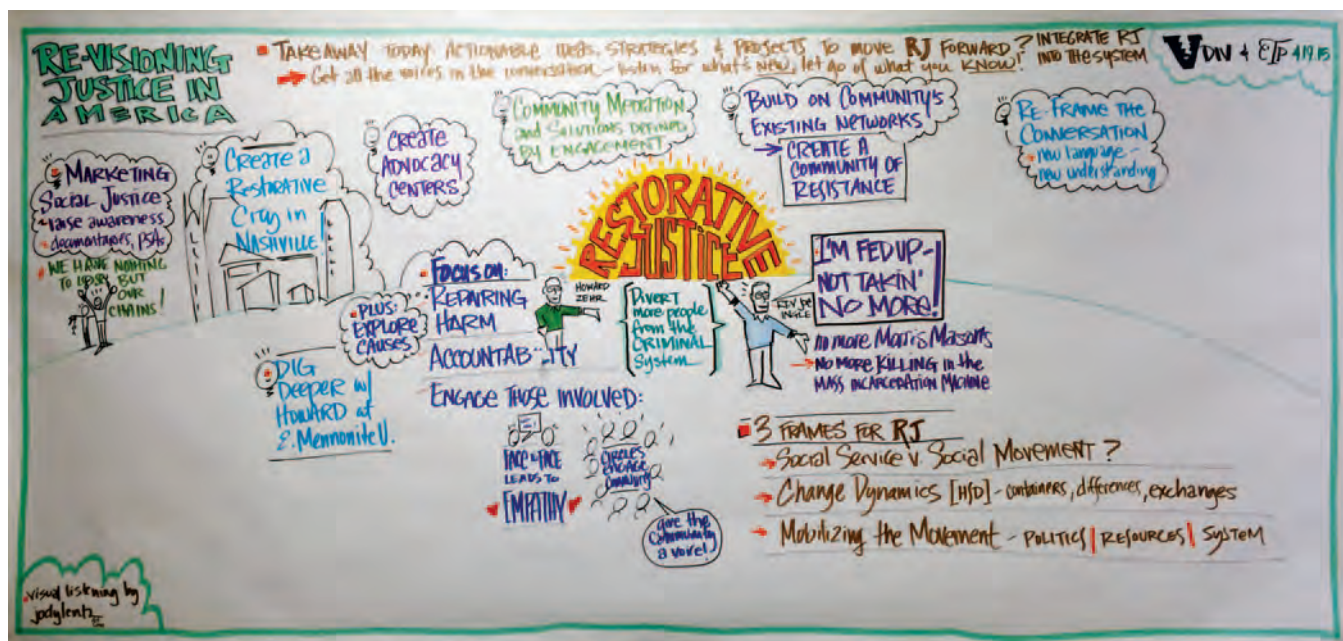
One year, we were fighting a discriminatory ballot initiative in Massachusetts, aimed at immigrant children, to halt bilingual education in the public schools.

Some residents didn't want the schools to teach in any language other than English. The law would offer only a short period for non-English speakers to learn English before having all their classes in English. They planned to sue teachers who violated the law, were it to pass.

The teacher's union created yard signs stating, "Don't sue your teachers!" They put them everywhere. I remember thinking it was a terrible message due to the negative wording. I said they would never win with that message.

They didn't win. A better message would have been, "Knowing more than one language improves everyone's grades. Vote NO on Question 2."

They found these straightforward and easy to understand messages worked much better than the materials they had been using with much more complex messages.

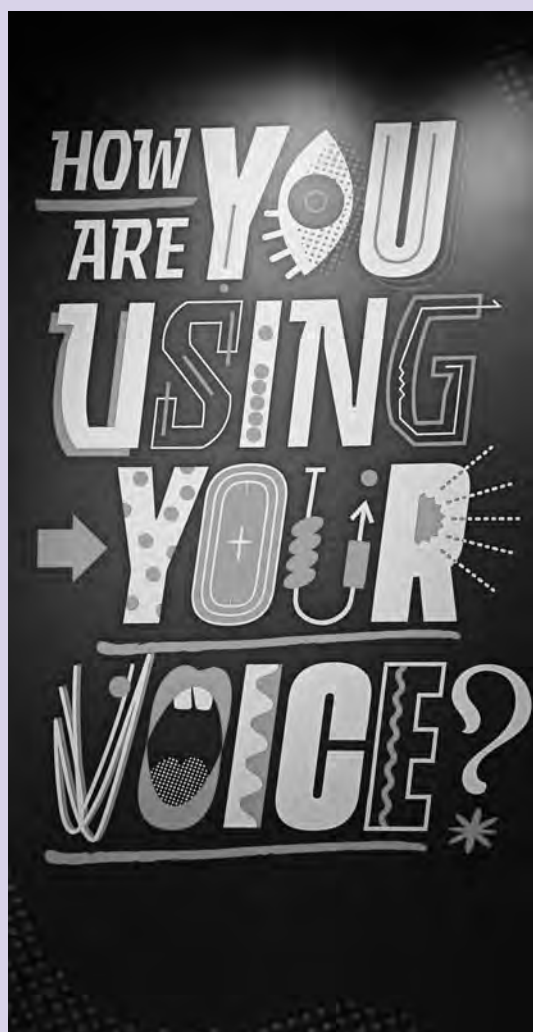


Finding Our Voices

Overcoming Don't Ask, Don't Tell

The Power of Coming Out of the Closet as a Poor Person

I and others at the Piedmont Peace Project began to see and talk openly about our struggles with poverty. Yet, much of our membership was so uncomfortable talking about it! We called it our own “Don’t ask, don’t tell” policy: they felt ashamed to discuss our poverty and would prefer we (or they) didn’t talk about it.



We struggled with what we now know was internalized oppression. We are a proud people. Most of us didn’t start out being ashamed of who we are!

We Begin To Find Our Voices

But as we started to realize we all felt this way, we also began to find a different attitude within ourselves. We could support each other and look at ourselves differently. So, we set up workshops for our members called, “Finding our Voices.” Speaking openly allowed us to bond around our common background and feel able to organize and build power, especially around poor white and people of color.

Finding our voices helped people understand systemic classism. We had accepted all the messages that poor people were somehow at fault for being poor. We believed them when they said that we were not smart enough or good enough. We heard and saw messages like these everywhere. Television shows were the worst. They depicted poor people — especially those from the South — as dumb. We were often the brunt of jokes.

Even more damaging was when these messages came from our allies.

I remember when a van load of us went to the national SANE/Freeze anti-nuclear conference. Before it began, they were trying to find a name for the newly merged group. Every-

one would vote on it at the conference. We learned that one of the names they were considering was “Peace Workers,” but it was rejected before the conference because some thought it would remind people of being “piece workers,” and that folks would be insulted by the reference. Since most of our PPP members worked in the textile mills where they got paid by the piece, and even most of the PPP staff had at one time worked in the mills, we were upset that they thought there was something wrong with being called piece workers. We made buttons and all wore them to the conference: “Piece workers for Peace.”

The conference was just a couple weeks before Easter, and our members pulled out their Sunday best clothes and their special Easter outfits they had saved all year for and dressed up for this event. Most activists wore jeans and t-shirts, so our group stood out. Numerous people remarked to me about our group, “They don’t look poor.” Not only did they assume I was not but that people who were poor couldn’t look nice.

At the workshops we would all share these stories, with usually the trainers/staff sharing our own stories first, until a member was brave enough to start. After that, everyone wanted to share their stories of hurtful messages and comments.

We began to believe we were the strong and powerful voices for change.

Constantly On Guard

But even with the “Finding Our Voices” workshops, it still wasn’t — and isn’t — easy for us to combat these negative messages bombarding us. We can get “triggered” by one person’s thoughtless comment, a billboard or a commercial that reminds us we’re not accepted or seen for who we really are.

Some of us can “pass” as middle class and can even seem to live a middle-class life, but we still struggle with the shame of what we have seen and heard people say about us. For example, I was always an honor roll student and most often the top of my class. But in the 4th grade my teacher overheard me telling my classmates that I was going to be a teacher. In front of my friends, she said, “Kids like you don’t go to college!”

Much later, one of the hardest things for me as I went around the country speaking, was when people would always ask me, “What is your degree in?” This immediately made me feel bad. I would think of the pain of not being able to stay in college because my expenses were \$500 more than my scholarship.

I remember talking about my background and class at a prominent college symposium. The first person to stand to ask a question started crying. She said she was so tired of trying to pretend to be middle class and was “coming out of the closet” as a poor person! Many people followed her to say the same thing.

You Can Manage It and It Takes Work

“Finding Our Voices” was not a one weekend workshop; it became a year-long workshop for PPP! We had to keep revisiting it. Little by little, we began to help people understand they could step into power. It was incredibly empowering to throw aside the negative and disempowering messaging. We began to believe we were the strong and powerful voices for change.

Linda Stout



Intergenerational Organizing and Youth-Centered Messaging

Another principal of our work at Piedmont Peace Project was deliberately including younger people, even little ones, in our organizing. We always provided childcare, but for children kindergarten-age and up, we offered classes where they learned about how the government affected them, primarily around their schools and education. We would ask them to dream (vision) about what they wanted in their schools and classes.

Youth were clear-minded about what they needed and how they learned best. We began to get them to volunteer for Get-Out-the-Vote. Imagine a six-year-old knocking on your door and saying, “I’m too young to vote, but will you please vote for my future?” Children became some of our most effective volunteers to get out the vote. One of these young people grew up to become the youngest and first African American mayor in a prominent city. Many of them continued to be politically active as adults.

INTERGENERATIONAL ORGANIZING

OPENINGS

How has a young person’s leadership inspired you?

There are different ways that people think of youth. A few years ago, I heard a well-respected activist — an elder — say, “I’m ready to pass on the baton. I’m just not sure young people are ready to grab it. Or that they know what to do with it.” I don’t see it that way. From elementary school, to teenagers, to young 20-year-olds, we need to work together across generations.

Adults should not be telling youth what they should do or how to do it, but like everything else, adults should be soliciting their ideas, accepting their knowledge and lived experiences, and showing respect for their brilliance and way of thinking. Ask

them to lead the next meeting or an event. They will bring their friends because they don’t want the event to fail any more than you do! A successful event or meeting that they lead will give them confidence and bragging rights, but it also shows how much we value their participation.

Young people are more than ready to grab and carry the baton when they feel they have power.

Twenty-somethings

With young people in their twenties, we want to make sure they are included at every level of our organizing work. We need to make them leaders and equal partners in our decision-making. They should sit on our Boards and be on our staff. My experience is that these young adults are more creative than older people in reaching other young people to get them involved in the work and registered to vote.

Once a group invited me to talk to them about how to involve youth. If they wanted me to speak about involving youth, I suggested they invite some young people to attend, and so they invited four. The group opened the session with a long, boring reading and then sang a song that was slow, ponderous and went on forever. The young people rolled their eyes at each other.

If you want to involve youth, you must include age-appropriate songs and fun things to do. Youth leaders are very good at finding the right music that works for adults too. I always ask younger people to find music for me to use, as I know I'm very out of touch in that department! I have also played fun dance music that I liked as well as what they liked, and it was a good time for all. Food is important too. If you have a tofu dish, also have pizza!



Teenagers

We need to make sure we are reaching those who will turn 18 before the election (they can register as 17-years-old if they turn 18 by Election Day.) High school students make great volunteers if they are interested in the issues.

Just like a Listening Project, ask them, what are their most important issues? Sometimes it's about

their schools, subjects and teachers. But they also want to talk about gun safety, climate change, reproductive rights and many other key issues on the national, political landscape. Don't forget to include teenagers who have dropped out of school (some out of necessity to support their family). They often talk about the minimum wage and lack of support for continued education and community colleges.

Involving youth in visioning is also imperative. Many are so discouraged by today's politics they often see no hope for their futures. Visioning can change that. As one Rethinker from Kids Rethink New Orleans Schools said, "I went from being a realistic person to almost anything is possible."

She went on, "When I was a kid, I did not talk. I did not think my voice was important. I did not think I was good enough to speak my mind. What started to give me confidence was sitting there and thinking what could be, [and that] my voice, my existence, it matters."

Helping teenagers get to a place of hope and empowering them to know they can make the difference is critical to your success.

Younger Children

Working with younger children, kindergarten to teenage, has been one of the highlights of my work. When they envision the kind of future they want — the kind of schools, the world they want to live in — they are exceptional at coming up with ideas to make a difference.

I am reminded of working with Kids Rethink New Orleans Schools, established in the wake of Hurricane Katrina. Using collective visioning to shape their agenda each year, these middle-schoolers had multiple victories. One victory was to change the cafeteria food policies in their schools. Watch the Emmy-nominated HBO documentary, "Weight of the Nation: The Great Cafeteria Takeover," starring the Rethink students, to see how they did it.

The students took on Aramark, a multinational corporation that serves cafeteria food to 2.5 million children across the United States. The Rethinkers did not win everything they wanted, at least not at first, but they got their foot in the door and are holding these powerful corporations accountable to what



they promised. Collective visioning gave these young people the knowledge they needed to make change and build power to create new leaders for the present and the future.

Canvassing

Usually, the weekend before the election, we take children to the neighborhoods we are targeting to help with get-out-the-vote. The children will list their issues, often around wanting better conditions at school or more parks and now unfortunately, a keen awareness of needing gun control. We then teach them who has the power to make those changes, for example, the city council or school boards. They have a script they help create and agree to use, such as: Two children knock on your door and say, “I’m too young to vote, but will you please go vote for my future on Tuesday?” Then they hand you a flyer about voting.

The children feel a great sense of achievement in this project, and it’s some of the most effective voter turnout we have accomplished. We always end the day with a pizza party or ice cream social. Not only are

the young people effective, they hit more doors with their enthusiastic energy than any group of adults!

We do not take children into conservative areas, but primarily into their own communities. One adult watches every two pairs, so the adults have eyes on the children at all times. Be sure to discuss safety with them when they go door-to-door in a group.

A few of my rules for children who are canvassing:

- Stay in sight of the adult/car watching over your teams.
- Never go inside the house.
- If you know the people, you can accept a drink or treat, but only if adults have said it’s okay.
- If anyone makes you uncomfortable or you feel unsafe for any reason, both of you run back to the adult/car.
- If people say they are not interested, don’t argue. Thank them nicely and leave.
- Have fun!

When you have young people meaningfully involved in events, trainings and celebrations, they not only bring more young people to participate but they often bring in their parents as well.

CIVIC LESSONS

Even in high school, most young people are not taught anything about the three branches of government or how government operates. Many adults learned about the role of government in elementary school, but in most schools across the country today, civics is no longer taught. Even if it is taught, there is usually no power analysis with it.

Filling in the Gaps

It is important we teach this to young children as well as adults who don't understand how government operates. Teaching is most effective when you ask questions and get as many of the answers from your group as possible. The series of questions in this exercise are examples of ones you can use. If the questions don't apply to your area, skip them, and/or create questions that do fit for your community. I have used similar questions (not usually this detailed) with adults too, and with great results.

Exercise — Young People and Government

1. Begin by asking the question, *"How does government affect you?"*

Be silent until you get the first response. Some young people are nervous to answer at first, for fear it might be wrong. No matter what the answers are, affirm them, unless they're so far out you know they are being silly.

If there are no responses, you can ask some follow-up questions, such as:

- *Does the government affect what you learn at school?*
- *Does the government decide what you eat in the cafeteria?*
- *Who decides what schoolbooks you get?*
- *Who decides what books you have to read?*
- *Who decides how much money your school receives and what teachers are paid?*
- *Who decides how many children per classroom at school?*

You can be provocative, if it's appropriate, and ask:

- *Why does your school (one that is primarily African American) get old schoolbooks that have been used for many years, and the other school (in a white neighborhood) receives new books every two years?*
- *Why does your school not have air-conditioning but the other school gets a \$10 million new gym? (Yes, that happened.)*
- *What laws allow there to be so many school shootings? (If you use this question, determine they're at an appropriate age to discuss this.)*

2. As they answer these questions, write the answers on a board or easel.

3. Then ask them, *"How can you make this different?"* Often you will get shrugs. Sometimes complete silence. Some might say, *"Protest!"* Affirm and continue to write on the board and ask, *"How else can you make a difference?"*

4. Ask what parts of government make these different kinds of decisions. You might have to explain about the several levels of government, what they do and who represents them: i.e., President, Congress, state, local, school board.

5. Ask who at the county level also runs schools. You might hear PTA (you can affirm and say, “Well, they have a lot of influence”); *but who is in charge?* You are hoping for the answer, but eventually tell them if they don’t give you the answer: “An elected school board.”

6. *So, since you can’t vote, how can you make a difference?*

- You can learn who your school board is, and talk to them as a group (one person seldom makes a difference, but a lot of children, bringing along local reporters, can make a difference.)
- By helping elect people who will represent your interest.

7. *How?*

- By educating adults about what you care about and who to vote for (if you are partisan).
- If you are non-partisan — a 501(c)(3) — talk about getting out the vote and issues with people in your neighborhood.

This is a visioning exercise I’ve used with young people regarding their public schools.

From here, you help the young people create an action plan. Be careful to make it realistic. If it’s a summer school program where they have lots of adult leaders and support, they could take on a lot

more. If it’s a weekly meeting, without a lot of adult support, you need to make the action plan doable. It could be as simple as electing a new school board member who will represent them, and getting a meeting with the school superintendent to make their wishes known. It could be as complex, as Rethink did, of totally overhauling their school system.

Exercise — Visioning with Youth

1. Ask participants to bring a picture of a younger child (their younger brother or sister, cousin, niece, nephew, or just someone they know) to put on the “inspiration table.” That way they know they are working to make schools better for younger children coming behind them. This is especially important for those who might graduate in five years or fewer.

2. As facilitator, speak slowly, with pauses between statements.

“First everyone settle down and get comfortable. You can lie on the floor using the mats and pillows or sit comfortably in your chair with both feet on the floor. Let’s turn in all our phones into the center of the room and make sure they are turned off for the next few minutes.”

“Now, take some deep breaths with me.”

We take three to five breaths together.

“Imagine you are walking in the woods down a beautiful path. Smell the freshness and feel the cool breeze. Listen to the water from a nearby creek.”





“As you come around the bend of the path, you see yellow in the bushes to the side, covered in vines. You go to explore it and discover a big yellow school bus is parked there. You go on and there are strange dials where you would usually drive. You realize it’s a time machine! You turn the dial to five years into the future.”

I use sound effects here that I’ve downloaded on my phone from YouTube. I have a speaker connected to make the sound very loud. You hear the click click click of the dial turning, and then a whooshing noise (very effective sounds for this are a space ship sound, or I’ve had people who can make these sounds with their mouth.)

“When you step out of the bus, you realize you’re five years older! You see the child whose picture you brought in waiting to greet you. How old are they today? They are anxious to show you their new and improved school. ‘Everything has changed,’ they exclaim, ‘and it’s fabulous!’

“As you get off the bus, look at the property surrounding the school. As you walk outside around the school, what do the grounds look like? What do the playground and sports areas look like?

“As you enter the front doors of the school what do you experience? How do you feel? What is the entrance like?

“Walk all around. Go into the classrooms to observe. Have lunch in the cafeteria. What is different?

“After lunch, you spend time in the library and then visit the nurse’s office.”¹

“Think about what has changed in your school and remember it. You want to bring this back to your present time, after you travel back. Ask the young person showing you around for their advice about the number one thing you need to do upon returning. What is it?

“After spending the day at the school, you get back on the bus, and turn the dial back to present time, year 20XX. (Click click click and then whooshing sounds of the time machine.)

“As you step out of the bus you come into this room and open your eyes.”

¹ Some have never had a nurse’s office in their school, so may not be sure what this is.

3. Have large pieces of paper and markers/crayons available. Ask participants to draw the different things they saw. If people are having trouble getting started, go to them and help. Ask them questions and possibly help them start drawing. Occasionally, people can't come up with drawings, so write the words down. If there is an image, suggest that and help draw if necessary. It's always best if they draw themselves but they sometimes have a hard time turning their thoughts into images.
4. Share pictures and stories with each other. If it is a large group, divide them up into groups of four to six, and have an adult taking notes in each group. We usually then make a gallery wall in a hallway, or in a larger room if needed. Everyone observes each picture and asks questions if they need clarification.
5. Then try to get them to identify the top three things that people identified to work on. They can use post-its or stickers on the gallery wall to identify the top three things they think are most important to do first.

MESSAGING

Young people we've worked with are likely to use social media to encourage early voting and voter registration. Creating materials that will reach youth means including them in the words and pictures you use, but also encouraging use of the platforms and apps with which they are familiar. They are the experts for their age group.

After visioning with younger children, always ask them to draw pictures and share with one another. This gives others ideas as well. Some will have wild ideas that may not fit, but never tell them their ideas are not suitable. Help them explore more and figure out how their ideas might be used. Often other children will help them with that.

Children usually love visioning although there are some who "just don't get it" as I've heard from a few children. As I've written, one young man told me he thought visioning was "STUPID!" as it was just pretend. I answered, "You're right. It IS just pretend unless you put together an action plan to make it come true! And that's what we are doing next." After that he got into it, and became a great organizer, full of ideas.

Vision in Action

During a visioning session with junior high school students, one young boy envisioned "no school." Other children laughed at him. So I asked him, how did children learn? He drew pictures of children with workers all over the community mentoring and teaching children. The others got so excited about this idea, they convinced the school to have a program of working with adults in the community to learn.

Mulati, a Rethinker, recently reflected on her experience visioning as a middle schooler. She found, "If you don't know what is possible, then you can't shoot for it." She went on to say, "It's not, 'It is what it is,'" describing how that was her mindset before visioning. "With visioning, you can strive for so much more."

Mulati advised other youth like her, "Look inside yourself and envision who you can be. Because who you are helps to shape the space around you."

**"... who you are helps to
shape the space
around you."**

—Mulati, Kids Rethink New Orleans Schools

Inspiration and Ideas Everywhere

At age 14, Chris Suggs was already losing friends, schoolmates, and family to drug and gun violence. Coming from a community that is the most economically distressed in all of North Carolina and with the highest rate of gun violence, he decided to provide alternatives for teens. Chris started Kinston Teens to amplify the voices of all youth in Kinston and to create civic engagement and community service opportunities for his peers.

Kinston Teens are involved in projects like mapping the area to find unregistered voters, health education and vaccine clinics, food boxes for the hungry and environmental justice. They have made an impact on the lives of more than 4,000 youth with programs like a Youth Summit, community workshops, leadership development seminars and assemblies at local schools.

Chris took us on a tour around the community when I was there. We saw multiple houses and businesses collapsing and boarded up. Nearby, we would see a cleared lot planted with flowers, roses and shrubs. These were lots that the Kinston Teens had acquired for very little money (\$500–\$1,000) and fixed up to be a place for young people to hang out.

We visited a house that Chris bought when he was 19, donated to Kinston Teens and fixed up for a Teen Hub. The house had been flooded and was falling down when he bought it. The city was getting ready to raze the house and sold it to Chris for \$1,000. He found people who donated money, supplies and the labor to renovate it.

Now teens can access the Internet and use a computer. There is a small food pantry and a large deck and yard where they can host events and parties. Across the street on another lot of theirs was a “blessing box,” with items like food, toilet paper and baby diapers. The City Council turned over eight more lots to Kinston Teens, so they now own 18 properties.

Even though they are too young to vote, that hasn’t stopped them from having a political voice! Kinston Teens have lobbied their city council and state government and even testified before Congress in Washington, D.C. They attend all city council meetings and school board meetings, so they are well-informed on every issue that affects the teens. They are also very active in voter registration and get-out-the-vote. Kinston Teens are a great success story, and a participant in our TAKE10 trainings.



RULES FOR THE ADULTS

- Make intergenerational organizing fun! Have music before, during and after the program. I use whistles, magic wands, funny hats, little toys for children while we're doing exercises (nothing that makes noise!). Many people need extra stimulation to be able to focus.
- Don't worry too much about cross-talking. Usually it's productive.
- Affirm all answers, unless a child is trying to be silly and then laugh at their joke.
- Be careful never to laugh at a serious answer no matter how far-fetched. When a child said there should be "no schools," I wasn't sure if he was joking or being serious. Turned out he was very serious! Later, his idea of community schooling became a program at the school they designed.
- Never judge or shame a child for not knowing or answering incorrectly.

- For younger children, it is fine to collect phones at the door and give them back at the end of the program if the phones are distracting them.
- Older children have more attachment to their phones, so I don't collect them unless I find it's keeping them from participating. Some children feel it's a matter of safety. Always ask what they are doing with their phone before taking it, as often they use Google like a dictionary or encyclopedia. I remember asking one young person to turn in her phone and all she had been doing was looking up different levels of government, trying to find answers to my questions.
- If you show children respect and love, they will respect and love you! Even if they say something crazy. I had a couple girls ask me why I was so fat. You could tell it had been a subject of discussion among several. After pausing a moment, I put aside my hurt feelings and said, "Because it makes me the best hugger — soft and cushy!" A bunch of children ran up and gave me big hugs. This continued even after they were teenagers and often taller than I was.

Youth Leadership

Intergenerational Organizing

See Resources and Materials for the Youth Leadership Intergenerational Organizing PowerPoint presentation on page 128.

When you have young people meaningfully involved in events, trainings and celebrations, they not only bring more young people to participate but they often bring in their parents as well.

Change Is Coming. Are You Ready?

We all have a lot going on. Dealing with the economy, climate change, infrastructure, cybersecurity, immigration, our health, a living wage, the rise of hate groups ... what we call dealing with “complex change.”

We see how young people are often more flexible than older ones, and more willing to change. But we feel stuck.

Maybe it was a moment or a comment or an event that we just can't seem to move on from. So allow time to reflect on what happened. Time is a gift we can give ourselves.

Go back and reconnect with our vision and our larger intentions. What did we want to do before hitting this wall? What are we hearing now? If we ask ourselves these questions, we can find the wisdom within us and reconnect with our creativity — we can find a way to go around, over or under that wall!

Try shifting the energy. Sometimes we just need to play, laugh or move. Jump around or take a walk. Dancing, singing, integrating art into our lives, taking a break are all ways we can use our gift of time and find the energy we need.



Are You Prepared to Manage Change?

Too often, real change is abandoned because a leader fails to put into place the necessary pieces to ensure its success: clear vision, skills to implement the vision and rewards when goals are met.

If your team is confused about the change you've introduced, perhaps your vision hasn't been clearly communicated. If they've grasped your vision but are still anxious about their ability to pull it off, then they may lack the skills needed to carry out the strategy. If vision, skills and a good action plan are in place, but progress seems painfully slow, you may need to introduce some incentives (rewards) to get people moving ahead.

Sometimes, you need to call in a skilled consultant to help you with visioning, planning and creating an action plan. Make sure you find the right person if you do this — someone who understands the people in your organization, who speaks in a way that is understood by all, who cares about your issues. For example, if you get a college professor to speak to a group of very low-income folks who don't have a college education, make sure they don't use words that people can't understand or if they do, they explain them in a respectful way. Getting the right person for your group can be very important for the future of your organization.

Do You Have What You Need?

An absence or scarcity of resources results in frustration. For vision, skills, incentives and resources to come together, you'll need a strong action plan. For action plans to be effective, you need good feedback from like-minded peers and continual revisiting. Use your action plan to track measurable progress; revise it periodically to ensure that you are learning well from your experiences — both the positive and negative ones!

I like to use this diagram from Dr. Mary Lippitt, founder and president of Enterprise Management, Ltd., the "Managing Complex Change" model, to explain the process.

Creating and Managing Complex Change *(note how missing elements bring different results)*

Vision	+	Skills	+	Incentives	+	Resources	+	Action Plan	=	Lasting Results
		Skills	+	Incentives	+	Resources	+	Action Plan	=	Confusion
Vision	+			Incentives	+	Resources	+	Action Plan	=	Anxiety
Vision	+	Skills	+			Resources	+	Action Plan	=	Plateau
Vision	+	Skills	+	Incentives	+			Action Plan	=	Frustration
Vision	+	Skills	+	Incentives	+	Resources			=	False Starts

Keep Learning and Moving Toward the Vision!

Explain your vision clearly. Learn to celebrate the little victories along the way that encourage prompt exemplary change. Make sure you have an action plan. Be open to change.

Then go for it.

Linda Stout

IN THIS HOUSE,
WE
LIVE
TOGETHER
AND
WE
LOVE
KINDNESS IS EVERYWHERE



©KRISTIN JOINER

Peer Coaching

I believe you will find coaching is one of the most valuable parts of the training that we do. Feedback from the TAKE 10 trainings always describe how much people treasured this coaching time and how it built community among them. Coaching is fluid and responsive to the realities your team faces.

Even though the individuals I trained were often far apart geographically, many said that because of the peer coaching, they would feel free to frequently call each other for advice or help. This is especially important if you are training over Zoom or virtually. In some of the coaching groups I've led, people went on to form coalitions and work together on their issues.

Our TAKE 10 training with leaders of organizations is scheduled for once a month. Two weeks later, we have a 90-minute coaching session. Our coaching is very different from “professional coaching.” This is peer coaching, and it depends on the participants to find the answers to questions posed by members of the group. As group leaders, we just need to know the questions to ask.

Coaching Benefits

OPENINGS

For a short opening, I often use a sentence where they fill in the blank:

- “I knew my vote made a difference when _____.” Or,
- “I know I’ve been successful when _____.”

At the end of a training session, we ask each participant to set a two-week goal and implement what they have learned. They write their goal down and share it with the group. Some people’s goal is a tiny step: “I’m going to set a date for the training with my group.” Some will want to do much more. We keep track of what each person says they want to do, so we can follow up with them in the coaching session.

At the two-week mark, we hold the planned coaching session, which can be done virtually or in-person. After a quick check-in, we ask if everyone was able to accomplish their goal. A few people will say no, but overall, we find most people have tried.

For those who say they haven’t accomplished what they wanted to, we ask: “Was this because you didn’t have time or were you hesitant to start? What is your concern?” The most common reason is being afraid that people will not respond or say no. In the case of visioning, they may worry that people will think it’s strange or uncomfortable.

Once, a woman said her group would not do the visioning exercise in Chapter 3. When they saw it on the planned agenda, her group protested and changed the agenda. She was devastated. Everyone else in the coaching group had been successful with the exercise.

I asked her how she presented it. It turned out that she had not introduced the visioning exercise beforehand or given any reasons for why they were doing this. She just put it on the agenda and started the exercise.

Her peers told her they didn't think their groups wanted to do visioning until they had introduced it,

explained the goals and why it was important. The next time we met, she proudly reported she had tried again and that her folks really loved the experience. I didn't present the solution; her peers helped her. That's the beauty of this type of coaching.

Exercise — Evaluate and Recalibrate

Ask your group to tell about their experience with the topic from the last training. If they don't answer, tell a story of your own experience. Slowly, you will see that the conversation starts to get more in-depth or people may share they had the same fear. Use this same question format below each time, so people know they will get a chance to talk if things didn't go well for them.

1. *Were you able to accomplish your goal set at the last training?*
2. *If so, state your goal for the group, and tell us about your successes. (It is important to encourage even those who said they would set up a time for a training).*
3. *What worked? (Give each person five minutes to say what worked for them. Always start with the positive so the group is not bogged down in the negative.)*
4. *Everyone gets applause or appreciation when finished!*
5. *What didn't work? (This is the time for your peer coaches to shine!)*

Sometimes the participants quickly realize what went wrong, just by hearing stories of what worked. It's especially good if they figure out for themselves where they think things went awry.

6. *Name one thing you might do differently. (You may have to facilitate this tightly, because some people like to tell others everything they think they should do! Go round-robin until everyone has said what they think. Then you can go around again if people still have something to add.)*

It is important to have people propose only one solution at a time. It can totally deflate a group if one person goes first and offers every single solution they can think of, not leaving room for other people to talk.

7. *What would you have the trainer do differently next time so you would have had more success?*

This is a great learning time for us, the trainers. I've learned so much from the peer feedback and it has made me a better trainer.

As much as possible, we try to let them coach one another. Volunteers learn more from hearing from someone in their community who has tried it than hearing from the trainer. I always have a list of solutions to common problems but I never use it until everyone else has had a chance to share. Most of the time, their peers come up with the solutions and everyone learns from that. Only rarely have people not had answers.

Flexibility and Fluidity

I never make judgments if people have not been able to do what they said they would do. If it's more than two or three people, and there hasn't been a community crisis that took their attention away from the work, I assume it's something I didn't cover in the training. We might need to back up and do other work or different training before they are ready to start.



In this case, I ask: “What do you need from me? What did I miss that would allow you to do this?” I learn more about training than they learn from me in these situations. I always find new examples, new ways of doing things and better ways of working through these coaching sessions. I constantly acknowledge what I learn from them and how they are teaching me. Peer coaching means the trainers are learning too!

Many times, completely unexpected subjects arise, and if the group is going that direction, I follow. If it’s just one person, I will decide to either give a small amount of time to this topic, or if I think it’s something the whole group will benefit from, we follow that person’s line of inquiry. If someone says something personal, like, “I don’t have transportation and I need money to fix my car,” I will ask the group for their solutions. If it’s something I don’t think will benefit the group, I tell that person that I will talk to them about that particular issue later. It’s always

important to let them know you will follow up and when. I try to talk to them the next day, but if it will be longer, I explain that.

Once someone mentioned another trainer who said something racist during her training. It led to one of the most valuable conversations we had during the entire time we’d been working together. People were hungry to talk about ways (through racism, sexism and classism) that they were shut down as leaders. You can always come back to the subject you wanted to cover in the next training but never let “your” agenda come before the will of the group.

Another time, there had been a police killing of an unarmed Black man, and we ended up spending a couple of hours listening to everyone’s grief and anger. We then spent the next training session hearing it again. It was a topic and an event that demanded more time, and this helped people determine what action they wanted to take.

Exercise — Probing Questions for Trainers

- 1.** *What’s on your group’s agenda you want to discuss in today’s coaching session?*
 - 2.** *Do we need to change our agenda based on current events?*
 - 3.** *What are some of the roadblocks you’ve encountered because of what’s happening?*
 - 4.** *How are we re-energizing ourselves and your base?*
 - a.** *Describe something you can do every day.*
 - b.** *How are we leaning on others to help us keep up our energy?*
-

Stepping Into the Fear

*I learned that courage was not the absence of fear, but the triumph over it.
The brave man is not he who does not feel afraid, but he who conquers that fear.*

—Nelson Mandela

Are you afraid to take the next step to becoming a leader?

When I first contemplated becoming an organizer, I was afraid. I had no experience, no training and did not think of myself as a leader of any kind. I believed I couldn't do anything other than work in a textile mill (which is where I started.) But my commitment to making change in the world was stronger than my fear.

Fear and Consequences

I've seen many people not take that next step, even though they would make an incredible leader. You often see this fear among disenfranchised people who have always been told they can't be a leader, whether it's to their face or through oppressive systems.

So how do you step into the fear that holds you back from stepping into this work? You have to manage the fear and do it anyway. I know, that sounds so easy and so dismissive, but believe me it isn't. Even today, that fear still rears its ugly head for me. But being with others in the movement for change, and receiving constant reinforcement through praise, thanks and recognition, is the most effective way to help yourself and your volunteers deal with their fear.

When I was facing fear, I spent a lot of time meditating about it. I knew I had a calling to step into this work and had been told I didn't belong. I had nagging questions in my head such as, "Who am I to think I could do this? Why do I think I can be a leader? I'm afraid to deal with conflict and now I have this issue among members!"



Managing Your Fears

When I first started organizing, I said, “I will do anything except fundraise, speak in public or write.” I didn’t believe I could do any of those things. Of course, to run an organization you have to do all of that. You don’t have to write a book, but you do have to write about your work for funders, speak at various functions, and I don’t know any organizer who has not had to do fundraising.

When I began to speak in public, I used index cards. I practiced my speech over and over. Before I spoke, I went into the bathroom and usually cried. Sometimes I was sick. When I spoke, I was hesitant and my hands shook terribly. But each time I did it, I became more confident.

This is my secret: doing it, despite the fear. Over and over!
Here is what I do:

- Always go back to your vision — your dream. This is what you’re working toward. The only thing that will make it a failure is giving into the fear of failure. When you are fundraising, you are encouraging people to invest in a vision and dream of the future. **Keep the vision front and center.**
- Look at the negative messages you have received, and even believed, and get rid of them! I always imagine mine as old recording tapes on reels, and then picture myself pulling the tapes off the reels and destroying them. Remember these are messages that you’ve heard to pull you down and keep you in your place. That only benefits those in power! Whether it was a parent or a case of systemic oppression, school, television and social media, **work on destroying the negative messages.** Not only did I do this with exercises again and again, but I did a lot of therapy to help me. Create your own exercises to let those negative messages go.
- **Be willing to be uncomfortable.** Know you cannot stay in your comfort zone. When you step into your fear, amazing opportunities will open up for you.
- **Take small steps, until you are able to “jump off the cliff.”** Sometimes, I imagine myself jumping off a cliff without a parachute. I imagine growing huge wings that keep me soaring. It really helps me, but again, come up with images that work for you. This helps shift your brain neurologically and you begin to think differently.

When you step into your fear, amazing opportunities will open up for you.



I believe it’s impossible to not be afraid. You will be frightened, but you learn to keep stepping up anyway to do what scares you. Now, many years later, I don’t even prepare ahead of time for speeches. I sometimes still feel fear, but I easily get over it when I start to talk. The more you do it, the less afraid you are.

The braver you become.

Linda Stout



Register and Vote: Nuts and Bolts of Managing Your Plans

VOTER REGISTRATION EVENTS

Plan your registration events. When you're creating your action plan and timeline, back up from when voter registration closes and determine how many months or weeks you have for events. Check that your organization has liability insurance, and notify the company before big events in case you need a special rider or one-day insurance. Then based on your staffing, volunteers, resources and other work, think realistically about how many events you could do. I would not suggest organizing more than one event per month, although for some groups that might be too many.

People are more likely to participate in voter registration if it is a group activity. It is most often done door-to-door in neighborhoods you are targeting, but there are a variety of other ways:

- Go to popular events and set up a voting table.
- Train people in Black barber and beauty shops to carry out voter registration. This is very popular in the South, and people may already have experience doing this. They will also recruit volunteers for you!
- Set up voter registration tables at high schools and colleges during lunch and dinner time.
- Prepare a voting message using rap or popular music that gets people's attention.
- Put up signs on the backs and sides of a truck with voting messages (one of our TAKE 10 groups did this) and play current or rap music while people walk along side to register those who come out to see what is happening!
- Create your own special event. We held many public events in the park (with free ice-cream, face painting, a fish fry or BBQ with a band playing).

The requirement to attend was you must register or already be registered to vote. Your name was on the voter list if you were and if you weren't, we were there to register you. One youth group hosted "Movie Nights" with a large outdoor screen and combined it with voter registration.

- Show how people's vote matters. In one election, our congressman won by only 512 votes. We used that fact in subsequent elections as a motivation and to show how much "Your vote counts!"

There are so many ways you can be creative. Ask your volunteers for entertaining and fun ideas that will catch people's interest. Brainstorm!

Write people stories of how the ideas worked. You will want to use these personal stories for proposals, donors, general reports and to share with peers. The stories help others understand how involved you are in the community.

A few people may decide that they will recruit their 10 people from their families and neighbors. That's okay too! Make sure you give people sample scripts (see Chapter 5) that involve them asking about



and listening to people's concerns as the first step of outreach, even for their own families and friends.

Coordinate with other groups doing voter registration. You don't want to register people multiple times!

Social Media

I can't stress enough the importance of using social media. While I believe face-to-face interactions or in-depth conversations over the phone are by far the best, social media is a way to reach so many people you wouldn't reach otherwise.

I don't talk a lot about social media in this book because I personally didn't do this piece of the work. But we had staff, consultants and interns who did. Some of the best work came from college interns who figured out what kind of social media our community folks liked and created memes that would especially reach them. One of my favorites was the realization that our older folks loved memes about cats and dogs. Our intern created many voting memes using animals, even focusing on the kind of dog or cat that folks owned. People loved it!

Be creative! And always be positive. People are much more likely to act on a positive meme than a negative one — it should be fun to look at and fun to share. According to a BBC study¹, memes that spark a

strong, emotional response are more likely to be shared. Another study² in Uganda found political memes were an effective form of political participation especially among millennials, even suggesting that greater exposure to memes was positively related to participation.

Many groups create memes that you can "like" and forward, such as People's Action, MoveOn, Rock the Vote, Vote for Your Life and Working Families Party. Find examples that your organization would respond to and pass on.

If you don't think social media is important, remember that the radical right has used social media and memes to influence how people think and to organize an insurrection. *See Resources, pg. 104 for more information about memes.*

A PLAN TO GET-OUT-THE-VOTE

Once you've registered as many people as possible before the deadline, it is time to implement your Get-Out-the-Vote plan. This is very important to prepare for — start as far ahead of time as possible.

To be most effective at turnout, voters need to be contacted in person a minimum of three times. At Piedmont Peace Project, we found that each additional contact with a new voter produced significantly higher turnout.

¹ www.bbc.com/future/article/20220928-the-surprising-power-of-internet-memes

² www.jesoc.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/KC13_032.pdf

OPENINGS

What has been your best experience voting on Election Day?

What made it special?

For example:

Number of Contacts for New Voters

No follow up — <10% turnout

One contact — approximately 10–20% turnout

Two contacts — approximately 30–50% turnout

Three contacts — approximately 60–95% turnout

Organizing and training is ongoing
— approximately 95–98% turnout

We have found that mailings and phone calls where you leave a message produce minimal results, unless they are phone calls with actual people having personal conversations. To be most effective in Get-Out-

the-Vote, you must create a plan for **three in-person contacts**. This shows people you care about them. It can be as simple as saying to someone, “I

know you’re interested in [this issue]. I just found a great article you might want to check out at [this web-site].” You are forming genuine, authentic relationships with voters that will go beyond November of any given year.

Much work can be done during early voting. Encourage people to vote early and provide rides, because that can increase the number of votes significantly. Make sure people have a plan to vote, whether it is early voting or on Election Day. If you can get people to make a plan and fill out a card with their plan to vote (including time and transportation), they are twice as likely to vote.

Door-to-door contact usually starts about two weeks before early voting dates and Election Day. Plan several times for this (evening, weekend, weekday) so you are certain to reach everyone. This is a good time to hand out the “How to Vote Flyer” (see Resources and Materials) and let people know you are offering rides to the polls. We often had volunteer drivers, but

we raised money and also rented 10-passenger vans for early voting and on Election Day. The vans had the precinct location on a poster affixed to the side of the vehicle. We used the vans in heavily populated places to transport people. We usually had several available when hundreds of workers came out of the textile mills and only had an hour to get to the polls. Some African American churches also loaned their buses with drivers, both for early voting and on Election Day.

We borrowed tents for our events and on election days, from the African American funeral homes, if they were available.

The weekend before Election Day is when to involve the majority of young people who are part of the effort. We get everyone together — adults and youth — and offer donuts, granola bars, water and fruit. Then the adult volunteers take four young people into pre-mapped areas. As I described in Chapter 7, the young people go door-to-door with their message of, “*I’m too young to vote. Will you please go vote for my future?*” At the end of these days, we usually meet somewhere for a pizza party and ice cream (the food is often donated by local businesses).

Materials You Will Need

Develop your Get-Out-the-Vote materials in advance. It is a way to keep volunteers continuously involved, even if they are not out canvassing. Remember, you

Exercise — Make a Plan

What are your Get-Out-the-Vote plans? Ask your group to answer the following questions:

1. *What are your target numbers?*
2. *How many times will you contact people?*
3. *What methods will you use to contact people?*
4. *How you will provide rides to the polls?*
5. *What is your communication plan to target registered voters?*
6. *What are your plans for Election Day?*
(i.e. food, support, entertainment)

want the community engaged in creating messages and how they are delivered. Young people may want to promote your message on t-shirts, especially if they can design the shirts themselves. Have a competition and give a t-shirt to everyone who participates.

Other folks may develop telephone scripts, flyers or door-hangers, press releases or newspaper opinion pieces. Use pictures of local community members in any printed material. This makes them feel authentic and community-centered.

In addition to using local community folks in the pictures of your “How to Vote” flyers, create flyers that connect the power of voting with issues people have talked about in community gatherings. We find that if people actually volunteer to help with creating these messages (being in the photos, making sure the message is simple and clear) that they or people who know them are more likely to pass them around to places like their churches, workplaces, or beauty and barber shops. If it’s from the community, they are proud of what they have created and want to distribute their message far and wide!

Two weeks before Election Day, make your grocery list and go shopping. I often go to individual donors for funding to buy these supplies. Some larger non-profits will also provide funding. Go somewhere you can buy in bulk and where prices are reasonable.

Buy lots of water and juices you can pack in ice chests, crackers, packs of nuts, granola bars and other snacks. Some sites offer pizza, which is always a big hit. In the pandemic, we also provided masks, gloves and hand sanitizer. You can borrow folding chairs for elderly people who must sit if they are in long lines. Find some volunteers to bring balls and toys for outdoor activities for children. The older youth are often great working with the younger children. I always bring soap bubbles. Some adults love these as much as the youth. Or maybe that’s mostly me!

Absentee Ballots

In North Carolina, you can register folks and hand out absentee ballot request forms at the same time. Determine what the rules are for providing absentee ballots in your state. For example, it may require marking your ballot in the presence of a witness.

Dear Voter,

Voting in Massachusetts is secure, easy, and convenient. State laws were recently changed to allow you to cast your ballot by mail, with no excuse needed, for all elections. Enclosed in this mailing is your Official 2022 Vote by Mail Application.

If you prefer to vote in person, you can still vote at your polling place on Election Day. Apply soon! Your Vote by Mail application must reach your local election office by 5 p.m. on Monday, August 29th for the **September 6th State Primaries**.

For more information about voting, visit our website at www.VoteInMA.com.

Secretary of the Commonwealth
Elections Division

TO REQUEST YOUR MAIL-IN BALLOT:

- 1 Check your information below. If you need your ballot mailed to an address other than the one listed, write-in that mailing address.
- 2 If your party is listed as “No Party” below, and you want a primary ballot, pick a party. Your party enrollment won’t be changed.
- 3 Choose your election(s).
- 4 Provide a phone number (optional) for your election office to use to contact you.
- 5 Sign the application, tear it off, and mail it back.

Track your ballot and find more applications at
www.VoteInMA.com



I WANT TO VOTE!

Official Vote by Mail Application

Voter Information:

2 Elections:

☐ All 2022 Elections*

Know that you may provide assistance as a witness, and you should observe that the ballot is marked, but not how it was voted. Seal the ballot and put it into the envelope provided. Don’t put anything else into the envelope. Seal it. The voter and witness may be required to sign their names on the back of the envelope.

There are a few ways to return your absentee ballot, depending where you vote. Be sure to confirm this. Some states will let you turn in an absentee ballot on Election Day; other states will not. Here are some possibilities to return the ballot:

- By mail to your county Board of Elections, post-marked on or before Election Day, and received by 5 p.m. the Friday after Election Day
- By commercial courier service (DHL, FedEx or UPS)

- Dropped off in-person at your county Board of Elections office by 5 p.m. Election Day
- Dropped off in-person at any early voting site in your county during early voting hours

Early Voting

As I noted earlier in the chapter, it is very important to get people to vote early during the days your polling places are open. Early voting is usually in a larger location and should be both there and at the Board of Elections or Town Hall, but it can be in other places like libraries, malls or churches. Sites change between elections, so always check where the early voting sites are each year. This diminishes the lines on Election Day and the long waits. Early voting is also less intimidating for new voters, if that's an issue that you encounter.

You also want people to use mail-in ballots, if possible. This is an especially good approach with the elderly, nursing home residents, the unhoused, students and disabled people. But mail-in ballots can be easy or difficult to do, depending on the state. In California, for example, once you vote by mail, you automatically receive a mail-in ballot for the next election. I find mail-in ballots in North Carolina especially tough. I had a difficult time following the instructions myself.

If you are disabled and can't get out of the car easily, try to do a mail-in ballot. But if you want to go to the polls on Election Day, the polls have a provision where someone can come out to the car to let you vote if you are parked in a designated space for this service. When you arrive, just ask someone to go in and ask for a poll worker to come to your car. When I've done that in the past, I just ask someone going in if they would help me, and they always do.

If mail-in ballots are hard to obtain or fill out where you are, help people learn how to get them. Voter suppression laws have made it much more difficult in some states, for example ballots can be thrown out if a group collects them to turn them in to the

Election Board. Make sure their signature is in the right place and you are completing every instruction. Many mail-in ballots are thrown out if the instructions are not followed exactly. Your volunteers should know all these problematic things they need to pay attention to before they make their contacts.

When voting early, provide rides to the polling places. Often, you can get additional volunteers from other states to do this if you are in a critical state or district.

Election Day

Once the window for early voting closes, it is time to move into the next stage of your Get- Out-the-Vote campaign. Usually churches — especially in the African American community — offer rides to the polls, often using church buses. Some churches do this for early voting as well, usually after the Sunday service. Find a way to support or participate with them if possible. It is usually enjoyable and filled with a sense of comradery. Make sure you mark off your list those who have voted. This is much easier to do if you are using a digital device (computer, phone, tablet) and database!

On Election Day, analyze who has voted, and ask volunteers to go into areas that need the most turnout. In one election year, I ran out of volunteers and saw I had a whole area that needed concentrated turnout. I called volunteers in South Carolina, about an hour across the border. Because North Carolina was a critical state (and South Carolina was not), a bus load of volunteers arrived within the hour.

If you are in a critical state because of tight races, a lot of outside volunteers will want to work in your community. We try to team these folks up with a local person when possible. If not, we make sure they go through at least a 30-minute training so they can use our scripts and guidelines. We want our volunteers to have been trained well so that they can team up with those who are getting very short trainings on election days. Many volunteers who come from out-of-state have participated in previous trainings, but you want to confirm that.

VOTER SAFETY IN THE FACE OF VOTER SUPPRESSION

Election Protection National Hotline Number
888-OUR-VOTE (888-687-8683)

Exercise — Facing Challenges

Take time to discuss what is happening in your area. Ask the group:

1. *What's on your agenda and are you changing it based on current events?*
2. *What are some of the roadblocks you're encountering?*

Solving Problems

If people experience problems voting, have experts on hand to help them at your safety tent. Post a phone number that folks can call. Provide cellphones at the tents (we use burner phones.) You can display yard signs upon entering and exiting the polling places (check how many feet you have to be from the polling places in your area — we can put our signs close to the door in North Carolina as long as they are not political) with a number to call or tell them to come by your tent. Many organizations provide this service for voting problems. Always have anyone who was turned away ask for a provisional ballot if they are told their name is not on the voter list and they know they have registered.

Violence and Intimidation

Report intimidation to local officials if you think they will be sympathetic and helpful. If not, make sure it's reported to local organizations tracking voter threats and providing advice. In North Carolina, our state table, Blueprint NC, gives us numbers to call to report intimidation or violence. We also always have a list of lawyers on call to help.

Don't try to confront people yourself unless you've had extensive training. Call sympathetic news reporters to report on the situation. Be ready to post about voter intimidation on social media. Take pictures and video when appropriate and safe to do. Although this will not solve the issue, it does help you later when other people

hear about it. Also, see if your Board of Elections will honor someone voting there at the office, instead of at the individual's polling place.

Exercise — Take Time for Self-Care

Quite often, people think self-care is not important. Remind volunteers that by taking time for themselves, they will be more productive, so it benefits the organization and campaign.

Brainstorm with your team:

1. *What do I need to let go of in order to be all in for this election?*
2. *What do I need to add to keep myself energized?*

Self-Care


In one of our training sessions, a volunteer told me, "I have so many loose ends out there, it's like I'm a mop." As the campaign intensifies, it can feel overwhelming. Your tendency might be just to put your head down and go 24/7. But you are in this for the long haul, so think about how you and your volunteers will manage and practice self-care. You may need to give something up (another volunteer said, "Sometimes I can sit in the back of the van instead of always needing to drive.") You may also need to spend more time on self-care in your training.

Have many little celebrations. Plan a weekly time you stop work, play great music and get everyone dancing. Our office always took the week off after the election to rest and recover!

Every person has their own way of doing self-care but remind folks to do it. Do a wellness check with your volunteers every two weeks. This shows them you take self-care seriously, and that you care about their well-being.

A good opening or closing for meetings is to ask people what they will do that week for their own self-care. At the next meeting, ask people if they were able to do it. If someone has a hard time thinking of a self-care practice, move on to another person but come back to them at the end. Often after hearing other ideas, that volunteer can find some inspiration.

You are in this
for the long
haul, so think
about how
you and your
volunteers
will manage
and practice
self-care.

A blackboard with a silver frame, mounted on a wall. The text "WHATEVER IT TAKES" is written in white, all-caps, sans-serif font. The blackboard is slightly tilted to the right.

WHATEVER
IT
TAKES

Are All Voices Heard in Our Electoral Process?

The Corner Store

I remember when I was six-years-old, my mother took me with her to a small country store in Asheboro, NC that served as a grocery store, gas station, post office and what I know now was also a place to register to vote.

We went in and stood in line behind an African American woman at the post office window. It was the fall of 1960. We waited for what seemed forever. Cigarette smoke engulfed us from the farmers who were sitting around the pot-bellied stove in the middle of the store, gossiping about the weather and how their crops had done over the past year.



Finally, it was my mother's turn. She gently told the man that she wanted to take the test. "But you don't have to Mrs. Stout. You're white!" My mother stated that if the woman in front of her had to take the test, she had to take the test. Again the man declared, "But that test is just for colored people!"

My mother insisted on taking the test. She read from the Constitution, and then had to write down what the man read to her from the Constitution. You could hear a pin drop in the store. Everyone had stopped talking and was staring at us. I had no idea what my mother was doing, but I knew enough to feel afraid and think we were in trouble. I thought she was doing something very wrong.

Taking a Stand

I always remembered what happened, but it was several years before I talked to my mother about it. By then, I was able to understand that she was standing up for something good — for insisting on being treated the same as the African American woman who was being treated differently because of the color of her skin.



Linda and mother

It would be a long time before I truly understood racism, but at that time, my mother showed me that we should stand up for people being treated differently.

While we don't have tests like this anymore, we have numerous other restrictions that we need to be aware of that impact people of color especially. Changing restrictive voting laws is critical to our future and our democracy.

I was able to understand that she was standing up for something good — for insisting on being treated the same as the African American woman who was ... treated differently because of the color of her skin.

Linda Stout

SMALL
STEPS
ARE
PROGRESS



Time for Joy, a Time for Grief and Always, a Time for Celebrations

After the polls close on election night, several of you will gather together to watch the results. It can be a night of joyfulness and a night of deep disappointment. It's a time to share emotions, both happy and tearful.

It is important to listen and leave time for people's grief. If it's an especially difficult loss, you might want to gather just to talk about people's feelings. They have to be expressed and grieved over in order to move forward. But we can't stay in a place of anguish for long, because it paralyzes us. It stops us from being able to take action and necessary next steps.

One year, after a particularly bad loss that would directly affect our lives, we held a special gathering at Piedmont Peace Project. After everyone conveyed their grief, we had them write down their feelings, wad the paper up, and then we went outside to burn the paper in the fire pit where there was a roaring fire. We asked the fire to provide us healing and to give us the courage to keep going.

THEN CELEBRATE

Within a week or two of the election (hopefully before Thanksgiving holiday), it's time to celebrate. No matter the outcome of the elections, you need a celebration to bring people back to the long-term vision and goals and to bring their energy back up. You will have already planned this in advance, making sure that all the volunteers plus those they worked with are invited to come. Remember to consult one another about timing and place in order for the most people to attend.

This is a party! Plan fun activities for the children, play dance music and if you have it in your budget, you can hire a band (we also use a speaker and an iPhone when someone has a good playlist). Get people moving around and dancing. Have great food — BBQ, finger food, veggies, wings, pizza and a celebratory cake. Depending on your group, you could have a potluck, but make sure everyone brings what they consider celebratory dishes and that all dietary needs and restrictions are met.

Tell success stories — wins of people who will support your community, from small local elections to the state or federal level. I remember we celebrated a president who won because our state had voted for him. At the same time, we celebrated electing a city council member who was part of our group.

Among another group of TAKE 10 trainers, one had run for city council and, at 21 years of age, was the youngest elected official in North Carolina. It was a double victory because he was also a young African American.

Victories might start small. When PPP first began, one woman never wanted to take on a front-facing volunteer role — she preferred to stay in the background and volunteered to clean. She did go through the training, however, and then registered folks to vote and brought to the polls everyone

within three blocks of her house. In later years, she became our trainer for “block captain organizing.” Another woman was able to get 98 percent of her targeted region in a county to go vote. An unheard of turnout!

Once, our congressman won by a slim margin. We had turned out more than 5,000 new voters to the polling place. Believe me, we never let him forget that we were the grassroots folks who elected him to office.

Most of all, tell stories of your volunteers’ achievements. Pass out congratulatory certificates for each one (you can buy these at office supply stores or order online) and then ask them to tell a short story about a success they observed. It could be simple, like taking a 101-year-old to vote for the first time, driving a whole van of teenagers to vote for the first time (“They were first turned away by a poll worker but with our help, they persevered!”) or a formerly incarcerated person who had just received their freedom to vote. The point is, the group focuses on all the positive things they made happen. Sometimes we gave a special certificate and prize to the Volunteer of the Year.

It is very important to **capture all these stories and victories**, even if you have to digitally record it at the event and write it down later (and use parts of the recording on a

website, social media or eblast to supporters). This will be so important to report to funders, for future encouragement to recruit volunteers and to help raise more money.

I can’t emphasize enough how much celebrations enhance your organization and keep volunteers returning to your group. If they can have fun while doing important work, it’s even that much more satisfying. We always thank people, verbally and by written cards or notes, or through texts and emails. At our PPP office, which was in downtown where most of our volunteers worked, we would set up refreshments and put on dance music around 3 p.m. on Fridays, so members would come to our office after getting off work from the nearby textile mills. Then we would party!



OPENINGS

Begin with asking, “What are you grateful for in this year’s election?”

Exercise — Successes and Room for Improvement

Break into small groups. I suggest four groups. Ask each group to:

1. Tell a story of your most successful interaction with an individual, either in getting them to vote or getting them to the polls.
2. Discuss with your group where you thought things could have improved.
3. Based on what worked (it can be something small or something big), what could you do differently next time?
4. Brainstorm with each other and draw up your ideas on paper (appoint someone in your group as the scribe or note-taker.)
5. Is there an action or change in training that you would suggest to make this improvement?

Ask each group to create a short skit on the action/changes they would make and act it for the other groups. (I have a bag of props to use when I'm doing skits, like scarves, a hat with mayor on it, something that identifies a police officer, nametags to identify other officials, a noisemaker — bring along anything you think may be useful.)

EVALUATE THE YEAR

At another meeting, look back with the whole group of trainees and carefully evaluate.

Once you have set the tone by opening the meeting with words of gratitude, you can ask what worked and where they would like to improve. Focus on how to do things better, instead of focusing on “fixing” something wrong.

This philosophy may seem contradictory to a lot of people who believe they need to pay attention to what went wrong — to critique. A man who had his master's degree once said to me, “Well, if we can't critique, I don't want to be here.” A few others, also

college graduates, agreed with him. I said their criticisms would come out if they had suggestions for solutions or improvements. Focusing on the negative is not useful — especially with people who have been disenfranchised. It's so much more joyful to work on making the work better.

Much of the TAKE 10 training is built on what I learned from participants through evaluation and coaching. Evaluation will lead to tweaks you might want to make in the training for the next year. Each community is different. Volunteers might request alternative ideas or exercises.

The first step is always to ask the group. They often problem solve best for what they need.

Focus on how to do things better, instead of focusing on “fixing” something wrong.



See Resources and Materials for the Election Follow-up PowerPoint presentation on page 131.

Why People Hold On to the Wrong Story

When we win, it is wonderful to see folks in the streets celebrating the results of democracy in action. You can feel a collective exhale of anxiety as every vote is counted. It is also deflating to see how people's anxiety levels can ramp up again with lies, misinformation from elected officials and baseless accusations of voter fraud.

Let's remember we have seen the wrong story try to stop us before.

I recall that in the late '80s, the Piedmont Peace Project held a press conference announcing that we planned to sue the state of North Carolina for illegally denying us access to register voters on public property. The next day the state's attorney general released a false statement saying the state had not denied us this access. He was considering a countersuit against the PPP for filing what he called a frivolous lawsuit.

The local newspaper supported the attorney general and published a vicious attack on PPP, even though we had provided them proof of the true story: copies of letters from the state denying our right to register voters. The paper refused to print a retraction or to write the truth.

Immediately, our members felt disempowered. Some were prepared to give up. Many even believed the newspaper reports and thought that they had somehow been duped.

It is a tactic that individualizes us and seeks to break us apart.

We held an emergency meeting to bring everyone together and to talk about how they were feeling. We then asked people to think of a time that the newspaper had made false statements. With this newspaper, there were many! All of a sudden, the energy shifted as people began to pour out their stories of the paper's false accusations, insults, and the newspaper's fear and hatred around labor and civil rights organizing.

Our win had threatened the powerful.

We discussed with our members why we were a threat to those in power. People realized that we had been successful in unseating some local politicians who were known members of the Ku Klux Klan. For the first time, our community had elected people of color. We needed to get back to our vision of what we wanted and planned to do.

We organized to get the real message out through churches and community groups. Standing together, we were able to turn around this potential catastrophe and celebrate a powerful victory against the state. In the end, the newspaper had to tell the real story.

This is to say, we cannot give up. We can take a deep breath and recommit to our collective vision of the world we want to live in while we continue to do the hard and necessary work to get the correct story out there.

Linda Stout

We needed
to get back to our vision
of what we wanted and
planned to do.





Holding Elected Officials Accountable

Once the election is over, many groups think their job is done. But it is just beginning! Voting in someone new, even if they're a member of your constituency, requires constant accountability.

OPENINGS

Reflection question:

- *"I hold myself accountable by _____."*

The Work Ahead

You want to hit the ground running the minute people take office in January. After you celebrate all you have accomplished in the election, you will ask volunteers to sign up for a very important workshop in December or early January.

Be aware of all the bills on issues your group cares about that are coming up for a vote at the federal, state or local level. At Piedmont Peace Project, we had national and state organizations that we kept in touch with and they advised us. Once we were told what we need to lobby on, for example a vote on a

particular bill, we worked with another national organizer who would help explain what this bill was for exactly, how much it cost and other pertinent details. We would then work with our volunteers to determine how we could talk to folks in the community about it.

For local school boards, city and county commissions or boards, you should have at least two to three volunteers who will go to all the meetings, know what is on the agenda and keep your group informed.

The Next Important Workshop

Prepare volunteers to stand firmly for their rights with people in authority. Many low-income folks are afraid of those in power and don't understand that these people work for us!

We teach that confidence by going through a series of questions and answers. It always goes back to how they were elected into office.

Exercise — Accountability 101

1. How do these folks get into office?
2. If they are appointed, who appoints them and how does that person get their power?
3. Who elects them? Anyone who voted, even if we voted for someone else.
4. Who can un-elect them? We can!

If we are in charge of electing and un-electing them, then we are their boss. They work for us!

Building power to get what you want is not just about voting.

HOW CAN A 501(c)(3) ORGANIZATION LOBBY?

Lobbying is broadly defined as an attempt to influence government action through either written or oral communication. I have seen many leaders and organizations refuse to do any grassroots lobbying because they are afraid of losing their Internal Revenue Service non-profit status. I believe this is a mistake! There is much we can do, and it furthers our work and builds our power.

Most of us who work for a non-profit, tax-deductible organizations that has the IRS designation of 501(c)(3) know we need to follow the IRS guidelines in election work and lobbying. Understanding what you can and cannot do within the IRS framework for a 501(c)(3) organization will help your organization hold officials accountable, before and after an election.

As 501(c)(3)s, we need to be aware of IRS rules and stay within the spending limits set by the IRS. These caps can change. There is a monetary limit on how much an organization can spend on lobbying based on its expenditures. In organizations I worked for where we used volunteers, we never spent much money although we did a lot! When we traveled to Washington, D.C. — if we traveled at all — we counted staff time, transportation and gas. We never came close to meeting the spending limit. (Training does not count as a lobbying expense.)

For example, as of the writing of this manual in 2022, if the total spending for your organization in the current fiscal year is \$500,000 or less, then you can spend 20 percent of your budget on grassroots lobbying. This is called the “insubstantiality” rule, meaning that it is not the largest or major part of what your organization does. It is why the expenditure limit is determined by how much of your annual budget you spend on lobbying.

You should revisit the IRS rules and your state guidelines annually. Most of the rules remain the

same from year to year, but other things might change based on legislation. My number one go-to source for information on how to do lobbying is Bolder Advocacy (a program of Alliance for Justice, www.bolderadvocacy.org). The National Conference of State Legislatures (www.ncsl.org) provides a state-by-state guide to regulations.

Make the Regulations Work for You

Standing up to elected officials and holding them accountable empowers people to think they can do anything. It is very significant to help people overcome their internalized oppression. At PPP, not only were we able to change the voting records of our elected officials in several ways, but we inspired our volunteers to do more. We held a training with African American elected officials from Charlotte, NC explaining how to run for office. Several of the volunteers went on to run for public office.

The IRS also places limits on activities for Voter Registration/Get-Out-the-Vote. As a non-partisan organization, you are not allowed to just register people to vote for one particular party. You can't tell people what party to register with or for which party they should vote.

In some states, you are required to file a registration form before lobbying and in a few states, there can be restrictions on employees' time. Even the states that require registration have different spending limits you need to reach before this has to be done. In North Carolina, it is \$3,000 per quarter, but California is \$5,000 per quarter. The best way to determine this is to find your state's requirements at Bolder Advocacy's website.¹

If you want to dig deeper into all the details, download Bolder Advocacy's book as a pdf, *Being a Player: A Guide to the IRS Lobbying Regulations for Advocacy Charities* by Gail M. Harmon, Jessica A. Ladd and Eleanor A. Evans.²

¹ <https://bolderadvocacy.org/resource/lobbying-disclosure-act-thresholds-does-your-organization-need-to-register/>

² https://bolderadvocacy.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/Being_A_Player_paywall.pdf

How much can a 501(c)(3) spend on lobbying?

Organization's Annual Expenditures	Overall Lobbying Limit
\$500,000 or less	20%
\$500,000 to \$1 million	\$100,000 + 15% of excess over \$500,000
\$1 million to \$1.5 million	\$175,000 + 10% of excess over \$1 million
\$1.5 million to \$17 million	\$225,000 + 5% of excess over \$1.5 million
Over \$17 million	\$1,000,000

The Dos and Don'ts of 501(c)(3) Nonprofit Lobbying¹

There are many activities that a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization can do when it comes to advocating for your issue, both during an election season, and not. But there are also important limits, especially during elections, and it is critical for you and your organization to know what is and is not allowed. The list below includes some, but not all, activities that a nonprofit organization might want to undertake:

Activities	Permitted	Not Permitted
Conduct public education and training sessions about participation in the political process	✓	
Encourage members and non-members to write letters	✓	
Sponsoring or co-sponsoring a debate during an election season, among ALL candidates	✓	
Meet with/speak with policymakers about legislation	✓	
Testify at public hearings	✓	
Provide research, analysis and commentary	✓	
Publicly endorse or oppose specific legislation	✓	
Criticize sitting elected officials (<i>may not attack their personal characteristics or attack them in their status as a candidate</i>)	✓	
Invite a policymaker to visit	✓	
Use private "non-earmarked" funds to lobby	✓	
Raise funds for candidates		X
Make campaign contributions, either cash or in kind		X
Publicly support or oppose candidates		X
Use federal funds to lobby (<i>some exceptions apply</i>)		X
Post partisan political messages on Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr, or other social media sites		X
Connect organization's criticism of public official to voting in an election		X
During an election, compare organization's issue position with that of a candidate		X

¹ https://bolderadvocacy.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/Public_Charities_Can_Lobby.pdf

We debriefed about what we could do differently. Our group said, “Ask the congressman to speak louder. Move the chairs and create a circle where the other two chairs used to sit, closer to the desk.”

The next group of five people came in to the same set-up. They moved their chairs closer to the desk but not as close as the two original chairs had been. They asked for more time than the specified 10 minutes, but they didn’t get it. I said I had to be at another important meeting.

After debriefing again, we sent the rest of the group who had not tried to meet with the congressman out of the room to plan a new strategy (along with one of our staff in case they needed coaching).

As the next group of a dozen people arrived, they were given the chairs against the wall with an apology that we didn’t have enough chairs. They waited until the staff left the office and then they all picked up their chairs, moved them to the desk, and put their hands on the desk, touching it. Those who did not have chairs stood behind the congressman as if guarding him and keeping him there. They were very polite, saying things like, “We want to be able to hear you.” Or, “I can’t hear unless I’m close by.” One person said, “We want to be in a circle with you.”

One volunteer opened with a short prayer, and then they began to tell their often heart-wrenching stories. I found myself — “the congressman” — crying. Later, our volunteers told me in the debriefing that I wasn’t a convincing congressman!

After about two stories (we limited each story to two to five minutes, depending on the impact of the story and how many people we had), the office manager came in and told me that I had to leave for a meeting. The group started protesting, saying they didn’t have a chance to speak yet. Or, “We have more time promised!”

Then Deacon Brown, who had a booming, authoritative voice, stood and said, “I called two days ago and they said you had no other meetings this afternoon, so we have planned on, and would like our hour.” I nodded, the congressman’s staff left, and the group continued the meeting.

In reality, when we met with our congressman, no one interrupted to tell him to leave, but he did tell us he didn’t have much time. But after moving around

his desk and sitting with our hands on the desk (yes, we really did that!), he let us talk for an hour plus.

MORE TRICKS OF THE TRADE

We always promoted press stories from the newspapers about our issues. We sent letters via pages — the young interns who were allowed on the floor — to representatives and senators when they were in session, to bring these newspaper articles to their attention and showcase our issues.

We also faxed (today it would be a scan) everything we could that was printed about us to our congressman. We collected comments, letters, notes and cards at every meeting from our volunteers. Sometimes, we asked them for thank you letters. If a member came in to complain about something, we would also have them write a letter to the appropriate person. Some folks couldn’t read or write and volunteers or staff would help them. We had a regular schedule of trying to fax something every single day. Today, we would also send eblasts, email senators and congresspeople directly and post on Facebook with the senator or representative tagged in the message.

All communication was personalized for the individual’s stories. This is very important! When we just use a bill number and a canned message, it has less impact and effectiveness than real-life experiences. Also, even today, we rarely send emails or texts. We use the old-fashioned letters with postage — snail mail!

One thing we NEVER did was a postcard or letter writing campaign where someone from a national organization provided us the language to employ. We used our own words to educate people about issues or their connection to the issues, most often budget-related.

We taught children to talk to school board members when possible. We taught groups in a couple of counties these strategies and after they had tried them, they went with us to other counties to help with the training. Eventually, they led the training themselves. Even with 10 staff people, we never had the capacity to lead all the trainings.

Building power to get what you want is not just about voting. Continued grassroots lobbying and pushing the levers of influence are essential.

The Power of Lobbying with Grassroots Members

House Bill #5167 would build multiple MX missiles. At Piedmont Peace Project, we learned how many billions of dollars it was going to cost. We compared that to what was being spent on housing, health-care and education, the issues our members and volunteers cared about most. That was a drop in the bucket, compared to the missiles.

We already had enough nuclear weapons to destroy the earth many times over. We explained how many low-income housing units could be built, how much support there could be for healthcare and Medicare/Medicaid, and how much we could improve schools and Head Start programs in low-income communities if the money was spent in another way.

Going to the Local Office

We then scheduled several groups to go talk to our congressman who sat on the Defense Budget Committee and chaired the New Military Construction Subcommittee. Farmers, parents and the elderly were enlisted to confront him in his state office. They did not identify as Piedmont Peace Project members going into the appointment.

The morning of the vote, a group of farmers talked to him about the need to save small family farms. When the congressman said there was no money to do that, they talked about how many farms could be saved with just one MX missile! He said he was sorry, but he was voting “Yes” for the MX missiles.

Then the parents went midday to talk about the schools, the need for improvements and to open Head Start programs in their communities. When the congressman said there was no money in the budget for that, they talked about how many schools could be improved and how many Head Start programs could be implemented with just part of the MX missiles budget on which he was voting!

Later that day, a group of elderly people went in to talk about the lack of affordable healthcare, their inability to pay for prescription drugs and the lack of Medicaid for those who needed it. The congressman changed his language and said that while he supported these things, it just couldn’t happen this year. No money in the budget. The group responded with how much he could take care of the healthcare situation, schools and farms with the MX missiles budget.

The congressman groaned and he put his head down on the desk! Then he said he was sorry, he had already promised to vote for the MX missiles (almost all of his campaign money came from military contractors). He stated he couldn’t go back on his word.



Going to the Capitol

We traveled to Washington, D.C. for the vote. An architect from Charlotte, a large city a couple of hours away, was a supporter. He helped us design a visual aid for our trip.

We built a large, five-foot MX missile that we carried on the bus to D.C. The day before the vote, on the steps of our congressman's office building, we held a press conference. Our volunteers, who practiced their speeches on the bus ride to D.C., spoke about their needs and the cost of the MX missiles. When one person described the housing problems, the missile, built like a transformer toy, folded down and out to turn into a cute, painted, little white house

with a picket fence and flowers in the front, like many of the tiny textile mill houses in which our folks lived.

As news reporters followed PPP, we also brought hundreds of individual letters to the congressman's office from people speaking about their particular needs, and praying, begging him not to vote for the MX missiles.

The Vote

We were at the Capitol early the next day and sat in the top balcony to observe. We could not speak to the congressman personally but while everyone else waited in line, I took off in my scooter at top speed to his offices. I said to the staff there was an urgent message (in a sealed, important-looking envelope that Senator Kennedy's office had given me!) and it needed to be delivered to our congressman right away.

In the envelope was a letter signed by all of the Piedmont Peace Project members and volunteers present. It said we would be praying for him to follow his heart and his constituency, and to make the right decision during the vote. We also told him we would be sitting in the balcony directly behind him. We knew where he always sat.

We understood that he believed deeply in prayer. He was a gospel singer and talked about his Christianity as a Southern Baptist. Most of our volunteers were devout Christians as well.

I flew back to my group and got into a seat they saved for me. A young page delivered the envelope I had left with the congressman's staff and we saw him open it. He wore a bright yellow spring suit. All of our group agreed to wear blue that day. We had blue organizational t-shirts for those who wanted them. We all stood up when he opened the letter. A few people around us stood with us, not knowing whether they should or not. When he turned around to look at us, we all had our heads bowed and our hands up in prayer.

A person in the balcony, who was not with our group, saw us and yelled "AMEN!!" All the congressional representatives turned around and looked at us. Immediately, many others in the balcony went into the prayer position and many more yelled "Amen!" Reporters captured the story and it was on the D.C. news that evening.

Our congressman did vote "Yes" for the MX missile that day, just as he had promised to his financial backers. The vote returned to the budget committee for some revisions. A week later, the vote came back to Congress. Our congressman voted against it that time!

After we exited the Capitol, several folks from other states followed us and asked how we had come to do that action. As our folks chatted with others about our story, we were asked to do a workshop. We presented it for many people later that day.

We learned that by effectively holding our elected officials accountable, as well as voting, we could make radical changes for our community.

Some Days You Win, Some Days You Lose

Of course, we didn't begin with this many people supporting us. I remember my first visit to D.C. to lobby. We took up several collections just to get me a bus ticket. I carried more than 100 letters from folks in the community, written on whatever people had at the time: children's composition notebook paper, the back of a paper grocery bag, others on pretty cards and stationery. The children wrote little notes as well. We purposely asked people to write on whatever they had, and we could provide them with a variety of paper if they didn't have anything.

When I got an appointment with the congressman (after having to do a one-person sit-in since he cancelled our meeting), I was allowed a 15-minute meeting in the Congress hallway right outside where they were debating. I began with, "I don't want you to say anything. I just want you to listen."

I proceeded to read the most impactful letters from a variety of counties and ages. I didn't read fast but I read powerfully. At the end of 15 minutes, with tears in his eyes, the congressman said he really had to leave. I pushed the 100 letters (a big pile because of all the differences in paper) into his hands. He chatted with me for several more minutes and gave me a message to take back—a promise to read all the letters!

Any time we visited D.C., we also visited all of our congressmen and one of our senators, as well as Senator Edward Kennedy and Congressman Ron Dellums. We were never allowed an audience with the right-wing Senator Jesse Helms' office, but we did deliver more than 100 letters with return addresses to him, with a penny taped to the top of each letter, stating "a penny for my thoughts!" Each letter was mailed separately. His office returned them to the letter writer, even the children, with the penny attached.

Not everything we fought for was a win. We had many losses along the way, but we had many more victories. We learned that by effectively holding our elected officials accountable, as well as voting, we could make radical changes for our community. In addition to building leadership among our volunteers, we also changed many people's minds in our district, even though they weren't part of our organization, through our positive media stories and community events.

Linda Stout

THIS IS
THE SIGN
YOU'VE BEEN
LOOKING FOR



Identifying and Supporting the Next Group of Leaders

We are constantly identifying new leaders as we go door-to-door, finding people interested in attending an event or an informational meeting. On every sign-in sheet, which we keep for everything that people come to, we ask people to write their names, address, email and phone numbers, and inquire about their willingness to volunteer and/or come to additional meetings or events.

Anyone who checks the “I’d like to volunteer” box is called immediately to see what they are interested in and where they would like to volunteer. It is important to engage people as soon as possible or you may lose a great opportunity, especially during a campaign season when everyone is competing for volunteers. It is also important to enter their information into a database to follow up and track their responses.

After events, continue to support people and move them into the next level of volunteering. Offer training yourself as well as training opportunities from other organizations for volunteers to attend. Share links to websites or commentary that you like. This is a time to provide education on deeper subjects like racism and internalized oppression, or bring in a well-known speaker.

Planning for the Next Cohort of Leaders

We created a five-year plan for our volunteer programs at Piedmont Peace Project, with levels to move people

OPENINGS

Reflect on these quotations:

“A leader takes people where they want to go. A great leader takes people where they don’t necessarily want to go, but ought to be.”

—Rosalynn Carter

“I always did something I was a little not ready to do. I think that’s how you grow. When there’s that moment of ‘Wow, I’m not really sure I can do this,’ and you push through those moments, that’s when you have a breakthrough.”

—Marissa Mayer

up each year. We would identify the different kinds of trainings that were needed to build skills. We knew we always had to have introductory and intermediate trainings as well as the more advanced trainings.

In Maine, after Voter Registration/Get-Out-the-Vote where people worked on the election, we taught volunteer groups how to do a long-term plan the following year. We showed them how to conduct a Listening Project (see Chapter 5) so they could go back into their community and continue to talk about issues and recruit new volunteers. We presented how to talk to people about these issues.

Moving to Another Level

In eastern North Carolina, where we conducted regular TAKE 10 trainings, we offered advanced trainings for leaders to become trainers themselves. In the Training of Trainers workshop, we went through each part of the TAKE 10 curriculum but with analysis and feedback for what they did as trainers.

As TAKE 10 trainers tried things out while training their members, we would discuss what worked and what didn't work in our coaching sessions. We gave them materials they could adapt for their own organizations and provided PowerPoint slides they could incorporate in their own trainings (we have provided examples of those in Resources and Materials).

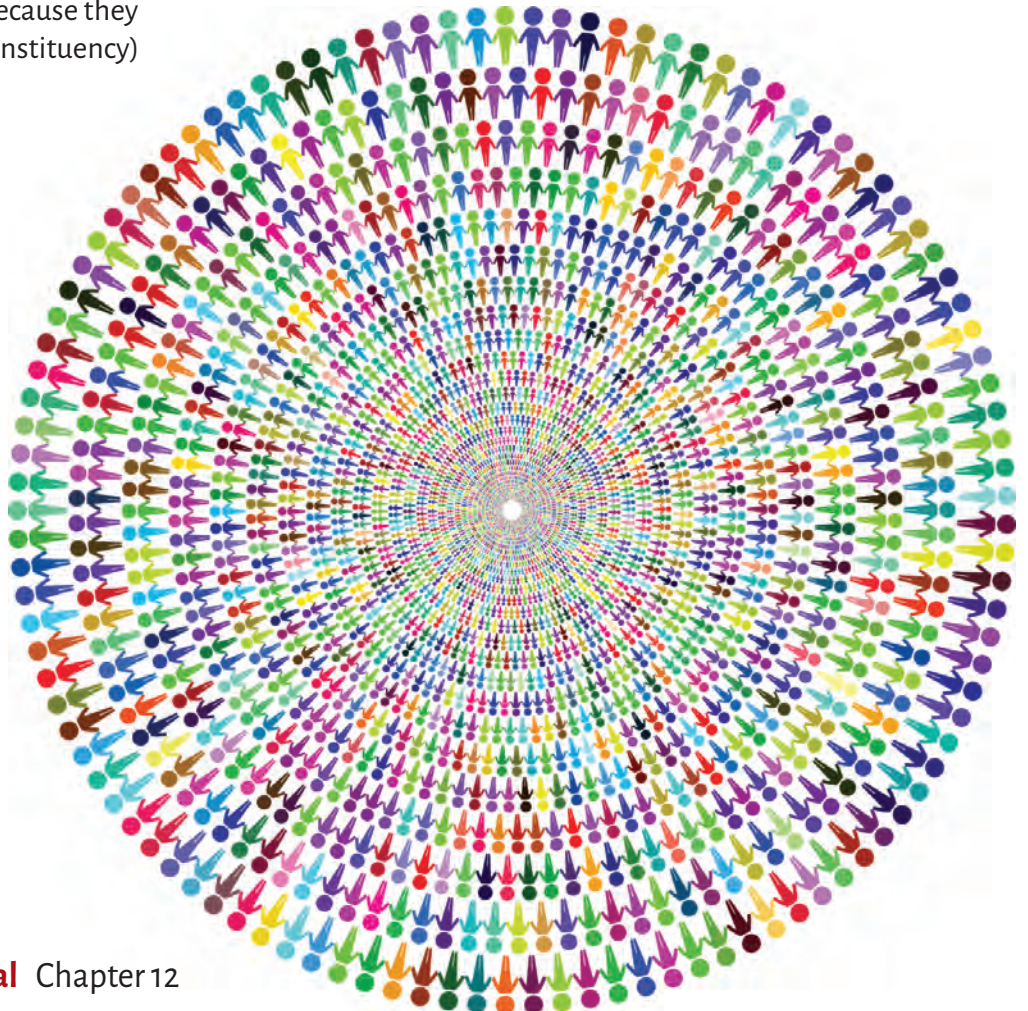
We also taught the trainers how to use Zoom or meet virtually. We showed them how to get people to raise their hands, use chat and how to set up rooms within chat. We displayed virtual rooms from the local Chamber of Commerce, and the trainers could change the picture and make the room more inviting to their folks (for example, covering pictures of business people with scarves (because they were not representative of their constituency) or changing the seating to circles).

Exercise — Develop Leadership

This is a good exercise to do with new leaders. It can inform future trainings that they need.

1. Think of a current leader who has inspired you.
2. What qualities do they have that motivated you?
3. What leadership qualities do you want to embody? Write these down and think how you can develop these habits or obtain these skills.

Further trainings included proposal writing and fundraising, and other topics they needed to know as leaders of their organizations. We had not originally planned to do proposal writing and fundraising but as we did the Training of Trainers, our leaders requested what they needed, such as executive leadership coaching, donor engagement and help with strategic planning.



Do an assessment and analysis of what your leaders, volunteers and groups want. Being responsive to their needs is so important. Go ahead and alter your workshops based on feedback but also consider current events. Recycling the same old workshop year after year is not a viable organizing strategy. Note that the same slides work differently on Zoom than in-person workshops. Keep re-creating based on today's requirements and circumstances.

Realize we all have different strengths and abilities. Invite others to help you as necessary, people who are sensitive to your constituency, and will serve your members and volunteers. This will help folks grow in their work, stay engaged and build their skills.

“Buy Local”: An Example of Post-Election Training

A post-election training we offered at PPP demonstrated how spending our money with locally-owned businesses circulated three times more money back into the local economy than chain stores do. As people registered for the day, they received an envelope with play money and a list of things to buy during the breaks and lunch time.

We made pretend businesses: a locally-owned pharmacy (with our own local pharmacist running it), a local sandwich shop, local hardware and farm equipment store, as well as a Walmart, McDonald's and a Home Depot. Our intern, Joyce, actually got or made real-looking signs for each business, including one with the McDonald's golden arches. People had a great time spending their pretend money!

We collected their “receipts” after lunch and reported back at the end of the day on how they spent their money and how much of it went back into the community. Because there was not enough play money to buy all of the items at a local business, folks mostly had bought from the major chains where goods were cheaper. Many people used the local sandwich shop because the food was better, but very few went to the local pharmacy or hardware

store because it was too expensive. Also, some didn't have enough time, and found it faster to get most of their shopping done at two stops: Walmart and McDonald's!

Afterwards, our pharmacist told the group that, at first, Walmart could sell medicines cheaper than he could, and had already put some local pharmacies and other local shops out of business. Yet, within two years, Walmart was charging as much or more than the local pharmacy. Those of us who used the local pharmacy talked about how the pharmacist had helped us get coverage for our medicines that big chains didn't. Others testified that when they didn't have money, our local pharmacist would give them their medicine and let them pay for it later. The pharmacist also informed us when our medicines were not compatible with each other, and provided lots of services that we didn't find at the chains. Shopping at local businesses, you're seen as an individual not a consumer statistic.

After hearing these stories, and understanding from an economist who spoke to us about how the local economy invested in the community, people had a break to try to rethink how they wanted to spend their dollars. An amazing thing happened. People got very creative about how to spend their money. A group of farmers decided to share the tools on the hardware list. But the best part was they decided to form a tool co-op after the event. Some farmers even shared a tractor, a mower and other machinery.

Keep the Energy Going

We usually had two to three workshops during the year that either we assigned people to (if they were new rather than experienced volunteers, for example) or offered different subjects from which that they could choose. We also always had a couple of workshops for young people, one for the little ones and one for teenagers.

These post-election workshops were always fun gatherings, lasting a full day, and ending in celebration.

The Leadership We Need Now

How do we embrace the challenges that we face today as well as tomorrow's promises? To do this we must lead with hope and optimism, and with a collective vision.

Many Ways to Lead

We are all leaders although some may be playing many different roles. Some lead in the front, some within, and some lead while following. But unless we are leading in the way that is grounded in our values and leads by the example of what we are trying to build, we aren't able to create the change we want.

We come from a reactive culture that is fixated on problem solving. We examine problems and work to fix them. But what would it look like to live proactively? To live into what we are creating, what we want, actually being Mahatma Gandhi's "the change that you wish to see"?

Sitting in a circle and building relationships are a critical part of developing trust, hearing each other and creating change. Taking action on the vision we create leads to victories. Giving young people the knowledge and empowering them to speak for themselves creates our leaders of the present, as well as for the future.

Before you pass these ideas off as unrealistic or just too "woo-woo," let me share an experience. I was accepted and sponsored to attend the Weatherhead School of Management at Case Western Reserve University in a year-long program called "Deep Dive Leadership."

Leadership is about building consensus, creating buy-in and ultimately, a shared vision for the future.

Real World Experience

Out of 60-plus people, I was the only social change activist in the group. Others headed up or held high positions within large, multinational and national corporations, banks and hospitals. I recognized many of the companies' names they represented.

In our first week, we learned about visioning, mindfulness and how to lead from a positive, relationship-based place. The idea of beginning with a collective vision — focusing on what we want to create rather than what we are against — is the most important step in creating real, successful and sustainable change. Strong voices and accountability can make change — even with large, multinational corporations.

While I had been doing this kind of work for years before attending the management program, to lead with hope has now been "proven," through years of scientific research and studies, to be the most successful and the most profitable way to lead. Business leaders have figured out it is also the most effective method to



work in balance. So, although, these practices have been used for thousands of years by Indigenous peoples and others working for transformative change, research and science have caught up; now businesses and other leaders understand its importance.

Visioning Creates a Cultural Shift

Starting with vision provides us a positive grounding from which to work. It supports us to look for solutions and ways to get there. It also inspires us and others to keep motivated toward that vision, even during times when we feel hopeless and ready to give up. It builds trust, collective power, hope and joy. It sets us on a path toward winning on the issues on which we are working.

Changing the Way We Do Change

Leading with hope, optimism, love and vision helps us create a different culture in the way we do our work that is sustainable, supportive and achievable. What I learned in that first week of training is that real change begins with me — with you. Until we can embrace our own visions, our own ability to work from a visionary and relationship-based place, we can't teach others effectively. And to be successful we have to change the way we lead.

Lots of folks talk about needing national leadership. But all leadership is not created equal. Leadership is not about laws, rules and strong-people tactics. It is about building consensus, creating buy-in and ultimately, a shared vision for the future.

If we want true and lasting change, we have to change the way we do this work. I believe this is critical to our success and to creating a world that is a just and equitable place for all of us.

Linda Stout

Resources and Materials

“There is no such thing as a single-issue struggle, because we do not lead single-issue lives. ... Our struggles are particular, but we are not alone. ... What we must do is commit ourselves to some future that can include each other and to work toward that future with the particular strengths of our individual identities.”

—Audre Lorde

Terms and Lingo

This guide serves to aid training Get-Out-the-Vote (GOTV) staff and/or volunteers. It assumes that the organizer has some basic familiarity with GOTV work and language. It works well paired with the trainings in this manual.

Terms/getting familiar with the lingo:

Partisan and non-partisan

Partisan means that you are officially working in support of a political party or candidate. Non-partisan means that you are explicitly not supporting or degrading any political party or candidate.

State Table

Several states across the country have a group of non-profits who work together to make the biggest change possible when it comes to civic engagement. That state's Table is also a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, but it works like a backbone for all the other nonprofits to reconnect, get centered, share resources, etc. One of the most exciting resources that it offers is the Voter Activation Network (VAN), which is explained below.

Voter Activation Network (VAN)

This is an online database. It is very expensive to buy the ability to access VAN on your own, so groups typically have access through a State Table. However, there are partisan and non-partisan groups that use a similar database, and depending on whether or not you are partisan, you will have different kinds of access.

Scripts

Language matters! The way we communicate with others is a huge part of what it means to be doing this work. A “script” in this context means an agreed upon way to communicate at the door when we go canvassing door-to-door. Typically, a script is written down and on a clipboard; some people have a tablet or smartphone with the script written down.

Turf

Specifically drawn maps of areas to go canvass. Each group of addresses is considered a turf.

Planning Ahead Checklist

Be sure you have prepared your:

Scripts

Maps/turfs

Training on how and where to save turfs

Pre-canvassing

Drive through the neighborhood to make sure:

- The terrain is walkable
- It feels reasonably safe, i.e, there aren't KKK signs or loose, aggressive dogs
- There are places we can park the car or accessible modes of transportation
- There is a location to "train" on-site (see bullet points below)

Weather and light conditions assessment

Check the weather and prepare for what it might bring. If there is severe or dangerous weather then you may need to cancel.

If you will be canvassing until dark or even close to sundown, be prepared with blinkers or flashlights. These are especially important in neighborhoods without sidewalks. Blinkers can be worn by canvassers to help them be visible. You can also bring flashlights so that canvassers can see better.

Neutral training location near the turfs

We often train in parking lots. This is intentional when you design turf (or pre-canvass). This increases turnout to the training and GOTV event since they are combined, not two separate events.

Materials needed

Flashlights/blinkers	Pens
Raingear (or n/a)	Clipboards
Comfortable shoes	Water
Maps for each group	Snacks (limited, really just for folks with low blood sugar)
Smartphones or phones with texting	Vehicles
Scripts for each group	

Activities

These will largely depend on the group, type of election season or time within the election season, and current legislation:

- We often train people in the parking lots nearby where we will be canvassing as referenced above, but, if it is a particularly inexperienced group, we might want to do a training ahead of the canvassing day.
- Keep the information positive and clear.
- Have people practice "knocking on doors" with each other in the parking lot and getting used to the script.
- Make sure to answer questions before people go out.

Before you send people out:

Make sure the time and location of return are very clear.

Make sure everyone has the materials they need.

Emphasize how you need all supplies back at the end of canvassing.

Have all phone numbers shared amongst the group.

How to Vote



Volunteer Recruitment

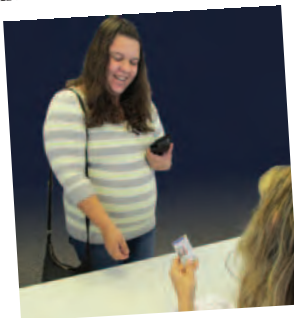
How to Vote brochure



- 1.** If you need a ride, call:



- 2.** We will pick you up and take you home after you have voted.



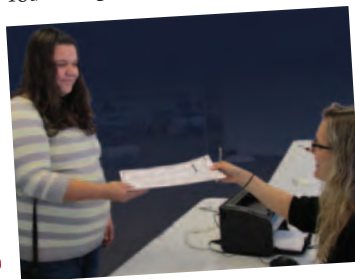
- 3.** When you get through the line, the poll worker will welcome you and ask your name.



- 4.** If you are a first time voter, or in a new county, you will be asked to show your ID.



- 5.** You will sign your name to check in.



- 6.** You will be given a ballot.



- 7.** You go to the voting booth to vote. Make sure you color in the entire circle of every person you are voting for.



- 8.** Put your ballot into the machine.



- 9.** Congratulations! Your voice has been heard!

If you need extra copies of this flyer, contact workingtogether@spiritinaction.net. Updated August 15, 2016.



BECOME A **TAKE 10** Volunteer

PLEDGE to register, educate and get 10 people to the polls on Election Day, November 3, 2020.

"I have come to see ... that one of the most decisive steps that [we] can take is that little walk to the voting booth. That is an important step. We've got to gain the ballot, and through that gain, political power."
—Martin Luther King Jr.

10

things I will do to build power within my community:

1. **Attend** the **TAKE 10** workshop.
2. **Reach out** to 10 people I know:
 - In my family
 - From a local organization
 - Belonging to my church
 - Around my neighborhood
3. **Hand out** materials on:
 - How to vote
 - Our issues
4. **Talk to people** about the issues that impact our community.
5. **Help** my 10 people to vote early or create a plan to vote on Election Day.
6. **Make sure** they have the information they need for voting (sample ballot, voter guide, ID if required).
7. **Contact** my 10 people the week before the election if they have not voted:
 - One week before (October 27)
 - The weekend before Election Day (October 31–November 1)
 - The morning of Election Day
8. **Help** people get rides to the polls if they need them.
9. **Celebrate** by attending the volunteer party after election!
10. Attend **TAKE 10** training on next steps to **keep the momentum going!**

Questions?

Call our hotline:
413-221-5854

spirit in action
CHANGING THE WAY WE DO CHANGE

514 Rose Hill Road, Asheville NC 28803
spiritinaction.net

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Spirit in Action's four decades of experience has created trainings that develop your skills to build vision, power and a base of volunteers who will impact generation after generation of organizing.



BECOME A **TAKE 10** Volunteer

Volunteer Recruitment

TAKE 10 postcard



10 things I pledge:

- Questions? Call us**

A close-up photograph of a hand holding a blue sign. The sign has white text that reads "Today We March..." on the top line and "Tomorrow We Vote." on the bottom line. The hand is visible at the bottom, with the index and middle fingers extended. The background is blurred, showing other people and a flag.

NAME + CONTACT INFO

[illegible]

108 TAKE 10 Organizer's Manual Resources and Materials

Volunteer Training

Ideas for What to Include in a Job Description

As you write your own job descriptions, put yourself in the place of a volunteer and ask what you'd like to know. Below are some items to consider:

Mission. Volunteers want to know your mission. State the basic idea of your work in one memorable sentence: "Saving Life on Earth," Center for Biological Diversity.

Project or position. Describe the goal of the volunteer project or role and explain how it contributes to your mission.

Include benefits that volunteers will receive: Learn new skills, make new friends, have fun while making a difference.

Tasks. Describe exactly what you want the volunteer to do. List specific tasks.

Skills wanted. Include both "hard" skills, such as writing or making phone calls, and "soft" skills that would be nice to have, such as good communication.

Setting. Describe where the volunteer will work: outdoors, your main office, an off-site location, door-to-door in the community.

Schedule and commitment. Answer common questions: How long will this job last? How many hours per week? Can I determine my own hours? Is the job more time-intensive during certain months of the year, such as Election Day? Are date-specific events or project deadlines part of the job?

Training and supervision. Describe the extent of on-the-job instruction, either formal or informal.

Screening. Describe up front any required background checks or screening tests for volunteers (for those working with children or government grants).

Be creative! Make into a flyer with logo, pictures showing volunteers working, gatherings, celebrations to promote your volunteer jobs.

"We can change the way
our government spends
our tax money."

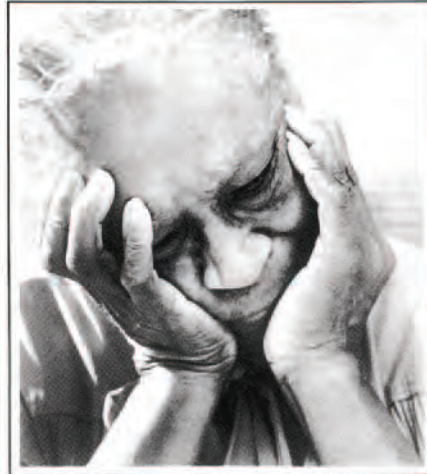


**Register
and vote.**

For rides, call:

A non-partisan voter participation project.

Produced by the Piedmont Peace Project
PO Box 3047, Concord, NC 28025.
Photos by Michelle Handler.
To order extra copies, contact the Piedmont Peace Project.
Cost is 10¢/copy.



"It takes my
whole social security
check just to buy
my medicine."



"Our government spends
only 7¢ of every tax dollar
on health care . . . "



"They spend 57¢ on the
military and weapons."

Popular Education

Easy to read brochure/fact sheet

Social Media Memes: History and Best Practices

www.nytimes.com/2022/02/14/learning/lesson-plans/lesson-of-the-day-the-meaning-and-history-of-memes.html

www.psychologytoday.com/us/basics/memes

www.wired.com/story/guide-memes/

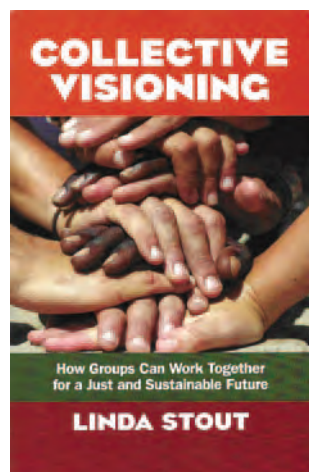
blog.woobox.com/2019/11/understanding-memes-a-marketing-guide-of-dos-donts/



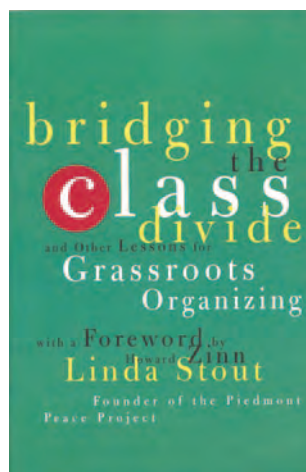
HOW TO MAKE A MEME

1. Choose an image that is not copyrighted.
2. Choose a font and add your text.
3. Choose illustrative and eye-catching icons.
4. Share your meme on social media.

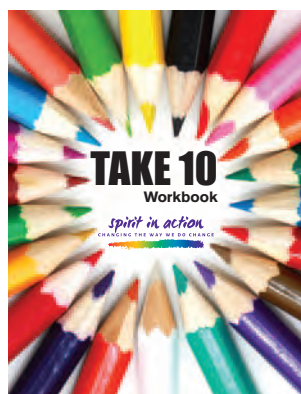
Books by Linda Stout



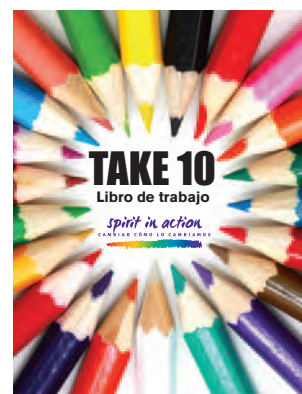
Stout, Linda (2011).
Collective Visioning: How groups can work together for a just and sustainable future. San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, Inc.



Stout, Linda (1996).
Bridging the class divide. Boston: Beacon Press.



Stout, Linda (2022).
TAKE 10 Workbook: Changing the Way We Do Change. Independently published.



Stout, Linda (2022).
TAKE 10 Libro de trabajo: Cambiar cómo lo cambiamos (Spanish Edition). Publicado de forma independiente.

If you want to provide your volunteers with a deeper dive into organizing, the TAKE 10 Workbook can supplement this manual with thoughtful exercises and homework that volunteers can do on their own.

Introductory Session

What does it take to win?

Introductory Session (23 slides)

PowerPoint slides are a tool for popular education and engagement. In this sample Introductory session, the slides discuss the TAKE 10 model, the time commitment required for the training, the ways we work together successfully, our vision for our community and our audience. Gear your presentation to the needs and knowledge level of your community. Tell them why they should care and what's in it for them. Be sure to convey your own excitement about TAKE 10!

Building Power to Win with Volunteers
Changing the World One Community at a Time

Sunday, June 14
1pm–2:30pm

The Way We Train



3

TAKE10 Model

1. Attend the TAKE10 workshop.
2. Reach out to 10 people I know.
3. Hand out materials.
4. Talk to people.
5. Help my 10 people vote.
6. Make sure they have the information they need.
7. Contact my 10 people the week before the election.
8. Help people get rides to the polls.
9. Celebrate by attending the volunteer party after election.
10. Attend TAKE10 training on "Next Steps."

4

Training Outline

A TRAINING FOR NON-PARTISAN ORGANIZATIONS Time commitment: 2 hours/week (Trainings may shift according to group's needs, skills and knowledge. All trainings are interactive based on a model of popular education.)

Training #1 June 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Building our online community: agreements and how to work interactively online Learning the TAKE10 model Visioning and goal setting Finding volunteers and supporting them List management—pledge cards Creating a plan
Training #2 June 14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Volunteer outreach, recruitment and training in the TAKE10 model Canvassing in rural or suburban areas <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Safety concerns and responses Voter registration starts (or continues)... Voter forms Evaluation: How we must constantly evaluate and learn from what doesn't work How to address this in positive ways with volunteers Messaging #1

5

Training #3 June 21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community listening project and outreach with volunteer leaders <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Role playing with your volunteers Reflections of a community: How to gather and present Nut and bolts of voter registration—teaching others Training of trainers—for your volunteer leaders Messaging #2
Training #4 June 28	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developing inspiring Get-Out-the-Vote materials connected to issues Language: The absolutely most important critical learnings! Keeping volunteers involved Training your volunteers—the next level Prepare for youth summer organizing
Training #5 July 12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Messaging #3: Issues and storytelling for Get-Out-the-Vote Time for celebrating volunteers! Let's have a party! School's out! Involving the kids!

6

Training #6 August 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants Choice! <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Issues we need to work on Retraining on particular areas that bear repeating Looking into the future—analysis of our volunteer leaders and what they need from us
Training #7 September	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developing our Get-Out-the-Vote campaign and work plan Training volunteer leaders in Get-Out-the-Vote
Training #8 October	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preparing for last minute Get-Out-the-Vote problems and solutions Turnout for early voting—why it's so important!—creating a plan What to do about voter suppression Creating a shopping list for Election Day

7

Training #9 November <small>AFTER the election (around the middle of month)</small>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sharing success stories and disappointments Our learnings: what will we keep doing, what will we do differently, what do we need to learn Celebrations: sharing victories and losses with your volunteers Planning your volunteer recognition gathering
Training #10 December	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifying the next level of volunteer leaders Preparing them to be trainers of the next group of volunteers in the new year Building your volunteer program for next year and beyond <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Setting up a training of trainers for your volunteers
Training #11 January <small>Bonus Training</small>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Now they're in office ... how do we hold them accountable? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training and introduction of grassroots accountability trainings for your members/volunteers

8

Group Agreements



9

Share in chat or out loud

“One thing that gives me
hope right now.”

10

Group Agreements

If I brought my best self to the meeting,
what quality would you see?
Share in one word.

11

I will bring these qualities to each meeting

•
•
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•

12

Group Agreements

What do I need from this group
to be able to step into my full power
and to feel free to speak my full truth?
Share in one word.

13

What I need from the group

•
•
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•

14

Group Agreements

- Hear with an open ear.
- Listen with an open heart.
- Speak with compassion.
- Courage to be yourself authentically.
- Hope pouring out healing others.
- Communicate relentlessly.
- Simplify and be direct. Learn from each other.
- Listen and encourage input.
- Illustrate through stories.
- Affirm with actions.
- Lead in the spirit of community.

15



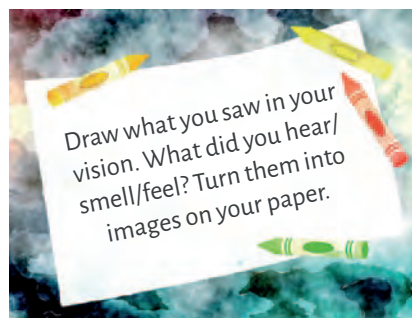
16

Visioning Activity

1. Close your eyes.
2. Think about change.
3. What is change?
4. What does change look like?
5. What is your role in this change?
6. What would your community be like in your vision of change?
7. Feel it and stay there for a moment.



17



18

Volunteers

Who, where, how?

19

Who is our target audience for volunteers?

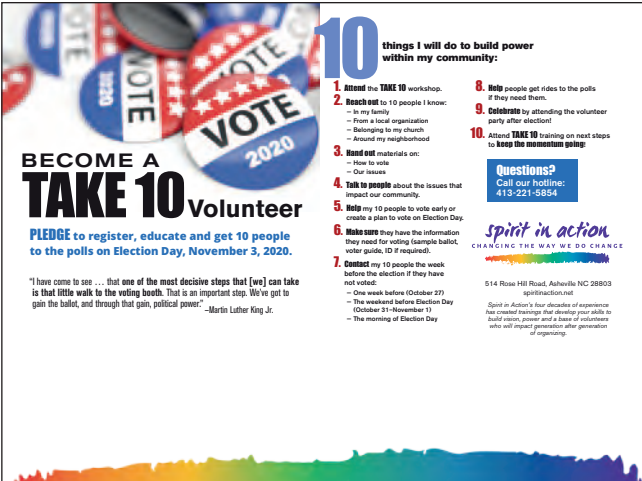
- Previous volunteers and their friends
- Sports team groups
- Creek letter organizations
- College students
- Church
- High school students
- Pastors
- Family members
- Law enforcement agencies
- Active community members
- Members of current organizations and families
- People in workplace
- Partner organizations
- People with active interest in work we are doing
- Retiree orgs — i.e., teachers
- Senior centers

20

How would you go about figuring out where non-registered voters are in your community?

-
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-

21



10 things I will do to build power within my community:

1. Attend the TAKE 10 workshop.
2. Reach out to 10 people I know:
 - In my family
 - From a local organization
 - Belonging to my church
 - Around my neighborhood
3. Hand out materials on:
 - How to vote
 - Our issues
4. Talk to people about the issues that impact our community.
5. Help my 10 people to vote early or create a plan to vote on Election Day.
6. Make sure they have the information they need for voting (sample ballot, voter guide, ID if required).
7. Contact my 10 people the week before the election if they have not voted:
 - One week before (October 27)
 - The weekend before Election Day (October 31 - November 1)
 - The morning of Election Day
8. Help people get rides to the polls if they need them.
9. Celebrate by attending the volunteer party after election!
10. Attend TAKE 10 training on next steps to keep the momentum going!

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Spirit in Action's four decades of experience, has created meetings that develop your skills to build vision, power and a base of volunteers who will impact generation after generation of organizing.

BECOME A TAKE 10 Volunteer
PLEDGE to register, educate and get 10 people to the polls on Election Day, November 3, 2020.

"I have come to see ... that one of the most decisive steps that [we] can take is that little walk to the voting booth. That is an important step. We've got to gain the ballot, and through that gain, political power!" —Martin Luther King Jr.

22



BECOME A TAKE 10 Volunteer

THIS is the will of the people!

Make your voice heard!

VOTE

VOTE

Your group/organization/ name and info goes here!

23

Group Agreements

Group Agreements (8 slides)

You might think it is easier to just plunge into the tasks that need to be done in TAKE 10, but without a shared set of guidelines for how we do the work, it is just as easy to fail. Take the time to understand the needs, expectations and inspiration each volunteer brings to the table with this session. Most importantly, follow through by holding each other accountable to the Group Agreements.



2

Group Agreements

If I brought my best self to the meeting, what quality would you see? Share in one word.

3

I will bring these qualities to each meeting:

-
-
-
-
-
-

4

Group Agreements

What do I need from this group to be able to step into my full power and to feel free to speak my full truth? Share in one word.

5

What I need from the group:

-
-
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6

Group Agreements

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- Listen and encourage input.
- Illustrate through stories.
- Affirm with actions.
- Lead in the spirit of community.

7

Share in Chat or Out Loud

“One thing that gives me hope right now.”

8

Work Plans

Work Plans (7 slides)

Great ideas need a structure for how you will achieve them! It provides a road map that keeps every one on the same page. This session is a good way to stop and reflect, and commit to paper (and to each other) how we will do the TAKE 10 work together.

Smart Goals

S	M	A	R	T
<u>Specific</u>	<u>Measurable</u>	<u>Achievable</u>	<u>Relevant</u>	<u>Time-bound</u>
— State what you will do	— Provide a way to evaluate	— Within your ability	— Makes sense within your life	— State when it will get done
— Use action words (who? what? where?)	— Use number targets (how much? how many?)	— Possible to accomplish in time frame	— Improves your organization or group (does it match other needs/ efforts?)	— Be specific on date or timeframe (when? Create milestones.)

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GOTV/VR Planning

Name: _____

Goal: _____

What are the tasks to accomplish your goal listed above? (list each one below)	How will you accomplish these tasks? What will you do to make it happen?	Who will take the lead on each task? Who else will help?	What resources do you need to make this happen? (trainings, people, research, money, etc.)	How will you get these resources and what will you do if you don't have all of them?
--	--	--	--	--

3

Reflect

How did you feel when completing your work plan?

4

Share

For those who finished your workplan, have you been using it? Has it been helpful? How?

5

Work plan challenges

-
-
-
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-

How to improve the process

-
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-

6

Individual Commitment

- One new strategy for outreach
- Identifying 10 volunteers
- What's one thing you will do before next session? (write in Chat)

7

Building Political Power

What does it take to win?

Building Political Power (10 slides)

This session is a frank discussion of power — power with, power over — which, like the Group Agreements, creates a common understanding of who we are, where we are going and how we will get there. If your organization is wary of advocacy and focused on service, this session introduces the value of using political power to further your goals.



2

Forms of Power

Power Over

Power With

Power Within

3

Using Our Power

1. What happens when we use our power for good?
2. What kind of political power can we build as a 501(c)(3)?
3. What can your organization do to build that power?
4. What does your organization need to be able to build that kind of power?

4



5

Reflection Questions

1. Which organization (or person) will you have the easiest time creating a partnership with?
2. Which organization or person will you have the hardest time creating a partnership with?
3. What example can your two groups set for the entire region?
4. What **hurdles** would you have to overcome to form a coalition with this organization or person?
5. What **benefits** could be gained by forming a partnership with this organization or person?

6

Name of organization or person

-
-
-
-

What do you have in common with this organization or person? (List people, causes, etc.)

-
-
-
-

7

Hurdles

-
-
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-
-
-

Benefits

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-

8

Homework

Talk to your board or membership about:

1. The possibility of bringing more political work into your organization; and/or
2. The possibility of reaching out to another organization to get to know each other (talk about differences, etc.) so collaboration can happen.

9

Please take a moment to fill out the feedback form now!

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CHANGING THE WAY WE DO CHANGE

10



Volunteers

Who, where, how?

Volunteers (18 slides)

No one wants to do this important work alone. We are building community and belonging! So, how do we find and recruit volunteers? We want to show them the many ways to bring people on board and keep them volunteering. This presentation will be enhanced if you share your personal story about why you volunteer, and ask others to do the same.

Who is our target audience for volunteers?

- [list examples]

How would you go about figuring out where non-registered voters are in your community?

-
-
-
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-

3

Reflect & Share

Think about a time you came back to volunteer again.

What were some of the things that made it exciting? What was it that brought you back?

Share out loud.

4

Journal

1. Who is your audience to recruit volunteers from?
2. How do you recruit them?
3. How do we see these volunteers as potential leaders?

5

What made you come back as a volunteer?

- Felt important and empowered
- Could see yourself in the work
- Directly impacted
- "People paid attention to me" and constantly motivated you
- Felt heard
- Excitement around the moment
- Felt immediate real, lasting impact
- Work was fulfilling
- Goal was to improve community
- Benefits!
- Seeing new things
- A leadership pipeline was natural — became an employee of the organization you were volunteering at
- Gained passion for the work

6

Volunteer Recruitment Strategies

- Volunteer training
- Show the benefits of becoming a volunteer — i.e., improving your community
- Tap into their passion — gauge them on their interest/connect it to their interest
- Recognize volunteers — i.e., certificates, gathering when we can get back together again
- Build relationships with leaders and staff
- Help volunteers with resources
- Peer recruiting
- Build trust with volunteers
- Have a fun activity
- Write job descriptions for volunteers
- Invite to monthly Volunteer Orientation Meet'n Greet

7

Materials

8



Postcard (front)



Postcard (back)

9

10



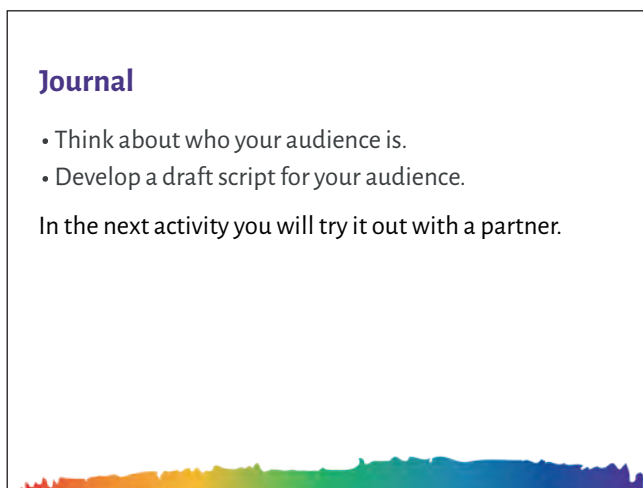
Pledge Card



12

11

12

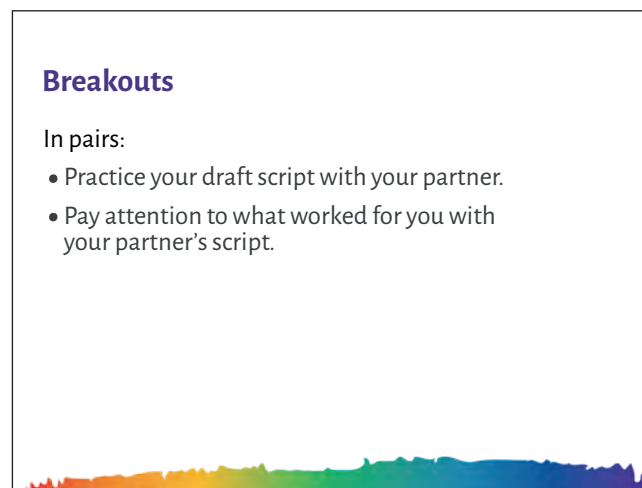


Journal

- Think about who your audience is.
- Develop a draft script for your audience.

In the next activity you will try it out with a partner.

13



Breakouts

In pairs:

- Practice your draft script with your partner.
- Pay attention to what worked for you with your partner's script.

14

Share

Share something that your partner did that you liked and would make you want to be a volunteer for them.

15

Wrap up

16

Next Steps

In the next two weeks:

- **Line up at least 10 volunteers** committed to TAKE10 pledge.
- **Set a training date** and ask volunteers to participate.
- **Share in the chat box:** What is one self-care action you will do?

17

Please take a moment to fill out the feedback form now!

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18

Youth Leadership

Intergenerational Organizing

Youth Leadership (10 slides)

There is no civil rights movement in history that hasn't had a strong youth component. From the suffragists to Black Lives Matter, young people have driven organizing with their energy, passion and ideas. Combine that with the wisdom of elders, and you have a powerful way for movement building. This session explores how to share common values, knowledge, needs and mutual respect.

Think of a young person whose leadership has inspired you.

What did you learn from them?

What are some stereotypes of the opposite generation that you hold in regards to work ethic and organizing?

**If you are a younger person:
talk about elders.**

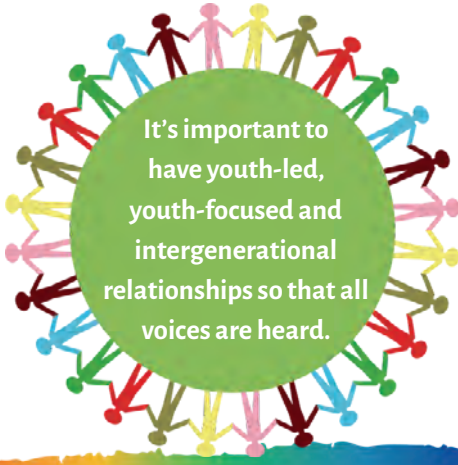
**If you are an elder:
talk about young people.**

3

Intergenerational Organizing

Take advantage of what each generation has to offer while incorporating all of our experiences, energy and leadership. Unite the lessons from the past, the power of the present and our dreams of the future.

4



It's important to have youth-led, youth-focused and intergenerational relationships so that all voices are heard.

5



What values are essential to intergenerational organizing?

What is the role of the adult ally?

What is the space we're trying to create?

6

Best Practices

- Honesty, communication, how you show up, relationship
- Honor that we are all experts of our own experiences
- Plan that a process can be messy—be comfortable in an uncomfortable place
- Make it a learning opportunity for all
- Honor the history and tradition of the group and its organizing
- Recognize that change is inevitable
- Share your stories and experiences
- Have patience, show caring
- Positive redirection
- Young people need to feel supported

7

In an ideal world, what would youth involvement look like in your organization? In your community?

8

Pair Share

- Strengths
- Weaknesses
- Opportunities
- Threats



9

Think about your young TAKE 10 volunteers. Who are they and what do they need?

- Many times we just didn't reel them into the work
- Opportunities to pull youth in, for example, Black Lives Matter
- Supportive, non-judgmental environment
- Public support
- Youth need to be able to grow at their own pace, not be overloaded with work
- Love and treat others the way we would want to be treated

10



Election Follow-up: Starting a New Era

Reflections & Next Steps

Election Follow-up (9 slides)

Keep the momentum of your efforts going, while using this session to think about what you can do to improve your efforts and impact. This session is not a critique; it should inspire your volunteers to celebrate their victories and look forward to continuing the work.

**How are you feeling about the election
and all the work you did?**

What are you most proud of?

What were some of the barriers you faced during this election year?

- [write down examples people give]

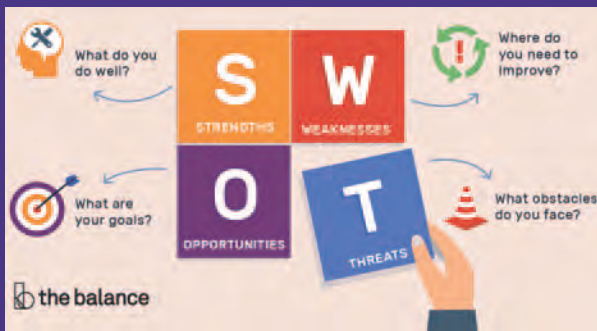
3

Where do you want to go from here?

- [write down examples people give]

4

SWOT Analysis



5

Think about where your organization is now (strengths/weaknesses) and where you want it to be in 3 years (opportunities/threats). Journal and then discuss:

- Strengths
- Weaknesses
- Opportunities
- Threats



6

Strengths

- [examples]

Weaknesses

- [examples]

7

Opportunities

- [examples]

Threats

- [examples]

8

In closing

Share an appreciation you have for
yourself and others!

9



LEAVE NO ONE BEHIND

Building Power to Win

Sample Workshop (37 slides)

This session is the nuts and bolts of volunteering and the TAKE10 model to get-out-the-vote. It should inspire volunteer recruitment while making clear what the volunteer's role and actions will be, now and in the future.

What we're covering today

- **Reflection/Homework Check-in** (5 minutes)
- **Volunteer 101** (20 minutes)
 - Phase 1: Recruit
 - Phase 2: Train
 - Phase 3: Retain
- **Get-Out-the-Vote Volunteering** (20 minutes)
 - Canvassing
 - Pledge Cards
 - Voter Registration
- **GOTV Planning/Homework Review** (10 minutes)
- **Individual Commitments/Closing** (5 minutes)



Section 1: Reflections

Share in chat or out loud

- What is one thing you valued and took away from Session 1?
- Describe Session 1 in one word.

3

4

Volunteer 101

There is no "I" in team but there is a "U" in volunteer!



Think about a group you have volunteered for

- Why did you volunteer with this group?
- Why does it stick out in your mind?
- What did you enjoyed the most? The least?
- What do you think of that group today?

5

6

Our volunteer experience highlights

- Supportive community
- Working with children
- Volunteering with friends
- Personal growth

Phases of volunteer outreach

- PHASE ONE: Recruit
- PHASE TWO: Train
- PHASE THREE: Retain



7

8

Phase One: Recruit

*The true meaning of life is to plant trees,
under whose shade you
do not expect to sit.*

— Nelson Henderson



9

Why do people volunteer?

- Outreach and making contacts
- Gaining experience
- Helping a good cause
- Volunteering in areas to test waters for career selection
- Making a difference in their own community
- Required by school and the work turns into passion
- Passionate about an issue

10

Motivations

"I want to volunteer ...

- ... because it matches my personal values."
- ... to understand more about the world around me."
- ... for my own personal development."
- ... because I am concerned about my community."
- ... to feel better about myself."

11

What makes a good volunteer and where can we find one?

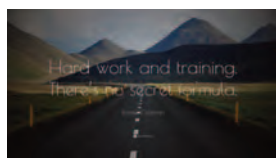
- Qualities
 - Already doing volunteer work
 - Someone really interested in learning about the subject matter
 - Someone who sees a need in their community and steps up
- Where to find them?
 - Social media
 - Religious centers
 - Other organizations
 - Within your own networks/people you know
 - Nonprofits in the county such as 4H and C4EE

12

Phase Two: Train

*Tell me and I forget. Teach me and I remember.
Involve me and I learn.*

— Benjamin Franklin



13

Orientation

- What do volunteers need to know to feel comfortable and competent in carrying out their tasks? (i.e. voter registration)
 - Know why they are doing what they are doing
 - Know various ways to volunteer
 - Know how the organization is going to support their efforts
 - Know more about the political process and how it all works
 - Understand how voting works and able to answer questions people may have
 - Know they can ask questions, that there are no stupid questions
 - Has resources available to assist when the answer is not easily discovered

14

Phase Three: Retain

Volunesia is that moment when you forget you're volunteering to help change lives because it's changing yours.

"Volunteers are not paid – not because they are worthless, but because they are priceless."

15

Top reasons why people quit volunteering

- Role isn't important and just doing busy work
- Not feeling supported
- Not being treated as if the work matters
- Not having enough time to properly commit, even though every little bit helps

16



17

Best ways to retain a volunteer

Recognition is key and critical

- Personal recognition is the most important tool for retaining volunteers.

Suggestions:

- Thank you notes
- Annual volunteer awards
- Luncheon
- Constantly update how their work impacted has the community (their work is valuable)
- Keep positions open on a rolling basis (they can come back)
- Recognition at the end of each event/program
- Snacks and drinks at events — "little thank yous"

18



19

Get Out the Volunteers

1. Canvassing
2. Pledge cards
3. Voter registration

20

1. Canvassing

Goals:

- Host two canvassing opportunities
- Explore virtual canvassing
- Create a storyboard about voter engagement and turnout

21

What is canvassing?

- Going door-to-door and having conversations about important issues with community members
- An essential component of organizing
- Talking to voters about issues that matter to them
 - Spreading your message
 - Recruiting new volunteers
- Results of every conversation are recorded
 - Organizing in the most efficient way possible
 - Focusing on what's most important to voters

22

Steps to a successful canvass

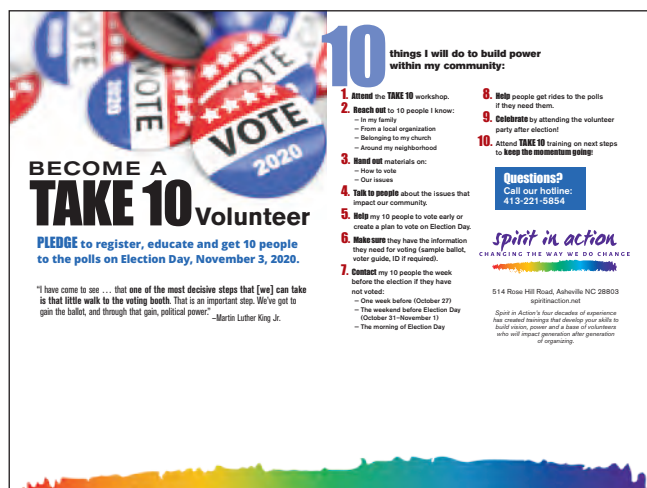
1. Select a staging location
2. Recruit volunteers and build a team
 - Canvass coordinator
 - Volunteer recruitment coordinator
 - Resources coordinator
 - Trainer
3. Prepare all of your materials
 - Map/walk list or phone bank
 - Script/tally sheet
 - Campaign literature
 - Pens/clipboard and contact information
4. Make reminder calls
5. Execute and celebrate

23

2. Pledge cards

- TAKE 10 pledge cards (goal 2,500)
 - Become a TAKE 10 volunteer
 - Pledge to register, educate and get 10 people to the polls on Election Day
 - Election Day: November 3
 - Pledge Cards will be available Thursday, June 18
- Voting pledge cards
 - Pledge to vote on Election Day
 - Voter must complete card and return back to you (and then to our organization)
 - If person isn't a registered voter ... seize the moment to register them!

24



BECOME A TAKE 10 Volunteer
PLEDGE to register, educate and get 10 people to the polls on Election Day, November 3, 2020.

10 things I will do to build power within my community:

1. Attend the TAKE 10 workshop.
2. Reach out to 10 people I know:
 - In my family
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 - Belonging to my church
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— Martin Luther King Jr.

25



BECOME A TAKE 10 Volunteer

Your group/organization/ name and info goes here!

26

3. Voter registration

When: June 20–October 9

Where: Halifax and Northampton Counties

Goal:

- 20 voter registration drives
- 250 voter registration forms completed

27

Important dates to know

North Carolina general election: **November 3**

In-person absentee voting: **not available**

Voter registration deadline: **Friday, October 9**

Early voting: **October 15–31**

Deadline to request an absentee ballot: **Tuesday, October 27**

Deadline to return completed absentee ballot:
Tuesday, November 3

Online voter registration information link:

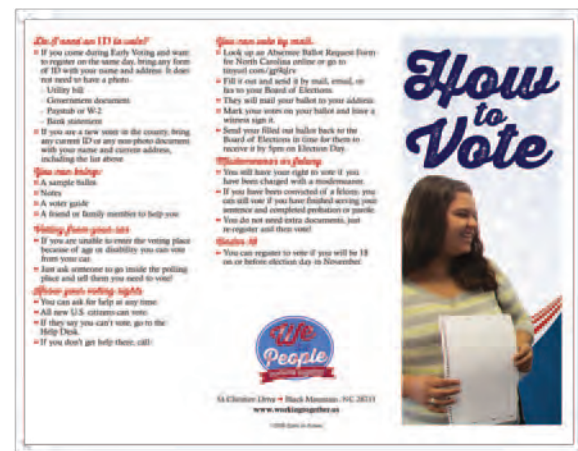
www.ncsbe.gov/Voters/Registering-to-Vote

28

Steps for a voter registration event

1. Pick a place, date and time for your registration event
2. Talk to the right people (event planners, churches, etc.)
Plug into events already happening (collaborate!)
3. Build your team (volunteers)
4. Get supplies from [name]
 - Voter registration forms
 - Pens and clipboards
 - Registration forms envelope
 - Table, flyers, banner, stickers, buttons, posters
 - Water and snacks
5. Request registration forms and return completed forms to [name]
6. Promote, promote, promote
7. Train your volunteers
(TAKE 10 is awesome)
8. Showtime ... pregame
... game day ... post game
9. Evaluate ... plan for next event
... celebrate!

29



30



31

Individual commitments

- Identify 10 volunteers (your team)
- Use your planning guide to include voter registration events and canvassing/pledge cards.
- What's one thing you will do before next session? (write in Chat)

32

Individual commitments

- CR: Reach out again to find volunteers and pledges. Go beyond who do I know; do public outreach.
 - JJ: Confirm with potential 10 volunteers.
 - DDM: Include an appeal for volunteers and voters during the Juneteenth Celebration.
 - LG: Reach out to groups on campus who do voting work and see if there are people who would like to join the TAKE 10 Project.
 - LO: Create a survey to get a consensus of what residents care about for their future president.
 - SS: Confirm at least four potential volunteers — start looking at additional dates to deliver flyers in the community — identify at least two potential agencies/churches/organizations that would be willing to partner with us.
 - EM: Reach out to area youth for volunteers and connect with friends for possible voter registration set-ups and passing out flyers.
- Notes: Have information on cards about being purged and for those individuals who were formerly incarcerated.

33

Important next dates

- Next session date: Sunday, June 21
 - Community listening project
 - Outreach with volunteer leaders
- Next session date: Sunday, June 28
 - Connecting the message to the issues
 - Critical learnings and language
 - Youth organizing

34

Closing

- Great brainstorming of ideas
- Team work went well
- Get more volunteers
- Whole session went well
- Work with talking through volunteers was really great and helpful for recruiting volunteers

53

Thank you!

Any questions?

You can reach us at:
[your email]
[your phone number]

36



37

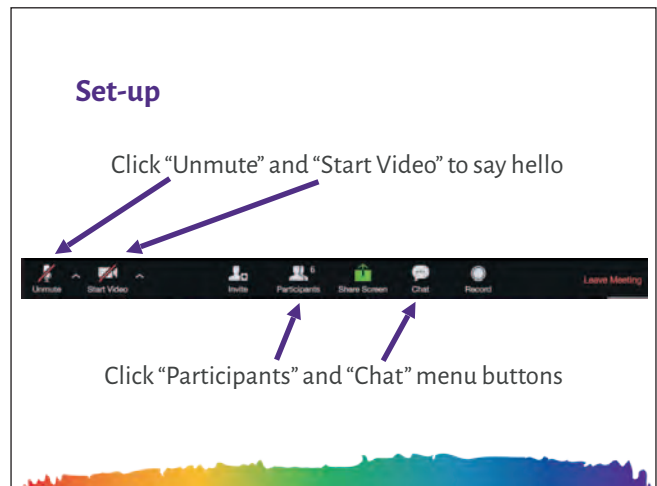
Tech Help

Use as needed

Tech Help (28 slides)

Here is the backbone of using PowerPoint slides in your virtual organizing with a tool like Zoom. It also provides tips about creating PowerPoint slides. Using four main tips to create your own presentation, it shows how you can:

1. Keep it simple
2. Create sections
3. Make it readable
4. Use visuals
5. Tell your story



2

Welcome back!

Mute yourself again



Click "Participants" and "Chat" again

3

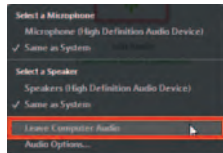
Private Chat

Click to choose who to send your chat to
Everyone or just one person



4

Use phone for audio



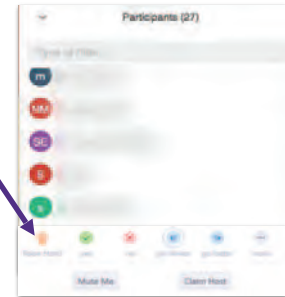
1. Click the ^ arrow next to Mute/Unmute.
2. Click **Leave Computer Audio**.
3. Click **Phone Call** for dial in info.
4. Click the flag for your country's dial in number.



5

Raise your hand

Use the participants menu tool
— or —
Type an asterisk (*) in chat



6

Slide Show Best Practices

Some tips to follow

7

This is a slide title

- Here you have a list of items.
- And some text.
- Remember not to overload your slides with content.

Your audience will listen to you or read the content, but won't do both.

8



Big concept

Bring the attention of your audience to a key concept using icons or illustrations

9

You can also split your content ...

Box 1

Box 2

10

... by using two or three columns

Yellow
 Is the color of gold, butter and ripe lemons. In the spectrum of visible light, yellow is found between green and orange.


Blue
 Is the color of the clear sky and the deep sea. It is located between violet and green on the optical spectrum.

Red
 Is the color of blood, and because of this it has historically been associated with sacrifice, danger and courage.


11

A picture is worth a thousand words

A complex idea can be conveyed with just a single still image making it possible to absorb large amounts of data quickly.



12



Want a big impact?

Use a big image.

13

And tables to compare data

	A	B	C
Yellow	10	20	7
Blue	30	15	10
Orange	5	24	16

14

→ **\$89,526,124**
That's a lot of money

→ **185,244 users**
And a lot of users

→ **100%**
Total success!

15

Our process is easy

First	Second	Last
Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit.	Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit.	Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit.

16

“

Quotations are commonly printed as a means of inspiration and to invoke philosophical thoughts from the reader.

17

Other example slides

*Make a copy and edit for your purposes
or use as inspiration*

18

[insert]

Name

Name

Name

Name

Name

Name

Name

Name

Name

Name

Name

Name

Name

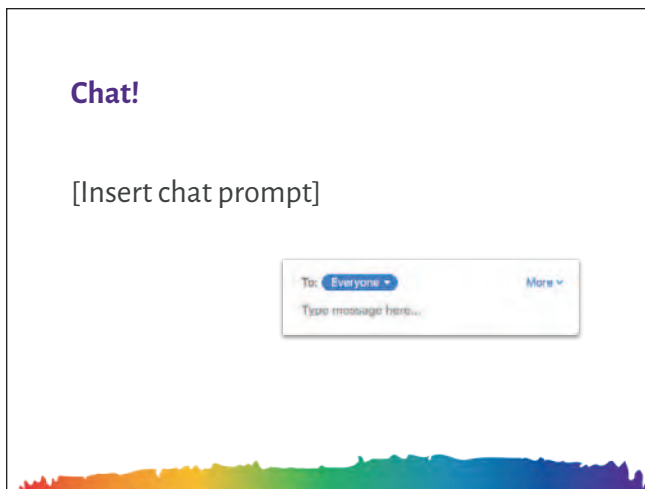
Template by [Training for Change](#)

19

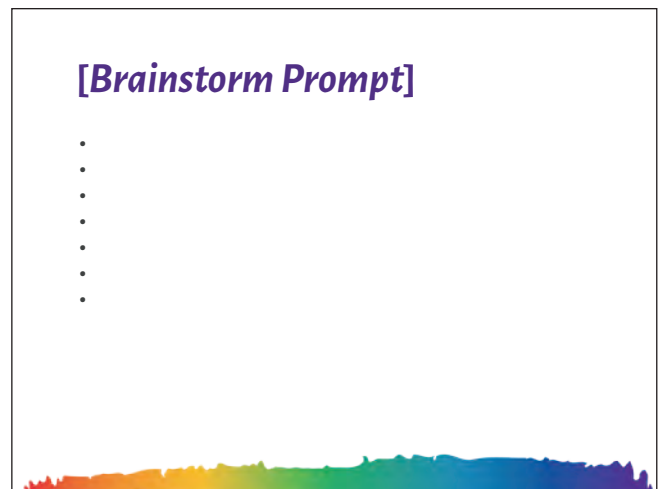
Share in chat or out loud

“One thing I am grateful for today is _____.”

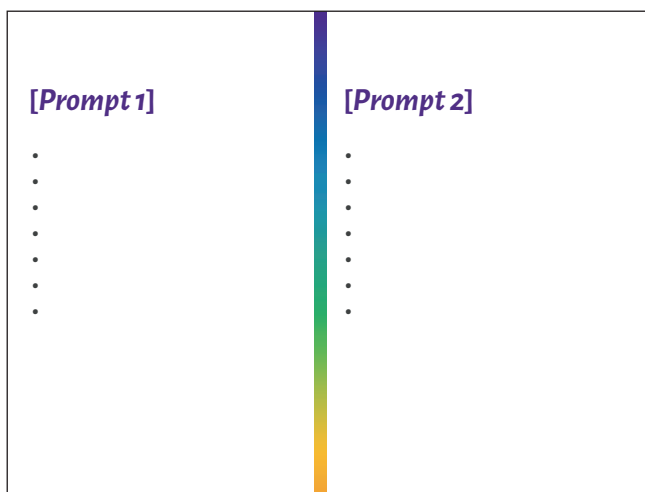
20



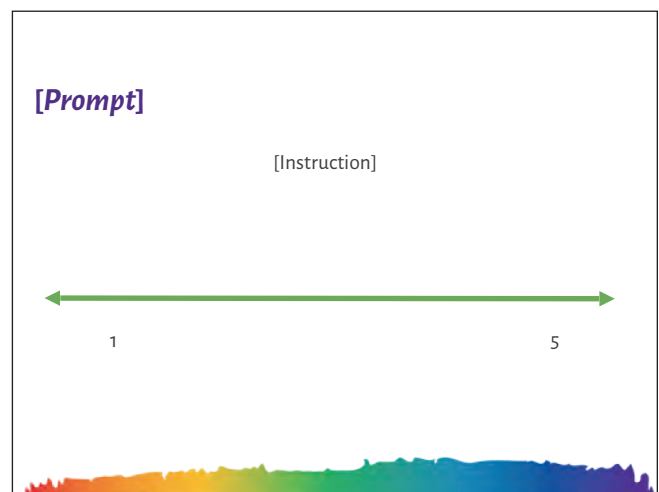
21



22



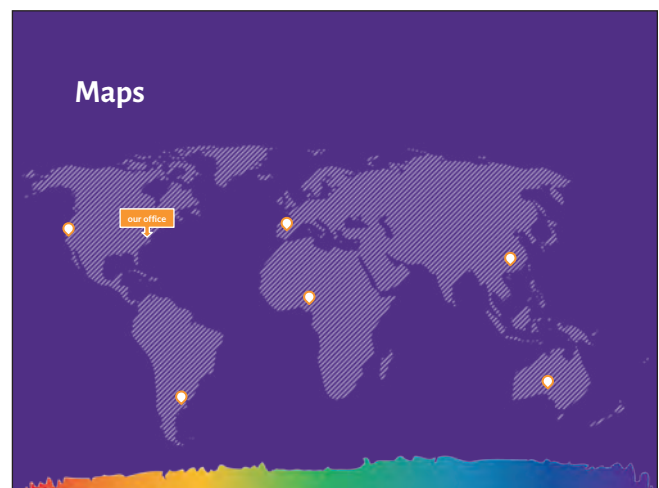
23



24



25



26

Next Meeting

- Next Coaching Session Date
 - March 31st from 6 – 7:30 pm
- Next Training Session Date
 - April 14th from 6 – 8 pm

27

Thanks!

Any questions?

You can find me at:

@username

user@mail.me

28



Acknowledgements

As I've written, people often ask why I use "we" in my books and "Who is we?" "We" is all the people who have been involved with my work: staff, board, advisors, mentors, consultants, interns but most importantly the people in the communities and their grassroots organizations, especially those who have participated in our trainings of trainers. I have learned more from them they have learned from me.

I need to credit everyone I've ever met in my work as an organizer with teaching me all of the things I know. I have learned from amazing mentors who were part of the Civil Rights Movement, Septima Clark and Ron Charity, who first taught me about Voter Registration and Get-Out-the-Vote.

I also want to thank specific folks: all the staff, members and donors of Piedmont Peace Project; all my mentors, especially Cathy Howell, John Wancheck, Chuck Shuford, Si Kahn and many others.

At Spirit in Action, thank you to all my coworkers and the volunteers involved with Circles of Change, Progressive Communicators Network, Kids Rethink New Orleans Schools (The Rethinkers), the Education Network, Standing in Our Power, We the People: Working Together, TAKE 10 and all the organizations I've worked with in eastern North Carolina through Blueprint NC.

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I want to thank all of the donors to my work, especially those who have stayed with me and continued their generosity throughout the last 20-40 years.

I especially thank all the young people who have inspired me and taught me so much, many who are national leaders now.

And I want to thank my family: Angela Barth, my wife, for her unending support, and Anthony, Adam and Amy. All of you who know me know I have to thank my little, fluffy sidekick who is always with me when I travel, train or speak: Shasta. I also wish to thank all my service dog companions who came before her.

An important part of my family are my dear friends, who without their moral support I would not be able to do this work. I want to thank Robbie Kunreuther, Gracie Close, Lynn Holbein, David Rosenmiller, and Loring and Louise Conant as well as all my many other friends who have traveled this journey with me. Thank you for your wisdom and advice.

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Afterwords

I write this as I am preparing to retire from Spirit in Action in 2023 and close the doors of this beloved organization. We started in 2000 with a vision through the year 2020, and we have more than accomplished everything we set out to do. The people we have trained in TAKE 10 have returned to their communities with new ideas, new ways of engaging, new ways of transforming the culture of their organization, city or state.

Our future — the world we want for our children, grandchildren and generations to come — depends on listening, finding the values we all believe in and embracing them together. We can only find these values by engaging in dialogue — not making assumptions but by truly hearing each other. It is elemental communication, people to people contact, not driven by polls or focus groups.

I hope to keep learning from you and hear from people who are doing this work. If you find you are really struggling with an area in this book, be in touch with me at www.lindastout.org. We might help you problem solve or find another resource for your group. The *TAKE 10 Workbook* is a companion to *Building Power to Win*, offering more exercises, deeper dives and meditations on the nature of organizing. Like this book, it is also available online in English and Spanish.

Thank you so much for using this book. *Building Power to Win* will be updated and revised as necessary, so I welcome your stories, experiences and learnings as you do the work. Please contact me at linda@lindastout.org.

Peace, Power and Love,

Linda Stout



The **TAKE10 model** of Civic Engagement is an internationally acclaimed training program for non-partisan organizations, leaders, staff and volunteers. It focuses on issue-based organizing and how to keep volunteers engaged for the long-haul. Spirit in Action's four decades of experience guides organizers through providing trainings that develop your skills to build vision, power and a base of informed, low- and middle-income, multi-racial activists that will impact generation after generation of organizing.



spirit in action

CHANGING THE WAY WE DO CHANGE

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