

BUILDING BRIDGES FOR AMERICA



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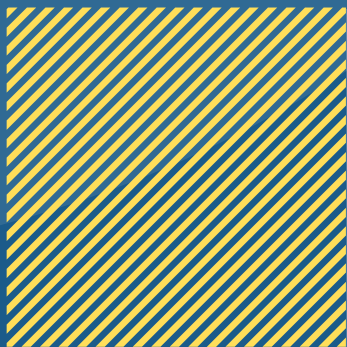
**How to be
Politically Active**



Why is this important?

THE POWER YOU SEEK IS WITHIN YOU RIGHT NOW. BUT **ONLY THOSE WHO SPEAK WILL BE HEARD.** THIS WORKBOOK WILL HELP YOU FIND YOUR VOICE.

POLITICS IS HOW WE WORK TOGETHER. AND **ONLY WHEN WE WORK TOGETHER WE CAN MAKE THE SYSTEMS WORK FOR US.** THIS WORKBOOK WILL HELP YOU WORK TOGETHER.



LISTENING AND TALKING WITH PEOPLE YOU KNOW IS **YOUR SUPERPOWER.**



YOUR MAGIC IS KEEPING TRACK OF WHO YOU'VE TALK WITH AND THEIR LEVEL OF SUPPORT. THEN EMPOWER YOURSELF AND THOSE ON YOUR LIST BY SHARING YOUR DATA WITH THE PARTY OR A CAMPAIGN.

**Local Party
State Party
Campaign**

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Unlock Your Political Power



Picture your phone ringing.

The call is from a candidate reaching out knowing you can deliver votes. Once elected, you call them with an issue in your neighborhood, They see your number and they answer your call.

Picture a loved one in your life who lost faith and did not think politics matters.

Then you talked to them about politics in a way that made them listen. Their eyes lit up with understanding. Now they are volunteering with you on a campaign.

That is your political power. You build that power with your personal story and connections.



Workbook Goals

IDENTIFY YOUR VALUES

Learn how to speak to others by connecting to shared values.

DEVELOPING YOUR STORY

Speaking from personal experience to show that politics matters to you.

ACTIVELY LISTENING

Pick up new habits to create space that allows for understanding.

TALKING WITH YOUR NETWORK

Follow the step-by-step process to identify and build a plan to intentionally talk with people you know.



Sharing Your Story

The best way to convey a progressive message is through personal connections. Using the common language of personal stories will effectively communicate your political feelings to people who are apathetic or who disagree with you. Feel empowered to speak from your heart and encourage others to do the same through active listening. This is the challenge of empathetic people to hold together the fabric of our families, neighborhoods, and the nation.

We share values, we share empathy for people we know, and we all understand personal stories. Our brains form morality, logic, and interpretation of facts differently. You cannot use these differences to make a connection. Focusing on differences will only drive you farther apart. To connect about why you care about an issue, speak to what is most important to you by sharing how politics walks into your home, your family, your wallet, or your body. Share how the issue affects you personally or affects the life of someone you love.



DO NOT USE:
FACTS
LOGIC
MORALITY

USE:
YOUR VALUES
YOUR STORY

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Speaking Your Values and Feelings

Start by sharing how you feel. And state your core values that make you feel that way. People will listen when you first make this personal connection to an issue or policy.

ISSUE

Climate crisis

POLICY

Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act

VALUES

Security

Justice

Compassion

Feelings

Afraid

Frustrated

Hopeful

I feel so frustrated that my car hit standing water on the highway. It is terrifying, The storms are getting worse and the roads are getting worse. For me it is security, our roads should be safe. That is why I am relieved we got the funding to make our roads safer.

**DO NOT
START WITH:
ISSUES
POLICY**

**START WITH:
YOUR VALUES
YOUR FEELINGS**

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What are your core values?

What is important to you? Deep down in your core? That core that drives you is your values.

First, let's distinguish values from issues and policy. Policies enable us to bring those motivating values to life through actions and systems. For example, economic growth for all is an issue, raising the minimum wage is a policy, but what draws you to that issue are your commitments to values, such as justice, equality, freedom, compassion, or resilience.

Dig down and identify and name those values that drive you.

My core values:

**EMPATHY
SERVICE
COMMUNITY
FREEDOM
PROSPERITY
FAIRNESS
TRUST
SECURITY
DEMOCRACY**



Recall a time that you felt one of your values

Describe moments in your life that drew you to care about a specific value. For example, identifying compassion as a core value because your neighbor helped your family when you were a child. Describe how, when, and where you saw and learned compassion. Then name how you act on it today.



An experience that made me care:



Share how that value is reflected in a campaign or cause.

Example: "The historic investments the Biden Administration has made in creating sustainable jobs here in America is great news for my kids as they start their careers in manufacturing. I am so proud to support real progress and change that will give my kids a chance at the success my parent's generation enjoyed."



How a campaign or policy helps me:



Why is it important to you that we act and get involved now?

e.g. We can't go back to falling behind on climate and jobs. We have chance to meet climate and economic goals with a vote to elect Democrats in 2024.

My motivation to act now:



Step

5

Now bring it all your answers together into one 30 second story.

My Story:

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IDENTIFYING YOUR NETWORK



The people you encounter in your everyday life are your network. Do not overthink it, include everyone on your list.

- MAKING A LIST
- IDENTIFYING YOUR NETWORK
- NETWORK TRACKER



Making Your List

USE THE PROMPTS BELOW TO HELP YOU
START TO LIST YOUR NETWORK

THREE PEOPLE YOU
KNOW WILL VOTE

Three empty rounded rectangular boxes for listing names.

THREE PEOPLE YOU
KNOW WILL NOT VOTE
OR ARE NOT REGISTERED

Three empty rounded rectangular boxes for listing names.

THREE PEOPLE
EASIEST TO TALK TO

Three empty rounded rectangular boxes for listing names.

THREE PEOPLE YOU
HAVE NEVER SPOKEN
TO ABOUT POLITICS

Three empty rounded rectangular boxes for listing names.

THE PERSON YOU WISH WOULD SUPPORT YOUR ISSUE

A single empty rectangular box for listing a name.



Starting the Conversation

Last person you spoke to:

Imagine you intentionally made plans to speak with them, and committed to telling them your story in conversation.

Now you are having the conversation. You hold yourself to your commitment and you are ready to tell them your story.

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Light openers



Talking politics does not mean political talk. It means sharing how you feel and understanding others. Start the conversation with either a light or timely question.

I signed up for this organizing class because I feel I need to do more than vote in 2024. How about you? How are you feeling about this election?

I was relieved that the library board rejected the book ban. What do you think about that?

Pick a question that feels right to you.

Your opening question:



THE CONVERSATION



Stay open and listen. You may have to fight your instinct to push back or defend. No matter what they say, be curious and respond with “Tell me more about that.”

Then share your story. Speak about your values and your experience.

Continue to listen and stay open. Make a note of their response. Again, do not react and get defensive, listen and share.

Now change the subject. Talk about something you have in common.

Lastly, make a commitment with yourself to reach out to them again.



THE BEST WAY TO CONNECT AND BE HEARD IS FIRST TO ACTIVELY LISTEN.

AN EFFECTIVE ORGANIZER'S GREATEST SKILL IS TO LISTEN. TO BE HEARD AND UNDERSTOOD FIRST YOU NEED TO OPEN THE DOOR OF UNDERSTANDING. PRACTICE THESE BASIC HABITS AND SKILLS TO SHOW YOU ARE LISTENING AND WATCH AS THE CONVERSATIONS YOU HAVE GROW DEEPER.

AVOID DISTRACTION

Set your intention to listening.
No daydreaming or multi-tasking.
Remove things that might keep you from paying attention.

REFLECT, PARAPHRASE OR CLARIFY

Repeat back what you have heard
“It sounds to me like you are saying...”

PAY ATTENTION

Do not use this time to prepare for a rebuttal. Ignore the divides and listen for the connections.

DO NOT INTERRUPT

Allow the other person to finish what they are saying.

USE DOOR OPENERS

Keep them engaged and talking
“Tell me more”
“That’s interesting”

DO NOT ARGUE

“I can tell you are very upset/frustrated”
“I know that it has been hard for you to change gears”

ACTIVE LISTENING



**REFLECT
AMBIVALENCE**

“So, on the one hand you want ___ and on the other you don’t think you can _____”

**LOOK FOR
COMMON
GROUND**

“Where do you think we could find common ground?”
“We agree on this, what else do we agree on?”

**EXPRESS
YOUR
ATTENTION**

Words and phrases like “Oh”, “I see”, “uh huh” and “hmm” show that you are listening.

**CREATE
DISSONANCE**

“Tell me (describe to me) what your feeling are on _____”
“Can you tell me what is keeping you from supporting ___?”

**SHOW
EMPATHY
FOR THEIR
FEELINGS**

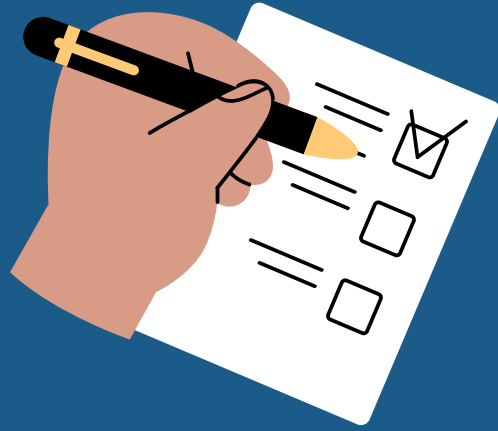
“I am hearing you say that you are frustrated because _____”

WRAP UP

“Thank you for talking with me.”
“I appreciate your opinion and understand your concerns.”



KEEP TRACK



After the conversation, make a note of the person's level of support. Are they all in? Are they still not sure how they feel? Do they support the opposition? All this data is very valuable.

Campaigns spend a lot of time and money to talk with voters and determine their level of support. Your list of people and their level of support is very valuable to a campaign.

Use your power by offering the campaign your list. For smaller campaigns it may be as simple as sharing a paper list of names of supporters. For bigger campaigns, they may have tracking tools like Reach or Rally for you to enter your list.

Your conversations and that list is the greatest way you can help a campaign. And it will empower you and the people on your list, noticed and listened to by candidates, the party, and elected officials.



Next Step

Put your story to work. Build your political power and connect with others who are taking action.

Take the next course in the Power series to build your confidence in talking politics to voters. Prepare yourself for effective conversations when door knocking, tabling, phone banking, and text banking for campaigns.

Conversations that Break Through Workbook



EMAIL

buildingbridges4america@gmail.com

WEBSITE

WWW.BUILDINGBRIDGESFORAMERICA.COM

OTHER AVAILABLE TOOLS

AVAILABLE AT
WWW.BUILDINGBRIDGESFORAMERICA.COM

TEAM SERIES

Build your grassroots team with Grassroots Organizing for Change.. And learn effective messaging with Say This, Not That, And take it to the next level and organizing the people around you with our Local Leaders and Precinct Chair training.

CIVICS SERIES

Know the system to fix the system. Get the basics with Civics 101, then learn to use civics for effective organizing with Civics for Change.

REAL TALK: POP THE DISINFORMATION BUBBLE

Timely sessions to understand how people can believe lies and how to use empathy to break through with the truth.

TEAM RESOURCES

Links and tools of the trade to run a successful grassroots group or campaign.

BUILDING BRIDGES FOR AMERICA LEADERSHIP TEAM



JENNY OKAMOTO

Director Leadership Development, Building Bridges for America

CAZ MARGENAU

Director Leadership Development, Building Bridges for America

TERRY MUMFORD

Associate, Leadership Development, Building Bridges for America