



Building Bridges for America

Unlock Your Political Power Workbook

UNLOCK YOUR POLITICAL POWER

Picture your phone ringing, and it is a candidate calling you knowing you can deliver votes. And when you call a representative to demand action they answer. Also think of a loved one who has lost faith and does not think politics matters. Or they are lost to bad faith politics and big lies. And you are the one to break through to them and watch their eyes light up as you find common ground.

That is your political power. And you build that power through your personal story and connections. You will achieve this with this workbook by:

- Learning to use the common language
- Identifying your core values
- Telling your personal story
- Learning to be an active listener
- Starting real conversations
- Reaching out to your network

TELL 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 progressive political feelings to people 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 this nation.

YOU CANNOT USE

FACTS
LOGIC
MORALITY

YOU CAN USE

YOUR VALUES
YOUR STORY

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, it will only drive you farther apart. To connect about why you care about an issue, speak to your core values by sharing a personal story about how the issue affects you personally or affects the life of someone you love.



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1. WHAT ARE SOME OF YOUR CORE VALUES?

First let's distinguish values from issues and policy and then focus on values. Values are your internal motivations, while policies enable us to bring those motivations 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 different values, such as justice, equality, freedom, compassion, or resilience.

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

Examples of Core Values

Empathy
Service
Community
Freedom
Prosperity
Fairness
Trust
Security
Democracy

My core values:

2. RECALL A TIME THAT REINFORCED ONE OF THE VALUES.

Describe what moments in your life drew you to care about a specific value. For example, if you identify compassion as a core value from seeing it in action in your neighborhood as a child, describe how, when, and where you saw and learned compassion, name how you act on it today and take us to a moment where you saw or heard a democratic leader embody that value.

My experience that made me care:



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3. SHARE HOW THAT VALUE IS REFLECTED IN A CAMPAIGN OR CAUSE.

e.g. The Equality Act gives me the freedom to expand my career and take a job in any state without losing my right to work because I am LGBTQ.

How a campaign or policy helps me:

4. WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO YOU THAT WE ACT AND GET INVOLVED NOW?

e.g. We are at a make or break moment in our country. We do not have decades to wait. The moment compels us to act. We have a chance to get this right.

My motivation to act now:

5. BRING IT ALL TOGETHER AND WRITE YOUR STORY.

My story:



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STARTING THE CONVERSATION

Write the name of the last person you spoke with:

Picture that last person you spoke with.

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

And now you are having the conversation. You hold yourself to your commitment and you are ready to tell them your story. To start, you ask them a question then listen.

You ask them, “Did you hear about The Equality Act?”

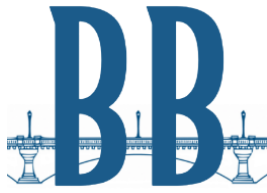
You stay open and listen. Perhaps you have to fight your instinct to push back or defend. No matter what they say, you are curious and you respond with “Tell me more about that.”

And then you share your story. You speak about your values and your experience.

Now you continue to listen and stay open. You make a note of their response. Again, you do not react and get defensive, you listen and share.

And now you change the subject. You talk about something you have in common.

Afterwards, you make another commitment with yourself and plan to reach out to them again.



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ACTIVE LISTENING

Create the space for real conversation through active listening. Practice these skills to encourage people to open up and share and be receptive to your story.

Avoid distraction	Set your intention to listening. No daydreaming or multi-tasking.	Remove things, persons or animals that might keep you from paying attention.
Pay attention	Do not use this time to prepare for a rebuttal.	Words and phrases like “Oh”, “I see”, “uh huh” and “hmm” show that you are listening.
Do not interrupt	Allow the other person to finish what they are saying.	
Use door openers: Keep them engages and talking	“Tell me more” “That’s interesting”	
Reflect, paraphrase, or clarify back what you have heard	“It sounds to me like you are saying...”	Show empathy for their opinions or problems “I am hearing you say that you are frustrated because _____”
Do not argue	“I can tell you are very upset/frustrated”	“I know that it has been hard for you to change gears”
Create dissonance	“Tell me (describe to me) what your feeling are on _____”	“Can you tell me what is keeping you from supporting _____?”
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?”	“Is there one issue here where we do agree?” “We agree on this, what else do we agree on?”
Wrap up	“Thank you for talking with me.”	“I appreciate your opinion and understand your concerns.”



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START A LIST OF YOUR NETWORK

The people you encounter in your everyday life are your network. Do not overthink it, include everyone on your list. The prompts below will help you start to list your network.

Three people you know will vote:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Three people you know who will not vote or may not be registered to vote:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

List the people you find are the easiest to talk to:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

List people you have never spoken to about politics:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

The person you really wish would come around to support your issue:

- 1.

