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December 2015

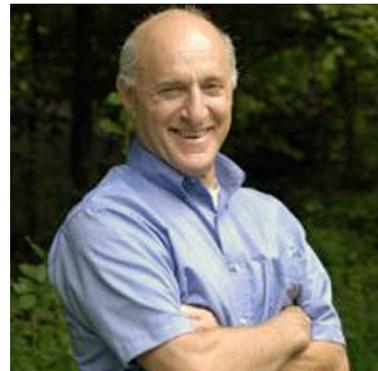
Michael Jacoby Brown
training & coaching

*Helping organizations achieve their goals
through recruiting and motivating others*

Organizer's Edge ▶

Black and Jews

On my "organizer's edge," is an attempt to bring Blacks and Jews together to achieve common social justice goals. One of an organizer's jobs is to get people together to do what they can't do by themselves. This is often the definition I use when asked what organizers do.



Then it gets complicated. Even among people of similar race, class, and political outlook, differences of all sorts will interfere with the unity necessary to achieve a group's goals. Two specific groups in the US, Blacks and Jews, share similar social justice goals. As Milton Himmelfarb, a Jewish sociologist remarked, "Jews earn like Episcopalians and vote like Puerto Ricans."

But joining the power of the two groups for common goals, especially on a local level, presents many obstacles: chief among them is an aspect of "modern racism" that [Visions-Inc](#) founder, Valerie Batts, PhD, calls "avoidance of contact." The avoidance of contact is not so much personal and intentional but rather the result of decades of racial discrimination in housing, jobs and education. The differences

in income, education and assets between Black and Jews, and other white people, are wide. They travel in different universes.

Their experience in America is vastly different. As Letty Cottin Pogrebin describes, "To blacks, America is the nation that enslaved them and continues to deny them opportunities. To Jews, it is a promised land that made good on its promises. Blacks worry that their (bad) situation will never improve....Jews worry our (good) situation will not last..." (see "Blacks and Jews: Different Kinds of Survival ," in *Bridges and Boundaries, African Americans and American Jews*, edited by Jack Salzman, 1992)

Where I live in Boston, like many metropolitan areas, most Blacks and Jews live distant from each other. [Read on..](#)

We want to hear from you, your reactions, ideas, what is at the edge YOUR "envelope." Just go to...

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Michael Jacoby Brown Story

Who else you will hear from.....

We are just starting, but so far you can expect to hear what the following people are thinking:

Jessica Tang: Boston Teachers Union, AFT

George Luse of the Mass Teachers Assn,

Scott Reed with the PICO Network, ,

Cathy Howell, in Oregon and El Salvador, formerly with the AFL-CIO,

Caesar McDowell of the Interaction Institute for Social Justice,

Diana Bell of Community and Labor United,

David Hernandez of the California Education Assn,

Linda Honold, of Wisconsin Voices

Attica Scott, now an elected official in Louisville, KY, formerly with Jobs with Justice,
 Quinn Rallings in Alabama with the PICO Network,
 Bob Van Meter with the Local Initiative Support Corporation in Boston,
 Walter Davis, in Tennessee, of the National Organizers Alliance,
 Deb Askenase, of Community Organizing 2.0,
 Deb Fastino, of the Coalition for Social Justice in New Bedford, MA,
 Rebecca Gutman, with SEIU-1199,
 Tim Dean, of SEIU-1199,
 Claudia Horwitz, of Stone Circles in North Carolina,
 Mary Ochs, long time organizer in Los Angeles
 and others, hopefully, including YOU

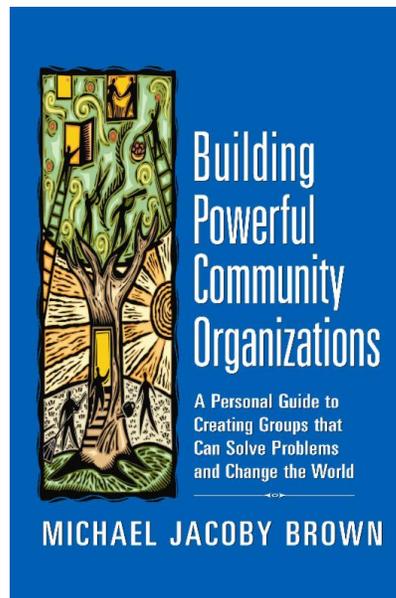
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