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Michael Jacoby Brown
training & coaching

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

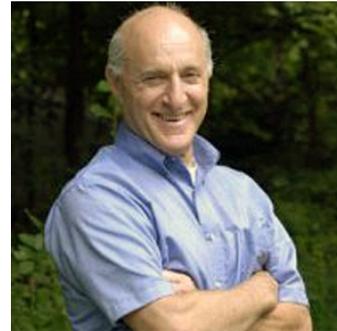
Organizer's Edge ▶

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From Michael Jacoby Brown

"It is not what Mr. Charlie does to you every day that keeps you down..."

Fifty years ago I watched on TV the scene of the Black voting right marchers beaten on the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma, Alabama. I thought, 'Hey that is like what the Nazis did to my relatives in Europe' and decided to go to Alabama. I was 17 and got on a bus in Port Authority, New York to Montgomery, with Terry Koch, a friend from high school. We stayed for several days, sleeping on the floor of a church in Montgomery, and marched with thousands of others to the Alabama State Capitol. At the end of the march I remember vividly that one of the speakers said, *"It is not what Mr. Charlie does to you every day that keeps you down, but what he has said to you over and over again so it runs like a recording in your head and you keep yourself down!"* A light went off in my head. I felt like that -- (what I later called "internalized oppression") as a Jew - and to this day, I understand how complicated and difficult this makes organizing for justice. So many, including myself, have these thoughts and feelings "that run like a recording in our head" and we keep *ourselves* down. Fifty years later, the wisdom of that speaker in Montgomery still rings true.



Diane Nash after her talk at the Selma Convention Center

Moving Beyond: "I don't like that."

I was lucky enough to hear **Diane Nash**, one of the leaders of the Civil Rights Movement, speak in Selma, Alabama, during the 50th anniversary celebration of the Selma to Montgomery March. In her brief talk, she

calmly explained the difference between a protest and a "non-violent campaign". She said today, many groups working for social and racial justice are protesting policies they don't like. But, she indicated, that is about all they are doing. They are saying, "We don't like that." But, she added, a non-violent campaign, like the



Selma to Montgomery March, had a specific goal: voting rights for Black people in the South. She said for real change to happen, it is important to have a goal, and to have it *written down*, so what you want to accomplish is clear. She was challenging some of today's protest movements to be more strategic and specific about their goals -- not merely to protest what they don't like. She added that when she started, "we had four and half months of training." How many of the protest movements today have that level of training

She was gentle but direct in her criticism. Her tone was more teacher than critic and it was about the best training talk about what community organizing is that I have heard in a long time.

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

MichaelJacobyBrown.com/Contact

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

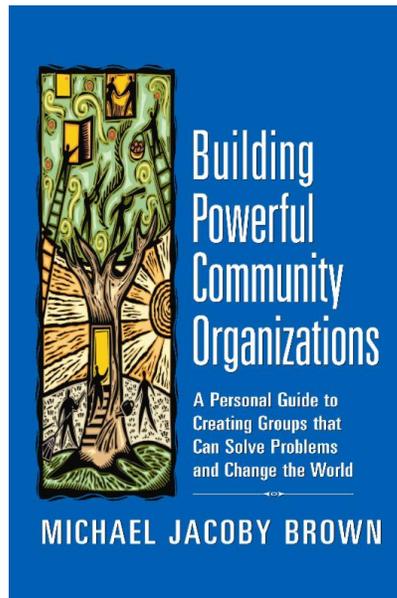
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Michael Jacoby Brown Training and Coaching | mjbrown246@gmail.com | <http://www.michaeljacobybrown.com>
10 Brattle Terrace | Arlington, MA 02474