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May 2016

**Michael Jacoby Brown**  
training & coaching

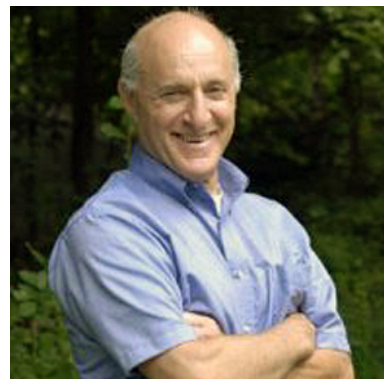
*Helping organizations achieve their goals  
through recruiting and motivating others*

## Organizer's Edge

### ***Fund Raising: Relationships, Networks and Listening***

The interview with a major donor (below) demonstrates how similar fund-raising is to organizing.

If we only "sell" our organization to a potential leader or funder, (most often by talking too much!) (instead of asking "what piques their interest," we are missing an opportunity to learn what really interests the potential leader or funder enough to increase his/her commitment or gift. Good organizers don't "sell" their organization, but rather listen for self-interest. We can do this with potential funders as well.



If fear or class differences make it difficult to develop a relationship with a potential funder, read below to learn how important those relationships are - just as they are with other members and leaders.

The interview also highlights how important networks are when raising money. People who give away money (see below) trust others they know who give away *their* money. If a donor who likes your work, ask to meet her friends, or host a house party and invite their networks.

And remember, that YOUR organization might NOT be on the top of the hit parade of every potential donor (or leader) you meet. But listen. Learn what is, and don't be shy about referring them to other organizations you respect that *are* on the top of *their* hit parade. The favor just might come back to help you.

### **Lessons Learned About Giving Away Money**

In pursuit of our theme of how we fund social justice organizing, I interviewed someone who gives away well over a million dollars each

year. (He did not want his name used.)

His comments follow:

"I don't have a defined decision-making process. There are many reasons I give away money. I have some major commitments: They are: Israel, social justice, education and, to a lesser extent, medical.

**Relationships** matter very very deeply - both with people who are heading up the group I am funding --but also with my peers. I know some people well who give away money. When I hear what they have done, my ears perk up when I know they have done their home-work. There are others who have given to something that is important to me because I have asked them and they know it matters a lot to me.

Relationships matter a lot, although when the numbers go very high, I don't give large amounts unless it is something I am very interested in. I don't give \$100,000, for example, unless it really matters to me.

**Leadership** in the organizations I fund matters too. One exceptional leader I know has done well because of several elements: people trust him. They trust him to have the overall health of the community in mind. They know him to be innovative and not so concerned with his own ego. He also spends a lot of time listening.

I often ask others I respect to see what they think is important. I also look at how the organization spends its money. And what are the results.

**Measurement:** I think a lot of philanthropists have gone over-board about measuring results. There are a lot of things that can not necessarily be measured. Sometimes it's high risk investing, and not everything you invest in will succeed. If you only invest in success, what happens to innovation?

In deciding what to fund, I do better with person to person meetings. I think it is really hard to make the right charitable decisions based on a written proposal.

I think it is important for anyone who wants to ask for money to ask: **What can I do to pique your interest? Try to engage them in a dialogue.** Ask them: How can I get to know you a little better?

## Feedback Welcome

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,

**Attica Scott**, running for State Rep in in Louisville,

**Bob Van Meter** with the Local Initiative Support Corporation in Boston,

**Walter Davis**, of the Tennessee, Health Care Coalition.

**Debra 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,

**Mary Ochs**, long time organizer in Los Angeles  
and others, hopefully, including YOU

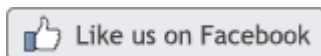
### **Other Useful Links**

<http://michaeljacobybrown.com/>

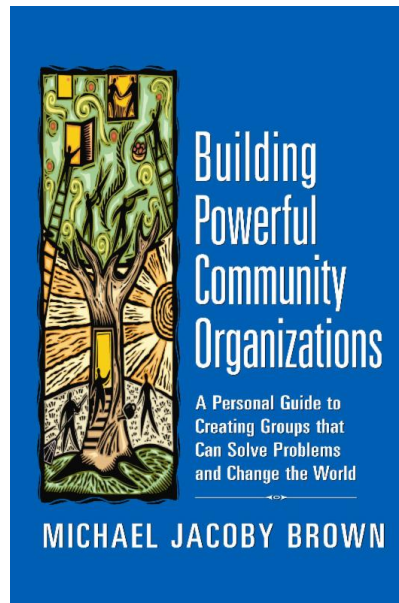
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