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May 2017

Michael Jacoby Brown
training & coaching

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

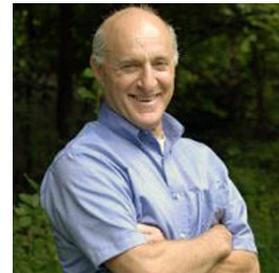
Organizer's Edge

The "Enemy" and Us

When I was little, my mother (may her memory be a blessing) showed me a Pogo cartoon.



It showed Pogo amid garbage saying, "We have met the enemy and he is us." Over the last 40 years I have been learning in how many ways this is true.



We try to change the world for the better and often screw up by mistreating each other, as well as ourselves. Our own hurts, trauma, hang-ups, world views, lack of security, competition, racism, sexism, homo-phobia and all the other ills that flesh is heir to get in our way and we often end up alienating those

we should be allied with.

We **could** take the time, (and it does take time), to set up the inter-personal processes that allow us to be more cooperative. But few organizations take the time and allocate the money to learn how to do this. We are too busy getting our "work" done - while these internal dynamics often weaken our organizations more than anything our enemies can cook up. I have observed this repeatedly over 40 years. Our rush to "get things done" and ignore the process weakens our power. This is another way, "we have met the enemy and it is us."

Lately, The Movement Strategy Center in Oakland, CA has written a report called **Love with Power: Practicing Transformation for Social Justice**. It points to a better way to do our organizing work. See [Love With Power](#)

There is lots of good news in this report about organizations that are using processes to foster love, community, a positive vision and organizational and personal power. I especially liked the story of the Wal-Mart workers -- how they saved the life of one worker who had a stroke and nevertheless was discharged from a hospital. Although I found some prescriptions too abstract to follow in practice, I loved their focus and direction. We need power with love, now more than ever.

The organizations they describe are mostly women's organizations. Maybe women have to do this work without men. Organizations have to work in a way that makes sense for their members, in the place and power (or lack of it) they have now. However, I think if the idea of Love with Power is going to get the power and traction to win the transformation they seek, they will need to involve men. The groups they describe and people they interviewed for the report are almost all young women (under 40.)

I would hope to include an inter-generational focus. (As always, your feedback if welcome and needed!)

Our understanding of our history guides and can limit our present work.

As Larry Kleinman has said, *"The thoughts and feelings that drive or impair, even paralyze our work flow from our understanding or misunderstanding of what came before. How we measure our accomplishments and our defeats-or how we fail to do so-materially affects us and our future work. Our judgments, both explicit and subconscious, shape our morale, energy, resolve, decisiveness, confidence and our sense of direction. For those who have no control, no options, and no hope of attaining either, measuring only adds insult to that injury."* (See: page 78 in the following report) [Story of Radio Movimiento](#)

I recommend this and other of his writings.

Larry Kleinman is organizing meetings of **Movement Elders**. Hopefully this will lead to more inter-generational work and better understanding and use of our history. I plan to attend one on June 14 in Boston. Stay tuned.

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, State Rep Louisville, Kentucky

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

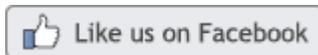
Other Useful Links

<http://michaeljacobybrown.com/>

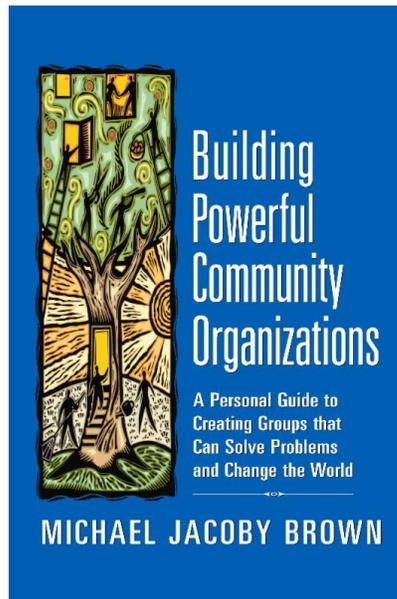
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