

SHARE:

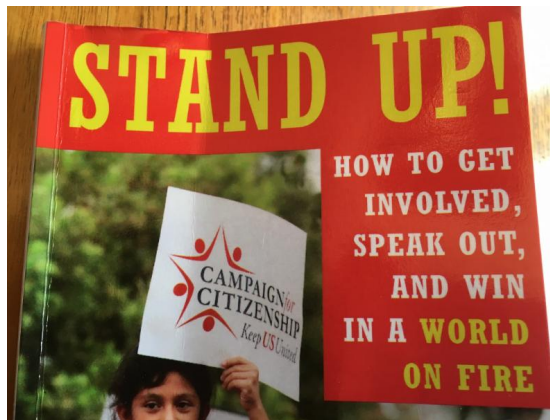
[Join Our Email List](#)

November 2017

Michael Jacoby Brown
training & coaching

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

Organizer's Edge ►



Stand UP! How to Get Involved, Speak Out, and Win in a World on Fire, [a new book](#) by **Gordon Whitman**

is a readable guide to developing the power to change the world. Whitman outlines five "conversations." The first is with yourself: "Preparing emotionally for the fight of your life," then, "Building relationships: moving people to action." Third, "Finding a home base in a movement for change," fourth: "recruiting a following you need to lead," and fifth: "Power - winning social change."

Race and Racism

This book is especially important because it is one of the very few books by white organizers that emphasize the strategic importance of confronting racism.

As Whitman reflects on one campaign:

"In hindsight, I can see that our inability to create space for a direct conversation about racism and racial anxiety - felt but not always spoken - made it harder to unify the parish. It limited what we were able to accomplish...We focused on symptoms not causes. Not having the language and space to talk frankly about race and racism held us back from confronting how the neighborhood was being abandoned...My ability to choose whether or not to talk about race and racism was part of the

privilege attached to being White in American society. This privilege is toxic to making progress on social justice."

Building Trust Face to Face

Whitman also emphasizes the importance of building trust and honest face to face relationships among an organization's members.

"The larger the institution or movement, the greater the need for small spaces in which people can connect... That's why face-to-face chapters, small groups and teams are the building blocks of mass social movements."

His advice to readers (and organizations!) is well taken.

"If you're part of an organization that treats you as a means to some other end, that asks you to do small tasks without involving you in strategy, that isn't speaking to your soul, then you need to change the culture of the organization or look for or create another home for your social change work. A simple test is whether you are on a real team that meets regularly. Be truthful! Here are other measures: Are you learning something new about yourself? Are you having experiences that tap into strong emotions? Are you bringing new people off the sidelines and building high-trust relationships with them? These questions will help you figure out if you're on track or not."

..."if you're looking for a way to plug in, perhaps by getting off the internet and into face-to-face organizing, then you need to find or build an organization that will ask enough of you to make it worth your while. Not enough organizations are structured around regularly meeting small groups, let alone bring people together across race, class and other differences; engage in strategic campaigns; and invest in the growth and development of their members."

Whitman's emphasis on race, building trust thru face to face relationships and attention to the whole person is a most welcome addition to the organizing literature. Buy it, read it, and follow his advice: you and our social change organizations will in much better shape.

Feedback Welcome

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

[Visit Our Website!](#)



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,

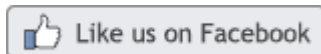
Mary Ochs, long time organizer in Los Angeles
and others, hopefully, including YOU

Other Useful Links

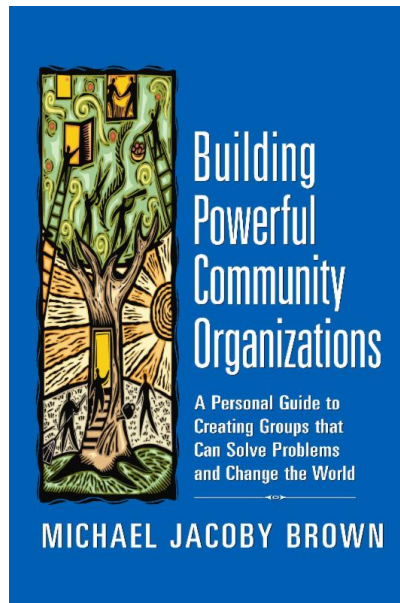
<http://michaeljacobybrown.com/>

[Road Map Consulting](#)

[Visions-Inc](#)



[Buy my book](#)



ading

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