

July 2018

Michael Jacoby Brown
training & coaching

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

Organizer's Edge ▶

Organizing and Spirituality

Editor's Note I hope you will take the time to read thru Dan Gelbtuch's article about his journey in organizing from a more traditional and transactional approach to exploring how spirituality, awareness of race, privilege, story and long held beliefs and organizational and political structures need to change, including how work with the PICO Network, now [Faith in Action](#), and [Momentum](#) training, changed his perspective.



Spirituality & Community Organizing

SPIRITUALITY & COMMUNITY ORGANIZING

NO SMALL PROJECT

BY DANIEL GELBTUCH

“This effort is no small project...Can we stop focusing simply on transactional moves we see as winnable and start working for the transformation of the institutions that perpetuate suffering? Can we speak to people's deepest needs—to feel a sense of connection, to feel love? Can we realize that working for the elimination of social suffering is an integral part of any spiritual project? Can we have a discussion about values that is grounded in hope and acknowledgement of our connected being? I believe we can, and I believe we must, if we are to heal the self and have a future at all.”

— JOHN A. POWELL, RACING TO JUSTICE

In this moment of disruptive change in our political environment I see both hope and real possibility to integrate traditional community organizing, social movement theory, and spiritual practices in order to bring our whole selves to the work of transforming systems and structures that oppress people and prevent them from realizing and sharing their gifts.

Through my experience of organizing in Massachusetts over the past ten years,

I have come to sense a widespread and growing feeling that the way we organize and fight for justice needs to change and is in the process of changing. Our historical and current model remains largely transactional, largely head-centered, and largely focused on singular policy changes that are not powerful enough to meet the challenges and possibilities of this moment. This moment in our collective story calls for more expansive vision and a more hopeful sense of what is possible for social change. We need an organizing model that is bolder and more courageous than what we currently have.

[READ ON...](#)

Feedback Welcome

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

[Visit Our Website!](#)



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

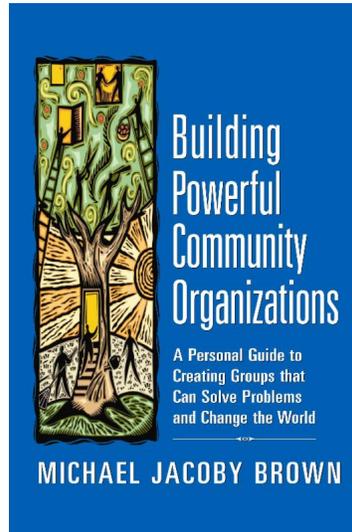
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