Lisa Fithian’s Notes on the Building Blocks for Change: Power, Fear, Oppression, Interest, Strategy, Campaigns, Actions, Organizing and Leadership

People Organize because of Solutions not because of Problems.

They Bitch, Moan and Complain about Problems, but ORGANIZE because they believe or know or see or FEEL that there is a better way….

To organize we must be able to tell a story that:
- Is Credible
- Has a plan
- Can succeed
- Understands why people obey – habit, fear

The primary role of an organizer is to create a container in which people can:
- Experience and move through their fear and act with courage
- Experience and build their power and make change

These are different sides of the same coin and the process for each is integral to the other.

Organizers help move people through a process from indifference or powerlessness or rage or victimization into a clear identification of the problem and then a generation of ideas for the solutions… Getting people to identify their vision for the future and then developing a realistic plan to get there using simple achievable steps can make all the difference.

There are several models of organizing - depending on if you are working with labor, the community, nonprofits or grassroots groups. I have learned that none are right or wrong but all have advantages and disadvantages. You need to work within the community you find yourself and then build the culture you desire. It also helps to be really clear on your goals, however some models may be more effective than others.

POWER: What is it? How does it work?

It is the ability to act.

The ability to consciously manifest outcomes

Power is not good or bad. It is how you use it and toward what end.

Power unchecked or unaccountable can corrupt – it can also reveal…

Power is not a zero sum – there is not a limited amount.

Power is not set it is relational. People power has the ability to alter the relationship

Exercising our power consciously can manifest the outcomes we desire.

There are different kinds of power:
- Power Over – that’s what the boss or state use
- Power With – horizontal organizing, that what we need to model and build
- Power Within – every single one of us has power to act. For some this is also spirit – a willingness to be fully alive, present and participating as an agent of change.
- Power Under – when we give up the power that we have, when we say we can’t instead of won’t.
Source of Identified Power

- Authority or Legitimacy
- Human Resources
- Material Resources
- Skills and Knowledge
- Psychological Factors
- Sanctions
- Privilege

What kind of power do we need?
- Organized people ➔ collectives, unions, coalitions, cooperatives
- Organized money ➔ pooling funds, dues etc - collectively we have more
- Organized actions/votes ➔ political power to persuade, convince, coerce just action

We live in a culture or world of Power Over…. No matter where you look ---in workplaces, communities, states or nations – the power dynamics are the same. We look to those people with money or political power or some other authority – mother, father, priest, teacher, doctor, and newscaster etc to tell us what to do. The power of the people relies on our collective spirit and many people taking collective action toward the same goal. It is by nature decentralized and horizontal.

Right now we don’t have enough power to create the kind of world we want and the State does lots of things to insure we don’t get it.

Once we begin to understand how power works, we can learn how to organize to build more….

The State (Boss) is able to maintain itself because we let them.

“All those who govern derive their power from the consent of the governed.”

We cooperate, we go along…why…because we are afraid of what will happen if we don’t. The State (or Boss) in subtle and not so subtle ways will show by example what the cost can be if you don’t go along. In the workplace the ultimate punishment is often firing a worker, but outside the workplace people have been killed as a result of their struggle for justice.

It is not the punishment that keeps us obedient it is the fear of punishment.

But obedience is not inevitable. We must organize in ways that overcome fear, apathy and neutrality. We do this by taking one step at a time, building support around each other and escalating to the next step.

We do this by giving our opponent the opportunity to do the right thing and when they don’t, we escalate again and again until we have won or completely withdrawn our cooperation.

To make withdrawing our cooperation possible, we must understand the consequences of our actions. If we are willing to assume the consequence, there is nothing they can do to stop us.

So we see that in this paradigm, we begin to take our power back when we refuse to go along, when we no longer cooperate with the injustice. This is a choice.
When we see power as an exercise of choices, we begin to see that every day, every moment gives us an opportunity to exercise our power and that our choices become opportunities to either liberate or oppress.

When people cross lines that typically divide, they generate power, power that builds spirit and trust and conscious organizing.

That is one of the greatest challenges of an organizer - how to bring diverse communities into respectful relationship with one another, where using or losing privilege strategically can equalize power and spread access to resources to those who have the least, where those most impacted have the greatest voice.

**Exercise on Power.**

This exercise helps people deepen their analysis of the society they are living in. You want to lead them through a process that starts by asking people why they are active, what they want, why they came. Solicit this; see if anyone says to build power. If not, after harvesting some reasons from the group, ask if anyone is doing it to build power?

I believe that building power is really at the core of our work if we want to manifest all the things people articulated as to why they are active.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Money</th>
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<tr>
<td>State: Government, elected, media</td>
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<td>People</td>
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The people have power and potential power. But ultimately it is based on our numbers and our willingness to not cooperate in their unjust systems.

The “State” and the people who control the money do a lot of things to keep us from getting the power we need to manifest the world we want.

What do they do? Brainstorm a list – really work it. You will get all kinds of stuff, but make sure you also get drugs, TV, malls, consumerism, liquor stores, prison, and bad food on the list.

The goal of this exercise is to see that everything in our society is set up to keep people from getting the power they need to manifest the world they want.

Once we understand this, it is also easy to understand why it is so hard for people to speak up, organize and resist. It also teaches us some about why we have to start where people are.

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**Exercise:**

**Radical Thing!**

This exercise is a small group process that is good for a group that has some pre-existing relationships.

Get people in groups of the three and have them go one at a time talking about the most radical thing they have ever done. This could be anything, not just actions (add examples??).

After people have completed that process and shared back some of what they learned to the larger group, the facilitator can then ask how people felt in that process. Share these answers in the same small groups. Often what emerges is fear, courage and liberation. It is an opportunity for people to experience a sense of their power.
Those interested in power over utilize a variety of tools. Five master suppression techniques or forms of Dominations that have been identified by Berit Ås a professor of Social Psychology at the University of Oslo are:

- Making Invisible
- Ridiculing
- Withholding Information
- Damned If You Do And Damned If You Don’t
- Heaping Blame and Putting to Shame

These tools of the master are used to break one’s spirit, to disempower, to confuse, to divide, to immobilize. These tactics are another assault on our humanity already laid bare through the devastating affects of institutional racism, patriarchy, classism and heterosexism.

Those more privileged go around with an inflated sense of self, believing that they deserve all they have because, at some level, they feel they are superior. Those who do not fit into the mainstream cultural paradigm go around in a state of deflation; carrying a sense of internal inferiority, where at some unconscious level they don’t believe they could ever succeed. Those who work to be conscious can see that these unjust institution and practices can be undone through understanding history, developing a deeper analysis, strategic use of privilege, organizing, leadership development, mutual aid/shared resources, solidarity and respect.

Fear

“Where there is fear – there is power”  

Starhawk

Fear is “expectation with alarm”

Fear is a normal, instinctive response to a perceived threat – fight or flight are the two instinctive responses

Fear is largely based on pondering a possible future or the what-if’s of the past, whereas the power to make change is in the present.

Fear is often a little voice inside you head that wants you to avoid things that are uncomfortable – confrontation, speaking in public etc. That little voice can create monsters in your imaginations

Fear has a physiological base. There are chemicals in our head that stimulate three primary fear reactions – crying, freezing or aggressive response. Fear can lead to panic, which is not knowing what to do when you are afraid. Typically when afraid the adrenals kick in, boosting the fuel, increasing heart and respiratory rate. This can give you amazing strength but can also make it harder to think in the moment if you are not experienced or prepared for the situation.

One of the most difficult aspects of fear is the anticipation of what will happen – we often stop what we are doing as soon as we start to get afraid. When we push boundaries, fear can get worse and worse, more intense till we think we are going to die. The truth is that part of you needs to die in order for you to move beyond this fear – that part yelling in your ear, that feels you need it to survive.

We cling to things the way they are so we don’t have to change into who we’d be without it. The truth is you can’t know until you go through it and understand that your fear is not keeping you safe. The real obstacle is understanding that fear is often you fighting yourself to avoid changing into your future self.
You can run away from the thing that scares you or you can empower yourself in your relationship to that object or source of fear.

If we can express what we are afraid of – we have taken the first step to moving through it. We choose to deal with the elephant in the room…if we don’t express it, it becomes a ghost – present but unseen, unknown, lurking, haunting us and our work.

One way to deal with fear is to take the object of it and break the big problems down to little manageable steps and make it a habit of dealing with these little problems one at a time in the present.

Organizers need to create a space for people to feel comfortable, safe and included. A space where people can reveal their fear and deal with the real story of what is going on…

Exercise:
One easy exercise is to put people in groups or pairs to talk about Hopes and Fears around a particular action, situation etc – then report back and see who else has the same fears. You can do this by simply asking for a show of hands of who has the same fears.

Some steps to working with fear:
- Notice it – express it, make it visible
- Explore it – what is real, what is imaginary
- Ask “Dumb” Questions – so what if that happens?
- Make it huge – what is the worst that can happen, then what, agitate to anger
- Make a plan to deal with it – motivate
  Break it into with simple, small steps
  Identify what support is needed
- Get Commitment – easy, immediate, short-term tasks – focus on action to take
- Provide Support – build confidence
- Follow-up, Debrief, Learn

In strategic nonviolent conflict we want to keep our wits about us and our fear at bay. To put us in the best position to address our fear is to do good strategic planning and organizing that builds confidence. From our confidence we can access our courage. Courage is not the lack of fear; it is the willingness to take action despite it.
Creating Liberation

“I have come to see that violence against other living things is oppression, just as I have come to see that oppression is violence”.

Oppression is when anyone regardless of their race, gender, class, age etc imposes their will against another through acts that are harmful–physically, emotionally, mentally, spiritually. This also plays out at a societal level where institutions use their power to exploit, deceive, enslave or imprison. To me all of these are an abuse of power.

Recognizing our own oppressive behaviors and the oppressive behaviors in our community institutions is an important first step in developing into healthy, freer individuals and communities. Developing practices that liberate can build strong and powerful communities. Working toward the greater good, having a generosity of spirit and using timely and clear communication while restraining those parts of ourselves that want to act out or behave badly is key. It means developing an internal discipline, where we don’t give those parts of ourselves that are mean, angry, rageful, resentful, racist etc. permission to act out. It is about becoming aware of them and taking responsibility for holding those parts of us accountable to our values and visions. (As an aside, it is those parts of ourselves, those shadow parts, that make us most vulnerable to infiltration, co opting and discord.)

As we develop personal practices rooted in a healthy use of our power, we can begin to undo the cultural programming or socialization that makes us racist, sexist, homophobic etc. As we dismantle this internally, within ourselves, our families and our communities, we undermine the oppressive systems and structures in our society. These structural forms of oppression whether it is physical, emotional, mental or spiritual, have created a society riddled with unjust institutions and amazing amounts of violence against women, people of color, elderly, queer and trans, and children.

There are also an amazing amount of really privileged people in our communities, country and world. Privilege is not good or bad it is how you use it. It is all around us. but it is often invisible to those who have it. We are socialized into believing certain things about ourselves and others. If you are white or male or straight or rich you are told you are desirable, important, special, superior. If you are a woman, a person of color, queer or poor – you are taught that you are less than, not important, inferior, that it is impossible for you to succeed. This is really powerful stuff and it runs deep in our culture. It is a cornerstone really. We can undo this by becoming conscious of these beliefs and practices and then by using our privilege strategically with those who are oppressed to be in solidarity with actions they are taking own behalf.

Strategic Use of Privilege is something I’ve been learning from the People’s Institute for Survival and Beyond and from my friend George Friday. She is the one who really helped me understand this. The following is based on my notes from one of her talks.

- **Work in Community** – must have a community context. everyone gets to participate, it’s everyone’s and we all have a role.

- **Build relationships** – it takes work, time and honesty. We must develop an everyday practice learning how to ask for what you want, even if the answer is no.

- **Focus on the Root Causes** – racism, capitalism, misogyny Deal with sexual identity, class, ethnicity, faith right up front, get it over with Figure it out quickly to know how to help support each others needs.
**Strategic Use of Privilege** is an easy way to build our movement and honest relationships.

- If I have more privilege – it is up to me to dismantle it or use it. How can I use it?
- If I am in the room with gay person, it is my job speak in favor of each person having the right to love and wed whom they choose.
- If am more educated, then I must translate, breakdown, or insure that everyone can understand what is going on.
- If I am a man, I need to support women’s leadership, etc

**Stay In It** - means we will screw up, so get that over with to, so go ahead and get it out front. We will offend each so do it, say it and take responsibility of it.

**Be Easy On Yourself!** This is life work, meaning strategic Use of Privilege is for the Rest of Your Life, so no need to beat yourself up.

It is also helpful to understand some of the masters tools that keep us divided and down.

**Forms of Domination**

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Those who work to be conscious can see that these unjust institution and practices can be undone through understanding history, developing a deeper analysis, strategic use of privilege, organizing, leadership development, mutual aid/shared resources, solidarity and respect.
**SELF- INTEREST**

Something that benefits the person or group or institution or community. Self-interest is a way to cross boundaries.

- Not everyone has the same interests and our interests change over time
- We need to identify our interests and our opponent’s interests.
- Our problems are usually a result of our opponents’, interests.
- The process of achieving a solution to our problems is by making our problems their problems, or said another way, making our interests their interests.

To do this we need to build an organization that has the power to act.

In the workplace or community we have a problem that is not being addressed…

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PROBLEM</th>
<th>SOLUTION</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. They don't know about our problems</td>
<td>- Inform Them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Bad/Incompetent Managers/Leaders</td>
<td>- Change managers/train them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. It's in the companies/gov interest to have</td>
<td>- Change their interests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>these problems</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Typically….

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Their Interests</th>
<th>Our Interests</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Money</td>
<td>Higher Wages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Image</td>
<td>Respect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doing Business</td>
<td>Job Security</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Their Interests</th>
<th>We Can</th>
<th>Our Interests</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Money</td>
<td>➔ Cost Money</td>
<td>➔ Higher Wages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Image</td>
<td>➔ Tarnish/Destroy Image</td>
<td>➔ Respect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doing Business</td>
<td>➔ Disrupt Business</td>
<td>➔ Job Security</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

We need to have an organization that has the power to make our interest their interests. It can have: Organized people, Organized money and Organized actions.

In the Saul Alinsky model of interest based organizing – there are no permanent allies, no permanent enemies. He worked to bring worker and community interests together.

______________________________
**STRATEGY** = Plan (a way to win) = Take what you have and turn it into what you need.

Strategy is the choice of ground in which you choose to engage the enemy

In ancient Greece...
Strategos = General G
Tacticas = Foot Soldier X X X X

Strategy means:
Looking at the big picture
Knowing who has the power to make the decision.
Concentrating the right resources in the right place(s) at the right time(s)....

Strategic campaigns are an important part of building a movement. They focus our energy on the forces that need to be changed, and can often result in some victory (big or small) or mitigation of damage. These efforts require participation and creativity. As we build power through campaigns, we model what can happen when we work together inspiring others and igniting imaginations that feed more and more organizing. The momentum of success attracts people who in general want to be aligned with those they believe have power. When we organize campaigns we build momentum and power.

Over the generations, people power movements have effectively used the concept of “Pillars of Support” to understand the institutions/forces that prop up unjust systems/power structures. From a strategic point of view, if you can erode or remove those pillars, those unjust rulers/state will not be able to continue. The art of this process is to pull support away from the pillar, which means persuading those people inside that institution/pillar to leave, stop or change their behavior.

**Strategic Planning Methodologies**

- **Identify Problem** – assumptions, facts, root, source, stories, get clear

- **Establish Strategic Objective or Goal aka...the SOLUTION or Remedy**

- **Assess Resource and Situation** – look at all factors in your world and your opponents’ world

  Know Your Opponent – strengths, weaknesses, history, interests, resources, plans, VULNERABILITIES

  Know Your Supporters - strengths, weaknesses, history, interests, resources, plans

  Map your allies and political environment, Vulnerabilities

  Web Analysis of Opponent – look for opportunities for leverage, what we can bring new into the situation or relationship that is either a carrot or a stick...Focus more in there capabilities than intentions. Intention change, but what can they really do?

- **Public Participation** – get people participating in small easy steps first that build success and confidence and keeps people in motion.

- **Dilemma Actions** – actions, which cause your opponent to look bad if they try to stop what you are doing. They must either allow an action to continue, meet the demand or act in a way that may lose them their allies and/or credibility.

- **Containment** – we need to be mindful of our own internal problems, weakness, vulnerabilities, abuses lies, corruption, violence in leadership, etc. Certain levels of violence/corruption/oppression will destroy movements internally and externally.
PREPARATION

Tool 1:

Web Analysis – is a tool to begin mapping your opponent’s world. Who do they care about? Who are they accountable to? What is the nature of the relationship?

1. Each Circle represents one of the players in your opponent’s world.
   - Workers
   - Management
   - Public
   - Customers
   - Competitors
   - Regulatory Agencies
   - Governmental Bodies
   - Legal Entities
   - Divisions
   - Media
   - ETC

2. Each Arrow represents a relationship.

What can we bring into this relationship that is new? We need to look for opportunities to

3. This can also be looked at as a “Web of Restraint.” If your opponent is engaging in negative, illegal or unethical activity informing or making it visible to some of the more important players may help restrain the negative action.

   INTERRUPT or INTERVENE or ADD NEW INFORMATION in that relationship. It might be a “carrot” (positive incentive) or a “stick” (negative incentive).
### Tool 2: Power Mapping

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Public Influences</th>
<th>VIP Influences</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Media</td>
<td>Experts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Public</td>
<td>Elected Officials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voters</td>
<td>Special Interests Groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specific Region or Group</td>
<td>Government Agencies</td>
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<tr>
<td>Organizational Affiliations</td>
<td>Important Businesses</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Personal Influences</th>
<th>Financial Influences</th>
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<tr>
<td>Family</td>
<td>Campaign Contributions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Friends</td>
<td>Investors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church</td>
<td>Consumers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inner Circle</td>
<td>Competitors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Future Ambitions</td>
<td></td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Decision-Maker Name</th>
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1. Who has the power to decide? Put them in the center
2. Who are the less powerful players that influence decision maker? Write their names down in the appropriate category
3. Who of these have the most influence? Circle them
4. Who do we have access to? Star them
5. Look over list – whom do we know that has access to and can influence those identified or the decision-maker directly?
### Tool 3: Power and Interest Chart

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Allies</th>
<th>Opponents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Power</strong></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Most</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Least</strong></td>
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Put all possible stakeholders on this chart with those having the most power near the top and those with the most interests near the centerline.

Then you want to focus energy on those with the most power and the most interest.

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### DEVELOPING A PLAN

Once you understand your opponent’s world you can more effectively begin developing a plan. To begin with, zero in on who has the power to decide. You want to focus on them or the institution they represent, focusing on the behavior, policy, etc, but not the person. Over time, however, if things are not shifting you can then escalate more personally. If one chooses to go after the person, possibilities for settlement may be more difficult. The high road is often a good choice, but if over time they do not change, escalation is critical.

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### Phases of a Campaign

- Preparation
- Launch
- Battle
- Settlement

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### Three Fundamental Principles Of Direct Action:

- Win concrete improvements in people's lives.
- Make people aware of their own power (by winning victories).
- Alter the relationship of power between people, the government, and other institutions by building strong permanent organizations and relationships.
Steps in a Nonviolent Direct Action Campaign

Each step continues through the duration of the campaign. For example we need to continue to research and education throughout. Each step builds/escalates to the next while setting up your opponent to do the right thing. You need to give them opportunities to do the right thing at every stage and when they don’t, you make it public; soon they begin to expose themselves. At some point it will be clear that negotiation is no longer possible and that the opponent is no longer a welcome player in our community and must be replaced.

1) Investigate – understand the nature and extent of problem. Gather information and evidence, know who is responsible, what do people want to do. You need a clear statement of the problem and the solution and evidence that backs up your case.

2) Negotiate – give the opponent a clear, fair, documented and publicized opportunity to resolve the conflict. Exhaust established channels for change.

3) Educate – get the word out! Go door-to-door, leafleting, teach-ins, petitions etc.

4) Demonstrate – marches, pickets, etc. Build support and increase pressure.

5) Direct Action – sit-in’s, blockades, occupations – create a crisis to force your opponent and the public to address the issues. Aim for dilemma actions where possible. Dramatize the conflict. Show your depth of commitment and test the determination of your opponent. Spark actions by other groups elsewhere to increase the heat.

6) Protracted Struggle (or War) – move from negotiation (although keep the door open) to the creation of alternative or parallel institutions while we shut the other one down.

7) Victory, Settlement - again, the art of the campaign is engaging your opponent at every step of the campaign. At the beginning we inform them of the solutions to the problems and give them the chance to do the right thing. They fix it or not. We escalate and educate and get more people involved and go back. We give them the chance to do the right thing. They fix it or not. We escalate and engage in demonstrations. We go back and give them the chance to do the right thing. They fix it or not. We escalate and engage in direct action. We go back and give them the chance to do the right thing. They fix it or not. We escalate and at some point we determine that our opponent is no longer a responsible member of our community and we seek to close them down while replacing them with another entity. In workplace situations this may be easier said then done depending on the industry.

Mechanisms for Change

- Conversion – convince them to change
- Acquiescence – they go along because they don’t want to fight
- Accommodation – reach a compromise
- Coercion – force an opponent to give up
- Disintegration – opponent no longer has anything to give up, incapacitated
Some Key Organizing Concepts

- **Create Crisis** – it is the edge where change is possible, where opportunities emerge

- **Escalation** – start within the experience of your supporters and opponents, take steps increasing in intensity and moving outside the experience of your opponent

  It is hard to close the box…. so take one step at a time and see the impact

  The power of action is in reaction - Saul Alinsky

  Once you are out of the box you cannot go back

- **Compression** – Organize all your escalating activities toward a point of compression, where things become so pressurized the crisis erupts internally and the process of change is underway.

- **Credible Threat** – we don’t always have to do what we say if our opponent knows we can do what we say.

- **Telegraphing** – let them know what you plan to do in advance and give them the opportunity to correct the information first—i.e. Public health flier…

- **Blame** the Opponent for everything you possibly can.

- **Mix it Up**
  - Craziness / Reasonable
  - Methodology to our madness
  - Good Cop / Bad Cop
  - Surprise…. go outside their experience

- **Eat Your Young**
  - You have to take risks
  - Every threat is an opportunity
  - You may have to be willing to sacrifice what you have to get more

- **Unity, Fun, Discipline** – people don’t want to struggle, but at times we must. Collective action or unity, spirit or fun and discipline are key cause they’re going to want to take us down.

- **Ignorance Often Works** - excuse me, I didn’t know that was the code, are you sure?

- **Focused and Unfocused** – sometimes we need a laser beam and sometime we just need to throw shit up against the wall…

- **Siege Mentality** - If the opponent is too big, create a siege mentality. The closer you are to winning, the more support you will get. People move toward victory.

- **Militant Minority** – can shift the balance of power, but if they go so far outside the experience of their allies and/or base they may not be able to consolidate that shift in power.

**The Four Ways of the Warrior** - Angeles Arrien

  - Show Up
  - Pay Attention
  - Speak Truth to Power
  - Stay Unattached to Outcome.
THE ART & SCIENCE OF ACTIONS: Shutting Things Down to Open Things Up!

“The power of the action is in the reaction” Saul Alinsky

Change is about transformation – personal and political – at an individual, group, community, institutional, national, or international level. I have chosen direct action as my primary strategy for change because it is more effective than any other strategy I have used. It is a rapidly and radically transforming process that has had proven success over the ages.

So much of organizing has to do with SPACE — physical, emotional, mental and spiritual space. We can reclaim it, transform it, occupy it, liberate it, shut it down, open it up, shift it or just be present in it. It is the art of knowing when and where to take it, to move into it or through it, then acting without hesitation, in that moment, because you know that if you do not do it now, the opportunity may not come again. Teaching ourselves to relate to political space in this way is fundamental to transforming power relationships.

“We take action to educate” – John Johnson, LA ACORN

People are taught to obey and thus to be afraid of taking action. So many think we need to educate first before people will act. In fact it is often the other way around. Actions, done well, are full of life and power and people want more of that. Experiencing our individual and collective power can be liberating and having an embodied experience can help one fully integrate information and lessons. By taking action we learn.

Actions are the containers for our tactics. Our tactics help us win and must be chosen wisely based on our goals and the resources. Advance planning can make all the difference in your success. It is best to do good planning and organizing and logistics in advance to make it successful. Once you get to that day, expect that not everything will go as planned and make sure you have thought through contingency plans. Sometimes you just need to let go with follow the flow because actions can have a life of their own.

Actions Basics – some of the art and science of organizing actions
- Is it Symbolic or Direct? Public or Secret?
- Vision Counts -Details Matter
- Need Beginning, Middle and End
- Action Logic – does it make sense in people’s minds
- “Inside” or “Outside” strategy
- Strong Visuals to tell a clear message –make sure the picture tells the story – big stickers, classroom in the streets,
- Colorful, inspiring, life affirming, fun, strong, dramatic attract people and capture their imagination
- Cover basic needs – food, water, bathroom, transportation, communication/information
- Support people at all levels – emotional, physical, mental, spiritual - before, during and after
- Using weapons of fear or violence against living things will almost always backfire if popular support is part of your strategy. There are other ways to let your opponents know that you can cost them,
- Organizing effective actions, which achieve short and long-term victories, growing movements that build culture and transform society.

Exercise – This is an opportunity think through the impact of your tactics. Many people believe that nonviolent civil disobedience is just symbolic, passive, and non-confrontational with limited impact, as we are no longer directly violating an unjust law in many of our actions. Exploring the impact of different tactics like this can be useful in assessing the actions you take.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action Type</th>
<th>Symbolic</th>
<th>Direct</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Legal Protest</td>
<td>Vigil on sidewalk</td>
<td>Phone ZAP – mass call in to tie up the lines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civil Disobedience</td>
<td>Blocking 1 of 3 gates of a plant</td>
<td>Locking down all gates</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I use the following little template when planning actions. Walking through it and really spending the time becoming very clear about what you are doing and how you are going to get it done can make a huge difference in how successful you are on the day of your action. I do all I can to have everything and everyone thoroughly prepped, with a common vision and clarity on everyone’s role, schedule and timing. Once the action begins is when to let go and trust that what happens is what needs to happen!
**Action Planning Template**

**Goals:** what are we trying to accomplish – concrete, tangible, winnable. What does victory look like? What do you want the headline to read the next day?

**Target:** who has the power to decide? Who are we trying to impact/move, what is strategic reason for it/them. If there are multiple sites, which is best suited for an action?

**Message/Demands:** what do we want our target to do, what do we want them to know. Are there other audiences besides the target?

**Messenger:** who is delivering our message? An impacted person or community leader working on a particular issue is always more powerful and credible than a talking head spokesperson. Is there a process for getting feedback/response from target?

**Mobilization:** how many people do we need? What are our turnout goals? Who will we reach out to—people, groups etc? What are the recruitment plan, rap, commitment, reminder and follow-up plan? I use a 50% rule...that is what I expect will turn out based on the commitments. So if 100 people say yes, expect 50!

**Scenario:** what will happen, what does it look like? What are the beginning, middle and end? How will message/story be told – visuals, words, props, and signs?

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- **Publicity:** fliers, ads, PSA’s, emails, mailings, facebook, blogs, calendars etc
- **Program:** Speakers, performers, diversity, culture, participatory, when, where
- **Schedule:** break it down, what happens by who and when, from pack up to clean-up...
- **Logistics:** all the things you need! (See below)
- **Props:** signs, banners, puppets,
- **Security/Traffic Plan:** what is needed? Who will coordinate, train and recruit? We often skip this step, but it is critical for mobile tactics. If groups are crossing intersections or moving through the streets, we need people paying attention to traffic and who are facilitating our safe passage by holding cars back.
- **Coordination/Prep**—trainings in advance and prep meetings day of or day before with as many people involved in filling a role as possible. Make sure everyone is on the same page and schedule, communications, review maps, communications, contingencies, getting everybody on board and knowing who is who and what will happen. This is a really critical step that is often overlooked.

**FOR CD**

- **Scouting and Mapping** – of site(s)
- **Trainings** – how we orient and prepare for the plan and risks we are taking, also legal etc
- **Model of Org** - Affinity Groups, Action Teams, Buddies, Clusters, Blocs, Gaggles
- **Spokes Councils or Tactical Leadership** – will it be a small group who will decide and direct or will it be a meeting of representatives of the participating groups or some collaborative process between the two models.
- **Legal Strategies** and Plan – lawyers, observer, laws, jail solidarity, court plan
- **Police Strategies** and Set-Up – do we inform them, get permit, how do we build a web of restraint on them?
- **Media**
- **Documentation plan** – video, cameras, audio, blogging etc
• **Street Medics** – got some? Do you know where hospitals are, any relationship with EMT’s or fire department?

• **Communications** – scouts, bikes, radios, flags, twitter, text mobs?

• **Jail Strategies** – support outside and inside – Jail Solidarity

• **Trauma and Healing** – when people are hurt or really afraid.

• **Post Action Legal Follow-up** – Courts, Diversions, Community Service. Lawsuits

**Logistics** – vary depending on event
- Date, Time, Place
- Route / Maps
- Megaphones
- Chant / Song Sheet
- Sound System
- Staging
- Permits
- Banners
- Flags
- Signs
- Stickers, Buttons, Armbands
- Leaflets to Distribute
- Armbands, sashes, hats for role identification
- Vehicles
- Trash Bags
- Water
- Food
- Bathrooms
- Transportation
- Directional Signs or chalking the sidewalk
- Cameras to Document

**Things to look for when mapping a city**
- Highways
- Roads / Streets – how many lanes / traffic flow at various hours
- Bridges - where they are, are they accessible and how, good for banners, posters etc
- One Way Streets
- Police stations
- Jails
- Court Houses
- Meeting spaces
- Parks
- Rivers/waterways
- Construction sites
- Parking Garages
- Heart of the City
- Symbolic Locations
- Tourist Sites
- Community Centers
- Public Transportation
- Hospitals
- Public Buildings, Bus Stations, Libraries,
Some Things to look for when scouting buildings:

- Security: desks, cameras, personnel
- WiFi
- Entrances, exits, loading areas, fire escapes
- What kinds of doors/door handles: important for planning how to get in and out quickly or how to close down. (As always, keep in mind your goal before doing anything!)
- Lobby Lay Out and security procedures
- Elevator locations, floors, access
- Sidewalk space, landscaping, trees, etc
- Windows: visibility in and out
- Places for possible banner drops
- Parking and parking garages (great for banner drops, which were great small team actions that can really lift spirits during a demonstration)
- Other tenants?
- Retail Outlets/Eateries as tenants
- Janitor/staff schedule

Other suggestions for mapping and scouting:

- Make a map for the people coming into your city with lots of information (don't forget to include where bathrooms are along your route!)
- Phone cameras are a great way to discretely capture important info about locations, maps of buildings, directory of tenants etc
- Make yourself invisible, act like you fit in, wear clothes that won't stand out
- Know where you're going and what you want to look at before you get there. Do online recon first
- When making a map, be thorough of what is where, obstructions etc, collect measurements (i.e. number of steps)
- Scout at about the same time of day as when the action will be; multiple trips both driving and walking to collect info can be helpful as well
- Have a story in case you're stopped, "students doing research" is generally solid - actually eyeball the location! Don't just rely on the internet like google earth, for your information, although that can be very helpful!

Direct Action Can: (From the Ruckus Society)

Directly stop a social, environmental or political injustice
Assert of defend positive right despite consequences
Show a willful refusal to cooperate or participate in an injustice
Sound the alarm – alert folks to issue
Create a community-based solution
Amplify people’s voices, build people power

Types of Direct Action

Protest – registering dissent. Rallies, marches, teach-ins, pickets
Non-cooperation – withdrawing your power. Boycott, labor strike, walkouts, tax resistance
Intervention – directly intervening in the functioning of the system
Creative Solutions – developing alternative community based systems / collectives

Points of Intervention

Point of Production – where harmful items are created
Point of Destruction – where resources are extracted, pollution released, natural resources destroyed
Point of Consumption – where products reach consumers
Point of Decision – where plans for the future are crafted
Point of Assumption – where social norms are developed and held
Point of Potential – when cultural or historic moments become actions opportunities
MISC NOTES ON ORGANIZING PROCESS

The process of change has two fundamental strategies. One is dismantling structures of oppression while the second is creating structures of liberation. If we don’t have something to replace what we take down, we will lose the confidence of those we are trying to wake up. This process of waking up and engaging in consciously liberating action is when we feel most alive and inspired and connected. Whatever issue is a person’s point of entry, anyone who takes on a struggle and organizes goes through a transformative process in which the world is never the same again.

It is the experience of accessing one’s own power and the power of our collective actions. It is the understanding and experience that you don’t have to just obey or believe in that external authority – be it parent, teacher, priest, cop, coach etc; – that you can trust yourself and your community to do what is needed to live full and healthy lives if not exploited or oppressed. When we have liberated our minds from the paradigm of the external authority, we begin to look to and trust ourselves and each other to create what we need, what feels good, what builds community. In this process we are creating culture.

As long as racism, sexism, homophobia, ageism, ableism and other forms of oppression exist, we must work to dismantle them at every level. It is a struggle and it is life work. But ultimately, it is how we choose to engage in this struggle and how we live our lives that will pre-figure the world we want.

Organizers Role:

- To question and listen
- Be concise
- Develop one on one relationships
- Identify and develop new leaders
- Keep meetings short and focused
- To be open, honest, up front and not defensive
- To Challenge
- Provide Humor and HOPE
- Be serious – people’s jobs and lives may be stake
- BUILD RELATIONSHIPS
- DEVELOP LEADERS

Thoughts about an organizers role:

- It is about asking the questions, which lead the worker to the information they need to know. This is the first step in workers understanding their own power. They know much more than they think.
- It's about identifying power relationships and how to change them
- Organizing is not about "helping". It's about laying down the challenge and making choices clear.
- We cannot make people's decisions for them. We must explain the risks and let them decide.
- People respect you more if you clearly lay out the challenge than if you kiss their ass.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>UNORGANIZED Workplace/Group</th>
<th>Organizers/Leaders</th>
<th>ORGANIZED Workplace/Group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Confused</td>
<td>Interpret</td>
<td>Understanding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apathetic</td>
<td>Motivate</td>
<td>Active</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scared</td>
<td>Challenge</td>
<td>Confident</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divided</td>
<td>Unify</td>
<td>Working together</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Going Nowhere</td>
<td>Plan</td>
<td>Purpose</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Organizing Principles

"First they ignore you, then they ridicule you, then they fight you, then you win." ~ Mahatma Gandhi

Organizing is about building relationships. People need to feel like they are a part of something. It takes people time to develop trust, learn, move to take risks. Your approach must be positive and affirming. It's about power, participation and community.

1. One-on-One Communication: Organizing is Relationships
2. Ownership: recruit/develop leaders
3. Message/Vision: must be one that makes sense, which creates common ground among workers,
4. Detail Matters - pay attention
5. Strategic Plans - without it you will flounder. Always be flexible. The best-laid plans may need to be changed or evolve as conditions change.

Developing a Rap

The skill to develop and deliver a rap will serve you well in any organizing work that you do – whether it is a one-on-one, a house visit, a tabling effort or a petition drive. It is not hard but requires that you take some time to be clear about the goals of the effort and the subsequent conversations.

There are five basic steps:

- **Introduction** - who are you and why are you talking? - Establish credibility and trust
- **Asking Questions** – engage quickly, what do you want to know? How do you want to draw out what they think and feel about? Ultimately everyone likes to talk and be listened to.
- **Listen** - to identify issues, what they care about, and their interests. Listen with ears, eyes and body.
- **Discussion / Make Points** - of what you want to talk about – fit with their concerns, build affinity with cause. If you really don’t agree, respectfully acknowledge the difference without judging the person.
- **Commitment** - ASK for something concrete - also known as the “Crunch” – will they sign, attend, fund, mobilize etc…
- **Close** - next steps. Make sure you each have relevant contact information, leave any educational/visual materials behind and be clear what the follow up will be. Acknowledge and appreciate each other, the moment and/or the struggle being engaged.

Getting People Involved

- **Ask** them one on one
- Don't always go for pro people first
- Make clear what you want people to do
- **Encourage** people to ask questions
- Give the **big picture**, and how each task fits in with the rest – how others work is dependent on them.
- Start small and build, make tasks manageable
- **Keep people accountable** - check in at each meeting on progress of work
- **Explain** how their work will make peoples lives better
Another process for getting people involved if one is trying to rapidly increase your numbers is to:

**TRAIN – ACT – RECRUIT.**

This cycle repeats itself again and again, with each trainee taking action, recruiting new, training them; they take action and recruit etc.

## PROBLEMS YOU WILL ENCOUNTER OR PSYCHOLOGICAL BARRIERS TO ORGANIZING

- **Fear** - of change, unknown, repression, job loss, management, economic insecurity
- **I.C.M.A.D.** - I Can't Make a Difference, powerlessness, hopelessness
- **Apathy** - loss of feeling, a result of how painful it is to feel that you are being screwed and doing nothing about it
- **Later, Not Now** - denial, if I put it off, it will go away.
- **Disgust** and tension from the fight between the union and the boss, the power holder and the effected community, etc
- **Confusion**, don't know what's happening
- **Lack of information**, knowledge, not knowing our rights.
- **Cynicism** because of bad experiences in the past or individualistic, "I don't need anybody else."
- **Divisions** due to racism, sexism, or elitism, or sense of inferiority
- **Family or personal problems**, illness, lack of transportation or childcare.
- **Other objections**, my parents, my spouse, or my church object.

If we blame people for their apathy or belittle their fears they just become defensive or even more apathetic. But if we understand why a particular person feels apathetic or afraid we can help them overcome the problem that is holding them back.

### Moving People Through Fear to Action

1. **What holds people back?**
   - People make excuses, but really it is fear and lack of belief in themselves and the campaign that holds people back from taking action.
   - When people are scared or frustrated, they make excuses.
   - As organizers, we need to see through that.

2. **What will convince people to act?**
   - Identifying the person's fear and then walking them through it – breaking down/addressing the fear.
   - Getting the person angry
   - Recognizing what they have accomplished and the strength they have demonstrated.
   - Refocusing the person on their motivation – agitation.
   - Convincing the person there is a plan to win and the step is critical.
   - What we are asking the person to do is critical to winning.
   - Making the person feel strong.
   - Making the person feel responsible for the greater good, a belief in the collective effort and accountable to others in the community/struggle.

3. **Key steps and prep for pushing**

   **Step 1: Before we talk to the person**
   - What motivates this person?
• What holds this person back?
• A Plan: How do we get this person angry enough, strong enough and committed enough to take the step.

Step 2: The conversation
• Revisit the person’s motivation.
• Recognize what they have done and their strength.
• Recommit to the union/struggle and the plan to win.
• Assignment: What do they need to do to win and be true to themselves?
• Struggle through the fear: motivate, agitate, challenge.

EXPERIENCING FEAR AND POWER HELP OVERCOME THESE BARRIERS

Organizers need to create a situation or “container” that will allow workers to experience and express their fears. Exploring these feelings can help uncover anger.

Anger directed is a key to change.

Organizing is the process of moving people to see and feel the injustice and then accessing their own power to change it. This process involves re-thinking their relationship to the oppressor/boss etc. This process can be quick or long and painful because ultimately it is about accepting and then overcoming things within us. Once we start taking responsibility for and control of our own life, then we have begun changing the relationship with the boss. One must explore their own interests and decide is the risk of loss worth the benefits to be gained?

Incumbents Run on Fear ------ Challengers Run on Hope
So employer/oppressor will always use an element of terrorism

From the United Farm Workers - AHUY
ANGER- righteous anger - people need to feel that the boss is taking advantage of them.
HOPE - people need to feel that things can get better.
URGENCY - people need to see that time to move is NOW, later or tomorrow will be too late YOU can make a difference!

"Nothing Can Withstand the Force of An Idea Whose Time Has Come"
Victor Hugo
LEADERSHIP

*Leadership is not good or bad, it is how you use it / do it!*

Community and labor organizing models place a high value on leadership and leadership development. They know that leaders are critical for moving people into action. At the same time there are many movements that unfortunately know that to be public as a leader can mean death. Some grassroots direct action movements—horizontal movements—say we are all leaders.

Leadership is the ability to inspire, motivate, energize, engage and move people into action, to move people to accessing their own power to make a change. Leaders can do this because they are respected. To be respected you must be respectful. Leaders serve as a source of inspiration, courage and clarity, they tend to have a vision of what could be, they tend to have strong character or personality, this may or may not be charismatic. Leaders tend to be disciplined; they do not abuse their power or authority. Leaders make the strategic decisions that will shape the conflict.

The Army uses the following definition: “Leadership is influencing people -- by providing purpose, direction, and motivation -- while operating to accomplish the mission and improving the organization.”

The Army further goes on by defining "influence" as a: means of getting people to do what you want them to do. It is the means or method to achieve two ends: operating and improving. But there’s more to influencing than simply passing along orders. The example you set is just as important as the words you speak. And you set an example -- good or bad -- with every action you take and word you utter, on or off duty. Through your words and example, you must communicate purpose, direction, and motivation.

While there are many different types of leadership styles, most people agree to these basic types

- Autocratic or Authoritarian
- Benevolent Autocrat
- Consultative Democratic
- Participatory Democratic
- Delegative or Free Reign

Each of these styles has their place or use. A good leader knows when to employ which approach in any given situation.

SEVEN PRINCIPLES OF EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP (canvasopedia.org)

1. SET THE (PERSONAL) EXAMPLE - Where leaders demonstrate honesty, hard work, courage and respect for others and show that they are willing to make personal sacrifices for the cause, those same characteristics will be evident among followers. Systematic corruption cannot be avoided when leaders are corrupt.

2. KNOW THE PEOPLE YOU EXPECT TO LEAD - An effective leader must demonstrate care and concern for those he/she is expected to lead. Leaders must create a climate of trust and show a willingness to listen. Community level leaders should make an effort to personally know their supporters, as well as "fence sitters", and make genuine effort to demonstrate concern for them.

3. BE PROFICIENT IN CARRYING OUT RESPONSIBILITIES - Leaders are expected to articulate clearly why the struggle must be undertaken, to inspire the Resistance - symbol instead of visible leadership.

4. SEEK AND ACCEPT RESPONSIBILITY - Conflict environments are characterized by uncertainty, misjudgments, and mistakes. Effective leaders step forward with confidence and fill leadership voids that
will appear when a movement experiences a setback. They also accept responsibility for failure if the movement does not achieve its objectives.

5. GIVE OTHERS CREDIT FOR SUCCESS - Good leaders usually do not use the word "I" when discussing a successful event. It was "we" who succeeded. Thus, good leaders show people that they are in the very heart of the things and that their individual participation is what really makes a difference to the success of the struggle. They acknowledge and show appreciation for the participation and contributions of others.

6. LEARN FROM (your and others') EXPERIENCE - The most expensive way to learn is from your own mistakes. Thus, effective leaders learn from their and others' mistakes and successes.

7. DELEGATE AUTHORITY AND RESPONSIBILITY - A good leader never assumes that he/she is the only intelligent person in the movement. Successful leaders know how to challenge and maximize the abilities of subordinates. The right people should be selected for the right positions, and responsibilities for more strategic activities should extend down through the movement leadership, together with a process for delegating responsibility to subordinates. Even the best leaders in history had a 24-hour per day limitation, and their movements would have collapsed if they had tried to do all of the activities themselves. Over-centralization of decision-making is a fatal flaw in any organization!

Qualities to look for in a leader

Team Work
Is accessible
Talks to and listens to others
Is accountable
Respects peoples' time
Pays attention to undercurrents

Talks Directly to Issues
Stops reading tea leaves
Stops speculation
Seeks direct answers

Takes Initiative
But not all the space
Starts things but delegates
Can remain unattached to own vision
Collaborates

Communicates with confidence about decisions and can explain what was decided and why
Can step aside and let others lead
Has integrity

Exercise – Brainstorm answers to these questions

What are the qualities we look for in a leader?

- Think critically in difficult times
- Willing to work and get involved
- Has goals for themselves, for the industry and what we want
- Believes in change and social justice
• Ability to push co-workers
• Punctual
• Hard worker - good worker
• Unselfish
• Not afraid
• Move negative person to positive - persuasive
• Shows good judgment
• Be able to lead meetings in own workplace
• **Respected at workplace**
• Trainer
• Responsible/dependable
• Be able to solve problems
• **Thinks of co-workers - cares about them**
• Honest
• Trustworthy
• Mutual respect with supervisors
• Persistent
• **Positive person - not a quitter**
• Listens
• Senior person - understands how company worker
• Representative of workforce and work
• **Can communicate with others - relay a message**
• Can and willing to learn
• Can give and accept criticism

Qualities in **bold** were listed as the most important

**What is the Role of a Leader?**

• Listen — identify issues and mobilize around them
• Move people to take action
• Have followers
• Communicate issues in workplace that affect workers
• Bring vision to co-workers
• Must have knowledge of labor movement
• Educate on issues, union, and what co-workers can do
• Be eyes and ears of union in workplace
• Help interpret to co-workers what boss is doing
• Delegate responsibilities
• Recruit more leaders and get people involved
• Lead by example
• Confront boss
• Represent union in public - spokesperson
• Give/contribute ideas
• Attend actions and meetings
• Be a bridge to co-workers
• Know workplace
• Assess co-workers

**How do we develop leaders?**

1. Motivate
2. Commit
3. Make a plan – assignments
4. Support implementation
5. Follow up and evaluate

**What helps us to develop leaders?**
1. Listen to potential leaders and ask questions
2. Talk directly about commitment and being a leader
3. Give assignments with detail
4. Get worker to make a commitment to the assignments
5. Congratulate leaders for completed assignments
Phases and Steps In a Direct Action Campaign

- **Prep**
- **Launch**
- **Battle**
- **Settlement**

**Protracted Struggle – Victory – Parallel Organization**

- **Direct Action**
- **Demonstrate**
- **Educate**
- **Negotiate**

**Investigate/Research**