

Game-Changing Intersectional Organizing

AKA Learnings, Practices, and Ways to Start/Push the Conversations and the Work
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Where did I learn this stuff?

- Things I know a lot about:

Red state organizing (South, Southwest, Midwest), feminist organizing, LGBTQ organizing, organizing across race for racial justice, inter-generational organizing, alliance building, bridging grassroots and grassroots organizing, grassroots organization building, listening, finding patterns AND running my mouth

- Things I know some about and am into:

Eastern European organizing, new grassroots electoral strategies, mass-based organization building, campaign development, economic justice organizing, social movement theory

- Things I know not so much to very little about:

Environmental movements, labor movements, international social movements, sports, how to use twitter well.

Where We Are 🙄

- Half the Human Race now lives under authoritarianism
- Massive global social, racial, economic and environmental injustice
- Governments and business interests in power around the globe completely unprepared for our now and our future
- 99.9% of the US unorganized (in the formal sense of the word)
- Massive gaps in our progressive infrastructure: leadership of now, organizations of now, campaigns of now, alliances of now

Where We Are 😊

- Women of all walks of life leading the biggest single demonstration in US history
- A massive renaissance/awakening of energy in grassroots electoral work primarily led by women overall, with amazing leadership from LGBTQ women and women of color
- Massive growth in some of our more open source and electoral organizations
- Starting of new organizations with new organizing models and the hybridizing and adaptation of others
- From teachers strikes to standing up to the tech industry, consciousness and resistance among working class folks in the US is growing
- A new longing for social movements of now: a Fourth Wave Feminism, new government systems, and young people demanding real solutions to climate change....

Toxics in Our Movements

- Valuing vocabulary over practice, valuing criticism over problem solving
- Competition, in-fighting and secrecy about resources
- Shame, Blame, and Perfectionism
- Oppression Olympics
- Politics of fundamentalism and purity
- Over-reliance on academia
- Movement as hierarchy
- Lack of base building, leadership development, campaign organizing, and alliance building capacity

(SONG and Momentum and Auburn and Adrienne Maree Brown—appreciations)

Zooming Out: Toxics in Leadership in US

- Numbing
- Being a knower and being right
- Hiding behind cynicism
- Criticism as self protection
- Power Over
- Leading for compliance and control
- Weaponizing fear and uncertainty
- Collecting Gold Stars
- Zigzagging and Avoidance
- Working from scarcity and squandering opportunities for joy and recognition

From Toxic to Tonic

Barn's burnt down --
now
I can see the moon.

-Mizuta Masahide

Tonics.

- Setting Boundaries and finding real comfort
- Being a learner and getting it right
- Modeling clarity, kindness and hope
- Making contributions and taking risks
- Power with, power to, and power within
- Cultivating Commitment and Shared Purpose
- Naming and Normalizing fear/uncertainty
- Giving Gold Stars
- Straight Talk and Taking Action
- Practicing gratitude and celebrating milestones

Tonics in Our Movements: Observations

- Principles, Codes of Conduct, Touchstones
- Legacy: the art of remembering who we are through who came before
- Clarity: Understanding why we are doing what we are doing
- Practicing the practices: Honoring the craft of organizing
- Movement as ecosystem
- Leadership as plural, and with different concrete roles
- Open Source hybrids: Oxygenating our organizing and our organizations
- De-throning a 2 dimensional intersectionality, uplifting a three dimensional one
- More lifters, fewer climbers. More ship builders, fewer divas.
- Combat loneliness by building teams.
- Embrace a politics of nuance, complexity, and global realities
- Leadership Development AND Leadership Retention

Alliances: Why are they so hard?

- SONG, Mijente, and a whole bunch of other groups: The Not1More Story
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wn119Wuw9tc>

Bright Spots: Organizing Examples

- Mijente
- SONG
- Sunrise



Bright Spots: Common Themes

- Leadership is present, clear, transparent and willing to share power
- Clear story, goals, roles, entry points, campaigns
- Capacity for leadership development, base building, campaigns, alliance building, communications
- Energy and life force of each group concentrates both internally and externally
- Each group doing on-going assessment, listening on the ground, moving flexibly
- Innovating with where URL and IRL meet
- Continue to radiate out purpose, meaning, team building, healthy org. culture
- What else?

Bright Spots: Key Differences

- SONG is a legacy organization: intersectionality in practice, LGBTQ and feminist, early to political home, late adoptors to campaigns
- Mijente was born from campaigns, late adoptors to political home. Younger, different approaches to membership building and campaigns
- Sunrise is 3rd iteration of Momentum model, learning from strengths and mistakes of last few years, more formulaic.
- OVERALL: Different constituencies, goals, perspectives, regions, and strategies

At their best, movements change who we are...

Ella Baker. Sylvia Rivera. Grace Lee Boggs.

In biographies, we hear about how growing movements changed who they were. But, movements occur because thousands of unknown people are transformed, and do more to better themselves and the world than they ever dreamed they could. At the heart of movements led by the marginalized is a beginning of loving ourselves, and turning to others who are hated and loving them.



...and movements change our world

- Never forget someone thought of the idea:
- Of a 'weekend'.
- That women and people of color are not the property of white men.
- That women, poor people and people of color should be able to vote.
- That LGBTQ people belong out of closets and in the bright world sharing all we have to offer

And then people like us made the ideas real in the world.

Let's go out and build, innovate, fail, and come together again like our lives depend on it because they do.

Close Out

*May we love the bird out of the cage as much as we love the equal scales,
May we know we are in a river of souls,
May we risk imperfection to lend a steady hand.
May we be free from fear,
May we be filled with imperative of the spirit.
And may all the barns in our way burn down.*