Creating the Collective: 1-on-1 Conversations

Community Organizing:
Bringing people together to collectively generate courage, knowledge, and confidence to see oppressive systems and take action.

-Chenjerai Kumanyika

1-on-1's:
A tool to get to know each other through conversation and storytelling, and to identify interests and common ground for engagement.

Self-care:
Intentional acts that nourish a person's physical, emotional, and spiritual needs (ex. nutrition, therapeutic tools, breathing).
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An organizing conversation has specific goals:

- to identify the issues this person cares about
- to connect them to a plan of action
- get consent from this person to commit to participating

This structure is called a rap.

1-ON-1 IN 5 STEPS

1. Make Space for a real conversation

2. What moves you?
identify the issues, where's the anger?

3. Empathize-Connect-Trust
share your story, who's responsible for our oppression?

4. A Plan to Rise Up: give inspiration!
there's a plan, share examples of successes

5. Ask: Reach for commitment
if ready, share urgent need for solutions...can you take action?

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Before 1-on-1:

- Get ready to connect with a potential comrade in the fight!
- Take deep breaths, stretch, make a cup of tea, and get present
- Keep the conversation organic, it's not an interview

Make Space for a real conversation, deep listening & empathy

- Be an active listener (80/20): see LaborNotes handout
- Keep the purpose general and open-ended, learn their concerns. Use open-ended questions.
- Be aware of triggers, make sure you're fully present, be gentle & kind, center their voice

Closed question = Yes/No

- "Do you like where you work?"

Open Question

- "What do you like about your job?"
What moves you?
identify the issues, where’s the anger

Shatter the Fear: create safer, braver, healing space for channeling anger & trauma responses

- Discover what most upsets them about the workplace/life. We have permission to be angry!
- Have you witnessed/experienced harassment & discrimination? Remember common tactics used by harm-doers: divide & conquer, coercion, victim-blaming, gaslighting, etc.

Connect to coping tools & remind them feelings might come up after call (breathing, affirmations, safety plan, etc.)

Remember that this conversation is confidential, you are not allowed to share personal information.
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STEP 3

Empathize-Connect-Trust
share a brief personal story,
who's responsible for our oppression?

Learn what is affecting them the most in regards to work, do you relate? What could you share connected to the issues this person is sharing with you?

- Who is responsible for this problem?
- Why do you think we are having this problem?
- Who's in a position to fix it?
- What support do you need? What would help you to thrive at work?

We want this person to realize that:

- they care about a problem
- There's a decision maker who has the power to fix this problem
- The decision maker won't fix it until someone encourages them to

If they want this problem to be fixed, they can join you and others to take action.
Now that the person is angry, it's time to offer some hope. Hope comes from our power in numbers and an achievable plan. What inspires YOU? share examples of success. What are the changes YOU want to see? What superpowers (skills) do you want to contribute? Would you like to chat again? Attend a future meeting?

Think about what the boss or the city government would say about your demands. How would we respond to that as a collective? We have power in numbers and a plan to succeed, that's how we make our problem into the decision maker's problem.
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Ask: Reach for commitment

If ready, ask the person to be part of the solution by taking a specific action

- Remember we CAN change the industry!
- Sometimes we fear that if we speak up, we'll risk losing what little we have.

- Connect with the fear (care for the trauma)
- Support the way out (empowerment, know your rights, we're stronger together)
- Assign a next step & self-care!

After 1-on-1:

- If interviewee is excited, create an assignment, such us, "come to this meeting," "research on a specific issue," "record a moment of inspiration or abuse," and other examples that could facilitate the conversation or a future meeting with you/group
- **Follow-up** with a thank you text or call if appropriate

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