

FAQ: The Power of Relational Organizing

What is relational organizing?

Relational organizing is a tool within a broader organizing strategy to build power in which individuals, groups, or organizations harness their personal networks and relationships to effect change.

What is a one-on-one relational organizing conversation?

A one-on-one is an intentional conversation with someone in your personal network. The goal of the conversation is to build a relationship with another person by understanding their issues, interests, and values to identify common ground for collective action. A one-on-one is meant to understand someone else, learn what matters to them, their community, their organization, and to figure out what will move them. Creating this relationship is foundational for being able to take action together and to build a bigger collective.

Why would I use a one-on-one?

One-on-ones is an action in-itself to build a genuine relationship of trust and mutual support around a common issue or goal. One-on-ones build solidarity across distance and separation.

What's the difference between a one-on-one a regular conversation with a friend?

A one-on-one is a face-to-face meeting that can be conducted in-person or a virtual video meeting. The purpose of establishing or deepening a public relationship around self-interest. The one-on-one is not an interview, nor is it therapy. It is an opportunity to build a relationship with someone who can join your goal and movement. A good organizer will share their story too in order to help build connection and demonstrate some vulnerability.

How do I have an organizing conversation?

These are some key components to an effective organizing conversation:

1. **Introduction:** Who are you and why the conversation is important. You can ask someone to do a one-on-one as it relates to the work or organization you are with.
2. **Ask Questions/Active Listening:** Try to make sure you are spending most of the time listening. You should use the 80/20 or 75/25 rule (80% listening and 20% speaking).
3. **Educate:** Give information on pertinent issues that are relevant to the community you are serving and speaking to.
4. **Agitate:** Ask the questions about their interests and connect them with the issue.
5. **Build a Vision:** What would both of you want to see?
6. **Invitation to Action:** Most one-on-ones do not end in a specific ask because goal is to get a sense of the other person's values and self-interests. If there is clear interest demonstrated and a clear activity that you can plug them into, move the participant to action by extending a specific invitation.
7. **Evaluate and Reflect:** Reflect on the meeting and determine how this person may get deeper involved with the work.

Any tips on how to conduct my first organizing conversation?

- Listen deeply! Remember, this is about understanding someone's values and self-interests.
- Be mindful of your surroundings! Practice active listening and limit distractions.
- Exercise conscious and genuine curiosity.
- Share your story and draw out connections between yourself and the person you are speaking with.
- The most effective way to move people is by connecting emotions. Avoid having an intellectual conversation about policy or strategy issues.
- An organizing conversation is people-centered and is not about "selling" the League or about a "task". It is about building a connection with someone to draw them into a movement.
- This is an intentional conversation, but it is not a script.
- Let people know you are on their side and leave the conversation with the beginning of a public friendship.
- Follow up! Maybe the conversation doesn't end with a direct act or action, but let the person know that you will be in touch about ways that can continue to be involved that work for their lives and schedule.

Key Terms:

Public relationship: Information or relationships that are open and related to work and issues.

Self interest: What motivates an individual to act

Power: Ability to effect change. Can come in the form of organized people, information, and/or money.

Story of self: The intersection of your self-interest and the work you do.

Movement: A group of individuals, organizations, networks, and communities working together to build power to advance their shared goals.

Additional Resources:

- Marshall Ganz: [Telling your public Story](#)
- Montgomery County Education Association: [Relational Organizing Resources](#)
- [Organizing Resources to Build League Power](#)
- [Take Action Relational Organizing Handout](#)