

Minnesota Unitarian Universalist Social Justice Alliance - MUUSJA
Leadership Training – “Now What? Using this Moment to Build a Movement”
by Beth Zemsky

November 15, 2008

Welcome by Rob Eller-Isaacs

Chalice Lighting

“I Dreamed I Saw Joe Hill Last Night” (c. 1930 by Alfred Hayes) presented by Doug Federhart

Introduction

Beth Zemsky presents Planning a Movement Moment

Goals:

- Networking
- Increase awareness
- Developing and deepening a shared UU social justice analysis. Think about the individual and the collective.
- Developing and sharing tools

Agenda

Getting to know each other
Movement building – history and theory
Lunch
Issue selection
Tools for change

Ground Rules

be present	respect
candor	conscious of own expectations
hear all voices	be aware of intent vs impact
be fully present	cell phones off
use of “parking lot” for items off topic, that might be relevant later	

First Exercise

“Speed Dating”

We all moved into the hallway and found a partner. With two lines of people facing each other, we were given the following questions, with a brief time-limit for each partner to answer the question, then everyone moved to the next person in line and answered the next question.

- 1.How are you? How are you really?
- 2.What or who in your life experience most contributed to your decision to step up for justice? share your stories...
- 3.If anyone really wants to appreciate who you are, what is one thing they would need to know?

4. What do you anticipate we will have achieved by the end of the day?

Beth asked: What are your expectations?

How to name a movement - what is the movement we are in?

Sense of way forward

How to keep energy of the election going

Motivation to action

Strengthen vision – strategy

How to bring new people/youth into movement

How to include people of other faiths

Assumption is that people are here because they feel a responsibility to live out their ideals and faith.

Definition of responsibility:

An appropriate response according to *your ability* and the *context*.

What is a social movement?

Social Movement Theory

Qualities:

connectivity transformational

scope values

size individual change vs systems

sustainability organized effort

mobilization activity, not a sustainable movement

tactic, not a movement look to causes

leadership power

tapped into emotion coherent, seamless world view

Nazism was a social movement that went into a political movement

We've been thinking about activities and tactics, now we need to think of a movement.

Characteristics of Social Movements

Collective intentional action

Movements are often sparked by a crisis

Some kind and degree of organization – continuity and sustainability

New movements are mostly informal

Outsider status

Regular means of accessing power not available

Because Obama was elected do we now have access to power?

Beth believes that politicians are followers

Scope and Scale

Formation of a Collective Identity

Reform how people think of themselves

The way movements talk about the world re-forms how people think about the world.

Collective identity of being American is already changing

Redefine identity so that we could find power to create change
Individual change in order to have ability to work for systemic change
People join a movement because they want to be a part of it

What is a UU collective identity?

<10 minute break>

Questions/thoughts came up during break

Paul Wellstone had to choose between being a politician and being the head of a movement. Paul told GLBT community that they hadn't done their work yet – the work which would allow him to do his. There needed to be a change in power/worldview before he could vote for GLBT movement.

LBJ told MLK Jr to "go out there and make me do this."

Context – in this Moment

Movements happen in waves - "social movements tend to cluster temporally in waves"

A surge – water waves, sound waves, ebb and build. Each wave has its own life cycle: beginning, peak, and end

Specific waves may be ripples from a larger wave.

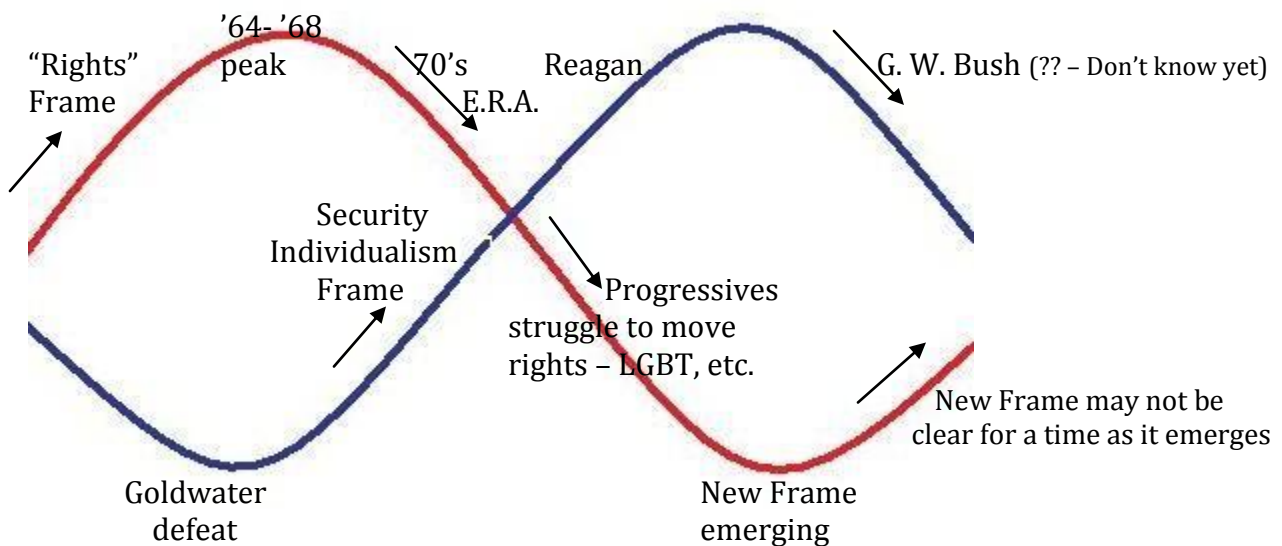
A common world view is the frame.

The last progressive movement had rights as a frame

A Master Frame holds other ideas together.

the master frame "rights" is used by civil rights, mental health rights and others

Before this frame, "fairness" was used.



A frame is something that gets into collective consciousness.

Such as the 1948 International Declaration of Human Rights from the UN - part of the response to the Holocaust

The peak of the Rights movement was around 1964-1968

Upward wave – from Negro to black people

Shame → fear → anger → power

Look at how well the core identity is resonating, how well do people accept it?

64 & 68, exit polls had civil rights #1. '72 → 8th on list, '76 → gone!

The ERA was voted on as the wave of “Rights” was ebbing, ERA failed

“Doing what you did gets you less of what you got” on the downslope.

Movements don't happen in isolation. The Right has a central theme, or Master Frame, too: Individualism, values and security (patriotism)

Co-opted language of values. The left continued to talk about rights and got less response.

In 1964 laize faire capitalism and the new right which was interested in values joined together. A thirty year plan was made to take over congress and the presidency by the year 2000. Starting with school board elections, the coalition of interests ran candidates who often lost, but their message was publicized.

The strategy was top- down, well funded, authoritarian structure.

Individualism and security came out of the last wave of the Right – McCarthyism.

Movements are about the struggle for meanings, how will people understand their lives.

The Right contested the meaning of Rights: Gay rights = special rights

Now Obama is contesting: “Ownership society” means people are on their own.

McCain – individualistic

Obama – Common Good

The election of Obama gives us an opportunity.

We don't have the next frame yet.

Hillary – old movement

Obama – new movement

YO YO = You're On Your Own vs WITT = We're In This Together

Bad things happen, how we understand what happens determines how we respond.

We need to listen deeply to what both sides are saying.

Frames

Belief systems = interlocking sets of beliefs held by large numbers of people.

“While beliefs explain something, belief systems explain everything.” Mark Gerzer(?)

US culture is divided by what people believe.

During Lunch: think about one core conviction which you never wish to compromise.

Back to belief systems: The UU Seven Principles

Collective Identity

Makes people part of something bigger than themselves. CI is experienced in cultural artifacts such as clothing, vocabularies

What is the UU collective identity?

<lunch>

Core Convictions

On downward side of social movement focus is on issues rather than on overall ??

Oppositional identities

Defining self in comparison to – rather than who we are

Part of progressive collective identity has been to be in opposition. What happens to the collective identity if we are inside now?

eg: Core UU value - “we don't believe in original sin” rather than what we do believe in: inherent worth and dignity of every person

“Repair the World” - a piece of God in everyone and everything.

Collective Identification as UU's

Chalice a collective symbol

No creed – brings diversity

“one piece of the truth” - as a bumper sticker

depend on each other in our search for truth

Oppositional identity

How do we deal with having an oppositional identity?

We are now a “we” in a positive way, not oppositional

Mission Statements

GLBT “end violence” is oppositional. We need to state what we wish to create, what are we for, not what are we against or what we want to end.

An Activity

find a partner, stand facing each other, look each other over.

turn back to back – change three things, eg, take name tag off

face to face – identify the three things your partner changed

turn back to back, change three more things

etc.

What was activity about?

After we changed, we put things back immediately – change is not comfortable

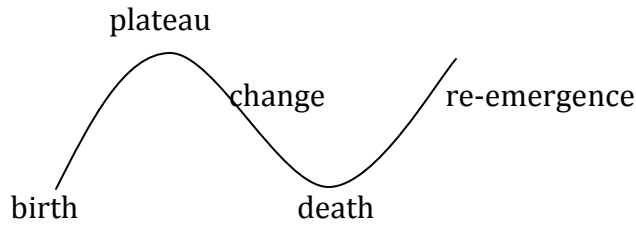
Types of Change

Developmental 

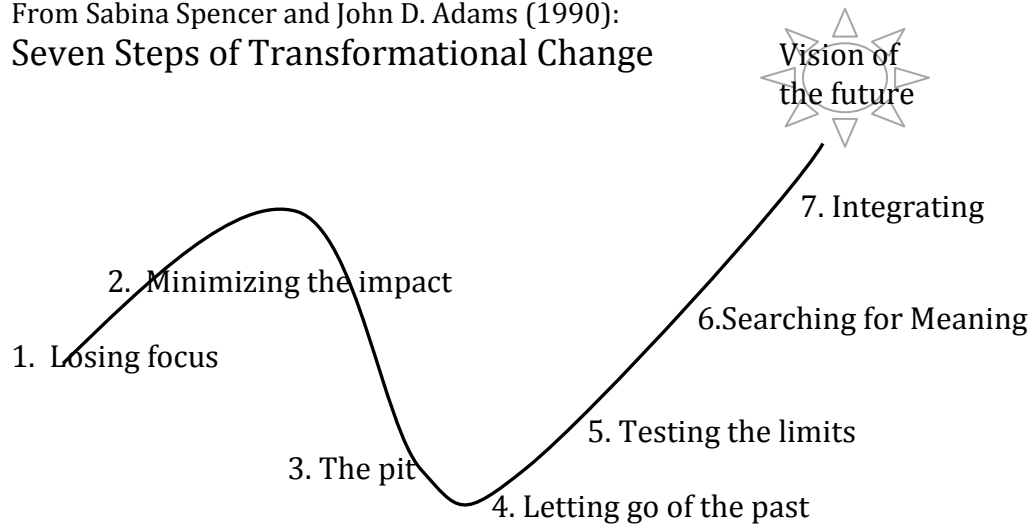
Transitional: old status → transition state → new status; eg. move to a new house

Transformational: don't know where you are going (see curve next page)

William Bridges' work includes this curve:



From Sabina Spencer and John D. Adams (1990):
Seven Steps of Transformational Change



The only way forward is through, the same as the grief process.

→Types of Change:

Cultural Change – transformations in practices, norms, values (values of dominant culture)

Political Change – changes in laws or policies that benefit constituencies

if culture is changed, policies are easy to change (not mutually exclusive)

Ways to Build Movement Power (traditional progressive model)

- Organize and win campaigns
- Build an infrastructure
- Develop, promote and disseminate a worldview

The goal now is to do it in the opposite way.

Saul Alinsky school of organizing (Gamaliel, PICO, etc) has been a good model for oppositional movement & about individualism. This inadvertently reinforced the frame of individualism.

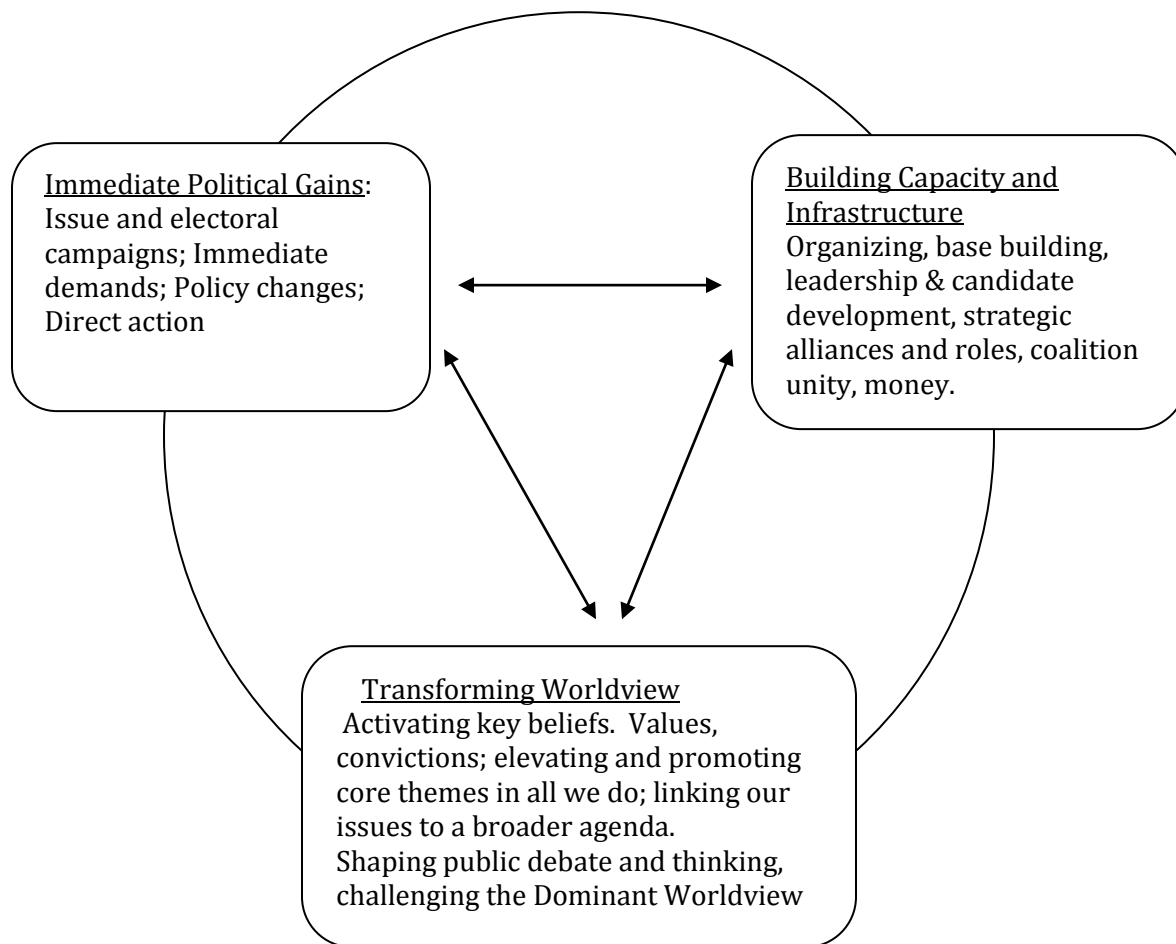
The focus in progressive politics in the past 20 years has been on Organizing and winning campaigns. But there is nothing holding people together. We built an infrastructure, but not grounded in a worldview. **The Goal in the Movement Moment is to reverse the order.**

- 1) What is the world view that we want to make sure we are amplifying
- 2) What is the infrastructure to get to the world we want, and
- 3) Then, what issues & campaigns do we want to wage in order for our worldview to get out there?

Inherent worth and dignity of all families

What are we fighting for and how do we reframe the debate? For example, we bought into the marriage equality frame of the Right.

Handout: **Contending for Power: The Three Faces of Power** (Grassroots Policy Project)



<break time>

Break out rooms for four MUUSJA working groups

Key strategic questions:
What issues will we select?

What will our frame be for our link to issues?

How will we use these issues to develop and disseminate our frame?

Who will be organized and how?

We are not changing people's minds we are changing the discussion.

How are we going to speak what is true and core to us and how do we build a relationship on that?

Authentic dialogue happens between people, not between ideologies.

Opportunity to frame the world in a bigger way than us and them.

-Don't frame in "us and them"

After Breakout – reporters from the four groups report on their frames

Eco/Environment group

principle #7 Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.

As UU's we are working for the responsible stewardship of the earth for this and future generations.

As UU's we stand for (or believe in) the responsible stewardship of the earth for this and future generations.

Green jobs – they will sustain our communities

As responsible stewards we will fight for green jobs which will sustain our communities, decrease our carbon footprint and sustain(?) our earth for this and future generations.

Look to work with: unions, Ford plant, Ford shareholders, legislators, unemployment groups, Obama transition team.

Voter Rights

As UU's we stand for the inherent worth and dignity of all citizens to exercise their right of conscience in the democratic process.

Work with Keith Ellison, legislature, paper ballots/voter ID bill

Organize UU's in Minnesota and nationally through Prairie Star District and General Assembly

Work with voter integrity groups in MN and network with Spiritual Progressives

UU's work for same day voter registration because we believe in the inherent worth and dignity....

UU's out 4 Marriage

We believe in the inherent worth and dignity of every person and every family. We stand for justice, equity and compassion for all families.

Civil, legal rights around partnering. Safety and health of all children, separation of church and state.

The only opponents are people who want to break up families.

Reproductive Rights

We support the inherent worth and dignity of all families and affirm and protect their right to make decisions for their health and well being.

Advocate freedom to choose comprehensive sex ed, beginning of life -when does it occur?

Closing exercise: Investing in the future.

“Change is inevitable – transformation is optional.”