**Background**

As an organizer you will be building relationships with volunteers around shared interests, values and issues. You will be asking others to step forward, get involved, and take action.

As organizers, we need to build trust, inspire hope, and move people to act. Stories are a powerful way to do this: they are how we communicate who we are and why others should trust us, what is at stake, and why there is such urgency and need to act together.

Effective organizing starts from your own individual interests and values – the why and what that moved you to act, but as organizers we need to connect our story with the story of others to create common ground and purpose for why we must act together now. This is simply another way of telling a collective story:

* We are faced by a challenge (what our shared problem is or what needs to change)
* We have a choice (the bad choice or our alternative better choice)
* We have an outcome (results of that decision) and,
* We have an ask (opportunity to act - there is hope that working together we can bring  about the better alternative)

In this exercise we will focus on creating your own organizing story using the framework of challenge, choice, outcome and ask. We’ll break it into four parts:

1. You will do the first part –reflect on why you became involved in politics and why it matters so much to you, your family, or your community.
2. In the second part, you will start to construct your own story using the framework of Challenge, Choice, Outcome, Ask.
3. For the third part, you will partner up with some of your peers, share your stories with one another, and exchange feedback.
4. In the fourth part, there will be an opportunity to share your organizing story with the whole group and gain their feedback as well as that of your trainer.

**Step 1: Reflection**

Think about the experiences that have helped shape you and have moved you to become involved in organizing.

You chose differently than a lot of your friends, co-workers, and neighbors. By virtue of being in this room, you took another path. You didn’t become isolated, but decided to become involved. Why? Look deeply. What motivated you? Why did you become an activist in the first place? When did you decide that politics and building power mattered? Where did your motivation come from? What had prevented you from acting before?

Your motivation might be related to your family, your faith, events in your childhood and youth, your work life, or your schooling and leisure activities. They may have been shaped by your race, ethnicity, economic and social circumstances, where you started in life, and where we are now.

Take 5 minutes and jot down some notes on the key experiences that helped shape who you are today.

* When did you decide to become involved?
* What was the challenge and choice you faced?
* What core values are reflected by your experience(s)?

**Step 2: Write your own organizing story**

Take 15 minutes and write your own brief story that connects your challenge, choice, outcome and ask. Try to include specific detail - what did each moment in your story feel like, sound like, and look like?

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| **Challenge** | **Choice** | **Outcome** | **Ask** |
|  |  |  |  |

Try to make your organizing story no longer than two minutes. [use the back of the page if you wish]

**Step 3: Share your story with others**

Take another 15 minutes and join two others and take turns telling your stories.

* What themes or values do you find you have in common?
* What is your collective story of hope that connects you together and moves you to act?

**Step 4: Share with the whole group**

We will share as many of these stories that we have time to share with the whole group.