

EFFECTIVE CONVERSATIONS

# Knowing your why

# Our learning journey

- Week 1:** Effective listening
- Week 2:** Know your why
- Week 3:** Why, how, what
- Week 4:** Motivational interviewing
- Week 5:** Voter contact best practices



A portrait of Alexis Conavay, a woman with short, straight purple hair and bangs. She is wearing dark-rimmed glasses, a nose ring, and a dark top. She is smiling slightly and looking directly at the camera. The background is a dark, textured wall.

**Alexis Conavay**

OFA Organizing Project Manager  
[@AlexConavay](#)

A woman with short grey hair and bangs is smiling warmly at the camera. She is wearing a blue button-down shirt. Her right hand is raised, with her index finger pointing towards the viewer. The background is slightly blurred, showing other people in a group setting. The overall tone is positive and engaging.

# Starting effective conversations

**#OFAAction**

# Goals for this session

- 1 Analyze underlying reasons why engaging in persuasive conversations is difficult, both individually and interpersonally.
- 2 Apply the theory of 'knowing your why' to people you will talk to in your organizing work.
- 3 Be ready to speak from our values and engage in challenging conversations during this incredibly important year!

# Agenda

## The challenge of persuasion

Speaking from values: The why, how, what

Case studies & examples

Practice and feedback

Putting it all together & next steps



# Why is changing someone's opinion so difficult?

**FOLLOWING CLIP:**

***The Incredible Rarity of Changing Your Mind  
from This American Life***

# THIS AMERICAN LIFE FROM WBEZ





## BRAINSTORM:

# Why is it difficult to persuade someone to change?

Type your thoughts into the chat box.

# Challenges to persuasion



**Personal  
Anxiety**

# Challenges to persuasion



**Personal  
Anxiety**

**Interpersonal  
differences**



# Challenges to persuasion



**Personal  
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**Fractured  
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# Challenges to persuasion

**Personal  
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**The “ask”  
typically  
associated**

# Agenda

The challenge of persuasion

**Speaking from values: The why, how, what**

Case studies & examples

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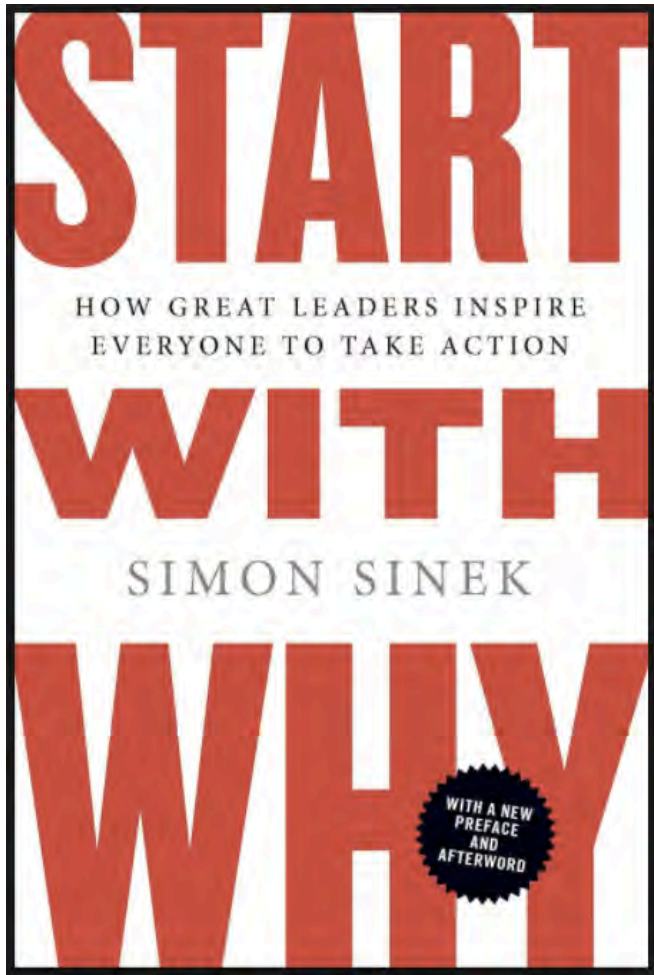
Putting it all together & next steps

**2018 is an important  
moment. We need to have  
thousands of effective  
conversations this year.**

**We can cut through the  
political noise when we have  
conversations that speak to  
the head and the heart.**



**But how do we have  
powerful conversations?**



# The Golden Circle

# Why

# Your why

- 1 This is your cause, your purpose, your belief. The thing that drives you most.
- 2 We are able to connect to each other more deeply through values and beliefs.
- 3 This is the hardest part of ourselves to understand clearly.



# How

# Your how

- 1 This is your strategy, the way that you bring your “why” into being.
- 2 Your how should explain the way in which you or your organization live out your values.
- 3 We sometimes call this our “theory of change.”

# What

# Your what

- 1 Your what is what you do; the actions you take each day.
- 2 This is the easiest part of ourselves to understand, but the least convincing to motivate others.
- 3 Use your “why” and “how” to motivate people to join your “what!”

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# Two case studies

# Speaking from the 'why'

- 1 Watch these two commercials and pay attention to how each utilizes messaging.
- 2 Which one is speaking more from its why? What values do you hear being messaged?
- 3 Why does this example feel more powerful to you? How does it move you?







# Speaking from the 'why'

- 1 Watch these two commercials and pay attention to how each utilizes messaging.
- 2 Which one is speaking more from its why? What values do you hear being messaged?
- 3 Why does this example feel more powerful to you? How does it move you?

**How can we apply this  
framework to community  
organizing?**

# Key shifts in thinking:

- 1 What we mean by persuasion
- 2 Who we understand the audience to be
- 3 How this applies to community organizing

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Putting it all together & next steps

**How do we speak from  
our values during our  
conversations with people?**

**First, you have to know  
your why and also be  
genuinely curious about  
your neighbor's why.**

# One method to identify your 'why'

## **Critical incidents:**

Critical incidents are events in your life that you can recall being an important moment for you in clarifying what you believe.

-Stephen Brookfield



# **My critical incident story**

## WHOLE GROUP CHATBOX

**From the critical incident story you heard, what values do you hear being conveyed?**

# One method to identify your 'why'

## **Critical incident question:**

When was the first time you remember standing up for something that you believed in?

# Now it's your turn

**Remember:** Having a clear, concise why keeps us connected to why we do what we do, helps us connect to others, and when shared, has the opportunity to build trust and community.



Type in the chat box to share  
your critical incident

## WHOLE GROUP CHATBOX

**In your own critical incident story, what values do you find?**

# Putting it all together: The framework of your why

**Critical  
incident**

**What is a critical incident that leads to what you believe and why?**

# Putting it all together: The framework of your why

**Critical  
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**What is a critical incident that leads to what you believe and why?**

**Values**

**What values are present underneath your critical incident and why?**

# Putting it all together: The framework of your why

**Critical  
incident**

**What is a critical incident that leads to what you believe and why?**

**Values**

**What values are present underneath your critical incident and why?**

**Practice**

**How will you practice communicating your values in way that resonates with diverse groups of people?**



**What changes will you  
make in conversations if you  
are trying to identify and  
understand their why?**

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# Debrief

Which phase of the framework comes easily to you?

How will you use this framework in your conversations this year?

# Next steps

A man with glasses is looking down at a document he is holding. The image is darkened to serve as a background for the text.

**EFFECTIVE CONVERSATIONS**

# **Part 3: Your theory of change**

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**Alexis Conavay** / OFA Organizing Project Manager

**June 13th at 8 p.m. ET / 7 p.m. CT**

# Team '18

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**Thank you!**