

CAMPAIGN ORGANIZING BOOT CAMP

Personal story

Elizabeth Erickson / [OFA Training Director](#) / [@LizzGErickson](#)

A close-up portrait of a woman with light brown hair pulled back, smiling warmly at the camera. She is wearing large, gold-colored hoop earrings with colorful beads. The background is a blurred, textured wall.

Liz Erickson

OFA Training Director
@LizzGErickson

#OFAAction
#OrganizingFor18

Goals for our time

- 1 Analyze underlying reasons why engaging in persuasive conversations is difficult, both individually and interpersonally

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- 2 Apply the theory of 'knowing your why' to people you will talk to in your organizing work
- 3 Use the challenge, choice, outcome, ask framework to develop your personal story

Agenda

The incredible rarity of changing your mind

Theory building with Simon Sinek

Critical incident

Personal story framework

Debrief and close

Why is changing someone's opinion so difficult?

FOLLOWING CLIP:

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

**Listen to clip on
following slide**

THIS AMERICAN LIFE

FROM WBEZ





GROUP SHARE

Why is it difficult to persuade someone to change?

Pause for group discussion

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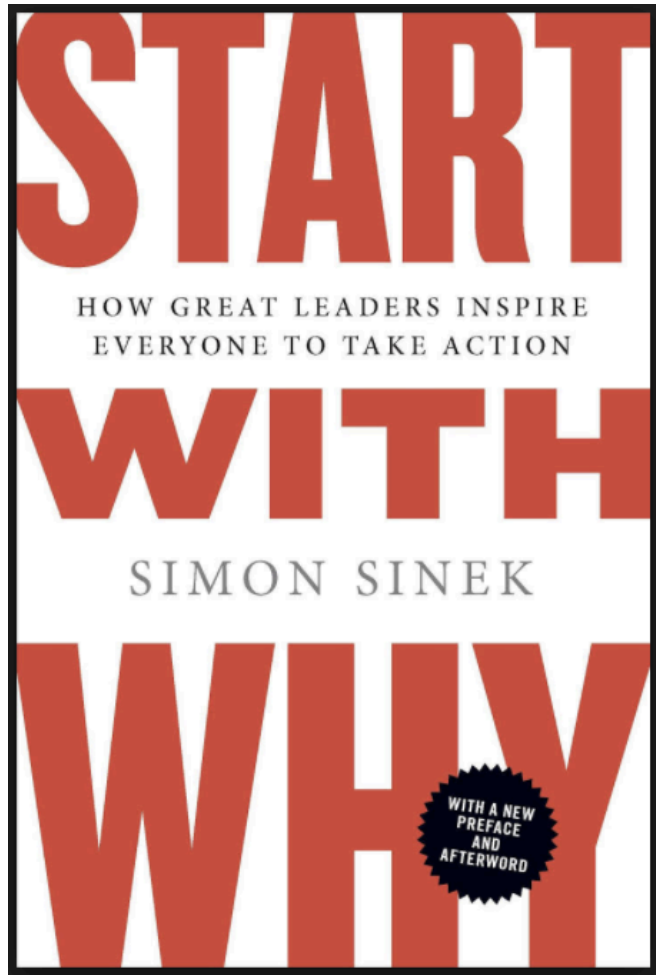
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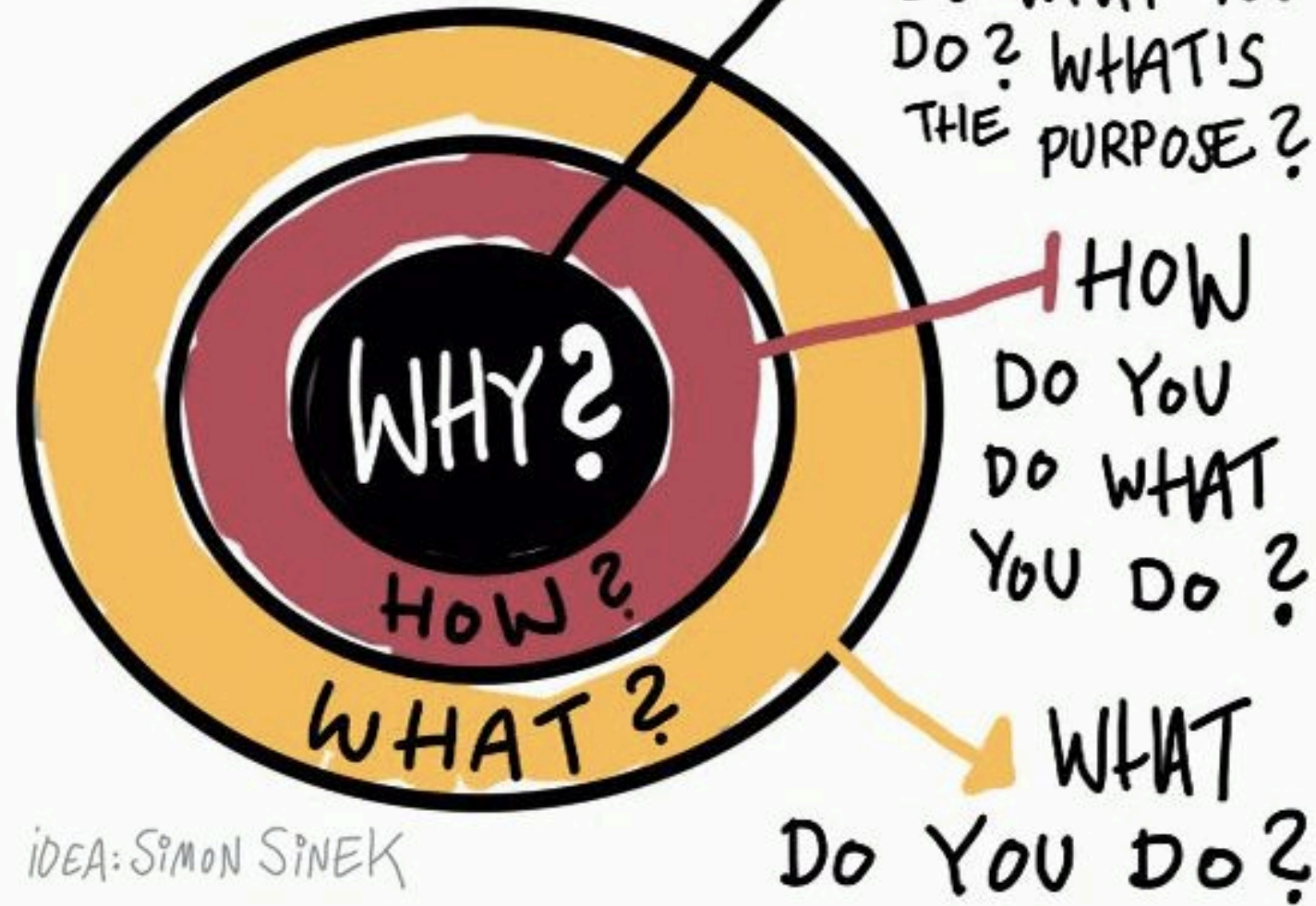
Debrief and close

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

**Watch video clip on
following slide**



GOLDEN CIRCLE



IDEA: SIMON SINEK

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**Narrowing in on our values
and beliefs aid us in
understanding our '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

One method to identify your 'why'

Critical incident question:

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

Write:

Write down that story – tell us all of the details of when, where, people involved, and what the outcome was

2 minutes

**Individual
reflection**

- Write down the story of your critical incident
- Using the values list on your worksheet, identify 2- 3 values operating in your 'critical incident' exercise

**Pause to write personal
critical incident**

2 minutes

Partner share

- Share your critical incident with your partner
- Partners should listen for the values that are underneath the critical incident
- What feedback do you have for your partner?

Pause for partner reflection

Group share

**How does this apply to
your organizing work?**

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Stories are powerful

Elements of a personal story



Challenge

Choice

Outcome

Ask

Sample personal story

Growing up in Central California, I have seen firsthand the importance of water in our community. As we speak right now, firefighters are risking their lives to contain deadly fires that are ravaging the Sierra Nevadas and surrounding communities, and I am truly terrified at the thought of my family - my parents, brothers, nieces, and nephews having to evacuate because the air they are breathing is toxic. Access to the quantity of water we need helps us contain these fires, as well as helps our local economy thrive with agriculture, jobs for farmers, and drinkable water from the ground table.”

In 2016, I voted for officials that would represent my beliefs about water access to government. I want our community’s future access to water to be guaranteed. If we continue on our current track, we know that the future of our community is shaky.”

Unfortunately, our pleas for creative solutions about the future of water in Fresno have gone unheard in Washington, which is why I am organizing with OFA and volunteers in our community to think of how we can address this critical problem.

Would you join me for a house meeting with other volunteers to brainstorm how we can make sure our member of Congress protects families from fearing about water safety in the future?

Elements of a personal story



Challenge

Choice

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The challenge is the central reason for taking action. Without challenges, there would be no need to organize. Everyone would just be happy with the status quo.

Sample personal story

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Elements of a personal story



Challenge

Choice

Outcome

Ask

This is the **choice you made
to confront your challenge. What
is the choice you made in that
moment of adversity?**

For most organizers, your choice was action. Your choice was change—to stand up and do something, no matter how big or small.

Sample personal story

Choice

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Elements of a personal story



Challenge

Choice

Outcome

Ask

What were the results of your decision?

The outcome shows how taking action can lead to something good. If you're telling the story in an effort to move someone to take action, they need to know that taking action can have positive results.

Sample personal story

Outcome

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Elements of a personal story



The diagram consists of four circles arranged horizontally. The first three circles are dark gray and contain the words 'Challenge', 'Choice', and 'Outcome' in white text. The fourth circle is white and contains the word 'Ask' in blue text. All circles are of the same size and are evenly spaced.

Challenge

Choice

Outcome

Ask

The ask is when you give
your audience a chance to
join you and become part
of the story.

Sample personal story

Ask

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Now it's your turn!

Elements of a personal story

Begin writing your personal story. Think of a key life moment—it doesn't need to be dramatic—in which you began to care about the issue you wrote about in the previous exercise. Consider the following:

- C** What was the specific challenge you faced?
- C** What was the specific choice you made?
- O** What happened as a result of your choice?
- A** How can your listener join you in taking action?

**Pause to write
personal story**

Pause to share personal story

Next Steps

- 1 Continue to practice and refine your personal story
- 2 Share your personal story with two other people and ask for feedback
- 3 Learn all the tactics that incorporate your personal story on our next training

Key shifts in thinking:

- ① Talking with others at a values level
- ② Seeking emotionally resonant experiences
- ③ Knowing your audience and adapting to them: personal story, 1:1s, deep canvassing, volunteer recruitment

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Debrief

What are your next steps for your personal story?

How can you continue to re-center on the values that drive your work?

What do you predict will be difficult?

Thank you!