

DCHPN Meeting

9/25/19

Marple Library/ Township Building

Sharing Stories that Inspire Action

Michael Gagné, presenter

Michael Gagné served as a teaching fellow for Marshall Ganz and has a background in adult education, community organizing, and strategic planning. As a consultant, he serves a wide range of mission-centered organizations and facilitates planning, organizational change, and conflict transformation.

Michael took us through a number of activities which you can use with your groups to figure out what you want to do to create change. The change can be as large as the civil rights movement or as small as just wanting people to learn more about your museum. The concepts are the same. Michael is available to do this workshop with your group if you would like.

Warmup- Introductions

Stand in a circle and then introduce yourself to at least 4 people

Say your name and either 'I am here because...' or 'I'm here to learn...'

Common Ground

Stand in a circle and step in and say something that is true for you, see how many other people step in to see what you have in common

Say 'Common ground for ...'

Examples- Cat/ dog people, people who live in Delaware County, people who like history, people who like reading, etc.

My People

Answer 'Who is my people?' 'What change do they need?' 'How do I organize them to create change?' 'How do I build capacity and create leaders?'

Stand in a circle and go around and complete the sentence 'My people are...' It can be as deep and complex as you want it to be, or just one word. It's who you relate to in your friends, family and community.

Examples- My people are 'curious', 'voracious readers', 'travelers', 'historians', 'diverse', etc.

Michael told us stories about his background and how he got into community organizing, starting with his childhood in Montreal, Canada and his experience in working on a number of campaigns for social change. He told us about Marshall Ganz, who created a system of community organizing. There is an online course for those who are interested in learning more. Check out <https://marshallganz.com/> for more information about public narrative, leadership, and action. Michael also recommends Ghandi's autobiographical book 'The Story of my Experiments with Truth' for inspiration.

Organizing is about non-stop learning, and campaigns are learning libraries.

Organizing starts with relationships

You need a team of leaders, so you need to build up leaders (for example, the Montgomery Bus Boycott had a number of leaders, from MLK, Jr. & Rosa Parks to the mimeographers who wrote the notices for the boycott)

The 3 points are: Story, Strategy, Structure

Determine relationships> Develop shared story> Create structure (leadership)> Create a strategy (plan)> Cause action (what changes)

Commitment precedes strategy- you have to have a commitment from the people involved

Leadership- Leaders have to accept responsibility to create change

Stories activate shared values, make them exciting

Stories include a challenge, choice and outcome

Public Narrative

Story of Self- can change over years, where are you coming from?

Did you have a 'challenge, choice, outcome' point in your life that inspired you to make change?

Story of Us- Shared value- Find out what we care about

Story of Now- What is the call to action? Why do people need to care?

Stories align the:

Head- Strategy

Heart- Narrative

Hands- Action

Stories are powerful if it creates action, even if the action is a deeper understanding of your organization

Neural Imaging- Empathy- Feel something, imagine what it's like to be the character

Create interesting stories:

Values> Emotion> Action

Stories have

To counteract

Urgency

Inertia

Anger

Apathy

Hope

Fear

Solidarity

Isolation

YCMAD

Self-doubt

(You Can Make A Difference)

Public narrative is the moral of the story

Character has a challenge. They make a choice. There is an outcome, and the moral (takeaway) is what they (or we) learned from it.

Commonalities:

SELF < Purpose> NOW <Urgency> US <Community> SELF

Figure out what the stories (Self/ Us/ Now) are, and how they connect to each other

Story of Us- think of these questions

-Who is the 'Us' you will call up on to join you? (community, visitors, members, etc.)

-What motivating values do they share? (Each Us can be different, but there should be some commonalities)

-What experiences have you shared?

> We are all part of multiple Us's. One way to establish an Us is by shared stories

> Types of Us's- past/ future, interests, fate/ choice (what do you have in common?)

> Elements of Us

- Founding (were you all there at the beginning of the group?)
- Challenges faced and overcome (did you have a campaign for change- save a building?)
- Who joined us? (did other people join you along the way to help)
- What this teaches about the values of organization

*Story of Us works if people identify with each other around values that inspire them to act

Michael recommends Howard Zinn's *A People's History of the United States*:

Since its original landmark publication in 1980, *A People's History of the United States* has been chronicling American history from the bottom up, throwing out the official version of history taught in schools—with its emphasis on great men in high places—to focus on the street, the home, and the workplace.

Story of Now:

- Is urgent- is there a threat/ opportunity?
- Meant to inspire- make people pay attention
- Rooted in values that you celebrate in story of Self/Us, but poses a challenge to them
- It contrasts a vision of how the world could be if you act/ fail to act

Hopeful action- need strategy

-Calls on us to act with a specific ask (not just 'let's take to the streets!' - say 'we need you to design flyers', 'we need you to call these people', 'we need you to go to this meeting', etc.

Story can change scale depending on the organization

You may just want people to find out more- read a book, attend a workshop, do research, etc.

Coaching tips- how to organize people:

Don't just offer vague 'feel good' comments- 'good job!' 'way to go!'

Coach on the following:

1. Challenge- is it specific? Does it paint a vivid picture?
2. Outcome- What is the specific desired outcome? Is there a clear hopeful vision?
3. Choice- Is there a clear choice? How does it make you feel?

4. Values- What values do you share with the storyteller?
5. Details- What is especially vivid? Do you want more?
6. Interweaving Self/Us/Now- Did they relate? If not, what thread might link them?

Historic sites might have multiple 'Us' and might mean different things to different people.

Historic characters can have multiple layers (occupation, family, religion, community, etc) that can connect to different people in different ways

Other resources:

1. A video interview with Marshall Ganz (interviewed by Bill Moyers) in which Ganz talks about the power of story/public narrative in relation to social change:

<https://billmoyers.com/episode/how-people-power-generates-change/>

3. A brief handout about explaining public narrative:

<http://marshallganz.usmblogs.com/files/2012/08/Public-Narrative-Worksheet-Fall-2013-.pdf>

3. A participant guide for developing your own Story of Self:

<https://www.ndi.org/sites/default/files/Public%20Narrative%20Participant%20Guide.pdf>

4. A powerful video in which James Croft gives a five-minute speech on bullying and LGBTQ suicide that has a "self, us, now" framework:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lymvc5d6qxY>

If you would like Michael to work with your group, here are his details:

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