**SPEAKING FROM THE HEART: MAKING THE AMERICAN DREAM REAL FOR EVERYONE**

**TRAIN THE TRAINER WORKSHOP**

**HANDBOOK**

**February 2-3, 2017**

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**“SPEAKING FROM THE HEART: MAKING THE AMERICAN DREAM REAL FOR EVERYONE WORKSHOP**

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This workshop is being presented today by Mark McDermott and Kelly Coogan-Gehr, Director of the Washington State Labor Education and Research Center at the Georgetown Campus of Seattle College.

**OVERALL GOALS OF WORKSHOP**

To develop better leaders, staff and activists, inspire activism, and identify and build more labor and community allies through deeper heart and mind connections with our shared economic pain, values and vision of a better future for all. Reframing and controlling messaging based in shared experiences and values is important in campaigns and other educational, training and outreach efforts. Achieving these goals will help accomplish the following:

1. Union leaders and staff become more effective in messaging within and without the union;
2. Union activists gain better skills in communicating with union members, unrepresented workers and our families and communities;
3. Union members are inspired to become activists;
4. Unrepresented workers are encouraged to join the union after more effective contacts with union leaders, staff, activists and union members; and
5. Community organizations and members become stronger allies.

**KEY TECHNIQUES TO BE LEARNED**

1. Finding Common Ground – Building group solidarity by learning about our shared economic pain, feelings and dreams for a better today and future
2. Elevator Speech – Using a heart-led personal introduction that draws people toward us and begins to open their hearts and minds to deeper conversations about working together to build a better future
3. Walking Graphs – Learning about Corporate America’s stealing of our shared prosperity by physical group exercises that dramatize the explosion in income and wealth inequality since the late 1970s.
4. Blame Game/Who are Our Current and Future Allies? – Encouraging participants to name and reflect on what groups are blamed for our hard times and explore how blaming the wrong groups does not serve our interests as working people and community members. This exercise also creates a space to identify new potential allies in our fights.
5. Power of personal and family stories - Using our personal and family stories to establish credibility, engage audiences and inspire them to join the fight for a better future.
6. Encouraging discussions
   1. Pair/Share – talking in pairs to maximize participation
   2. Small groups
   3. Large groups
7. Setting ground rules and expectations for workshops and presentations

**INSPIRING OURSELVES AND OTHER BY RECLAIMING OUR HISTORY AS WORKING PEOPLE**

The workshop will also help the trainers deepen their understanding of how our working class ancestors and their allies built the American Dream, how Corporate America is stealing our Dream, and what we can do to win a better future for all. This history can inspire workshop participants by learning, for the first time or reclaiming their own understanding, that our ancestors, against overwhelming odds in extremely difficult times, built the American Dream. If they could do it, we can do.

A critical part of the Corporate America’s strategy is to convince the American people that our current reality cannot be fundamentally changed. Convincing a people that they are powerless to change an unjust present creates a defeated people. Reclaiming hope based on our own history is foundational to helping people reclaim their power. This is true for members of the IBEW and other unions as well as our families and community members across our state and country.

This workshop brings that hope directly to both trainers and audience participants.

**FLEXIBLE TRAINING AND TOOLS**

This workshop, and its skills building and history teaching exercises are designed for maximum flexibility. Its design allows trainers to use some or all of the exercises and history lessons based on the time available, the intended audience, and what the trainers are trying to accomplish. This training prepares the trainees to give 3-4 hour workshops as well as 15, 30, 45 minute or longer mini-trainings, mini-workshops and presentations to diverse audiences.

**USE OF WORKSHOP CURRICULUM, RELATED MATERIALS AND HANDBOOK**

Participants in this workshop are free to use and modify these materials without the prior approval of the author Mark McDermott. The one exception to this freedom to modify these materials is that only Mark McDermott is free to modify the Handbook used in this workshop.

Any reproduction of these materials requires the following the following acknowledgements:

1. Mark McDermott is the author of all materials;
2. UFCW Local 21 provided funding for the original workshop “Making the American Dream Real for Everyone” which forms the basis of this workshop;
3. The IBEW provided the funding for the creation of the workshop design, curricula and related workshop materials; and
4. Tracy Prezeau, IBEW, played an important role in the original workshop design.

Compliance with these requested requirements are not based in copyright law as I support “freeware.” The requests for acknowledgements are based in joint use agreements between the author and UFCW Local 21 and the IBEW. Your compliance with these requirements is greatly appreciated.

**WHY ARE WE HERE?**

Our American Dream of shared prosperity, equal treatment, opportunity for all and security in hard times is under relentless attack from Corporate America and their political allies. Even in the best of times, millions of Americans never achieved our American Dream due to discrimination and denial of equal rights and opportunity. Today, record levels of income and wealth inequality and corporate profits coupled with increasing corporate influence in all branches and levels of our government reflect the growing domination of corporate power. Tens of millions of our fellow Americans live in unnecessary and unjust economic insecurity. We, the people, must once again rise up and take back our nation and government in order to build a new American Dream for everyone.

Destruction of the labor movement is central to Corporate America’s relentless drive for economic and political domination. The labor movement is the largest and most diverse movement opposing corporate domination. This decades-long assault on working people’s rights to organize, bargain collectively and share fairly in the wealth that we produce takes many forms:

1. Systematic and growing violations of existing labor laws;
2. Court decisions weakening workers’ rights and favoring corporations;
3. Well-financed and often illegal campaigns to defeat union organizing efforts;
4. Increasing influence of almost unlimited funding from corporations and the wealthy in elections and lobbying which undermines the voice of the people;
5. Blocking federal and state labor law reforms;
6. Relentless public relations efforts that demonize and weaken unions and downplay the many great victories of organized labor in building the American Dream;
7. “Free trade” agreements, monetary, tax, and other government policies which undermine the people’s rights and well-being;
8. Weakening of the social safety net;
9. Dividing native-born workers against immigrants;
10. Blocking stronger anti-discrimination laws and effective enforcement of current laws needed to end systemic discrimination;
11. Making affordable quality education less accessible and increasing student debt
12. A deliberate effort to keep the American people and particularly our youth ignorant of the great role that organized labor and our allies played in creating the American Dream for most Americans.

This endless corporate campaign affects all Americans concerned about justice, democracy and a brighter future for everyone. It is part of a larger attack on the foundations of our democracy. If working people and our many allies cannot organize effectively, both economically and politically, we will no longer have a meaningful say in our government.

We are here today to learn more about how to inspire, educate and stir to action union members, our families, and our current and potential community allies. Such action can build a bigger and stronger labor movement and the broader community coalitions needed to help working people and our allies take our country back and ensure a brighter, more just and secure future for all.

**PURPOSE OF THE TRAINING**

1. Train groups of facilitators who will present and adapt my workshop “Making the American Dream Real for Everyone” for leaders, activists, members, and apprentices in organized labor and other organizations, movements and communities concerned about growing economic and social injustice;
2. Develop specific presentation techniques and messaging tools that are adaptable to other presentations;
3. Provide the facilitators with the resources and materials they need in order to conduct the workshop;
4. Encourage and learn more creative ways to present ourselves and organized labor to our many diverse communities; and
5. Provide reference materials and websites that workshop participants can access that will deepen their understanding of the issues presented in the workshop.

**GOALS OF THE TRAINING**

1. Provide facilitators with the knowledge, skills, and presentation techniques they need in order to successfully present workshops, trainings and presentations. This work can inspire participants, deepen their understanding of the historical role of organized labor and our allies in building the American Dream, and encourage them to get more involved in their unions and communities;
2. Stimulate discussions within organized labor, individual unions and other economic and social justice organizations and movements about how to inspire, educate and activate their members and constituents; and
3. Promote and stimulate dialogue, unity of vision, shared programs, durable coalitions and actions within the labor movement and between the labor movement and other economic and social justice organizations and movements to build a better future for all.
4. Encourage you to practice your new skills, techniques and knowledge within six week of the training. This will help ensure that your new knowledge is used before you begin to forget it through disuse.

**KEY TECHNIQUES TO BE LEARNED**

1. Finding Common Ground – Building group solidarity by learning about our shared economic pain, feelings, values and dreams for a better today and future
2. Power of personal and family stories - Using our personal and family stories to engage audiences and establish credibility
3. Making presentations about history and economics
4. Walking Graphs – Learning about major changes in income and wealth inequality using physical group exercises
5. Blame Game – Encouraging participants to name and reflect on what groups are blamed for our hard times and explore how blaming the wrong groups do not serve our interests as working people and community members
6. Encouraging discussions
   1. Fair/Share – talking in pairs
   2. Small groups
   3. Large groups
7. Setting ground rules and expectations for workshops and presentations
8. Elevator Speech – Using a heart-led personal introduction that draws people toward us and begins to open their hearts and minds to deeper conversations about building a better future

This workshop is constructed so that the facilitator(s) can use some or all of these key techniques. For example, you do not have to do the Elevator Speech and Power of Personal Stories exercises as part of the workshop. These are powerful tools that be used with some of these techniques in shorter time periods.

**GROUND RULES FOR THE TRAINING AND WORKSHOPS**

1. Respect for everyone in the training;
2. Limit the length of your comments to encourage everyone to participate;
3. Step up and step back – If you are someone who is comfortable talking in groups, try to “step back” part of the time to create a space for others who are not so comfortable talking in groups. If you are someone who is not so comfortable talking in groups, try to “step forward” and push yourself to engage in the discussions;
4. All comments and perspectives have value; and
5. Every person in the room has a perspective that we can learn from even if we disagree with that perspective.

Will you agree to these rules?

**THEORY GUIDING THE WORKSHOP TRAINING**

You are both facilitator and teacher providing information and inspiration to participants. People learn best when their own stories and experiences are part of the learning process. We want participants to discover their own path forward while we share information and inspire and activate them into more sustained action. This is an important balancing act.

**We need to inspire participants** with the knowledge that working people like them in previous generations overcame tremendous odds and opposition and created the American Dream. These great victories brought a brighter future and economic prosperity and security to tens of millions of working people and their families and communities. Participants must learn - that like their predecessors – what they do and the actions they take – will make a real difference.

**We need to recover our heroic multi-racial, multi-cultural working class history** that has been hidden from us. In doing so, we will help participants create a new sense of their identity and purpose that we can foster pride in our own family and collective histories.

**Engaging participants with our hearts establishes common ground among participants.** We do this using our individual, family and collective economic, political and social histories, challenges and difficulties. In doing so, we will build greater solidarity across our many differences and open our minds to new ways of approaching our great challenges and opportunities.

**As facilitators we need to deepen our understanding of the power of our own stories**. Our stories are a reflection of ourselves and can serve as a great source of strength and inspiration for participants Moving participants to think about and share their personal stories provides an opportunity to **remind participants that we/they are fighting for a brighter and more secure and future for their children, grandchildren and the people that they love.** **Personalizing the hardships caused by economic inequality helps on participants deepen their commitment to persevere in this long and difficult struggle.**

**A key task of the facilitator is to offer participants a balance between passion, thought and reflection with a call to ongoing action.** Here is an example: “Say yes, if you are with me on taking our country back.” Tell them I can’t hear you. Get them to speak loudly and powerfully aboutwhat they want and don’t want. This provides the opportunity to energize the participants and create a memorable experience.

**Another goal of the facilitator is to get everyone talking during the workshop.** Some people are very uncomfortable talking in a large group. This can be addressed by frequent use of breaking out the group in pairs or small groups. This is called “Pair-Share.” Small groups or pairs of participants can then be called upon to “report-out” feelings and ideas, which would otherwise be lost. If the discussion bogs down, switch to Pair-Share to get their ideas flowing, then bring them back together.

**Every workshop, presentation and training should end with a call to action that is focused. In many cases, the call to action should be guided by the sponsoring organization’s strategies and organizing efforts.**

**IMPORTANCE OF KEY QUESTIONS**

The effectiveness of this workshop and other workshops and presentations will be influenced by understanding who your audience is and your goals for the workshop. Is your audience key leaders of organizations, staff, activists, or members of unions and community-based organizations who are concerned about the direction of our country? What actions do you want them to take after the workshop?

This workshop can be used effectively with leaders of organizations, their staff and activists as well as their members or other interested persons. The first step is to identify key questions on which you want to focus the workshop discussions Examples include:

* A group of leaders who want to deepen their members’ commitment to various campaigns
* Workshops with leaders and activists from other movements and organizations to facilitate the building of coalitions and better understanding across movements and organizations
* Expanding the knowledge and skills of staff and activists to support their growth as effective organizers
* Educating, motivating and inspiring people to get involved

For those already involved in organizing, the workshop can serve to deepen and strengthen their work. It is very important that you, the facilitator, develop your key questions through discussions the leaders of the organization(s) that are sponsoring the event that you are facilitating. Leaders sponsoring the event may have clear reasons for putting the event on and are likely to want to encourage attendees to take specific actions coming out of the event. In cases where you are unable to get clear input from the leaders pick questions that will stimulate discussions about actions they might take to advance economic and social justice.

**Bottom Line: Choosing thought-provoking key and action-encouraging questions for the discussions can help with all of these goals.**

**EQUIPMENT AND MATERIALS NEEDED AND ROOM SETUP**

**EQUIPMENT AND MATERIALS CHECKLIST**

1. PowerPoint projector connected to Laptop
2. Laptop
3. PowerPoint files
4. Laser pointer/clicker
5. Microphone – best to have a lapel mike so you can move around if you wish; handheld is second best; stationary mike is least preferable. Having a mike eases the strain on your voice which is particularly important if the group is large and the workshop is long
6. Easel with pad of paper with stickum on the back so you can post to the wall
7. Magic markers – best to have non-odor markers in case people are sensitive to chemicals
8. Sign in sheet to collect names and contact information
9. Evaluation form – this is highly recommended so you can learn what worked and what did not work
10. Access to my website markmmcdermott.com if you want to use one of my videos
11. Any materials you want to hand out

**ROOM SETUP**

In order to promote optimum discussion and dialogue you should plan the room set up in advance of the event:

* Use round tables if possible.
* Use rectangular tables as an alternative.
* Least desirable is straight rows which make it harder to break into small group discussions.

The “Walking Graph” exercises about income and wealth inequality requires adequate space and flexibility on your part. Ideally, you will want six or seven participants lined up shoulder to shoulder and then take 10+ steps forward. It is best if they can walk in front of all the participants. Sometimes you will need to move tables to make room so plan this in advance.

The bottom line of room set up is to be very clear with your sponsoring organization how you would like the room set up. It is also important for you to know how many people are likely to attend. While it’s not your job to recruit for the event, it is your responsibility to know how many will be attending.

**TIP:** **Get there early so you can help arrange things to the maximum benefit of the workshop. Above all, be flexible and work around difficulties.**

**TRAIN THE TRAINER WORKSHOP SCHEDULE**

This workshop is being jointly presented by Mark McDermott and Kelly Coogan-Gehr, Director of the Washington State Labor Education and Research Center at the Georgetown Campus of Seattle College.

**Day 1: Thursday, February 2nd**

**9:00am to 9:20am:** Mark & Kelly

* Introductions, Personal Stories, Ground Rules, & Workshop Agenda

**9:20am to 9:40am:** Kelly

* Participant Introductions

**9:40am to 10:00am:** Mark

* PowerPoint Presentation # 1: *What Are the American People Thinking?*

**10:00am to 11:00am:** Mark

* Tool # 1: Elevator Speech

**11:00am to 11:15am:** Morning Break

**11:15am to 12:00pm:** Mark

* Tool # 2: Common Ground/American Dream Exercise

**12:00pm to 12:30pm:** Mark

* PowerPoint Presentation # 2: *Our Ancestors Building the Dream*

**12:30pm to 1:00pm:** Lunch

**1:00pm to 1:15pm:** Kelly

* Discussion: Anxieties and fears around teaching and facilitating

**1:15pm to 2:15pm:** Kelly

* Group Work: Teaching *Our Ancestors Building the Dream*

**2:15pm to 2:30pm:** Mark

* Tool # 3: Walking Graphs of Income Inequality & Wealth Inequality

**2:30pm to 2:45pm:** Kelly

* Logistics: Making the walking graph work at your union meeting

**2:45pm to 3:00pm:** Afternoon Break

**3:00pm to 3:30pm:** Mark

* PowerPoint Presentation # 3: *Corporate America Stealing the American Dream*

**3:30pm to 4pm:** Mark & Kelly

* Wrap up of the day & questions

**Day 2: Friday, February 3rd**

**9:00am to 9:30am:** Kelly

* Icebreaker

**9:30am to 9:45am:** Mark & Kelly

* Thoughts & Reflections on Day 1

**9:45am to 10:45am:** Kelly

* Group Work: Teaching *Corporate America Stealing the American Dream*

**10:45am to 11:00am:** Morning Break

**11:00am to 12:15pm:** Mark

* Tool # 4: The Blame Game

**12:15pm to 12:45pm** Lunch

**12:45pm to 2:15pm:** Mark

* Tool # 5: Personal Stories

**2:15pm to 2:30pm:** Afternoon Break

**2:30pm to 3pm:** Mark

* PowerPoint Presentation # 4: *Fighting Forward to Build a Real American Dream for Everyone*

**3:00pm to 3:30pm:** Kelly

* Active listening & drawing out issues that matter to your union brothers and sisters and current and potential community allies

**3:30pm to 4:00pm:** Mark & Kelly

* Thoughts and Reflections on the Workshop

**TRAIN THE TRAINER WORKSHOP SECTIONS**

**GETTING STARTED**

**ACTION STEPS**

1. Self-introduction - Your personal story **(See Handbook Section on Personal Stories)**
   * Share a personal story that creates an emotional connection with the group. This also establishes you as a credible facilitator with firsthand experience with the pain and challenges that many working people face
   * Communicate to the group your personal commitment to helping working people and our allies take our country back and create a brighter future for all people.
2. Why are we here?
   * You should be as clear as possible
   * We want to take our country back and create a brighter and more secure future for all people. Here are some examples:
     1. I want my grandson to have the opportunities I had
     2. I see young people I love struggling to get started in homes and careers
     3. My parents are worried sick about adequate income in retirement
     4. As a person of color, a woman, an immigrant, or a gay or lesbian, I continue to experience discrimination
   * The need to take action to advance our efforts
3. Describe the workshop briefly – Present the agenda
4. How we will work together?: The Ground Rules
   * Be respectful; listen to other opinions
   * Step up; step back – some people are more comfortable talking; allow others to talk; we can learn from others and no one has a lock on all the good ideas
   * Come back from breaks on time so we can move through our agenda
   * **Where are the bathrooms?**

**LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

1. Establish an emotional connection with the group that demonstrates you have lived a part of the struggles all working people face.
2. Clarify why we are holding the workshop, presentation or training.
3. Set expectations about the agenda and the importance of creating a respectful safe place to share our hopes, dreams and ideas about how we build a better future for all.

**GROUP EXERCISE #1**

**COMMON GROUND PART 1**

**QUESTIONS ABOUT ECONOMIC HARD TIMES FOR YOU AND THOSE YOU LOVE**

**PART 1 –SLIDES 2-3.**

**ACTION STEPS**

1. Talk to participants as trade unionists or community activists but also as parents, grandparents, family members and members of diverse communities. You want to talk to them in their full personhood not just their union affiliation or community connections.
2. Ask them a series of personal questions about themselves, their families, and their close friends and their families. You are not asking them about people that they know casually. You will be asking about the people they hold close in their lives. You will invite all to join the activity knowing that some may not feel comfortable. **It is OK if some don’t participate but hopefully all will. Be clear no one is required to participate.**
3. Your first question is to ask them to participate. Ask for a show of hands so you get a sense of what percentage of the audience will participate.
4. Ask them to please raise their hand if the answer to the question is yes. Ask them to look around the room to see how others are answering.
5. You should also announce that you are participating as well.
6. After each question, announce an estimated percentage of participants who have answered yes.
7. Repeat this process for each question.
8. At the end thank them for their willingness to participate.

**LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

1. Get people actively participating and sharing.
2. Learn and share important information about how the participants and those they love have been doing.
3. Build a sense of group solidarity and cohesiveness

**GROUP EXERCISE #2**

**COMMON GROUND PART 2**

**HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT THESE HARD TIMES?**

**PART 1 - SLIDE 4**

**ACTION STEPS**

1. Make sure the easel and magic markers are at hand so you can record the answers given by the participants. Some facilitators do much better if they have someone assist them in recording answers. This is an important point – someone can be an excellent facilitator but not do so well if they have to simultaneously record on the easel. So one way to address this is to consider a “rule” that every facilitator have someone on hand who can provide logistical support during the presentation and hopefully to assist in recording remarks on the easel.
2. Ask participants to pair off with someone sitting next to them preferably with someone they don’t know.
3. Ask each of them to talk to the other person for 90-120 seconds about how they feel about their answers to the 10 questions. At 90-120 seconds, announce that everyone should switch roles. Both people should talk and be heard. **Make sure people stay on the topic.**
4. After 3-4 minutes, bring the group back together.
5. Announce that you are going to ask between 10 and 15 participants to **share one or two words** that capture how they feel about the long period of economic hard times and what the future may hold. Make it clear that you won’t call on everyone. **YOU WANT SHORT ANSWERS. DON’T LET THEM GO AT LENGTH**
6. Write down their words. If they speak a phrase or sentence, try to capture it in a word or two. If someone repeats something someone else has said, put a check by an earlier word or phrase. Examples: Anger, anxiety, depression, frustration, fear, hopelessness.
7. Respectfully listen to people’s feelings.
8. After recording the comments, take a step back and ask the participants if this general list of feelings generally captures their individual and collective experiences.
9. **Post the sheet(s) on the wall for future reference.**

Take a step back and comment from a heart-felt place about the strong emotions. Try to quickly sum up the collective feelings.

**LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

1. Learn the breadth and depth of feelings that participants have about how the economy and the direction of the country is affecting them.
2. Participants are sharing some of their feelings.
3. Build a deeper sense of group solidarity as participants recognize that their feelings and experiences are not unique, weird or odd.
4. Demonstrate how to help people bring their pain forward in a constructive manner.

**GROUP EXERCISE #3**

**COMMON GROUND PART 3**

**WHAT DOES THE AMERICAN DREAM MEAN TO YOU AND YOUR EXTENDED FAMILY?**

**PART 1 - SLIDE 6**

**ACTION STEPS**

This can be a difficult question for many people. In my experience, some people of color, immigrants and others who have been systematically discriminated against react to this question with statements such as: “The American Dream is a myth or phony.” Don’t be put off by their comments. **Don’t debate them.** If you experience this, respect their reality and truth by rephrasing the question: “What are the hopes and dreams for a better world and future for you and those that you love?”

1. Make sure the easel and magic markers are at hand so you can record the answers given by the participants.
2. Depending on the size of the group and the time available, you can ask people to pair off with someone else or ask this question to the entire group. **This is optional and will add time.**
3. Announce that you are going to ask between 10 and 15 participants to share one or two words that capture part of their American Dream. Remind them that not everyone will be called on. Examples: Own a home, secure future, everyone is treated fairly, kids do better than me, affordable education, help in hard times, etc.
4. Write down the answers. Paraphrase if people give longer answers.
5. After 10 or 15 answers, take a step back and reflect on whether anything has been left out. On many occasions I make one or two suggestions and ask the group if it is OK to add them.
6. Read the answers aloud.
7. Ask if this fairly accurately captures much of the essence of their version of the American Dream. Stress that we have done this quickly. We might not have the precise words.
8. **Big question #1:** Is your dream getting closer or farther away? Every group I have worked with says it is getting farther away.
9. **Big question #2:** Do you want to take our country back so those we love will have a brighter future?
10. **Call and response technique: I CAN’T HEAR YOU. WHAT WAS YOUR ANSWER?**
11. **Post on the wall.**

**Final step: Sum up our shared solidarity: Hard times, don’t like it, shared dream, want our country back. Let’s talk about how our ancestors built the Dream, how it was stolen and how do we build a new one.**

**LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

1. You and the group have identified what their dream(s) are. A rough cut version of our American Dream has emerged.
2. The gap between current reality and the Dream is identified and particpants are in touch with their strong feelings.
3. This is the third level of group solidarity: A shared Dream and it is shrinking for many of them.

**PRESENTATION #1**

**TELLING THE STORY: “OUR ANCESTORS BUILDING THE AMERICAN DREAM”**

**POWERPOINT SLIDES 7-40**

**IMPORTANT NOTE**

Talking about our ancestors and their role in building the American Dream can be problematic. It is important to remember that we have many immigrants in our midst whose ancestors did not help build our Dream. Recognize publicly that some of the audience may be immigrants or descendants of recent immigrants and did not participate in this history. In many cases, their strong desire to come to the U.S. was driven by economic hard times, political repression and discrimination. They have their own stories of hard times. Welcome them to our country.

Reemphasize that many Americans have never experienced the American Dream due to racism, discrimination, exploitation and oppression. This is also part of our story.

**ACTION STEPS**

1. This part of the workshop focuses on telling the story of how our ancestors in the labor movement and their allies built the American Dream from the late 19th century to the 1960s. **Your starting date can be driven by time available and particular lessons and insights you want to highlight.**
2. You have two choices here
   * Use one of my videos on my website, [www.markmmcdermott.com](http://www.markmmcdermott.com) **I strongly consider using one of my videos. This is not necessary but may be very helpful for inexperienced facilitators.**
   * Use the narrative provided in the Notes Sections of the PowerPoint – Making the American Dream Real for Everyone – Part 1
3. After the slides with quotes from George Santayana and Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., I show a slide of my family and describe their working class roots and some of their struggles. If you use the narrative in the PowerPoint, skip this slide.
4. **I do recommend using a story from your family’s history that reflects your own commitment to fighting for a better future based in part on your own family’s history. This is optional but it adds more emotional power to the history that you are sharing. Here are many examples:**
   * **Your grandfather may have been unemployed in the 1930s, rode the rails, lost a farm or experienced other hard times before or during the Great Depression.**
   * **Your parents or you may have experienced hard times.**
   * **Your family members may have been victims of different types of discrimination.**
   * **Your and/or your family might be immigrants who struggled upon arriving in our country**
   * **This history helped shape you even if you don’t have a detailed knowledge of it. This is also true for the participants.**
5. It is OK if you don’t know all of the details and cannot answer some questions that might arise.
6. All of the slides have footnotes in case someone asks you where the information came from. I have never found this to be a problem.

**LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

1. Sharing another personal or family story adds power to the broader history. We all have family stories even if we don’t know them or they are not well understood.
2. Our ancestors never gave up the fight for a better future for their families and their communities.
3. Decades of defeats and hard times did not crush them.
4. In the depths of the worst depression in our history, our ancestors built greater unity, won great victories and achieved what many considered impossible.
5. These great victories of the 1930s and 1960s laid the foundation for the greatest period of shared prosperity in our history.
6. **Building great unity across our great diversity, relentless determination and courage won the day.**
7. **It is important to get the audience in touch with how much of this important history has been hidden from us. Not knowing our history means we don’t know who we are, where we came from and what we are capable of doing.**
8. **We still had a long way to go. Millions continued to live in hard times and experience mistreatment. However we were moving in the right direction.**

**GROUP EXERCISE #4**

**REFLECTIONS, THOUGHTS AND FEELINGS ABOUT PART 1**

**ACTION STEPS**

At this point in the workshop, the participants have developed some level of group solidarity based on their own experiences and dreams. This is a good time for discussion.

1. Make sure the easel and magic markers are at the ready.
2. Depending on the time available or if you are having a difficult time getting a discussion started, you may want people to break into pairs to talk about ideas or feelings that have come up. **DID THEY HAVE ANY “AHA” MOMENTS?**  If you do this, allow about 90-120 seconds for each person to share. Then bring the group back together. If you want, you can ask for comments without the pairing off.
3. Stress that all ideas and feelings have value and don’t be shy.
4. Ask participants to share a feeling or idea that came up for them during the workshop and history presentation. Ask them to keep their comments to 30-60 seconds. Write them down.
5. Sum up the important feeling and ideas.
6. You can let this run for 10-15 minutes depending on the time available.
7. **Post on the wall.**

**LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

1. Participants surface ideas and feelings that are important to them.
2. Reveal important truths that are relevant to our efforts to rebuild the labor movement, build stronger coalitions in our communities and move toward building a better future for all.
3. Sum up the most useful ideas that have emerged.

**GROUP EXERCISE #5**

**WALKING GRAPHS – INCOME INEQUALITY FALLING AND RISING**

**PART 2: SLIDES 3-5**

**SETTING THE CONTEXT FOR EXERCISE**

This exercise dramatizes in a very visual, acted-out manner show how the gains from economic growth were shared in the two periods. In the first period, unions were quite strong and economic gains were shared broadly with the income gaps between whites and people of color and between men and women are narrowing. We were moving the right direction with much work still to be done. In the second period, unions lost much of their strength and income inequality exploded.

**MATERIALS NEEDED**

1. 8 ½ by 11 inch cards with the income growth figures for all income groups for 1947-79 and 1979-2012. Six for the first time period and seven for the second time period.

**ACTION STEPS**

**STEPS – PART 1 – 1947 TO 1979**

1. **We need six volunteers. Reassure them that you are not going to embarrass them.**
2. They should stand on an imaginary line, shoulder to shoulder, with a little space between them. Their toes should be touching the imaginary line.
3. The first five volunteers represent five groups of families which make up one fifth of all the families in the country: The poorest 20%, the second poorest 20% up to the richest 20% based on income, not wealth. The sixth volunteer represents the richest five percent of families.
4. Each volunteer is handed a card which showed the percentage increase of the average income of their group from 1947-79 after inflation has been taken into account**. For example, the poorest 20% saw their average income rise by 116% after inflation.** This is a big economic point to emphasize. This means that the purchasing power of their income more than doubled. **It is optional for volunteers to talk here.** Each volunteer tells the audience how much their average income went up over the period. Talk in a loud clear voice.
5. Each volunteer, one at a time, takes 1 step forward for each 10% gain in their income. For example, the volunteer for the poorest 20% takes 11 ½ steps forward. Each volunteer should try to take similar sized steps. Adjust the participants to reflect the accurate picture.
6. After all six have stepped forward, the audience will see that all income groups except the richest 5% saw their average incomes double over the 32 year period.

**The key point: During this long period of economic growth, a rising economic tide lifted all families. It was a time of broadly shared rising prosperity. Our country was moving toward a more inclusive and broadly shared American Dream as income inequality narrowed. During this period, income gaps between whites and people of color narrowed as well as between men and women. However many people did not share fairly due to many forms of discrimination and exploitation.**

**STEPS – PART 2 – 1979 TO 2014**

1. The six volunteers return to the starting line. They continue to assume the role for the same group of families except we are now looking at the period 1979 to 2014.
2. Steps 2 to 6 are repeated using cards for the years 1979 to 2014. This is where you will use the third slide that includes the top .01 of the top 1%.
3. **For dramatic effect, use the following device. Oh, I forgot someone. I need a 7th volunteer.**
4. Ask that volunteer to go to the starting line. This volunteer represents the richest one-hundredth of one percent of families approximately 11,000 families. **Their average income was $35.5 million during the year 2006.**  The relevant study did not include later years. Their income went up 315% over the 32 years. Ask them to take 31 ½ steps. They may have to walk back and forth or walk around the edges of the room. Give them time to finish walking. **This is a dramatic moment.**
5. Sometimes I yell: “Don’t run into the wall” or other wisecracks to create humor here. **GET THE ENERGY FLOWING.**
6. Allow for 30 seconds of silence after this person finishes walking.

**GROUP EXERCISE #6 – PUBLIC OPINION POLL**

**PART 2: SLIDES 6**

1. Take a quick public opinion poll. Would you rather have a shared prosperity like 1947-79 (Option 1) or rapidly growing income inequality like 1979-2014 (Option 2)? Every audience I have worked with wants Option 1.
2. I have a good news, bad news report. We all want Option 1. Corporate America wants Option 2. They won’t give it up without a great struggle.
3. **CALL AND RESPONSE: HOW MANY OF YOU WILL FIGHT TO BUILD A NEW SHARED PROSPERITY LIKE OPTION 1? I CAN’T HEAR YOU.**

**LEARNING OBJECTIVES FOR EXERCISES 5 AND 6**

1. We have learned about the explosion in family income inequality between the periods of 1947-79 and 1979-2012. During the first period, 1947-79, organized labor was still quite strong. During the second period, 1979-2012, organized labor has become much weaker.
2. This exercise sets the stage for the second half of the workshop.

**IT IS TIME FOR A BREAK. BE CLEAR ABOUT WHAT TIME TO BE BACK. URGE THE IMPORTANCE OF STARTING AGAIN ON TIME. ASK SOMEONE(S) TO HELP ROUND PEOPLE UP.**

**GROUP EXERCISE #7**

**THE BLAME GAME**

**PART 2 – SLIDE 7**

**EQUIPMENT NEEDED**

1. Make sure the easel and magic markers are at the ready.

**ACTION STEPS**

1. Ask the participants what groups they have heard are responsible for the major economic problems facing our country. This question is not “What groups do you believe are responsible?” but a broader question of what have you heard. Each person’s list of possible groups is included in this broader question.
2. Stress that we do not want to be racist, sexist, homophobic or bigoted as we lay out the list. At the same time, we want to put groups on the list.
3. Open it up for comments. I usually start by listing “welfare queens.” This was a big favorite of Ronald Reagan in the 1980’s.
4. Allow the audience to list up to 20 or 25 groups. If there are any obvious groups of “suspects” that are not mentioned, add them yourself.
5. When you have a good list, announce that you want the audience to rate each in three categories: Have a lot of power, have some power, or have little or no power based on how the system currently works. For example, typically people would agree that homeless people have little or no power while hedge fund billionaires have a lot of power.
6. Rate each group. If you have some level of disagreement give a group a double rating.
7. When done, stand back and reflect on how many groups have little or no power or a little power. Also note that a few groups have a lot of power.
8. **If you have two people presenting this exercise, one can be assigning the “power ratings” and the other can simultaneously be categorizing the groups by the power ratings. For example, list all of the groups with a lot of power in one section, those with some power in another section and those groups with little or no power in a third section. This will make it easier for participants to see which groups fall into the various power categories.**
9. Reflect on how can it be that groups that have little or no power can be responsible for the economic challenges and injustices we face. Corporate American and their political and media allies want to keep us confused about who is wrecking our future.

**LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

1. This exercise allows the audience to give voice their own beliefs as well as what they are being told about who has screwed up our country.
2. They get a chance to reflect on how many groups who are being victimized by our growing economic injustice and inequality are being blamed for these very problems.

**PRESENTATION #2**

**CORPORATE AMERICA STEALING THE AMERICAN DREAM**

**PART 2: SLIDES 8-28**

**ACTION STEPS**

1. You have two choices here
   1. Use one of my videos on my website, [www.markmmcdermott.com](http://www.markmmcdermott.com)
   2. Use the narrative provided in the Notes Sections of the PowerPoint – Making the American Dream Real for Everyone – Part 2
2. **I strongly recommend that inexperienced facilitators consider using my videos.**
3. Quickly explain how Corporate America mounted a long-term strategic counterattack against labor, working people and other movements to reassert dominance in our political and economic life.
4. If you have the time, take a few minutes for the group to reflect on how this has been done and its impacts on them, their families, their unions and their communities based on our Common Ground exercises at the start of the workshop.
5. Slowly walk the audience through the two slides about the declining support for organized labor over a long period of time.

**PUBLIC OPINION POP QUIZ: WHICH AGE GROUP IS MOST SUPPORTIVE OF LABOR**

1. Ask the participants to participate by raising their hands when asked which of these four age groups is most supportive of organized labor. It is very rare that the audience gets this right. This is true of labor audiences as well. **Allow the disbelief to sink in.** This is not the only national poll that shows this result.
2. Lead a short discussion if time allows.

**LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

1. At this point, we have built a sense of group solidarity, explored how our ancestors struggled to build and expand the American Dream, and demonstrated how a broadly shared prosperity was created. We then finished the “Walking Graph” exercise which shows quite clearly how the broadly shared prosperity is over.
2. How did the decades-long corporate counterattack work and succeed?
3. It is important to stress that this was a long-term well-financed and disciplined strategy that continues to this day.
4. **ASK A RHETORICAL QUESTION: WHAT IS OUR LONG-TERM STRATEGY TO COMBAT THEIR RELENTLESS WELL ORGANIZED ATTACKS? WE WILL GET TO THIS LATER IN THE WORKSHOP.**

**GROUP EXERCISE #8**

**DISCUSSION ON RISING SUPPORT FOR UNIONS AND TAPPING INTO THE STRONG PRO-UNION ENERGY OF WOMEN AND YOUTH**

**PART 2: SLIDE 25**

Corporate America and their allies have been waging a 40+ year war of big ideas to discredit organized labor and paint it as a thing of the past and no longer needed in today’s America. Despite this tremendous effort, the majority of the American people still support unions and larger numbers believe they are still necessary to protect workers. This is good news although we have our work cut out to move more people toward a deeper understanding of the critical importance of unions in making our country and future better and more secure.

**ACTION STEPS**

1. Make sure the easel and magic markers are at the ready.
2. Comment on the percentage of the audience that got the correct answer to which age group is the most pro-union. Virtually none of the audiences so far have gotten the correct answer. You might ask participants why so many of you got the wrong answer.
3. Depending on the time available for this discussion, I recommend having participants pair off (Pair-Share) for 60 to 90 seconds for each person.
4. Come back together and share feelings and ideas with the larger group.
5. Write the feelings and ideas on the easel.
6. Post on the wall.

**LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

1. **Remind participants that despite 40 years of corporate propaganda and tens of billions of dollars spent to shape the thinking of the American people, majorities of the people still support unions and believe they are important to protecting workers. This is a big positive despite the decline.**
2. Draw out participants’ feelings about why support for unions has been dropping.
3. What can we do to change this decline?
4. Begin to surface ideas about how to harness the energy of women and youth.

**PRESENTATION #3**

**FIGHTING FORWARD TO BUILD A REAL AMERICAN DREAM FOR EVERYONE**

**PART 3: SLIDES 1-32**

**KEY MESSAGE:**  **ALL RESISTANCE IS NOT FUTILE. WE CAN WIN BIG. OUR ANCESTORS DID, SO CAN WE.**

**CONTEXT**

**ACTION STEPS**

1. Set the stage by noting that you are going to present a long list of victories and ongoing struggles that demonstrate the growing need for and power of strong labor/community coalitions. Sometimes we will lose as in Wisconsin but we can “lose forward” if we build strong coalitions and deepen people’s understandings of the nature of our struggle and need for greater unity, vision and hope.
2. Contrast the loss in Wisconsin with the big victory in Ohio. Many more people know about the loss in Wisconsin than the equally important victory in Ohio. Why don’t more people know about the Ohio victory?
3. Walk the participants through the various victories from different states and longer term fights across the country.
4. Keep emphasizing that we can win with broad coalitions.
5. **A critical part of the presentation is “What Do We Do to Take Our Country Back.” This is my analysis. You can obviously change if you feel other elements are needed.**
6. **The last two slides “People Like Us” and “United We Can Change the World” are intended to energize and excite the crowd. I frequently use the phrase: “They said we couldn’t win big and we did.”**
7. **End with “We can take our country back.” Are you with me? I can’t hear you. Standard call and response.**

**LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

1. The participants have shared their own pain and experiences as well as the growing power of Corporate America. This section is designed to counteract feelings of hopelessness and despair.
2. Keep driving home the power of labor/community coalitions in these fights. This is relearning the critical lessons of the 1930s and 1960s.
3. Bring the participants to an energized and more hopeful space as we move into the discussion phase of “What Do We Do?” and “How Do We Build the Road Forward?”

**GROUP EXERCISE #10**

**DISCUSSION ON “WHAT WILL YOU DO TO BUILD A STRONGER LABOR MOVEMENT AND STRONGER TIES WITH COMMUNITIY ALLIES?”**

**PART 3: SLIDE 33**

This critically important discussion is set up based on the key questions that you and the sponsoring organization have agreed upon prior to the workshop. **You want participants to walk out of the workshop more hopeful, more energized, and stimulated with new ideas and concrete actions that they are willing to engage in with others.** Therefore the key questions of the workshop set the foundation for this concluding discussion.

We want to focus on what participants are willing to do to build the power needed to take our country back. Here are some key questions:

1. Do participants think they can take our country back without allies? If the answer is they believe many allies are needed. The following questions are useful.
2. Who are our allies now?
3. What other allies do we need to unite with?
4. How will we move forward with this work?

This exercise can take two different directions or may combine the two directions.

1. One direction is listed below under **ACTION STEPS.** This direction focuses on developing new ideas about more effective ways to do our current and future work.
2. The second direction would be to focus on identifying current key allies and future allies for whatever strategies and work are being advanced as priorities.

**ACTION STEPS – DIRECTION 1 – HOW DO WE MOVE FORWARD ON OUR KEY IDEAS AND PROPOSED ACTION STEPS**

1. Make sure the easel and magic markers are at the ready.
2. If time permits, break the group into small groups of 4-5 participants and allow them to discuss the key questions and the big ideas that came up for them during the workshop.
3. It is a good idea to have a participant at each table write down what came up in the small group. This allows the sponsoring organization and the presenters to see what came up that might be helpful in their organizing efforts.
4. After 15-20 minutes, bring the group together and ask the groups to report out.
5. Write down their key ideas and proposed action steps.
6. Post on the wall.
7. If your group is small, you might skip the small group section and do a “Pair-Share” exercise for a few minutes and then bring the group together for a report out and discussion.
8. It is important to respect each other’s ideas even if you disagree with them.
9. **We want to get participants to agree to take concrete actions at the end of the workshop if possible. This can only be done effectively if you have worked closely with the sponsoring organization on this important issue.**
10. At the end of this discussion, sum up the workshop and the ideas that surfaced.

**ACTION STEPS – DIRECTION 2 – WHO ARE OUR CURRENT AND POTENTIAL ALLIES AND HOW DO WE BUILD A BIGGER STRONGER NETWORK OF ALLIES**

1. This exercise can be based on the results of the work done in Group Exercise #7 – The Blame Game.
2. Break the group into small groups of 4-5 participants and ask them to identify current key allies of their organization and/or movement.
3. Also ask them to identify future allies that they believe are needed to achieve short-term and longer-term successes.
4. Report out to the larger group
5. Discuss whether their organization or organizations have a big enough set of well-developed allies. If not, how do they build a broader network.

**PROPOSED SUMMARY AND LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

1. We have all learned that we have much common ground based on the impacts of the economic hard times on us, our families and those we love. We also share much common ground based on our feelings about these hard times and a generally shared vision of an American Dream that works for all of us.
2. This common ground can serve us in all of our organizing work. When we disagree on how to proceed, our common ground can keep us at the table in a respectful way.
3. We have learned that our ancestors overcame tremendous barriers to build a broadest and most secure shared prosperity in our nation’s history even though many were still left out. Our work was not done.
4. We have learned more about the critical role of organized labor and building strategic community alliances played in building that shared prosperity.
5. **It is important to remind the participants how much of this important history has been hidden from us. Not knowing our history means we don’t know who we are, where we came from and what we are capable of doing.**
6. We have looked at how Corporate America has regained dominance over the vast majority of us and are stealing our dreams and a hoped for secure and just future.
7. We have been reminded that despite great opposition, organized labor and our community allies have been winning some important victories in recent years.
8. We have begun to identify ways we might work together more effectively in the coming months and years.
9. Last, but not least, we have regained a stronger sense of hope that yes we can seize the time and build a better future.
10. Let/s keep these discussions going with a growing list of community allies.

**DEPENDING ON THE LENGTH OF THE WORKSHOP, THIS MAY BE THE END OF THE WORKSHOP THAT YOU ARE RUNNING. IF YOU HAVE MORE TIME, YOU MAY WANT TO USE ONE OR MORE OF THE FOLLOWING GROUP EXERCISES. IF YOU ONLY HAVE TIME FOR ONE, DO THE ELEVATOR SPEECH EXERCISE.**

**TAKING ACTION WITH WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNED**

**BE CREATIVE WITH YOUR NEW TOOLS AND KNOWLEDGE**

You have learned a set of new skills and gained additional knowledge about the rise and fall of working class and union power and what we can do to take our country back. You have participated in all of the activities needed for a 2-4 hour workshop. Don’t be intimidated by the thought of running a full workshop as a starting point. At the same time, you will have many opportunities to use these skills and knowledge when much less time is available.

Here are some ideas about “mixing and matching” various components and skills. Regardless of how much time and who you are presenting to, **always start with your Personal Story** of approximately 3 minutes. This will humanize you and make you real and authentic.

1. If you have 30 minutes, do the Walking Graphs of Income Inequality exercise. Start a discussion about why the audience believes we have gone from a rising standard of living and a broadly shared prosperity to record levels of income inequality. Why did this happen? What do we do about it? This can be a teaser for other discussions.
2. If you have 45-60 minutes, do the Walking Graphs of Income Inequality exercise, skip the discussion, and do “The Blame Game” and “Who are Our Current and Future Allies?” exercises. We lost our broadly shared prosperity and who is to blame. This combination will draw out that many of our current and potential allies are blamed for our economic hard times and in fact are among the leading victims of corporate-driven economic injustice. When you identify new potential allies, you can begin to talk about how do we reach out to them to build our power
3. If you have 60-75 minutes and you are talking to a community audience, start with the Common Ground Exercise, do the Walking Graphs and start a discussion. As a variation, you can skip the discussion and move to the Blame Game/Who are Our Allies?
4. You can also use the Common Ground Exercise to get union members thinking beyond the issues of wages, hours and working conditions as a starter for any of the three options listed above.
5. Another option is to use one of my videos and then start a discussion. My videos can be found at <http://www.markmmcdermott.com/> **This workshop is being filmed and videos of the three presentations will be put on my website. It will take a few weeks to get them finished and posted.**
6. Depending on your audience, you might want to do the “Elevator Speech” or “Personal Stories” exercise. These are more focused on skill development for people who want to reach out more effectively in one-on-one situations as well as making more powerful, heart-touching introductions in larger settings. These can also be mixed and matched with the options listed above.

**Here is an important bottom line. Find a group to practice with in the next 6 weeks. It might be an apprenticeship class. If your union does not have an apprenticeship program, pair up with someone who does. I recommend doing this work in pairs as you start out. BE BOLD. Audiences will respond well to your genuine and authentic approach of helping them think and feel their way to making our country and world better for those we love.**

**Before you leave today we encourage you to think about where you will do your first presentation and what it might look like.**

**GROUP EXERCISE – OPTIONAL**

**PRACTICING YOUR ELEVATOR SPEECH**

Many participants, particularly men, usually introduce themselves with their job titles and job duties. In many cases, people already have preconceived notions about these jobs or may be ignorant of the job and its duties. Their preconceived notions may also be quite negative. Don’t lead with job title and duties, lead with your heart and the values that motivate you.

This skill can be enhanced using an “Elevator Speech” activity in which the participants introduces themselves to others in a manner designed to create a positive impression based on shared values. For example, when I am asked what I am about, I reply: “Thanks for asking. I have been thinking about this a lot lately. I realize I am in the American Dream business. I care deeply about people and I love to talk with them about how they and the people they love are doing economically. I ask them about their hopes and dreams and how our economic hard times are making reaching for their dreams for a better and secure life more difficult. I then work with them about ideas of taking action to make our country and their lives better. I don’t have all the answers but I believe that people talking to each other and working together can help all of us find a way to a better life.”

I have not revealed my job title. I have shared that I care about others, I want to help them find a way to a better, more secure life. I have the humility to know I don’t have all the answers and I want to encourage people to listen to each other and find ways to work together. Aren’t people going to like someone who expresses these feelings and the willingness to help and work well with others?

**ACTION STEPS**

1. Introduce the concept of an elevator speech in which we become more effective in presenting ourselves to others from a “heart/values” perspective rather than a “head/job title” perspective.
2. Stress that this can be challenging as many of the participants may not be comfortable with getting up in front of a group of people and sharing from the heart.
3. Set a ground rule that we do not want participants making fun of each other as they try to do something that is difficult and potentially embarrassing. At the same time, no one has every died doing this exercise.
4. Demonstrate a bad elevator speech with bluster, jargon and words that many people will not understand. Then give a contrasting version of your own elevator speech of 60-75 seconds. Get people to see the difference. This sets a tone of a willingness to be emotionally vulnerable.
5. Break the group into groups of four. Give them 20 minutes so everyone has an opportunity to practice. Consider doing this in pairs.
6. Walk around the groups and encourage them to stay on task. Sometimes people will spend their time talking about how difficult this is. Encourage them to move into the challenge and not remain outside of the hard work.
7. Bring the group back together and ask for volunteers to come up and present to the large group. If you know someone who is willing to be a risk taker, ask one or more people ahead of time to be willing to come up and break the ice.
8. With each person, ask them what worked well for them. Then ask the group for positive feedback. Clap to thank the person for coming up. Set a positive tone.

**LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

1. Participants become more effective in short introductions to be people that you don’t know or may know very casually. Effectiveness is defined, in part, by creating a connection with the other person that allows you to share more of who you are and what you are doing to make the world a better place for people like them.
2. Learn to lead from the heart by sharing your deeply held values that are a foundation of who you are, what you do and why you do it.
3. Avoid using jargon and terms that people do not understand or may have negative initial reactions to unless they have warmed up to who you are and what you stand for.

**GROUP EXERCISE – OPTIONAL**

**TELLING YOUR PERSONAL STORY TO START THE WORKSHOP**

I always open my workshops with a personal story that establishes my credibility with the audience. I cannot walk in their shoes through the hard times of their lives but I have my own stories of hard times. I am talking from my heart, not my resume or job titles. Typically I am introduced with a review of my resume and job titles but that introduction does not convey well the contents of my heart.

I open with one of two stories: For union audiences, I tell the story of spending 15 months out of work after my employer, the sole owner of a unionized manufacturing plant in Washington state, fired the entire workforce in 1982 as a condition of the sale of the firm. We had four hours’ notice before we were pushed out the door in the worst recession since the Great Depression. I was an elected union official in the plant and was told that I would not be hired by the new firm because of my union status. This was illegal but I could not prove it because two managers for the new firm who told me this and I was the only witness. I swore that day I would spend the rest of my life fighting for working people to help stop the relentless attacks of Corporate America on our rights and our formerly broadly shared prosperity

The story I tell for other audiences is about my father losing his job at age 56 and I was 12. He was unemployed for the next six years and tried to provide for the family with great difficulty. Our formerly working class family plunged into deep poverty and we struggled to survive. I have tasted the bitter fruits of injustice and poverty. I know firsthand what it is like when our country allows hardworking families to live continuously with great anxiety and fear of total destitution.

Both of these stories lend great credibility to my commitment to the fight for a better future for all.

**You may want to think about having different personal stories for different audiences. My story of being victimized in a union bust works very well with union audiences. It can work well with other audiences as well. However if I want community-based audiences to see that I also understand their struggles about poverty and personal hard times, I use the second story.**

**No matter what story you tell, if it is authentic it will go over well with your audience. You are revealing your truth that led to fight for the rights of your own people but also the rights and dignity of others.**

The purpose of this exercise is to help the workshop presenters surface their own personal story that has led them to committed activism.

Here are some examples that facilitators might use:

1. I was a single mom who got into an apprenticeship program and my life improved dramatically
2. My dad was on strike when I was a kid and we suffered during the fight
3. I got to go to college on a scholarship and other financial aid that was won in struggles years ago to open up higher education to working class and poor people.
4. My cousin lost his house to foreclosure after he lost his job
5. My brother has been out of work for a year and can’t find work
6. Grew up learning from my family that we should stand up against injustice
7. My family and I have been victims of discrimination

**Many, if not all of us, have events or family stories that shaped who we are and led us to fighting for justice. Find those stories in your own life and introduce yourself through them. You will gain great credibility with your audience.**

**ACTION STEPS**

1. Explain the goals of this exercise. To help them connect well on a heart level with their audience. Reveal their own experiences as a way to share their values and world view.
2. Break the participants into groups of 2 or 3. Give them 20 minutes to talk about incidents that had a big effect on shaping their world view and commitment to activism. These incidents might have affected them directly or happened to their family members or other people they know.
3. Ask them to craft a short story that allows them to introduce themselves with a personal story that will touch the hearts of the audience.

**LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

1. Get the participants more comfortable talking from a personal space as well as expressing their personal values that flow out of their own life experiences.
2. Strengthening the “heart to heart” connections that we want to create between the presenter/facilitator and the participants and between the participants themselves.
3. This personal story can set the tone for the entire workshop.

**ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

My website [www.markmmcdermott.com](http://www.markmmcdermott.com) has a number of videos, PowerPoints, articles and recommendations for websites and other materials that can be used to deepen people’s knowledge and insights about growing economic and social injustice and inequality.

Many of the attendees of my workshops and speeches have asked for places to get more information. I use all of these websites and have great confidence in their professional work and commitment to speaking the truth. Many of them work on a wide range of issues so the categories below do not list all of the types of work they do. I encourage you to visit their websites and learn about the range of their work.

**If you have other good sources of information and analysis that you want to share, please email me with your sources. I want to build this list. I can be reached at** [**markmmcdermott1@msn.com**](mailto:markmmcdermott1@msn.com)

**LABOR MEDIA OUTLETS**

Washington State Labor Council’s daily electronic newspaper - [www.thestand.org](http://www.thestand.org)

The Union Edge – Pittsburgh PA based daily labor radio program - <https://theunionedge.com/>

We Do the Work – Mt. Vernon WA based weekly radio program - <http://www.ksvr.org/archives_wtdw.html>

Worker Independent News – national radio - <http://www.laborradio.org/>

**LABOR AND WORKER RIGHTS**

Jobs with Justice/American Rights at Work - <http://americanrightsatwork.org/>

* Dedicated to promoting the freedom of workers to organize unions and bargain collectively with employers.

National Employment Law Project (NELP) - <http://www.nelp.org/>

* Excellent work on low-wage workers, immigrants and wage theft (employers refusing to pay workers what is legally owed to them)

AFL-CIO – national labor federation – <http://www.aflcio.org/>

Change to Win (CTW) Strategic Organizing Center - <http://www.changetowin.org/>

Puget Sound Advocates for Retirement Action - [www.psara.rog](http://www.psara.rog)

* An activist organization in Puget Sound WA working for retirement security and economic justice for all people. Their *Retiree Advocate* is a monthly newsletter. I write for it. It is very good. <http://psara.org/advocate-archives/>

Washington State Labor Council, AFL-CIO – [www.wslc.org](http://www.wslc.org)

* The AFL-CIO’s Washington State affiliate and the largest labor organization in the state. Their on-line daily newspaper, The Stand, [www.thestand.org/category/wslc/](http://www.thestand.org/category/wslc/) is great.

Seattle Civil Rights and Labor History Project - <http://depts.washington.edu/civilr/>

* Great resources of Seattle and Washington State labor and civil rights struggles

Washington State Labor Education and Research Center - <http://georgetown.southseattle.edu/>

* Their Film, Book and Binder Libraries section has extensive materials.

**INCOME AND WEALTH INEQUALITY AND POVERTY**

Economic Policy Institute (EPI) - <http://www.epi.org/>

* Great easy-to-use website and outstanding on-line and paper book *The State of Working America.* This is a must for anyone looking for information on these issues.

United for a Fair Economy - <http://www.faireconomy.org/>

* Excellent educational materials and great work on racial wealth divide and federal taxes

Center on Budget and Policy Priorities - <http://www.cbpp.org>

* Works at the federal and state levels on fiscal policy and public programs that affect low- and moderate-income families and individuals. Covers a wide range of issues.

Levy Economics Institute - <http://www.levyinstitute.org/>

* Wide range of issues including gender equality, immigration and income and wealth distribution

Institute for Women’s Policy Research - <http://www.iwpr.org>

* Covers wide range of issues including poverty, welfare, income security, work and family and more.

Dollars and Sense - <http://www.dollarsandsense.org/>

* Excellent easy-to-read, on-line magazine focused on economic justice

**ECONOMIC POLICY AND TAXES**

Center for Economic and Policy Research - <http://www.cepr.net>

* Great work on broad economic policy, taxes and many other economic justice issues

Center for Tax Justice/Institute for Taxation and Economic Policy - <http://ctj.org/> http://www.itep.org/

* These are the first places I go for in-depth quality analysis on federal and state tax issues. They are allied organizations

Center for Popular Economics - <http://www.populareconomics.org/>

* Their *Field Guide to the U.S. Economy* is very user-friendly and easy to understand. Great job of making economics more understandable. Check out their resources section.

**GENERAL HISTORY**

* The People’s History of the U. S. – Howard Zinn – This is my favorite book. A must read.
* The Populist Moment – Richard Goodwyn – Populists of the late 19th century fighting corporate power
* Lies Across America – James Loewen

**ECONOMICS**

* The State of Working America – Larry Mishel et al – Great data book on economics and inequality
* The Price of Inequality – Joseph Stiglitz
* Freefall: America, Free Markets and the Sinking of the World Economy – Joseph Stiglitz
* One World, Ready or Not: The Manic Logic of Global Capitalism – William Greider
* Everything for Sale: The Virtues and Limits of Markets – Robert Kuttner

**LABOR**

* There is Power in a Union – Philip Dray
* Organized Labor and the Black Worker – Philip Foner
* The Civil Wars in U.S. Labor – Steve Early
* Down on the Killing Floors: Black and White Workers in Chicago’s Packinghouses, 1904-54 – Rick Halpern
* Solidarity Divided – Bill Fletcher and Fernando Gapasin
* From the Folks Who Brought You the Weekend –Priscilla Murolo and A.B. Chitty
* Labor’s Story in the U.S. – Philip Nicholson
* Voices for Justice: Asian Pacific American Organizers and the New Labor Movement
* Consuming Mexican Labor: From the Bracero Program to NAFTA – Ronald Mize and Alicia Swords
* All Labor Has Dignity – Martin Luther King Jr. edited by Michael Honey
* Going Down Jericho Road: The Memphis Strike, Martin Luther King’s Last Campaign – Michael Honey
* Wars of Attrition: Vietnam, the Business Roundtable, and the Decline of Construction Unions – Marc Linder

**RACE/ETHNICITY/IMMIGRATION**

* The Harvest of Empire: A History of Latinos in America - Juan Gonzalez
* Occupied America: A History of Chicanos – Rodolfo Acuna.
* The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness – Michelle Alexander
* Slavery by Another Name: From the Civil War to World War II – Douglas Blackmon
* From Slavery to Freedom: A History of Negro America – John Hope Franklin
* Under the Warmth of Other Suns – Isabel Wilkerson
* A Different Mirror: A History of Multicultural America – Ronald Takaki
* A Larger Memory: A History of Our Diversity – Ronald Takaki
* A Nation of Immigrants – Susan Martin
* Wasi’Chu: The Continuing Indian Wars – Bruce Johansen and Roberto Maestas
* The Story of White People – Nell Irvin Painter
* The African-Americans – Henry Louis Gates

**CORPORATE DOMINATION AND DEMOCRACY**

* Invisible Hands: The Businessmen’s Crusade Against the New Deal – Kim Phillips-Fein
* The Shock Doctrine – Naomi Klein
* Winner Take-All Politics: How Washington Made the Rich Richer and Turned Its Back on the Middle Class – Jacob Hacker and Paul Pierson
* Democracy Matters: Winning the Fight Against Imperialism – Cornel West

**FAITH AND ECONOMIC JUSTICE**

* A Worker Justice Reader – Interfaith Worker Justice
* The Biblical Jubilee and the Struggle for Life – Ross Kinsler and Gloria Kinsler

**MEDIA AND INFLUENCING THE PUBLIC**

* The Death and Life of American Journalism – Robert McChesney and John Nichols
* News for All the People – Juan Gonzalez and Joseph Torres
* Don’t Think of an Elephant: Know Your Values and Frame the Debate – George Lakoff

**THANKS**

I want to thank Kelly Coogan-Gehr, Director of the Washington State Labor Education and Research Center (LERC) for her help in updating and improving this workshop and its materials. Her insights have been invaluable. The LERC also has played a key role in helping to ensuring that this workshop takes place. This workshop would not be taking place without their critical support. I am deeply appreciative of Kelly and the LERC for their support and participation.

I also want to thank Tracy Prezeau, International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers International Representative in their Education Department. Tracy is the co-author of the original workshop design for this train the trainer workshop. For years, she has been a strong ally and great co-worker in the joint work that has led to first presentations of this train the trainer workshop. The IBEW and the labor movement are lucky to have such a talented and dedicated fighter for worker, economic and social justice.

I also want to thank the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers for their financial contributions which enabled the creation of the original version of this handbook and related materials used in the workshop “Building a Better Future for All.”

Last, but not least, I want to thank United Food and Commercial Workers Local 21 which provided critical funding and technical assistance in the creation of the initial workshop and related materials which on which this train the trainer workshop is based.

**ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

I am a lifelong activist working for economic, social and racial justice and peace. I am currently working full-time as an economic justice and labor educator doing speeches and workshops across the country with a wide range of unions and community-based organizations. I am both honored and humbled by the wonderful opportunities to do 270+ speeches and workshops across the country and Canada in the past 5+ years. My work has involved affiliates of 22 international unions in 18 states, AFL-CIO central bodies and many community-based organizations that share common values and ground with the labor movement. I also do strategic planning work for unions that are trying to build a longer-term vision and approach to their work.

I have been a member of the Machinists, American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) and Steelworkers Unions. I lost my job in a union bust in 1982 and spent 15 months out of work during the long recession of the early 1980’s. During this period of unemployment, I co-founded the Seattle Worker Center which is now a division of the Martin Luther King Jr. County Central Labor Council, AFL-CIO.

I was a long-time champion of working people and the poor in Washington State during a long career in government working in the following positions:

* Assistant Secretary at the Department of Labor and Industries
* Chief Deputy Insurance Commissioner
* Policy Analyst on the State Senate’s Commerce and Labor Committee
* Director of the Division of Income Assistance for the Department of Social and Health Services
* Senior Labor Policy Advisor for Seattle Mayor Greg Nickels

I retired after serving in President Obama’s administration as U.S Secretary of Labor Hilda Solis’ Regional Representative for the 8 Northwest and Northern Plains states.

In my private life, I have served on the boards of the Statewide Poverty Action Network, Fair Budget Action Campaign, One America, Washington State Living Wage Movement, Seattle Worker Center, Washington Citizens Action Network and the statewide Washington Association of Churches where I also served as Board Chair. My current activities include serving on the Education Committee and Board Member of the Puget Sound Advocates for Retirement Action and the Washington State Labor and Education Center’s Advisory Committee and the Advisory Committee for Washington Public Campaigns.

I am happily married to my wonderful wife Diane. We live in our adopted city Seattle. We love to hike in the mountains and deserts. Last, but not least, we both live near all of our brothers and sisters and get to spend time with our adorable 5-year-old grandson, Walter.

**May we build a better world for him and all of the children around the world.**