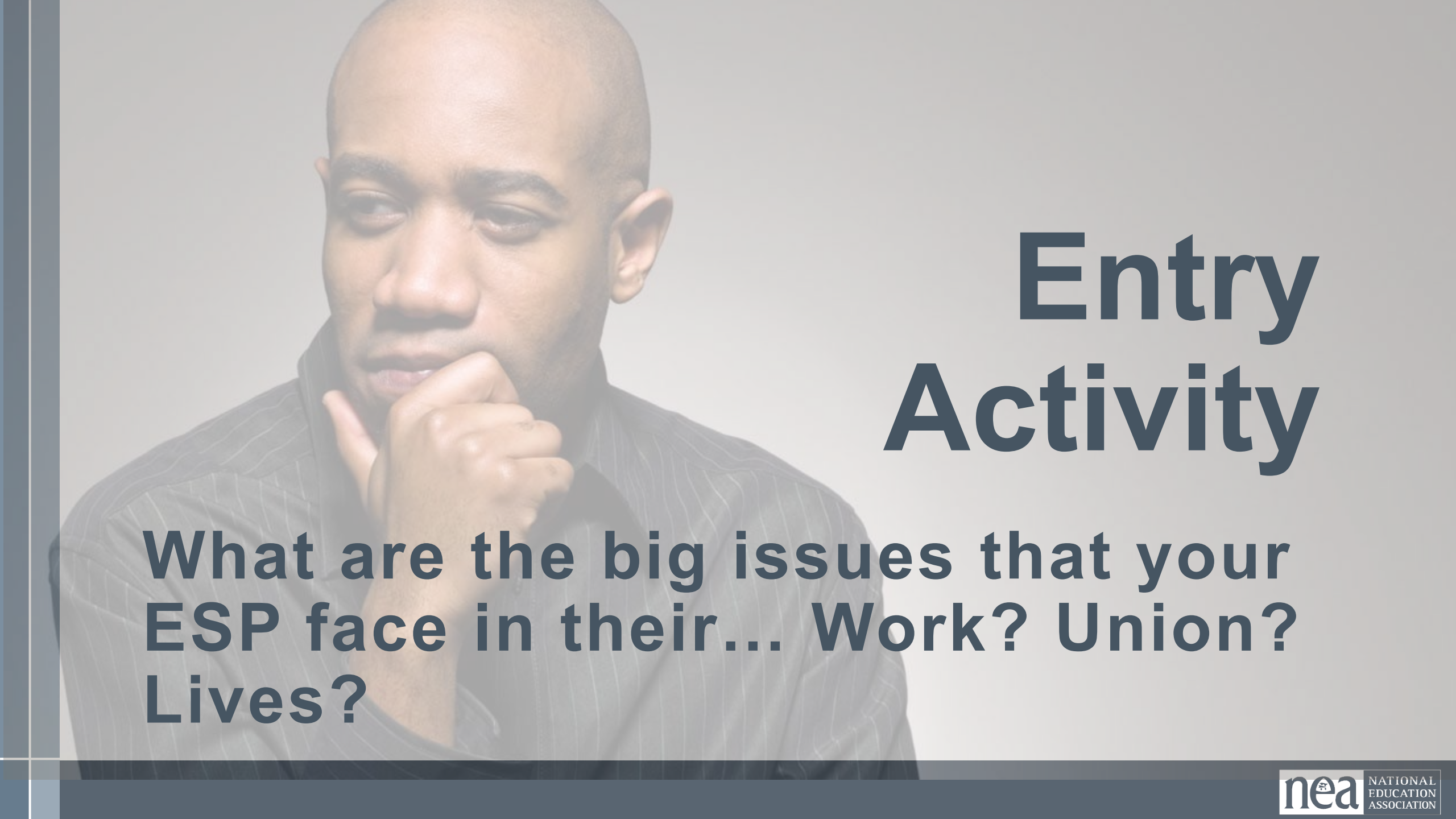




Entry Activity

**What are the big issues that your
ESP face in their... Work? Union?
Lives?**



Strategies for Organizing ESP

UniServ Focus Academy

NEA Members and Supporters

- › By attending this training you confirm that you are a registered attendee. The information you receive here is only for your use in your capacity as an NEA member or supporter.
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Honoring This Space

- › We begin by acknowledging that through a history of colonization and brutality, we are currently on the Shawnandasse Tula, Oage, Kaskaskia, Adena Culture, Hopewell Culture, and Muaamia land.
- › We honor these indigenous people, all elders, past, present, and emerging. We are called to learn and share these learnings about this tribal history, culture, and contributions that have been suppressed in the telling of the story of what we now call the United States of America.

start
with why

Why are
we
here?

The image shows the words "WHO ARE WE?" in large, white, 3D block letters. The letters are arranged in two lines: "WHO" on top and "ARE WE?" below it. They are set against a dark gray background with a subtle gradient. The lighting creates soft shadows beneath the letters, giving them a three-dimensional appearance.

WHO
ARE WE?

Meet
the
Team



Getting to Know Each Other

- › Name
- › Location
- › Your Required Pronoun





Three Day Agenda Overview

Days 1-2

Convene at 8:30

Lunch from Noon to 1:00

15 Min Breaks Morning and Afternoon

4:30 to 5:00 Networking

5:00 Adjourn

Day 3

Break in the morning

Lunch is a boxed lunch at 1:00 PM

1:00 PM Adjourn, no flights before 4:00

Logistics to Remember

Bathroom
Location

POPs

Materials

Food Room

Room Temp

Karla as
Resource

Questions?



Agenda Review - Today

- › Who are ESP
- › What are their issues
- › What is our work like with them
- › Obstacles to recruitment
- › Language Matters
- › What are some institutional challenges we have
- › Defining Class, Questioning systems, Reflections on practices
- › Issue identification
- › Spectrum of Allies



Community Agreements p. 2-3

- › Using Self-Awareness and Self-Knowledge
- › Listening for Understanding
- › Being Gracious
- › Staying Engaged
- › Being Open and Suspend Judgment
- › Saying “I”- tell your truth
- › Seeking Discomfort
- › Reaching Empathy
- › Expecting Non-Resolution and Non-Closure

*Adapted from “Embracing equity and inclusion”, Annie E. Casey Foundation

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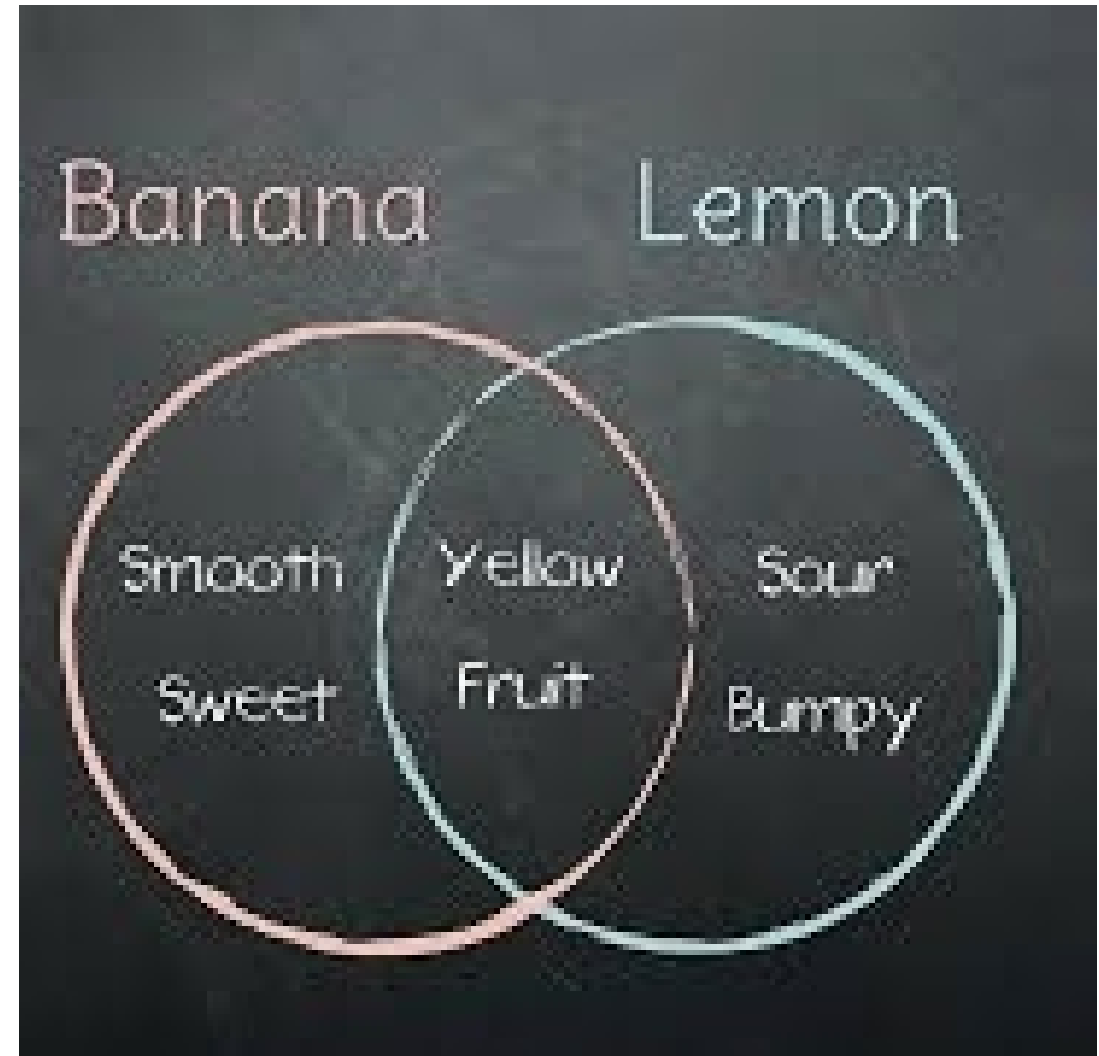
Challenges Our Members Face

Beth and Michael

Similarities and Differences

On the center of the table are a number of Post it notes and a paper to make a Venn Diagram Mat.

Working with your table write ideas/characteristics/issues that you think are unique to Certified Employees and ESP Employees and ones that are the same.



Affinity Wall

Brainstorm challenges/issues ESP members have - work, life, union, etc.

write one challenge per post-it



Affinity Wall Debrief

- What are the major clusters?
- Are any issues related to each other? (Which/How)
- What does this mean for our work with ESPs?
- What surprises you?



KEY IDEAS



Organizers begin with
issues

The issues of our members
ARE the issues of their
union

Their issues are our best
campaigns



Our Experiences Supporting ESP

Dawn

Picturing Our Experience



Picturing Our Experience

- › Step 1 - Everyone Pick 2 Pictures – then I will give you a prompt
- › Step 2 – Create a two minute or less story using these two pictures
- › Step 3 – As a table, use ALL the pictures to tell a two minute or less story
- › Step 4 – Identify a storyteller who will tell your story to visiting groups
- › Step 5 – We will carousel through the tables



Debrief

- › What did you notice that was similar in the table stories?
- › What most surprised you as you heard the stories?





BREAK

If you have not done so,
please make sure you have
read "Analyzing Everyday
Oppressions in Union Work"
on Pgs. 4-5 of the
participant handouts



ESP Research Study: Language Matters

From November 2022 – February 2023, NEA conducted a multi-phase research project designed to help NEA and state affiliates recruit potential ESPs into membership.

Vanessa

There were three phases of the study:



INTERVIEWS WITH ACTIVE
ESP ORGANIZERS.



FOCUS GROUPS WITH
POTENTIAL ESP MEMBERS.



ONLINE SURVEY OF 1,038
POTENTIAL ESP MEMBERS.

What do we know?

- 1) Who are ESPs?
- 2) What words do potential ESPs use when they refer to themselves?
- 3) What are the top worksite concerns for potential ESPs?
- 4) What questions/concerns do potential ESPs have about unions?



ESP?

ESP means "Education Support Professionals." Education Support Professionals play vital roles inside and outside the classroom. They keep schools and campuses running and ensure students are safe, healthy, and ready to learn.

ESPs work in PK-Higher Ed, in a variety of career families

- Clerical service
- Custodial and maintenance service
- Food service
- Health and student service
- Paraeducators
- Security service
- Skilled trade
- Technical service
- Transportation service

Potential ESPs recognize themselves as...

Support Staff ✓ Not
✗ ESP or Educator ✗

Job titles are always preferred. If you're not sure just ask!

**According to
research,
potential
member ESPs are
most concerned
about...**

WAGES

BENEFITS

**WORKPLACE
PROTECTIONS &
SAFETY**

RESPECT

What do potential ESP members need to know?

- Our association is a UNION. The word UNION conveys more meaning than “Association.”
- Unions negotiate, advocate, and organize on issues important to members.
- Joining a union is legal in bargaining and non-bargaining states.
- ESPs are eligible to join.



NEED TO KNOW

TRANSFORMATIONAL *versus* TRANSACTIONAL

- Our voice is stronger and more effective when we band together.
 - When more people join the union, administrators listen to us.
 - With more members like you, we'll have an even stronger voice and be able to secure real pay increases, COLA, and increases in retirement and healthcare.
- “If you add up member benefits, dues pay for themselves...”
 - “You need to join because you need the insurance or legal services...”



The importance of talking about “wins”

Higher salaries/benefits are at the core of our value proposition. Just short of that... Point to day-to-day wins, as a way of proving the union’s ability to deliver results.



Dues: A Barrier to ESPs Joining

› Dues

- Use monthly/weekly versus annual
- Don't equate dues to a small consumer item
- Using terms like “freeloader” backfires.
- Consider an Affirm, Answer, Redirect approach

Politics: A Barrier to ESPs Joining

- › Unions are too political
 - Use tone and language that conveys hope rather than hostility
 - Focus the message on what is happening in their local and state unions; ESPs tend to identify more with their local and state rather than their national union
 - For job classes that work directly with students, focus on how the work of their union impacts the learning environment of their students

Let's Recruit Some ESPs



- › Thinking about a specific local in your assignment, develop what you would say as part of a 1:1 to recruit a potential ESP member:
 - What's your story around how we win?
 - Write your story in 3-5 bullet statements.

KEY POINTS SUMMARY



Key Ideas

- › Potential member ESPs do not think of themselves as “ESP.” Support staff is a more recognized term; job title is best.
- › Unions are legal, and ESPs are eligible to join; recognize that many ESPs have **never** been asked to join their Union and may not know what a union does.
- › Transformational, not transactional. We need to invite ESPs into membership by focusing on how collective power helps them to have stronger work and home lives.



An Institutional Problem

Hedy and Jeny

Oppression Continuum



Race, Class, Gender Justice Lens P. 6

A set of questions that allow a system to identify ways that policies and practices oppress others

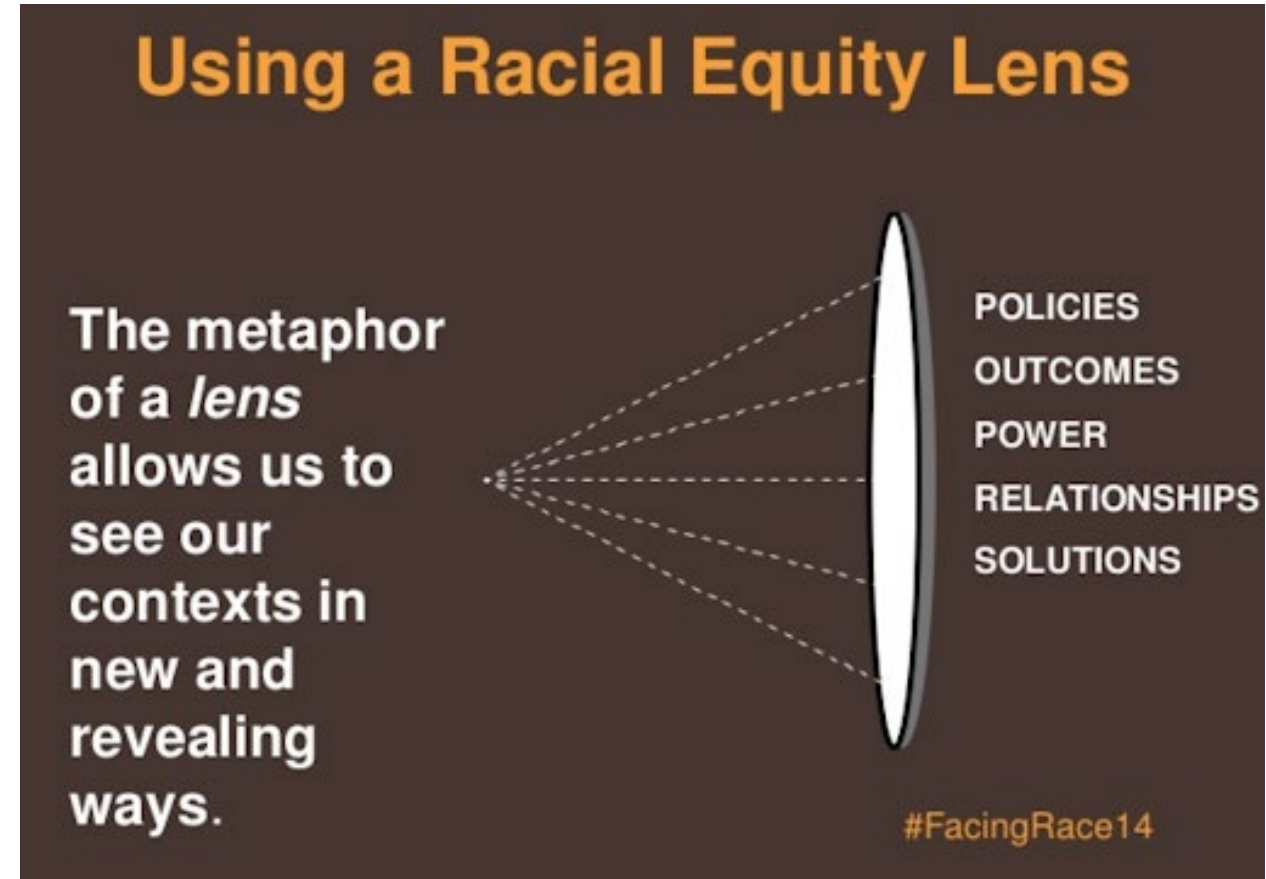


Table Work

- You will need Analyzing Union Engagement Misses and Opportunities found on p. 4-5
 - Discuss all 5 Questions on the second page of this story.
 - Question 5 is the most important.

Table Work Debrief

- Is Angel thriving? What is your evidence?
- What are the ways the Union could do better?
- What the examples of missed opportunities?
- What would you do to help Angel? Be specific.

›What race, gender,
and class is Angel?
›How do you know?

KEY IDEAS TO REMEMBER



Race, class, and gender are socially and emotionally constructed concepts that intersects with many other forms of oppressions

Two people can have totally different understandings of the same reality

Recognizing and interrupting systems of oppression is all our work.

Lunch





Narrative Matters

Hedy

Narrative

- Intentionally constructed stories
- What are the common narratives that are told about ESPs in our organizations?
- Who controls the development of these narratives?

Stand and move into triads to discuss



Why does the story matter?

- › *A dominant narrative* is an explanation or story that is told in service of the dominant social group's interests and ideologies.
- › It achieves dominance through repetition, the perceived authority of the speaker, and the silencing of alternative accounts/voices.

Narratives-pg. 7-14



NARRATIVE

Because dominant narratives are so normalized through their repetition and authority, they have the illusion of being objective and apolitical (neutral), when in fact they are neither.

Narratives are used to:

- 1) Trigger imagination and make connection
- 2) Are expressions of or a counter to cultures
- 3) Are resources for empowerment or oppression

Shifting the Narrative - DON'Ts



- ❑ Focus on challenging facts or interpretations of information.
 - Your arguments, as convincing as they may be, will lose to the dominant narrative.
- ❑ Attack people for their worldview.
 - Many people operate out of the dominate narrative, even if unconsciously. You cannot move people by attacking them.

Shifting the Narrative - DON'Ts

- ❑ Name the dominant narrative as “wrong.”
 - Accountability with respect
- ❑ Try to convert or convince people.
 - We are trying to bring out the best in people, help them find that in themselves.



KEY IDEAS



We want to hold people accountable but be respectful.

Shifting the Narrative Example

You are at a large staff meeting and a rather outspoken colleague says, "I can't believe these ESP members! They get all of the same benefits of our certified members. They take up much more of our time in services and they are complaining about the amount of their dues and the money they make! Why can't they just be content with what we give them? Why don't they just join another union that better fits their need?!"



NARRATIVE

Shifting and Using Narratives

Unmask

- › Name the dominant narrative when you see it at work.
- › Point out that what you just saw on the news or heard from a friend, or the law that was just passed, was based on particular values and beliefs.
- › *"I hear you saying we have one class of members that is more valuable than the other."*



NARRATIVE

Shifting and Using Narratives

Elevate

- › Name the values and beliefs from our new narrative that you want to see lived out in the world.
- › Connect it to places where your audience may see that happening already.
- › *"All work is respectable work I believe we have a duty to equally support all workers In our locals."*



NARRATIVE

Shifting and Using Narratives

Contrast

- › Lay out what might be different if your values/convictions were the ones shaping what happens in the world.
- › Be specific about how we have the choice to approach situations through a different belief system.
- › Invite a rethinking of the situation.
- › *"Imagine if our dues structure, our managers directives about our work, and our support system for all members were aligned. What could that look like?"*



NARRATIVE

Shifting and Using Narratives



NARRATIVE

Draw on your own journey

- › While it's important to personalize this, it's also important to do it in a way that anyone can see themselves in it. Describing your own realizations and shifts will help others
- › Find their own way in the conversation.
- › *"I understand the frustration that we do not have enough resources for all our work, that is not the fault of our members. We need a system that equally values and provides equal access for all members."*

KEY POINTS TO REMEMBER...



Sustain your efforts and connect with others

- Shifting a dominant narrative does not happen quickly – it takes sustained effort, over time, with many people working at it.

Demonstrate your worldview, don't just write / talk about it.

- Our actions say as much or more about our values and beliefs as our words.

Try the Shift!



› At your tables

- We are all going to explore more examples
- Apply the steps we discussed to shift the narrative
- Use your handouts for support

Debrief that Shift!



- › What do you notice?
- › What was tough?
- › What worked well?

KEY POINTS



Narratives are powerful tools that can be used to maintain power over an oppressed group

Narratives can be intentionally changed and used by an oppressed group to advance a change agenda

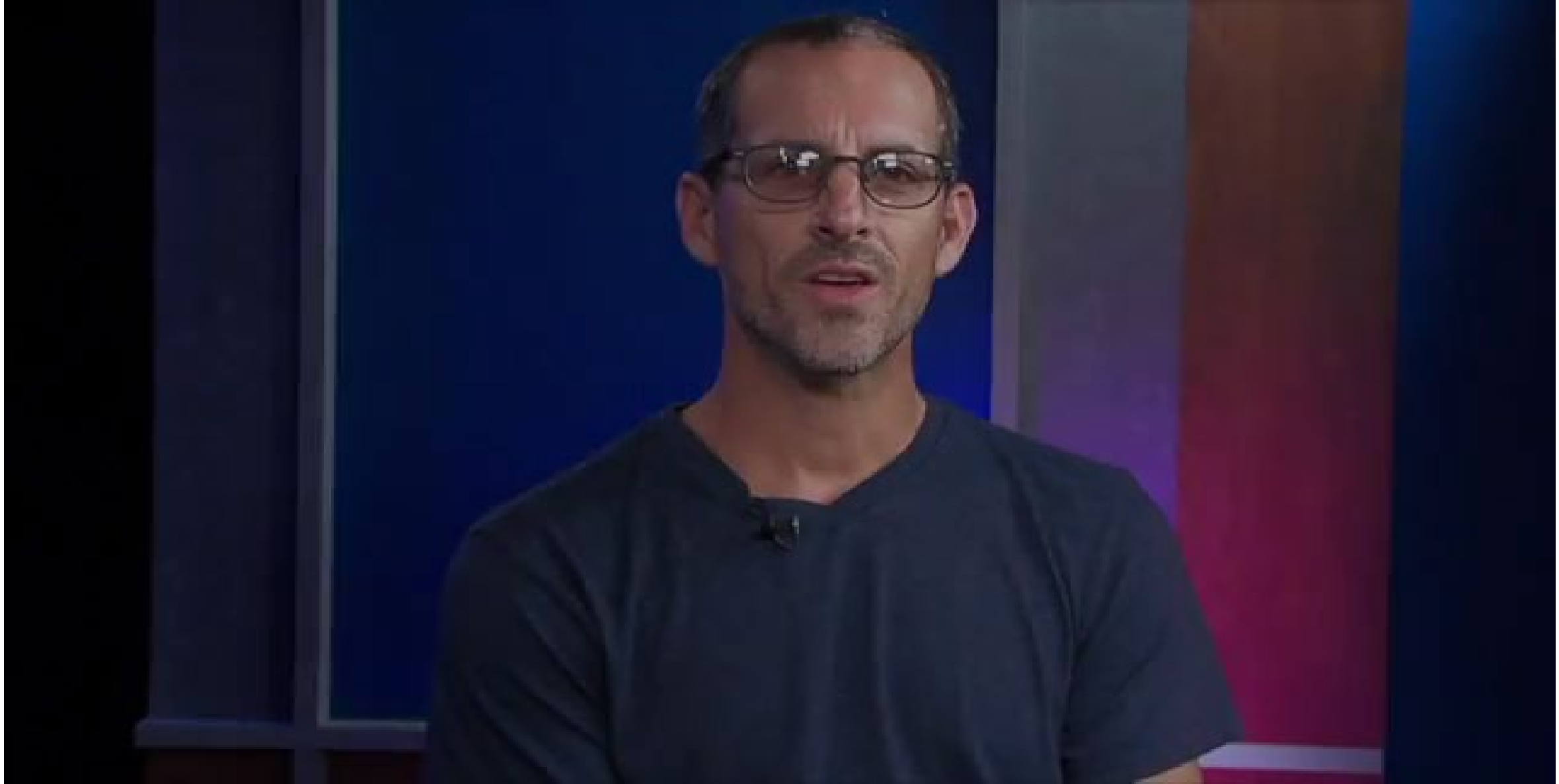


Defining Class

Michael

While you watch...

- › Notice what's missing
- › Notice what's new learning for you
- › Think about questions you want to ask



How do you define class?



Our Definitions – p.15-16

- › **Class** – relative social rank in terms of income, wealth, education, status and/or power.
- › **Classism** – differential treatment based on social class or perceived social class. Classism is the systematic assignment of worth based on social class; policies and practices set up to benefit more class-privileged people at the expense of the less class-privileged people.



BREAK



Anti-Class Consciousness

Jeny and Dawn

Anti-Classist Consciousness

Count off by 7's

Each team will be assigned one of the 7 “Shifts”



Anti-Classist Consciousness(pg. 19)

Read your “shift” and identify how the conditions described show up in your work with ESPs and our organization’s relationship with ESPs.

Be ready with a 2 minute or less report out



Questions to Discuss

1. What is your most important take away from this activity?
2. How will you fold this learning into your work with ESPs?
3. What are the consequences for not discussing and understanding classism?
4. What are the consequences for not including an intersectional perspective?



KEY POINTS



Classism is code for institutional racism

Classism is a complex set of intersectional privileges and oppressions

Advancing justice for our ESPs will require both intentional and strategic action to dismantle these systems



Problem to Issue Identification

Beth

PROBLEM vs. ISSUE

A problem is the whole pie. Problems are vast, complex, and entrenched.

When we try to tackle a problem, we reinforce the hopelessness of the situation. We are trying to take on the full pie all at once.

Issues are the pieces of the pie. It's a small chunk of the larger problem that we can make progress on, and in turn we are slowly taking on the full problem over time.



Issue

An ***issue*** is a slice of the larger problem that is manageable and solvable.



PROBLEM

vs.

ISSUE



Values

Values are fundamental beliefs that dictate behavior

Ideally, Unions advance the welfare of all members.

They are based on the universal ideal of human rights, the idea of justice, progress, and betterment of self and of society.

Through shared values, members build solidarity and commit to active participation in the labor movement.

Shared values transform individual members into part of something larger than themselves.

Some Union Values

Fairness, honesty/integrity, responsibility, compassion/empathy, safety, health, generosity, hard work/responsibility, community, freedom, democracy, binding contracts, equality, opportunity, respect, stability/security, unity, quality work, justice, collective action, dignity/respect, charity/community service, and due process.

How to Link Issues and Values

Investigating member issues is necessary but not sufficient – we also need to identify workers' **SHARED** values –

WHY is this an issue?

WHY do you want to fix this?



EXAMPLES- Problems to Issues + Values

VALUES – Public Schools should be safe, equitable, and inclusive learning and working environments for all people.

PROBLEM -Our administration does not address violent / hostile students

- **Issue Cut** – The MTSS / RTI / PBIS plan does not adequately address the behavior.

PROBLEM - Our school reinforces racism and the experiences of marginalized populations.

- **Issue Cut**– ESPs are the lowest paid employees.

KEY IDEAS



- › Problems are big conditions of injustice
- › Issues are the smaller member identified components that make up the problem
- › Issues indicate a path to action
- › Values build a relatable why across people experiencing the pain of the problem
- › We intentionally work to connect members around issues and values to build Solidarity

TEAM WORK – The Problems

Go to a theme that resonates with you

- › You will be forming a team no smaller than 2 no larger than 5
- › Use the theme to create a list of issues
- › For each of the problems you identify – try to think what the values are that are behind WHY you see this as a problem.

Example Problem – We want quality health care for everyone

Values behind wanting to fix this – equity, fairness, dignity

List your problems and values on your charts.

TEAM WORK – Problems into Issues

Example Problem – We want quality health care for everyone

Values behind wanting to fix this – equity, fairness, dignity

Possible Issues –

Not enough providers in our rural system

Values – access and equity

Drugs are not affordable

Values – fairness and access

No coverage for home health options

Values – equity and dignity

Cut your problems into issues on your charts.

Issue Criteria Checklist

p. 39-41 :Reference only

Will the Issue...	Issue #1	Issue #2	Issue #3
1. Result in a real improvement in people's lives?			
2. Give people a sense of their own power?			
3. Alter the relations of power?			
4. Be worthwhile?			
5. Be winnable?			
6. Be widely felt?			
7. Be deeply felt?			
8. Be easy to understand?			
9. Have a clear target?			
10. Have a clear timeframe that works for you?			
11. Be non-divisive?			
12. Build leadership?			
13. Set your organization up for the next campaign?			
14. Increase membership?			
15. Be consistent with your values and vision?			
16.			
TOTALS			

Group work



What's your issue?

Is it widely/deeply felt?

What's your win look like?

KEY POINT



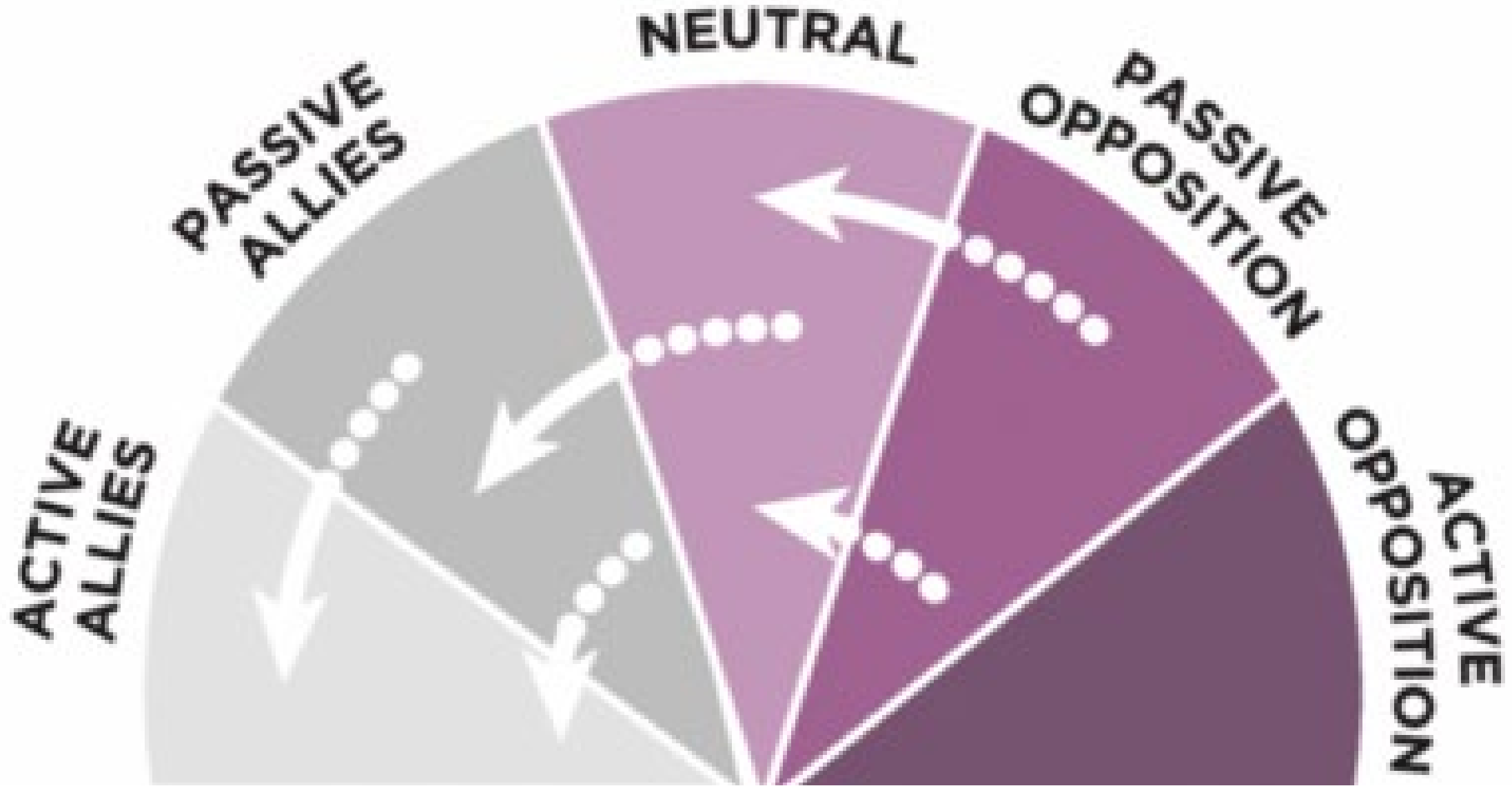
- › We don't choose the issues, the people who want the change choose the issue.



Spectrum of Allies

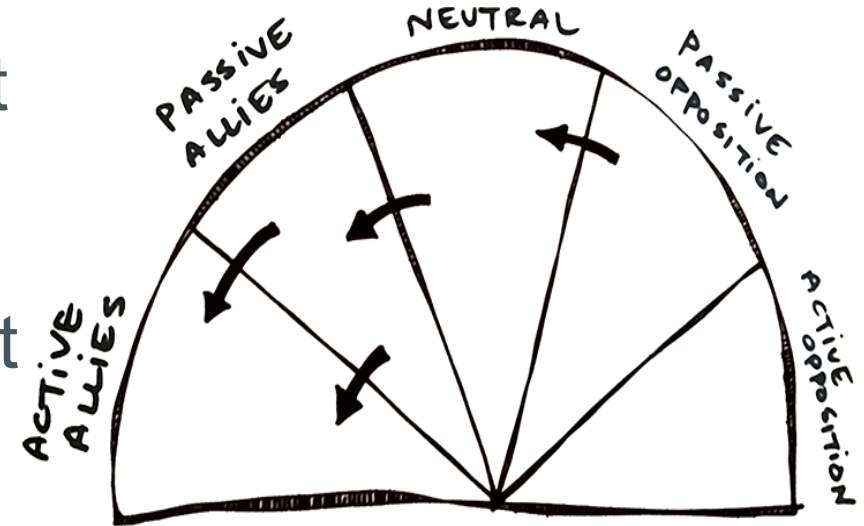
Vanessa

Spectrum of Allies



Spectrum of Allies Part 1

1. Active allies: people who agree with you & are organizing alongside you
2. Passive allies: people who agree but aren't doing anything about it (yet!)
3. Neutrals: people who aren't sure, or are unengaged (they might just not know about you yet)
4. Passive opponents: people who disagree, but aren't trying to stop you
5. Active opponents: people who have done something to prevent you from reaching your goal

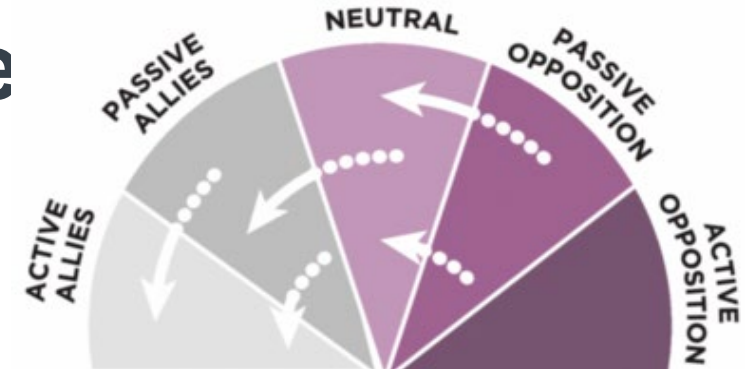


Where You Focus Your Energy Matte

Only the Opposition – cynicism

Only the Active Allies – stagnation

Generalizations about Slices – missed opportunities



DO FOCUS ON THE PASSIVE ALLIES

- These are folks who know or care about what you're up to, but aren't doing anything about it! Give them a chance to participate and build power with you.

THE GOOD NEWS

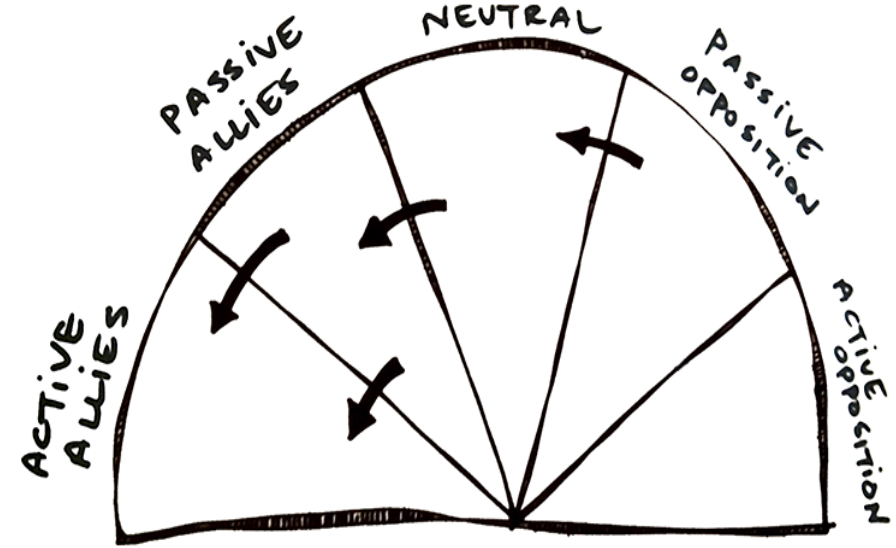
- It is only necessary to move some or all of the pie wedges one step in your direction. If we shift each wedge one step, we are likely to win, even if the hardliners on the opponent's side don't budge.

An example from history – Freedom Summer

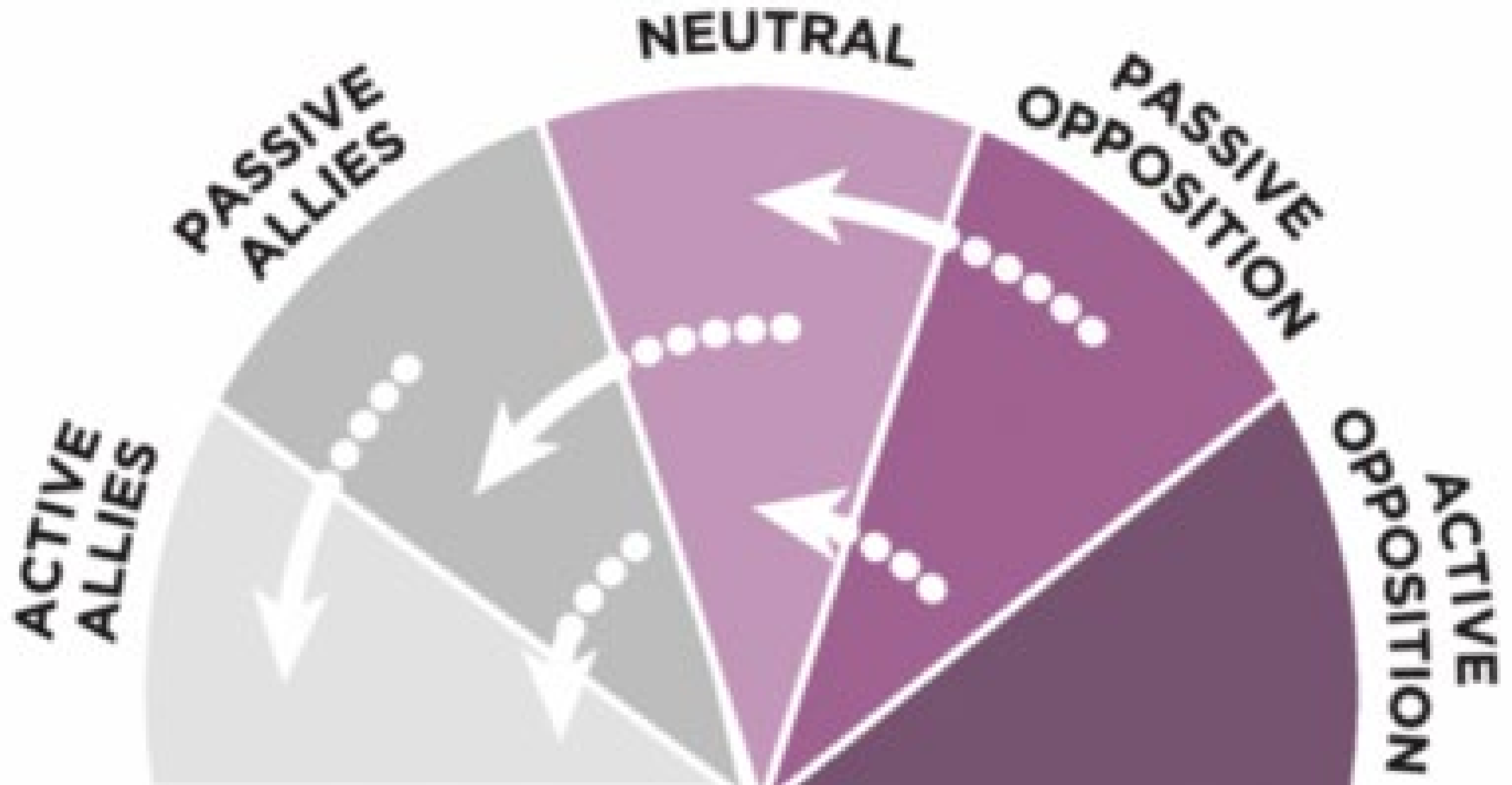


Spectrum of Allies Part 2

1. Develop a convincing argument or values based narrative that will appeal to each wedge.
2. Design one tactic for each wedge that you can invite them to participate in that will move that wedge one closer to us.
3. Design one small achievable ask to engage one individual from that wedge to move closer to you

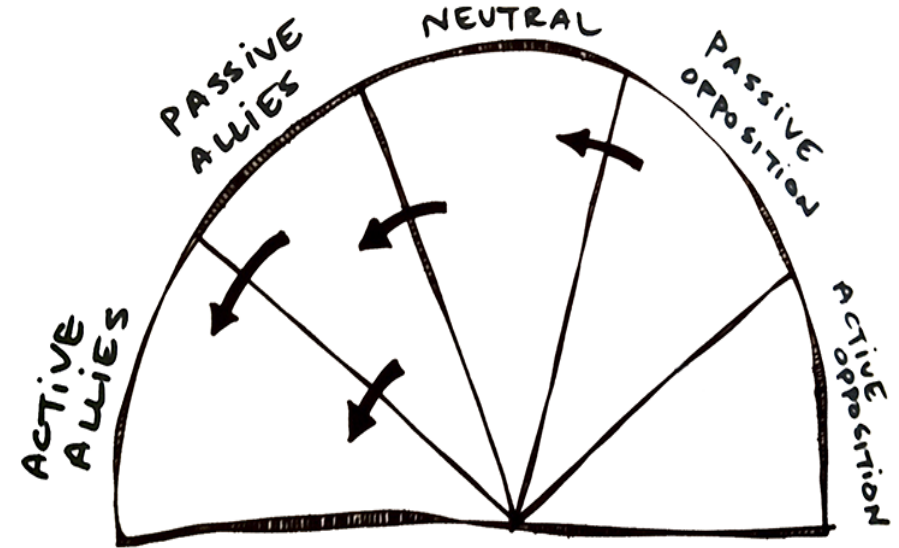


Team Pair Share of Spectrum of Allies



Spectrum of Allies Debrief – Whole Group

- › How did it feel to present your arguments for how to move your wedges?
- › What is something new you learned from this or from another team?
- › What do you think you could apply to your current work?



KEY IDEAS



It is only necessary to move some or all of the pie wedges one step in your direction.

If we shift each wedge one step, we are likely to win, even if the hardliners on the opponent's side don't budge.



Ending It Right

Ellen



**KEEP
CALM,**

IT'S

JUST THE END

OF MY POWERPOINT

KeepCalmAndPosters.com

Ending it Right

- › Choice Networking
- › Housekeeping
- › Feedback Form

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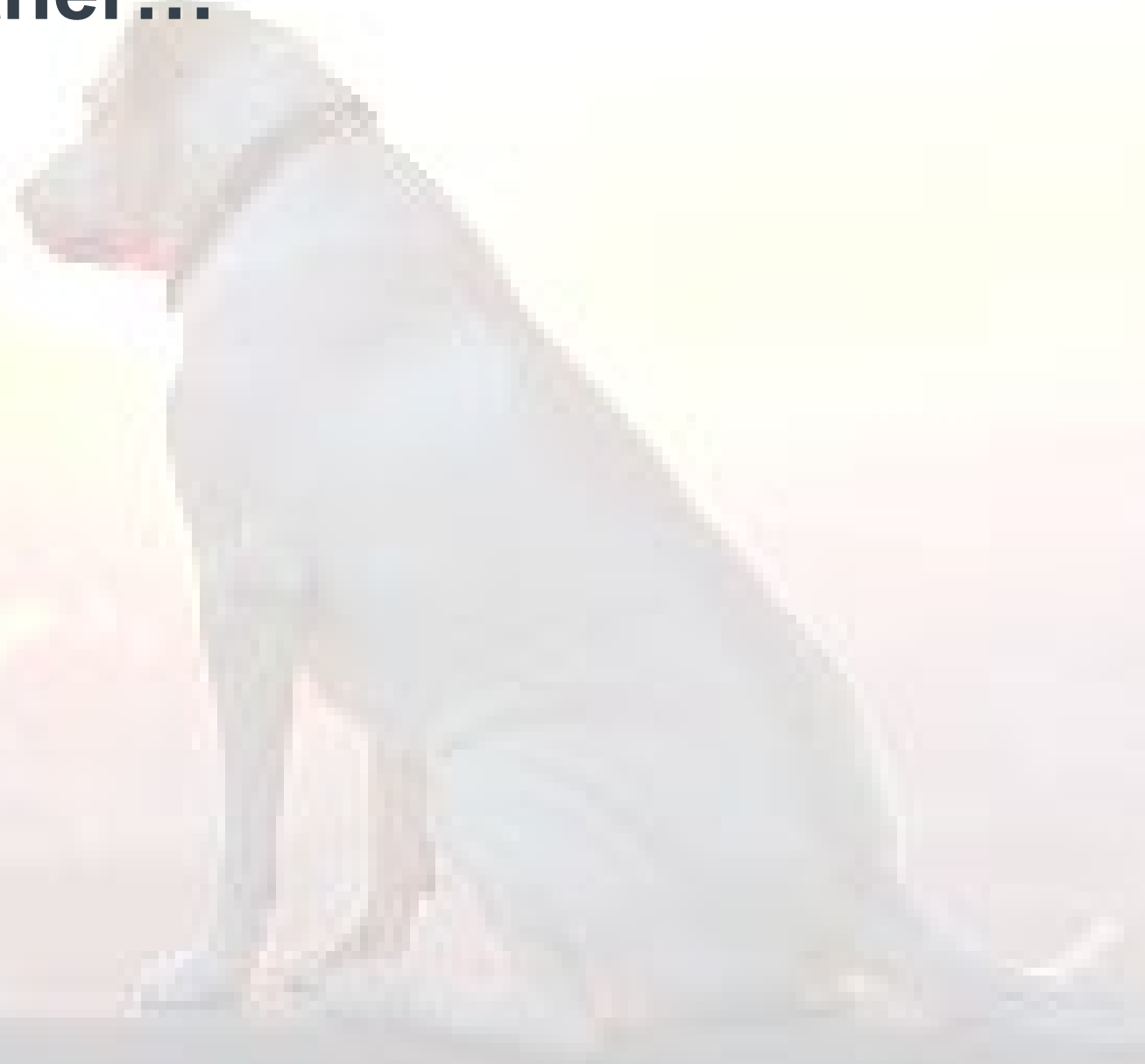


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Closing our time together...

What will you take with
you into your future
work?



“The opposite of
networking is
NOT working”

– Someone smart

Choice Network Time