**Building Your Group: It's All About That Growth, 'Bout That Growth**

We're not likely to end extreme poverty with just the people we have. Join RESULTS founder Sam Daley-Harris for the inside scoop on building your group.

**Write down some reflections to these questions:**

[For those who don’t have a group, answer the ones you can and get what you can from what others say.]

Why did you come to this session and what do you hope to get out of it?

Why did you join a RESULTS Group originally?

Who do you want to be in be world that RESULTS helps you fulfil on?

How many active partners are in your group right now? How many would you like there to be?

What is your greatest success in building your group?

What is your biggest disappointment in building your group?

What currently holds you back around inviting others and building your group?

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I went to the Citizens Climate Lobby (CCL) Regional Conference in Bethlehem, PA in March 2015. I attended a workshop on Building Your Chapter led by Madeleine Para, the CCL staffer in charge of group health. Madeleine had started as a volunteer and went on to start 11 groups in her home state of Wisconsin. She was one of the people I’d written about in the new chapter of *Reclaiming Our Democracy*. I’d been on the CCL conference call earlier that month and her local group, Madison, WI had 28 people on the call even though she wasn’t there but at another regional conference. Another group she’d started, Stevens Point, WI, had 30 on the call. I figured she had something to teach all of us. This document is adapted from Madeline’s session.

When Madeline started the session she said that this was the 10th regional conference she’d been to in this round of regional conferences (there were 140 registered for this one). She said that the Executive Director always starts with an inspiring quote but since she was a kindergarten teacher she likes to start with a song. She proceeded to sing, “Make new friend but keep the old. One is silver and the other gold,” and then had us sing it. She’d done what she thought was a very good workshop the previous nine times that had several key points: 1) finding people, 2) keeping people, and 3) getting them involved. But she also knew something was missing and that was the whole issue of creating a welcoming group culture. She read this op-ed by a CCL volunteer in Oregon.

**Climate change activism needs anybody:** *Neighbors find common ground in fighting global warming*

[**Carla Wise**](http://www.hcn.org/author_search?getAuthor=Carla%20Wise&sort_on=PublicationDate&sort_order=descending)**OPINION, Jan. 15, 2015**

I’ve made some unlikely new friends since becoming a climate-change activist. One of them is an 83-year-old retired engineer who is passionate about electric vehicles and doesn’t shy away from an argument. Another is a dairy farmer turned college student, who is so quiet it’s hard to know what he is thinking. Others include a retired pilot, a graduate student in economics and a retired science teacher, who are all still puzzles to me, as well as a guy who works at a homeless shelter and gets everywhere by bicycle, although he lives at the end of a long steep road in the soggy Pacific Northwest.

There is not a single person I would have identified as obvious friend material. I do not mean this unkindly, and in fact, they have taught me a thing or two about what this movement needs to succeed.

Two years ago, when I decided to launch a chapter of the nonprofit Citizens’ Climate Lobby, I pictured working with people I already knew and liked, or at least people I would be easily comfortable with because we had so much in common. But instead of my friends coming to the monthly meetings and lingering afterward to socialize, strangers filled my living room. Not only that, these strangers made me nervous.

I didn’t feel equipped to run meetings with these people. Many of them were retired men. Was the radical guy judging me for being too mainstream, the moderate guy thinking me too far left, the detail-oriented engineer criticizing my poor leadership skills, the cyclist disliking my two-car family?  I hated being in charge, worried no one would show up to the next meeting, and felt awkward and self-conscious. I nearly quit.

Then about eight months in, I began to see that we did have one thing in common.  We all understood that we are living in extraordinary times, and that everything we needed and loved was at risk. We all wanted — or perhaps needed — to do something about it. Some of us were cynical, some optimistic, some moderate, some radical, some angry, some just searching.

But we were united because we had all reached a threshold and knew that we had to take action. People said, “We work on climate for our children. We do it because not doing it would leave us with a world of regret. We do it because there is a chance taking action might make things better. We do it because living an ethical life requires it.” We might not have used the exact same words, but I understood that we felt the same way.

This awareness allowed me to stop worrying about whether these people liked me and whether I liked them. If they would come to the next meeting, help write the next letter, plan the next event, lobby a congressman, that was what mattered.

It’s a sad fact that we humans like to band together with people who share our views, values and politics to fight a common enemy. You can see this in our communities and our statehouses, and most dramatically, in our national politics. In recent years, the Republicans have been bound together by their hatred of Obama; the Democrats by their hatred of the Koch brothers and their contempt for the Republican Congress. I wanted to join with my friends to fight climate change, but my friends didn’t want to come to the meetings. So I had to find other people, and they had to adapt to me, too.

Our common enemy today is the destabilizing climate. If we can’t get over our clannishness and unite as humans to stabilize the climate and adapt to the changes we’ve already set in motion, we will all fall together. The Citizens’ Climate Lobby I’ve chosen to work with is nonpartisan, and I was drawn to that approach. Yet I had my own clannishness to overcome.

Now, every time the engineer, the student, the pilot, or the science teacher arrives at a meeting or volunteers for a task, I feel gratitude.  I still don’t know them the way I know my close friends, and they don’t really know me. Yet as long as they want to help fight climate change, I am truly happy to see them.

As a conflict-avoiding introvert, I’ve spent most of my life carefully choosing who I spend time with.  Now, I’m ready to join forces with anyone who wants to work on stabilizing Earth’s climate. Anyone at all is welcome -- you are all on my team, you are all my friends. I think the future of humanity may depend on it.

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Madeline mentioned that she especially liked the line, “Yet I had my own clannishness to overcome.” She asked those in the workshop, “Where are you clannish?” and had a few people share around the room. Then she went through this outline from her previous workshops. But before we go to her outline let me ask these questions. What is the best group you’ve ever been a part of and what made it great? How does your RESULTS group measure-up in being the best group you’ve ever been a part of? If it doesn’t measure up, what can you do to make it great? Let’s see what Madeline says then and then make your own list.

1. **Useful Perspectives**
2. **All organizing is one-on-one and personal**. Mass e-mails don’t reach people, you reach them.
3. **You are selling an organization, not a problem**. What is it about this organization that makes you volunteer your precious time with us? Talk about that more than you talk about the threat of our issue.
4. **Always talk solutions when you talk about our issue**.
5. **Finding one person at a time**.
6. **Look for new people: new to activism, new to town, newly retired,** people who aren’t already committed to 10 other causes.
7. **Drop our organization into the conversation everywhere, as part of how you talk about yourself.** Say one or two sentences, “My name is Madeleine and I teach first grade, but lately what’s even more important to me is doing something about climate change so my students have a strong future. I spend a lot of my free time volunteering with Citizens Climate Lobby because it’s been such an effective organization to work with.” Then pause for reactions. Say a little, pause, wait for a question. Interested people will keep the conversation going, those who aren’t interested will change the subject.
8. **Go where the concerned people already are**. Tabling, rallies, public events. It’s your job to start the conversation. “What brought you here today?” “Have you been thinking about (this issue) lately?” “Have you written your member of Congress lately?”
9. **Use the meeting margins—go early and stay late at events**. That’s where the personal connections are made, not during the presentation or the movie. Before the meeting ask what drew them there, and after the meeting ask what they thought about the meeting.
10. **Good prospects**—people with passion, with time or skills, especially relationship skills, and with the right attitude. Issue knowledge is less important. People can learn that.
11. **Be generous to everyone**. Not everyone becomes a chapter member, but sometimes people turn out to be good to know for other reasons, like for particular knowledge or access they have.
12. **Invite people you want to something**, either on the spot or very soon after. Invite them to coffee, the intro call, your next meeting, or to come with you to something you are doing.
13. **Eventually people are going to start coming to you**, as word spreads about your chapter. Follow-up promptly (within 24 hours is best) with people who come to you, before something else gets their attention. Welcome them. Act like they are important and special. Be enthusiastic with them and generous with your attention.
14. **Reminder: You are selling the organization/your group/solutions**. Not the direness of our issue.

**III. Keeping people by keeping it personal and productive**

1. **Call your people before meetings**. Personal contact and voice mails are better than e-mails.
2. **Pay at least as much attention to the new people as the experienced ones**. The experience people are going to grab your attention because they know you, so you have to keep an eye on and seek out the inexperienced ones. People who feel ignored don’t stick around. Talk with people before and after the meetings.
3. **Ask new people to help with the work as soon as possible**. Start small and scale up. **People who don’t feel useful and productive don’t stick around**. Ask for help setting up. Cleaning up, writing something, finding something out, bringing food, etc.
4. **Find out what each person wants to do and help them do it**. Everyone has a project.
5. **Don’t waste people’s time**. Come prepared for your meeting with an agenda and handle as much as possible without meetings.
6. **Invite people to do things with you that will help them learn more**. Try never to do things alone. Invitations are best when personal, not general.
7. **Celebrate every success, and stay positive**.

**IV Getting help with the work. Tips on delegating.**

1. When you have too much to do you aren’t delegating enough.
2. When people aren’t coming back they aren’t engaged in the work enough.
3. You can take pride in everything everyone else does when you delegate.
4. Generic requests for help rarely work. Well thought out personal requests for help often do.
5. If you assume you are burdening people with your request they will agree and feel burdened.
6. If you include an acknowledgment or appreciation of their strengths as part of asking, they may say yes more often.
7. When you match the person to the task well, they light up and thank you for asking them. (You have to know your people’s skills and interests.
8. It’s okay when people say no—it gives you useful information about what to ask next time.
9. Sometimes when they say no you can scale back the task to get a yes.
10. Delegating requires trusting people AND providing support for them to succeed.
11. When people agree to do something and you don’t see anything happening, you need to initiate contact, find out the problem and solve it. Possible problems: they should have said no in the first place, the task is too big or too vague, they need more support in some way. Don’t wait to do this.
12. When people feel bad about something they haven’t done, they leave. Get people off the hook and onto something they can succeed at as fast as possible.
13. Be careful what you ask of people who find it difficult to say no.
14. Things that kill delegation: criticism, isolation, invisibility, meaningless tasks, person not suited to the task, unclear task, micromanaging, making people do it your way. Things that encourage people to say yes: appreciation, clarity of the task, support, celebration, appropriate level of responsibility, celebration, appreciation, celebration, appreciation.

**What do you plan on doing differently to build your group? What support do you need?**