



CORE INTERESTS



To understand and establish a real connection to someone, you have to know what they care about—what is most important to them and what is most central to their life. It's the collection of relationships, experiences, beliefs, emotions, etc. that give meaning to the lives of human beings. Core interests are the basis for engaging someone in organizing. Remember, people will only fight for what they care about.

CORE INTERESTS CAN ENCOMPASS A WIDE RANGE OF CONCERNS. HAVING A FRAMEWORK FOR THESE CONCERNS CAN MAKE IT EASIER TO UNCOVER SOMEONE'S CORE INTERESTS.

The framework below names some categories that may be useful to explore. It is meant to suggest categories for questions that may help you in a 1:1 conversation.



CONNECTION

- Relationships
- Family
- Community
- Culture



MEANING

- Politics (worldview, belief system)
- Faith (spirituality)
- Creative expression



SAFETY

- Livelihood (income, home, etc.)
- Material sustenance (food, clothing, shelter)
- Personal boundaries



WELL-BEING

- Health (mental, emotional, spiritual, physical)
- Reflection (introspection, understanding)
- Recreation (fun, leisure)



Please complete the following diagram and insert your own core interests.

SAFETY

CONNECTION

MEANING

WELL-BEING





DEEP LISTENING



DEEP LISTENING PRESENCE

- ➔ Being present is the most important element of active listening; if your attention is on the past or the future, it is not on the person who is speaking to you, and they will know it.
- ➔ Focus on what the person is saying rather than rehearsing what you will say next.
- ➔ Centering is key to presence—use centering breath, awareness of posture, and grounding of your feet and body to center during conversations.

COMPASSION AND CURIOSITY

- ➔ Remember why you are in the conversation and in relation with the person.
- ➔ Work to be open to who the person is: seek to understand their perspective and how they see the world.
- ➔ Instead of immediately evaluating what is said, suspend judgment and listen.
- ➔ Be curious about the person: ask open-ended questions.

BEING AWARE OF THE BODY

- ➔ What is the message from your body language?
- ➔ What do you notice about how the other person in the conversation holds their body? Where and when are they tense or contracted, and where are they more relaxed and open?
- ➔ What does this tell you?
- ➔ Check this assessment with the person.

REFLECTIVE LISTENING

a. Paraphrasing ideas

- ➔ Paraphrasing is stating back to the person what you heard them say.
- ➔ It is not parroting their exact words, but communicating the essence of what they said in your own words.
- ➔ Paraphrasing can help you stay present, allow you to be sure you understand them correctly, and let the other person know you really hear what they are saying.

b. Listening for Emotions

- ➔ Be aware of the person's emotions; they may be obvious or more subtle.
- ➔ Restate them in your own words. This will help you check your assessment and may help the person gain clarity on what they are feeling.

CONNECT, ENGAGE, VISION, AND ASK (C.E.V.A.)



1 CONNECT



- Introduce yourself and ask introductory questions (Ex. How long have you been at the company? If there was one thing you could change about your job what would it be? What is important to you? Share your answer for the questions you ask).
- Establish basic rapport and genuine interest to build trust and connection with the person.
- Exercise deep listening skills, pay attention to their words, mood emotions, and body language.
- Give a short and clear explanation of the specific purpose of the conversation.
- Ask about their opinions/feeling/experiences in relation to this work or campaign.

2 ENGAGE



- Ask many questions which engage the person's core interests (connection, safety, wellbeing, meaning, and specific social/political issues).
- After pinpointing the core interests exercise deep listening and verbally express your connection and understanding of the importance of their beliefs.
- Agitate and polarize person by pointing out the inconsistencies between the person's core interests, the current socio-political reality/working conditions, and the change that needs to be made.

3 VISION



- After agitating and polarizing the person is searching for solutions and ready to transition to talking about solutions and what can be done to make change.
- Based on the person's core interests, highlight the union's/campaign's past victories or future fights which will be of interest to the person.
- Explain the role of organizing and collective action in building a power labor movement that can change our work life and society, and the role they can play in it.
- Create a collective vision (Power With) about the great effects of standing up and intentionally making change (the person, other membership, unions, and working people can increase their power and change circumstances).
- Clearly establish the purpose of the conversation/the purpose of the campaign, reiterate what you all agreed upon and continue to agitate around the need for change.

4 ASK



- Allow people to step up and fight for what they care about.
- Make a direct and simple request for the person to engage in the campaign/organizing effort of focus.
- Respect the person's dignity and let them respond without making decisions or excuses for them (deeply listen).
- Push back on soft no's/affirm, answer, and redirect/reiterate points of agreement, and restructure your ask, if necessary.
- Be persistent in getting a real commitment. Be sure to get all of the necessary information and suggest/schedule a follow-up to this conversation to continue to organize with the person.



SKILLS OF A SUCCESSFUL ORGANIZER

1 Connecting to what is most important to people

2 Displaying the ability to listen to what people care about

3 The ability to agitate and polarize; the ability to make people feel/think/connect the dots of the injustice or power over them

Simply put, this is the ability to make people feel/think/connect the dots to the injustice or power over them.



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AGITATE AND POLARIZE

AGITATE

Stir up emotions; get people to articulate their anger and frustration; encourage people to identify a problem and how it impacts them directly/personally; support people to voice clearly how they feel about a problem.

EXAMPLE How does it feel to go to work every day and still not have enough money to take care of your family?

POLARIZE

Us (workers) versus them (corporations, elected government). This is about who has power collectively and who does not, and who has *POWER OVER* us versus who we want to build *POWER WITH*.

EXAMPLE How does it feel to be forced to work overtime every weekend and miss your children's basketball games, while the bosses are at home enjoying their families?

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CWA
POLITICAL
ACTION

C.E.V.A.

1 CONNECT



- Introduce yourself and ask introductory questions (ex. How long have you been at the company? If there was one thing you could change about your job what would it be? What is important to you?) If warranted, share your answer for the questions you ask.
- Establish basic rapport and genuine interest to build trust and connection with the person.
- Exercise deep listening skills; pay attention to their words, mood, emotions, and body language.
- Give a short and clear explanation of the specific purpose of the conversation.
- Ask about their opinions/feeling/experiences in relation to this work or campaign.

2 ENGAGE



- Ask many questions which engage the person's core interests (connection, safety, wellbeing, meaning, and specific social/political issues).
- After pinpointing the core interests, exercise deep listening and verbally express your connection and understanding of the importance of their beliefs.
- Agitate and polarize person by pointing out the inconsistencies between the person's core interests, the current socio-political reality/working conditions, and the change that needs to be made.

3 VISION



- After being agitated and polarized, the person is in search of solutions and ready to transition to talking about what can be done to make a change.
- Based on the person's core interests, highlight the union's/ campaign's past victories or future fights which will be of interest to the person.
- Explain the role of organizing and collective action in building a "powerful" labor movement that can change our work life and society. Have the person think about the role they play in building a strong movement for working people.
- Create a collective vision (power with the person) about the great effects of standing up and intentionally making a change. The fuel for the vision is the fact that the person, other membership, unions, and working people can change unwanted circumstances.
- Clearly establish the purpose of the conversation/the purpose of the campaign, reiterate what you all agreed upon earlier in the conversation, and continue to agitate around the need for change.

4 ASK



- Allow people to step up and fight for what they care about.
- Make a direct and simple request for the person to engage in the campaign/organizing effort of focus.
- Respect the person's dignity and let them respond without making decisions or excuses for them (deeply listen).
- Push back on soft no's/affirm, answer, and redirect/reiterate points of agreement, and restructure your ask, if necessary.
- Be persistent in getting a real commitment. Be sure to get all of the necessary information and suggest/ schedule a follow-up to this conversation to continue to organize with the person.

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