Glen’s 6 Workshops Cover These Topics

FREE Online Workshop Series: **“Nonviolent Grassroots Organizing”**

Each 2-hour workshop includes many online handouts that flesh out the topic.

You will find these resources useful when you organize about issues you care about.

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#1 “The Power and Practicality of Nonviolence – What is Nonviolence?”

Violence and injustice are pervasive throughout our society. We can organize nonviolent grassroots movements that can solve those problems.

This workshop #1 clearly explains what nonviolence is and how it works. It makes a clear case for grounding ourselves in nonviolence and using it in all of our work. Nonviolence is not only ethical, but it is very practical and very powerful. Instead of “fight” or “flight,” nonviolence is a third alternative that works better, so you can fight back without using violence.

Nonviolence is much stronger and more comprehensive than merely a set of specific tactics. It is consistent with how the universe functions best. This workshop explains clearly how Gandhi, King, and others developed and used this strategically smart way to organize against oppressors.

Violence often backfires and make problems worse. Nonviolence has been proven to work more effectively and accomplish better results. Instead of “top down” violence, nonviolence empowers people from the “bottom up.”

In unjust, oppressive and violent settings, nonviolence changes the dynamics of the conflict so we can choose creative alternatives that rewrite the script of how the conflict will play out. Nonviolence requires courage. We can empower ourselves to devise smart, creative nonviolent strategies that will bring more people together into powerful grassroots movements that are much more likely to win than if the movements used any violence.

This workshop’s truths and strategies can help you win on any issue that you care about.

#2 “How to Strategize and Organize Effective Grassroots Movements”

Almost all of the positive political and social changes that have occurred in the U.S. were achieved through grassroots organizing. You can learn how to organize at the grassroots to change society in positive ways for any issue you care about. This workshop #2 teaches you some effective large-scale strategies and methods of grassroots organizing for social and political change. It also provides some nitty-gritty practical steps.

Nonviolence is powerful and effective largely because it uses methods that are consistent with how the universe functions best – and also are consistent with the goals we want to accomplish. Our activities plant the seeds of the society that will grow.

In order to achieve your goals, you need plans and strategies to bring more and more people into your nonviolent grassroots movement, so you can organize step-by-step to reach your goals. I define “organizing” as “working with other people to make good things happen.” It’s not enough to simply gather more information for ourselves. We need to reach out to the general public – and to various kinds of people within the general public – to inform and inspire them so they will join with you in your nonviolent grassroots movement to accomplish your goals.

The people who have the official power will not voluntarily give you what you want. You can win only if you organize a strategically savvy nonviolent grassroots movement so a large majority of the public will support your goals. Only then will the people who have the official power recognize that nonviolent “people-power” is more powerful than they are.

Your movement needs one or a few clear goals. Devise smart strategies for how to accomplish them. Your strategies must focus on bringing more people – and various kinds and constituencies of people – into your movement.

Although some kinds of goals can be achieved relatively quickly, the biggest and worst problems can be solved only with many years of skillful organizing that will evolve through several stages.

At the outset, only a few people know or care about the problem. You will need to educate people, connect them with each other, and organize local groups to work on it. You will need to reach out to the kinds of people who will see that their needs and values make them “natural allies” of your grassroots movement. Also, you’ll need to reach out to other kinds of people who might not at first see what they have in common with you, but you can help them see that their needs and values are somehow linked with yours, so they will join with you as “tactical allies.”

You will continue bringing more and more people into the movement – and persist without burning out or doing things that are stupid or violent – until you have a solid majority of public opinion on your side.

Then you will adapt your strategies to nonviolently forcing people who have the official power to change the official policies so your movement can achieve its goal(s).

In order to do all of this, you need a big overall strategy and specific strategies to move you from one stage to the next. In this workshop #2 I’ll explain an overall model – the “Movement Action Plan” – that you can use for doing all of this.

Your nonviolent grassroots movement needs to empower itself and understand how to organize such a “people-power” movement from the small beginning all the way to victory. Your movement needs this big picture in order to recognize the progress you’re making, even while the people who have the official power and the news media tell you you’re losing.

This workshop explains all of this – and how to devise smart outreach strategies. The workshop includes more insights and some specific examples.

#3 “Organizing 101: Basic Nuts & Bolts of Grassroots Organizing”

This workshop #3 gives you many very practical insights, skills and resources for doing what workshop #2 had taught. Because almost all of the positive political and social changes that have occurred in the U.S. were achieved through grassroots organizing, this workshop #3 explores practical large-scale strategies and methods – and it teaches some very practical nitty-gritty ways to help you be more effective. This workshop is useful for people who have experience doing grassroots organizing – and it is especially useful for people with less experience.

Workshop #2 had mentioned the need to bring various kinds of people into your movement. This workshop #3 teaches a way for you to see how the issues other people are working on are actually connected to the issue you are working on. You can reach out to them for support and alliances. This can help you build a bigger, more diverse movement. (In exchange, you could also become allies to help those people work on their issues.)

We’ll devote some time to sharing our various experiences about reaching out to people, networking with people working on other issues, and building coalitions with organizations that can discover something they have in common. We’ll share examples of what has worked – and why – and examples of what did not work – and why. You will learn how to replicate the successes and learn from the failures. It’s fun to learn from each other’s experiences.

Nearly half of today’s workshop focuses on what I call “basic nuts & bolts of grassroots organizing.” These are very practical things that – if done well – can help you build a strong effective movement, but that – if done badly – will cause you to fail.

These practical factors include creating a positive culture within your organization so people will continue participating and volunteering and following through. You need to be “user-friendly” for your volunteers, do your work competently and reliably, enable your participants to do high quality work, and devise smart outreach strategies.

#4 “Using Three Models to Devise Strategies to Make Progress on any Issue You Care About”

YOU will do most of the talking in workshop #4. Today’s session combines YOUR rational thought with YOUR creativity.

The first three workshops laid the foundation for today’s workshop # 4. Those three workshops explored (#1) what nonviolence is and why it is powerfully effective; (#2) devising goals and strategies for organizing effective grassroots movements; and (#3) smart ways to reach out to people and help them work together to achieve your grassroots movement’s goal(s).

Today’s workshop #4 teaches you how to use three different models for how to build your movement’s overall strategies and how to reach out to various kinds of people and bring them into your nonviolent grassroots movements for social or political change.

These three models are relevant to a wide variety of issues and settings. For any particular issue you work on now or in the future, you might find one or two models especially useful. If you understand all three, you can draw upon whichever model(s) might be must useful for whatever you are working on. I have used each of these models when working on a variety of issues. These have included abolishing nuclear weapons, protecting the climate, setting a $15/hour minimum wage, creating a peaceful foreign policy, and so forth. Today when we explore each of these three models, today’s group of participants may choose whether to focus all three models on a certain issue or whether to focus them on different issues.

The three models are very practical:

* The “Force-Field Analysis” model is a way to figure out what social, political, cultural and other forces are pushing in good ways in relation to your issue, and which ones are pushing in bad ways. We want to strengthen the good forces and weaken the bad forces.
* The “Spectrum of Allies” model recognizes that members of the public are not merely “pro” or “con” regarding your issue, but actually extend all across a wide spectrum including mild opposition, mild support, and undecided with mixed feelings. Instead of fretting about your hard-core opponents, this model empowers you to devise different strategies for the different kinds of people at the different points along the spectrum. You can devise strategies to move the people at each different point along the spectrum just one point further along to your side. The cumulative effect shifts overall public opinion’s center of gravity significantly toward your victory.
* The “Pillars” model helps us understand the systems and powers that caused and perpetuate the big, bad problems that we want to solve. This model can help us identify each system or power that props up the big problem – and devise strategies to weaken or remove each of those systems or powers, so we can dismantle the problem and replace it with something better.

#5 “Empowering the Progressive Movement”

In all of the problems that we want to solve, we are the underdogs. People with a lot of official power want to keep control over those problems and prevent us from solving them. Many progressives recognize how dysfunctional all systems are, so it’s easy to feel powerless. But if we feel powerlessness we won’t act boldly and effectively. Many people in the general public feel that the problems are too big and they are relatively powerless.

Today’s workshop #5 helps us understand the dynamics of this “learned helplessness” and how to empower ourselves so we can organize nonviolent grassroots movements that will bring people together to empower themselves, so – together – we can solve the problems.

Today’s workshop #5 builds upon previous workshops to explore further how political and social change occurs – and how we can strategize and organize effectively, so we can win. We’ll share some practical examples.

#6 “How to Get Your Message Out to the General Public”

It’s not enough for activists to merely accumulate more information and talk among ourselves. In order to make political progress, we have to interact with the general public and keep bringing more people into our movements.

To be effective, we must design our public contact strategically and carry it out skillfully. We can become much more effective than we have been at moving public opinion! This workshop provides a wealth of fresh insights and practical methods.

While all previous workshops have taught various aspects of outreach, this workshop #6 focuses entirely on outreach. We’ll provide insights into how to reach out effectively to various kinds of people. Warm, friendly ways work very well. We’ll explain how to use Marshall Rosenberg’s Nonviolent Communication method. We’ll explore the crucial importance of how we shape and “frame” our message to the public, so the public will understand and agree with us at the heart and gut level, as well as the head level. We will share a number of outreach strategies and methods – including some examples that are very creative and some that are very funny.