

Building relationships through conversations

Strong relationships are a key to building powerful, lasting grassroots organizations. Most relationships start – and are strengthened by – meaningful conversations. Among organizers, these are often called one-to-one conversations. They are conversations with a purpose.

Organizers and community leaders use one-to-one conversations as a way to learn about a community. They are also important in identifying, recruiting and developing new leaders. Here are some ways to make the most of one-to-one conversations.

A) Build a list of people you want to meet with. These may include:

- People in leadership positions, including ministers, social workers, leaders of ally organizations...
- KFTC members you want to know better.
- People recommended by someone else in the community.
- People who have expressed some interest (they came out to a meeting, signed a petition, etc).

B) Set up an appointment.

Call (or stop by if there is no phone) to ask for a time to meet in person. Explain that you want to learn more about their concerns for the community and to share some information about KFTC. Explain that you won't take more than an hour. (And stick to that limit.)

Find a meeting time and place that works for them. You may suggest several options, including meeting at the person's home or in a more neutral setting.

C) Plan your conversation. One-to-ones are conversations with a purpose. Know your purpose! What do you want to learn? It helps to think of your conversation in four parts:

Share personal stories.

Learn about their family, background, and interests. Briefly share your own story.

Ask a few specific questions, linked to your purpose. Some examples include:

- What do they value most about where they live?
- If they could change anything about their community (or city or state) what would it be?
- What are the most significant trends or forces shaping their community today?
- What life experiences have shaped their view of the world?
- What difference could a strong community-based organization make?

Make connections between their interests and KFTC.

- Briefly explain KFTC and the way we work.
- Connect their concerns to issues and values we work for.

Ask them to join and get involved.

- Ask them to join the organization.
- Ask them to do something (write a letter, attend a meeting, be interviewed for the newsletter...)

*Kentuckians For The Commonwealth, PO Box 1450, London, KY 40743
606-878-2161 www.kftc.org*