

TOPICS

1. Hold the media accountable / understand the news we consume (2 groups)
2. Protect individual & civil rights/fight racism, sexism, homophobia (3 groups)
3. Build understanding & develop conversation with the “other side” (2 groups)
4. Review, revise, change the U.S. voting & election process
5. Communicate with current legislative bodies (1 group + advance email)
6. Organize to change public policy from outside the current party structure
7. Educate ourselves/improve our education system
8. Hold face-to-face conversations within & between specific actions
9. Help coordinate many different efforts and a more cohesive movement
10. Resist cultural normalization of recent changes in language/attitude (added)

Topic 1. Hold the media accountable / understand the news we consume, group 1

Questions

- How do we define “media”?
- How do we interact with the fractured media?
- If fact checking was at an all-time high in this election cycle, yet it didn’t seem to materially impact the media cycle or the outcome, how can we ensure accountability?
- How can we signal the media re what we want them to cover or ignore?
- Can we establish standards that enable us to evaluate news sources? (i.e. Reddit)
- What role do/should citizen journalists play?

Insights

- Many media outlets want to appear balanced.
- Headlines matter more than below the fold copy / content.
- It’s hard for media to directly label something “a lie.”

Specific actions

- Support artists’ unique role in commentary. Example: *Hamilton* cast’s statement.
- **Proactive vs. reactive efforts** (marked by a star)
- Subscribe to newspapers & publications (that endeavor to check facts, etc.)
- Encourage media & individual reporters to investigate and question
- Support *Propublica* & other nonprofit news sources as well as foreign sources, *The Economist*, etc.
- Vote with your dollars
- Contact news outlets to directly communicate the type of coverage we want + provide feedback.
- More first-person accounts & stories
- Publish your own work on the internet
- Find issues where different political groups agree and engage disproportionately (e.g. Pipeline).
- Develop & apply a standard for evaluating news sources (outlets & reporters), a sort of system of public ethics or prominently featured code of ethics for media outlets.
- Start your own media portal (online).

Topic 1. Hold the media accountable / understand the news we consume, group 2

Enormous importance & influence of media

Shift of media to online/Facebook

- different realities within different circles

Fake news, superficial “sound bite” media

Social media and its influence

We should be writing/participating in local news sources – local & national

- support media so they exist (with subscriptions)
- write and let them know our opinions
- thank for when call out lies as lies

Strive for transparency & accountability

Trump’s misdirection from other issues through hyperbole

Media plays on emotion, doesn’t focus on issues

Trump spent ad dollars in Facebook & Google

We should target Facebook & Google, ask them to be more accountable

- Join FB groups calling for reform
- contact actual FB employees
- email, mail, call
- Free speech issues
- Attribution issues

Educate people to think critically about the news

Now, information is at our fingertips, ease of finding information

Election fatigue

Where the media is moving

- younger generation + digital/social
- socially-sourced info that people believe blindly

Media accountability / don’t normalize Trump

- “Alt-right” vs. “white supremacists” – language matters
- support the media that’s calling out the lies, e.g. *LA Times* on “illegal votes”

Media giving equal press to both sides of an issue, even when those issues have been proven unbased/false, such as climate change

- equal time does not equal transparency/accountability

Trump muzzling media: media sees Trump as “delicious candy bar”

Media censorship: call out half-truths/half-stories being reported

- encourage the media that is doing a good job, investigative journalists

Is it more influential to target Congress?

Media spends too much time on projections that on what is actually happening.

Topic 2. Protect individual & civil rights/fight racism, sexism, homophobia, group 1

What do we need to know?

- How do we help people feel safe?
 - Poverty, sexism, racism, hate crimes
- Safety pin – can I really back it up?
 - Show people that you are a safe person
 - Intervene in hate speech
 - Symbolic: You are not alone (solidarity).

- How do we combat systemic racism/marginalization?
 - A registry is a big, easy distraction from real, ground-level problems.
 - Look into avenues to fight/support legislation
 - Support organizations
 - Are petitions effective?
- What can we do?
- Start individually. What can we do with our neighbors?
 - Build a community with diverse viewpoints.
 - When our community is white/hetero, how do we learn about the people we want to protect?
 - Reach out, make effort.
 - “Next Door” / neighborhood blogs. Email. Ask how to help.
 - Have a more diverse Town Hall.
 - Invite minority groups and speakers. For example, ask CAIR leaders/speakers (Council on American-Islamic Relations)
 - When you feel fear, what can you do?
 - Safe place signs in businesses. The police pay attention. Talk to the businesses.
 - Positive reactions can come from taking a risk.
 - What would make Seattle safe?
 - Open to diversity
 - Low hate crime
 - Pay attention to giving a platform for minority voices. Make sure they can speak for themselves.
 - Understand the commitment behind the safety pin. Read about how to handle hate violence when you see it.
 - Not every conversation has to be “intense.” Start small.
 - Support diverse judges. Campaign. Fundraisers.

Topic 2. Protect individual & civil rights/fight racism, sexism, homophobia, group 2

Why did we choose this topic?

- How to address issues as a teacher
- What can we do to stop white supremacy?
- Racism – urgent, aggressive
- Looking for more diversity
- Encountering racism in our neighborhoods
- How to engage respectfully (around race issues)
- Reaching out to neighbors/community

How to combat “isms”? – concrete actions

- Sit next to someone if they’re being harassed
- Have conversations with the “other” side – ground rules, set an agenda/ask questions, be respectful
- Read, donate, volunteer
- Put yourself on the line
- Stay aware of what’s happening in your community
- Find “like-minded” people to connect with
- Solidarity with targeted communities (if there’s a Muslim registry, we all sign up)

- reparations.me provides 1-on-1 assistance support
(On the blog it says this about its founder: "Natasha Marin is a conceptual artist working across disciplines and media to collaborate with People to create opportunities for meaningful IRL and digital engagement.")
- Intercultural group dialogues
- Contact representatives, help friends contact reps.
- Seek out stories of people who are directly impacted by policies
- Connect with others with similar values/interests.

Topic 2. Protect individual & civil rights/fight racism, sexism, homophobia, group 3

- Should the focus of action be defined by what is proposed by the admin or should it be proactive?
- Find other spaces/organizations where people can be allied.
- Facebook as a place to find events. Follow new people on Facebook.
- Resource organizations
 - Centro de la Raza (can help immigrants learn English and other)
 - Refugee Women's Alliance
 - Jezebel, online newspaper listing immigrant's organizations
 - One America
 - Volunteer fairs
- Draw together disparate interest groups to build numbers.
- How can we proactively prepare for eventualities?
- Build a coalition with Catholics – around sanctuary and activism
- Coalitions can be either macro or focused, dig in deep
- Support the nonprofit world – such as the ACLU and Anti-Defamation League
- Is public protest effective?
 - Or is it speaking to the choir?
 - It creates energy, but doesn't change minds or build bridges
- What are our strengths? We don't know the extent of our impact in taking any one action.
- Check out this for consumer power. It started December 5: <injusticeboycott.com>
(Website says: "Relentless, principled, organized resistance, driven by local people and supported by passionate believers")
- Concrete next steps – talking to people

Topic 3. Build understanding & develop conversation with the "other side" group 1

- * Show respect for those you're conversing with
- * Focus on mutual, common interests. Find common ground.
- * Polarization with core values. Exercise constraint & be careful of pushing your personal mandates.
- * Meet with those in areas of your state/town that may not share your views.
- * A recurring topic: Hold and participate in round table discussions/forums that present a non-partisan point of view. Appear welcoming to all parties.
- * Understand the differences between the character vs. the ideology of who you're voting for or who you support.
- * David Brooks: *The Road to Character*. A book about historical characters and how they've changed the world – coming from different ideologies.

- * Understand the differences in one another based on experiences. Example: rural vs. urban upbringing.
- * Change the narrative. Move away from the “two sides” philosophy.
- * Continued dialogue with those that have differing perspectives

Topic 3. Build understanding & develop conversation with the “other side” group 2

Identified Steps:

1. Look at successful models
 - o Example: The Center for Nonviolent Communication <http://www.cnvc.org/>
2. Get to know each other – personalize the “other”.
3. Have education on the psychological factors and pitfalls at play when trying to build understanding with an “other side”?
 - o Example: The Hidden Brain weekly podcast <http://www.npr.org/podcasts/510308/hidden-brain>
4. Identify ways to build understanding without conversation. Words can be disagreed with, positions can be rejected.
 - o Art – example: AIDS Memorial Quilt <http://www.aidsquilt.org/>
 - o Film
 - o Music
 - o Books – example: Silent Spring
 - o Programs that build understanding
 - Example: Sister Cities <http://www.sister-cities.org/what-sister-city>
5. Learn how to raise a topic, approach conversation.
 - o Respectfully, politely
 - o Open-ended questions
 - o Probe more
 - o Don't start with topics that can be polarizing (e.g. abortion)
6. Work together on issues of commonality to solve problems
 - Example: non-partisan group No Labels <https://www.nolabels.org/>
7. Educate yourself on topics.
8. Create and support personal, community and nation self-awareness on bias (self-serving bias).

Discussion:

- How do you measure the effectiveness?
- Why did we decide to discuss #3?
 - o Half population went one way, half the other
 - Additional population did not vote
 - o We know people/family on the “other side”
 - o Bridge people, be connectors
- How would you raise topic?
 - o There are divisive topics and non-divisive topics
 - o Probe more
 - o Approach politely, respectfully, gentle
 - o Be aware of differing perspectives, such as someone in the military vs. anti-war/non-military
 - o Arguments don't work, there's no point to it.
- How to talk to each other
 - o How to talk in positive ways

- Build history of talking with each other
- Find the commonality
 - Example: Nolabels.org, a non-partisan political action group. They focus on 4 areas and have been around for 20 years. Areas include securing Social Security and Medicare, energy security
- Ask open-ended questions
- Start with approachable topics/less divisive (e.g. abortion - emotional issue with religious connections)
- Get to know each other. Who is the “other side”?
 - Younger people are less homophobic because they know someone—it’s not the “other.”
 - Project to raise Palestinian and Israeli children together in Israel – Marshall Rosenberg
 - Personalize examples of how x benefits you or someone you know, such as, how having healthcare made a difference when the accident happened.
 - NPR interviewer asking random people their perspectives on the same questions and recording their answers.
- Challenges to honest, safe conversation
 - How to address lies, particularly those in media and from politicians?
 - Where does the “truth” lie?
 - How to get beyond catchy labels, such as “crooked Hillary.”
 - Is talking to the “other side” an individual effort and/or media?
 - Fanaticism
 - Religious stances for some issues, but minimized for others
 - Culture – for example, women may accept that some men’s inappropriate behavior towards women is normal and it’s up to women to adjust to it.
 - Stated concerns may be inconsistent or different than expressed when examined.
 - Conversations can be difficult with people to the right and to the left
 - Can we have non-emotional conversations? Is it possible?
 - Need ability to disagree without offense
 - What’s the outcome we’re looking for?
- Perceptions
 - There is a lot of fear.
 - This is promoted with language of people being on “the other side”, same as “opposite side”
 - More afraid Democrats will do more harm than moral transgressions would
 - Puzzled. Positions and arguments don’t seem logical, aligned or to make sense. Why?
 - Fanatics – do we appear as a fanatic to those we perceive as fanatics?
 - There is a real dark side, where it is it needs to be recognized
 - It causes pain
 - It threatens people
 - Can’t call a racist something prettier
- Religion
 - Where is Jesus in all this?
 - Right has both religious and non-religious
 - Moral issues are not always common ground
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- Where is the opportunity to change minds?
 - Is there a great deal of movement to be had?
 - What does tolerance look like?
- Racism – a lack of understanding of another race. How do you bridge that gap?
- Create an environment that enables:
 - Confluence of different communities.
 - An exchange and sharing of This Is Us.
- What are the opportunities to build understanding without talking at each other?
 - Art, music, film, quilts, books
 - Example: AIDS Memorial Quilt
 - Example: Silent Spring
 - Projects of building mutual understanding
 - Example: Sister cities
 - Sometimes words are not the right tools. It's easy to disagree and stake positions with words.

Topic 4. Review, revise, change the U.S. voting & election process

- Electoral College purpose: Compromise for slave states to approve the Constitution
- Obama's pledge to work on electoral reform
- What motivates people to be involved in non-presidential election years?
 - Fear of becoming marginalized by legislative changes
- Make voting easy
 - Holiday for voting? All mail in?
 - National voting standards, opt-in for voting registration
- Change Electoral College: requires 2/3 of states to amend the Constitution
- Ask representatives to push for national standards for voting
- Send email alerts/notifications in a countdown to voting
- Notify friends & family in other states/counties to be alert to proposed voting restrictions.
- Urge a consistency in the arrival of voter information/pamphlets so they are timely with the ballots.
- Nationalize mechanisms to control gerrymandering
- How do we get non-voters to the polls?
- We have to flip vulnerable seats in the state and out of state
- Could there be an action network to identify vulnerable seats? Who would organize it? At a national level? Parties, organizational groups, voting rights groups?
- Civics education would be an answer to empower voters.
 - Return it to school education.
 - Put a call out to Olympia.

Steps:

- Advocate national voting standards: mail voting/voting day as holiday
- Identify vulnerable red seats and support opponents, even if out of district.
- Send voting reminders for all elections to motivate, especially outside of presidential election years.
- Call for reform of Electoral College – Obama's post-office initiatives?

Do we still live in a democracy? With reforms, yes!

Topic 5. Communicate with current legislative bodies

- How do individual citizens lobby?
 - Example: Citizens' Climate Lobby <citizensclimatelobby.org>
 - Student protest is an example of a non-party movement
 - Low Income Housing Committee
- Look for chances to talk with legislators
 - Get to know legislative members.
 - Use email and phone calls, and meet them in person.
- Divest from banks – Bombard all the organizations you're involved with & tell them to divest from corporations
- Talk to our two senators – Cantwell & Murray – about renewable energy.
- Organize mailings to banks, corporations, police departments, and state legislature
 - Use internet groups, postcards, lobbying.
- It comes down to the individual, and then to the group, and then to the bigger picture.
- Pay attention to Jill Stein's re-count.
- Rigged voting machines: "Gotta get rid of the voting machines!"
- Boycotting/divesting from the 38 banks that offer credit to the Dakota pipeline project.
Be part of a postcard blitz on this. Yes magazine gives information.
- CASCADIA
- National Popular Vote bill, is being voted on state-by-state
<nationalpopularvote.com>
- We should have assignments for ourselves for the next meeting
- "I don't know more"
- Organize flash mobs to make statements
- Participate in international protest
- Focus on local elections. Get good people to run.
- There are no answers. We do what we can.
- "We've had bad times before."
- "Keep up the morale."
- Meet-ups
- Sign petitions and make them.
- Dump "top two"
- Don't feel frustrated.

Topic 5. Communicate with current legislative bodies (by email in advance)

- 1) Stop or slow down some national things like Sessions, privatization of medicaid, cutting climate change research, and other stuff as bad that we don't even know about yet.
- 2) The current locus of power capable in some way of resisting legislative moves is the Senate, and the Democrats in the Senate.
- 3) They can resist only if they are united and strong in resistance.
- 4) People here in Washington can do what they can to make our Senators, Murray and Cantwell, strong and informed in their resistance and willing to work with others.
- 5) Phone calls are important but they have problems. They are one sided and it's not clear what senators do with them. We need additional creative ways of strengthening and collaborating with senators.
- 6) Push senators or their aides to sit down with activists and local Democratic Party members to talk about the project of broad scale resistance.

Topic 6. Organize to change public policy from outside the current party structure

- The two-party system is tribal.
- The Democratic Party silences anyone not part of the system.
 - Examples: Bernie and the three-party coalition
- Ways to work with the two-party system? What can the people do?
- We like it when politicians talk about the issues. Does the two-party system direct conversation away from the issues?
- The two-party system encourages the neo-liberal machine
- Identity politics
- The two-party system creates the United States' aggressive corporate agenda.
- It polarizes people over chosen hot topics.
- "Both parties are pro-war and corporate elites."
- Who is the third party? Green Party, Libertarian Party, Progressive Party, Christian Liberty Party, Constitution Party, Socialist Party?
- "We want all presidential candidates in the debate."
- What actions are we going to do outside of the party system?

Topic 7. Educate ourselves/improve our education system

1. What do we need to know
 - Ralph Nader organization, Breaking through Power, video on archive at TownHallSeattle.org
 - What are our goals?
 - Believe that institutions should teach critical thinking, and teach science
 - Support availability and affordability of college
 - Make healthy public school systems
 - Fight privatization of education
2. Are we talking about the same thing? What are our disagreements?
 - We agree:
 - Educate ourselves
 - Keep public in public schools
 - Try to understand the other side, other arguments
 - Public education should be funded
 - Make college available & affordable
 - We disagree:
 - Funding for public college
3. What are our strengths and assets?
 - We are pretty educated people here & in the Puget Sound Area
 - Right now we are not going to be disappointed like the people who voted for Trump
 - We are organizing
 - We have historical experience with anti-democratic governments, back to Eisenhower admin, pre-civil rights era, nuclear war threats, Vietnam War, Nixon, war in Central America, fighting for women's rights, reproductive rights, LGBTQ rights, environmental justice

4. Concrete next steps

- Get stories out
- Connect with Social Equality Educators in Seattle, <socialequalityeducators.org> (Website says: “We are a rank-and-file organization within the Seattle Education Association that is dedicated to strengthening progressive values inside SEA”)
- Support our public schools
- Be able to explain “why public education is valuable.”

Topic 8. Hold face-to-face conversations within & between specific actions

(Notetaker was late to join, so these notes miss much of the conversation)

Quote by Mary Ritter Beard: “Action without study is fatal; study without action is futile.”

Where do these conversations happen?

- One person at the table is involved in weekly planning meetings around what a neighborhood can do.
- Start small, with neighbors. Neighborhood groups, block parties.
- Another meeting, [ConcreteActions](#), was held at 3:00 on 12/4 (the same day as Penny U) at the International District Community Center. It was accompanied by an “[Action Fair](#)” including about 20 groups where people could volunteer. And that meeting was spawned by an earlier meeting at V2 on 11th Avenue in November, which the [Capitol Hill Blog](#) reported hundreds attended. It’s all part of a Seattle Neighborhood Action Coalition (story in Capitol Hill Times [here](#)).

How can conversations happen between groups?

- How can we connect all the groups that are emerging? So much is going on in so many directions.
- Reach out from your group to others, share your names, set up connections

Other cultural communities

- How can something like this happen within separate language groups? (the person asking this is herself a Japanese speaker). Many need a comfortable place to have a conversation. Perhaps we can spread the idea of people talking together within their own organizations or communities.
- Trust is really important, counteract the fear, validate the group.
- Places where this could happen: through the Japanese American League, at the Buddhist Church in the International District.
- Maybe there could be a kind of “United Nations” of all. Representatives from each group could come together, meet, and we’d get a better mix. There is now a Northwest Model United Nations <seattle.nwmun.org>, started at the UW.
- How could we reach out to people on the other side of the state? Building face-to-face relationships will be important. But we can’t just go there as “urban do-gooders.” Do connections have to be made at their request? We might approach it by starting here, with urban communities that have strong ties with rural parts of the state, culturally or through families.

(This group built a little solidarity around chocolate and sesame bars.)

Topic 9. Help coordinate many different efforts and a more cohesive movement

What do we need to know? Inventory what we do know.

- *Yes! Magazine* to keep informed
- We should learn from the past. Past progressive movements devolved into sectarianism. Avoid these pitfalls dividing the movements.
Example: SNOW & Iraq war. What happened?
- Progressivism in Minnesota – example of agenda viability specific to local communities. Collective action across the country will be a spectrum of grassroots efforts working on different things, but intersecting on some issues.
- *The Stranger* as a source of information.
- What's portland doing?

Where is the focus, the intersection? Do activist groups talk to each other?

- Are there other things happening that we're not privy to? Is there a central hub connecting all the grassroots activities? Or capable of filling that need?
- Emergency meetings. Dakota Access Pipeline. 350.org (climate change, pipeline issue, Wells Fargo protest).
Examples of hub/clearinghouse models (not for politics or social activism):
Jezebel.com
Fantasy Football--example of way to help citizens become educated about politicians, their voting record.

Issues/topics of interest

- Public service cutbacks.
- Washington State Building Codes. Net Zero agenda. private industry advancing progressive public policy.
- Now new governor wants to grow economically in the tech sector. The strategy is to become more progressive politically to attract younger workers. New governor was pro-LGBTQ as a tactic for being pro-business.
- Global issues can be inclusive

What can we do?

- Know our assumptions.
- Call area code of city/state to reach legislators around the country.
- Women Against Hate March in Seattle
- Check out politifact.com
- What about reaching out to local tech businesses to see if they'd like to help make something for online organizing
- What about calling the NFL? Urge to support or defund. The power of boycotting.
- Tap into clearinghouse/hub for organizing, educating, becoming informed. local grassroots movements plugging into nationwide/global communities of interest.
- Inclusivity is important as we attempt to build cohesiveness. Inclusive language. Creating a new lexicon for talking in an inclusive way.
- What are those actions that I can do to mobilize people who are more close-minded or see things extremely differently?
- Who to support?
- Strategy suggestion: focus on specific issues, not party politics. Developing conversations around specific issues and not attacking political parties.

- Shop Blue. Since Bush administration, used to organize boycotting efforts.
- Safety Pin Box (on twitter)
- Have our language be about what we are supporting, not what are we fighting against
- Voting vouchers (Seattle, starting in 2017) - enabling people to donate to causes who might not be able to afford it.
- Watch Breaking Through Power video by Ralph Nader
<https://www.breakingthroughpower.org/>
- Three things we should do if we want to keep working on this:
 1. Meet again as a group
 2. Gather contact information of all in attendance
 3. Walk away today with action steps we all are committed to taking.

Summary:

- Use inclusive language
- Focus on specific issues, not party politics
- Use consumer power boycotts, "shop blue"
- Create "crowdsourced" model online hub, or contribute to growing an existing hub to provide outlet for education, outreach, conversations, fundraising.
- Be national, be global (locality of issues)
- Build solidarity
- Making political participation more inclusive - Democratizing campaign financing - voting vouchers for voters contribute to political campaigns without spending their own money.
- Emergency Meetings

Topic 10. Resist cultural normalization of recent changes in language/attitude
(a topic added by a participant)

- The language is affecting our children & it's concerning.
- Where is the normalization of this language coming from?
- Maybe school campuses are good places to start working on this.
- Our strengths:
 - Cultural norms of accepting / kindness / "PC" / basic human dignity
 - Knowing the difference between being "ignorant" and being "horrible"
 - Experience of working toward kindness and fairness
- We need to engage in conversations with the opposing side
- We need to write our representatives with our concern
- We need to become activists, write letters to the editor, to school administrators, to school security
- We need to empower people to resist bullying, especially our children, but adults too.
- Use CAIR's website <cairseattle.org> and its partners list to find allies. Council on American-Islamic Relations.