



SEED'S TIP OF THE MONTH:

ENROLLING ALLIES TO ACHIEVE YOUR MISSION

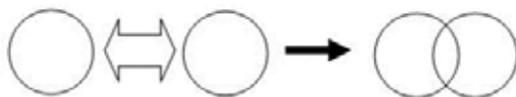
“Enrolling allies” is a craft you can practice and develop into something of an art. It’s kind of like dancing with your heart. How do you dance in conversation with a potential ally, such that shared agreement and enjoyment emerge? You want to be fully authentic and free in conversation. As Samuel Beckett once said, “Dance first, think later.” But also like dancing, you can practice your steps. You can learn to really tune into the other person’s rhythms and movements. To quote Martha Graham, “Dancing is just about discovery, discovery, discovery.”

STRETCH: Who would you like to enroll in your mission? Think of someone who has not previously been invited to engage in your work, who has something to offer, shares some of your values and maybe cares deeply about the results you seek. Is there someone who could add more value by becoming less passive and more actively engaged?

For this exercise, hold in mind an unusual ally, a person “beyond the choir,” outside your everyday web of interactions, perhaps entirely outside your profession or field. *Stretch* your sense of possibilities!

ENLIVEN: Enrollment is a multi-staged process. Do some research before you meet with your enrollee. Assemble what you already know about her/his interests. (The developmental scale presented in our [October Tip of the Month](#) will be helpful for preparing questions to invite your enrollee’s movement from “unaware” to “action.”)

Overall, your quest is to discover connections across two rich but disparate contents, yours and your enrollee’s.



The promise of enrolling participants (versus simply getting their buy-in or passive approval) is something owned and appreciated by both parties. Your dialogue needs to get you both dancing.

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- a) At the start of your meeting, suggest a question that you will each answer in turn to connect: “What excites you about X (the reason that we have come together)?” Or, “What brings you to so passionately engage in X?” Suggest taking two or three minutes each to respond.
- b) Now try to gain a sense of what is going well for your enrollee and what is getting in the way of her/his dreams? What’s missing? What needs to happen? What are some of the great challenges? Use Reflective Listen and seek clarification to understand what is important to her/him.
- c) Then you can start weaving a shared vision. With awareness of your own hopes and biases, share the distinctiveness, the unique promise of this opportunity to co-engage. This is more of a skilled advocacy, directing their energy to what might be mutually enhancing. Introduce aspects of your work in connection with what s/he has shared. Four guides:
 1. be transparent (“this is where I am coming from”)
 2. relate it to what s/he has said
 3. present with enthusiasm and passion
 4. be open—invite more: “What is making sense to you?”

Check for understanding. Ask for her/his thoughts on what you’ve shared. Any noticings?

ENNOBLE: Share a bit of what you are grasping about her/his deep interests. Then ask: “How does my work connect with the passion you’ve shared?” Make an explicit invitation or ask: “Are you getting a sense of how you might want to be involved? What might it look like? Is anything beginning to surface?”

DISCOVER: “What are we hearing as shared vision? Let’s have a look at what we’ve come up with. I heard XYZ. That’s a lot of great ideas. What else are you thinking?”

Suggest a quick brainstorm on concrete items to determine next steps. Try to end with firm agreements of who-will-do-what-by- when, to bring your shared agreements to the next stage.

Close your meeting with appreciation for the time spent together.

We’d love to hear how this works for you: tips@seedimpact.org