

## COMMUNITY ORGANIZING QUOTES

### **General Community Organizing**

*"The Three Radical Truths of Community Organizing:*

1. *Heart work is hard work.*
2. *You have to keep dancing even when you can't hear the music.*
3. *The path that makes you afraid is the path to take."*

– FACE

*"Learn from the people  
Plan with the people  
Begin with what they have  
Build on what they know  
Of the best leaders  
When the task is accomplished  
The people all remark  
We have done it ourselves."*

– Lao-Tzu Tao Te Ching

*"If we are going to survive we must build communities of caring and connection."*

– Cecile Andrews

*"The only way ... for our community to be a better place to live is for the people of the community to understand and accept their personal responsibility for what happens."*

–Davis Merritt, Jr.

*"Our real freedom comes from being aware that we do not have to save the world, merely make a difference in the place where we live."*

–Parker Palmer

*"Engaging people in learning new public ideas and practices is nothing short of a journey; there is no easy fix."*

–Richard Harwood

### **Leadership**

*"Facilitation is the art of drawing out what people intrinsically know and letting them own it. It is the art of observing, reflecting, guiding and giving back."*

– Ruth Hild

*"When we cast our bread upon the waters, we can presume that someone downstream whose face we will never know will benefit from our action, as we who are downstream from another will profit from that grantor's gift."*

–Maya Angelou

*"Be Someone for Somebody."*

–Mother Teresa

*"Everybody can be great because everybody can serve."*

–Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

*"A leader today needs to be one who convenes people, who convenes diversity, who convenes all viewpoints in processes where our intelligence can come forth. So these kinds of leaders do not give us the answers, but they help us gather together so that together we can discover the answers."*

–Margaret Wheatley

*"A leader takes people where they want to go. A great leader takes people where they don't necessarily want to go, but ought to be."*

–Rosalynn Carter

*"So I asked myself, will my footprints be deep enough to guide the children who follow me?"*

–Bishop Kenneth Hicks

*"There's something I know about you that you may not know about yourself. You have within you more resources of energy than have ever been tapped; more talent than has ever been exploited; more strength than has ever been tested; and more to give than you have ever given."*

–John Gardner

## **Collaboration & Teams**

*"We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly!"*

– Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

*"Community development, or community building, depends on identifying, developing and sustaining relationships. Central to being successful in those relationships is community leadership."*

–Center for Collaborative Planning

*"Relationship building is a way of looking at the world—not just a strategy."*

–Robert Putnam

*"Very great change starts from very small conversations, held among people who care."*

–Margaret Wheatley

*"Getting people together takes more than getting them in the same room."*

–Jim Rowings, Mark Frederic

*"Our best moments as a society come when we get outside ourselves and accept a common purpose that is larger than projected self-interest."*

–Tom Ehrlich

*"Alone we can do little, together we can do so much."*

–Helen Keller

*"How we decide is as important as what we decide."*

–David Chrislip

## **Chaos & Challenges**

*"Times of stress and difficulty are seasons of opportunity when the seeds of progress are sown."*

–Thomas F. Woodlock

*"Most of us at one time or another have been part of a great 'team', a group of people who functioned together in an extraordinary way—who trusted one another, who complemented each other's strengths and compensated for each other's limitations, who had common goals that were larger than an*

*individual's goals, and who produced extraordinary results ... the team that became great didn't start off great—it learned how to produce extraordinary results."*

–Peter Senge

*"This messy stage doesn't last forever, although it can feel like that. But if we suppress the messiness at the beginning, it will find us later on, and then it will be disruptive."*

–Margaret Wheatley

*"The more we pull together toward a common future, the less it matters what pushed us apart in the past."*

–Johnnetta B. Cole

## **Planning**

*"If you bring the appropriate people together in constructive ways with good information, they will generate authentic visions and strategies for addressing the shared concerns of the organization or community."*

– David Chrislip & Carl Larson

*"When we reflect deeply and honestly, when we subject our actions to thoughtful examination, when we act with purpose, not whim or thoughtlessness, we imbue our actions with meaning. I believe this balanced rhythm is the essence of a life lived with grace."*

–Bernice McCarthy

*"Vision without action is merely a dream  
Action without vision just passes the time  
Vision with action can change the world"*

– Joel Barker

*"Vision without action is daydreaming, but action without vision is just random activity."*

– Joel Barker

*"We dance around in a circle and suppose while the truth sits in the middle and knows."*

– Robert Frost

*"Discovery consists of looking at the same thing as everyone else and thinking something different."*

–Albert Szent Gyorgyi

*"You've got to think about big things while you're doing small things, so that all the small things go in the right direction."*

–Alvin Toffler

## **Plan Implementation/Taking Action**

*"Successful action gives people lessons in their own power."*

–Robert Putnam

*"I've found that luck is quite predictable. If you want more luck, take more chances. Be more active. Show up more often."*

–Brian Tracy

*"A good plan implemented today is better than a perfect plan implemented tomorrow."*

–George S. Patton

*“A barking dog is often more useful than a sleeping lion.”*

–Washington Irving

*“Success will never be a big step in the future, success is a small step taken just now.”*

–Jonathan Martensson

*“We cannot do everything at once, but we can do something at once.”*

–Calvin Coolidge

*“Action is the antidote to despair.”*

–Joan Baez

*“A journey of a thousand miles must begin with a single step.”*

–Lao Tzu

### **Plan Evaluation/Measurable Outcomes**

*“The purpose of evaluation is not to fix blame; it is to find out what we have to do next.”*

–David Mathews

*“You did what you knew how to do and when you knew better you did better.”*

–Maya Angelou

*“It is common sense to take a method and try it. If it fails, admit it frankly and try another. But above all, try something.”*

–Franklin D. Roosevelt