

20TH ANNIVERSARY EDITION

RECLAIMING OUR DEMOCRACY



*Healing the break between
people and government*

SAM DALEY-HARRIS

Founder of RESULTS

Foreword by Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Muhammad Yunus
New chapter on Citizens Climate Lobby

Important quotes.

Sen. Mark Hatfield

Mark Twain



Main Messages in *Reclaiming Our Democracy*

1. Most people feel hopeless and cynical about making a difference with their voices as citizens.
2. For 35 years I have seen people make a profound difference with their government on issues they care about



Main Messages in *Reclaiming Our Democracy*

3. The challenge is finding an organization that provides volunteers with a deep structure of support and a rich offering filled with inspiration, empowerment, and transformation



“Writing Checks, Signing Petitions, and Protest Marches: Is that All there Is?”

I wrote about this talk on Facebook and a friend wrote back saying she was a bit stuck on what to do next. I replied:



*The trick is to get away from feeling wildly impotent on 10 issues or mildly impotent on three to the point **where you feel profoundly effective on one** and trust that others are getting to their 'one.' You can click away on the other nine but you are still feeling profoundly effective on one. The trick is finding the organization that help you feel profoundly effective.*



You might not be the Town Hall question shouter, but if you are:

- Keep in civil, passionate, but civil
- Start or join a group for support
- Bring others in
- Plan your organizational meetings
- Clarify your message(s)
- Practice what you will say at Town Halls
- Join a national group that empowers you
- Reach out to the media
- Don't give up

But we will not solve issues like climate change, global poverty, mass incarceration, or getting money out of politics with checks, petitions, or protest marches alone. **We have to do the hard work of building bipartisan support and leadership.**

We shouldn't stop writing the checks and doing the other things, but we shouldn't stop there.



My story, from hopelessness to action.

Quotes that demonstrate our predicament.



...Our real problem is not a heating planet or rampant malnutrition....We only have one real problem: our own feelings of powerlessness to manifest the solutions right in front of our noses.

Frances Moore Lappé, *Getting a Grip*²



Frank Rich *NY Times* column from November 2007

....Last weekend a new....poll found that...only 24 percent of Americans believe their country is on the right track. [Seventy-four percent of respondents told pollsters the country is on the wrong track.]....



Wrong track is a euphemism. We are a people in clinical depression. Americans know that the ideals that once set our nation apart from the world have been vandalized....

[In January 2016 the numbers are about the same.]



Most non-profit organizations don't acknowledge the toxicity into which they send their volunteer advocates.

Consequently, they don't create a deep enough structure of support that can serve as an antidote to all the toxicity. Instead they offer mouse-click activism, thin gruel for anyone hungry to make a difference.

Sam Daley-Harris



Lawrence Lessig

We did a poll and found that 96% of Americans believe it important to reduce the influence of money in politics. But 91% don't think it's possible. That's the politics of resignation.



But the politics of resignation gives you a perfect strategy for winning...how do we thaw that resignation because once we do then I think we have a real chance of winning.



I will discuss some grassroots-led victories in the U.S. Congress. Of course, the change they brought are what is ultimately important, but I also want to give attention to these questions: “How did those victories happen? What’s the secret sauce for empowering ordinary citizens? What kind of structure of support and ethos are required to ensure grassroots breakthroughs?”



RESULTS began lobbying on child survival issues in 1984. In 1986 RESULTS volunteers generated 90 editorials in a successful campaign to triple the Child Survival Fund from \$25 million a year to \$75 million a year. At the end of the campaign UNICEF Executive Director James P. Grant wrote:



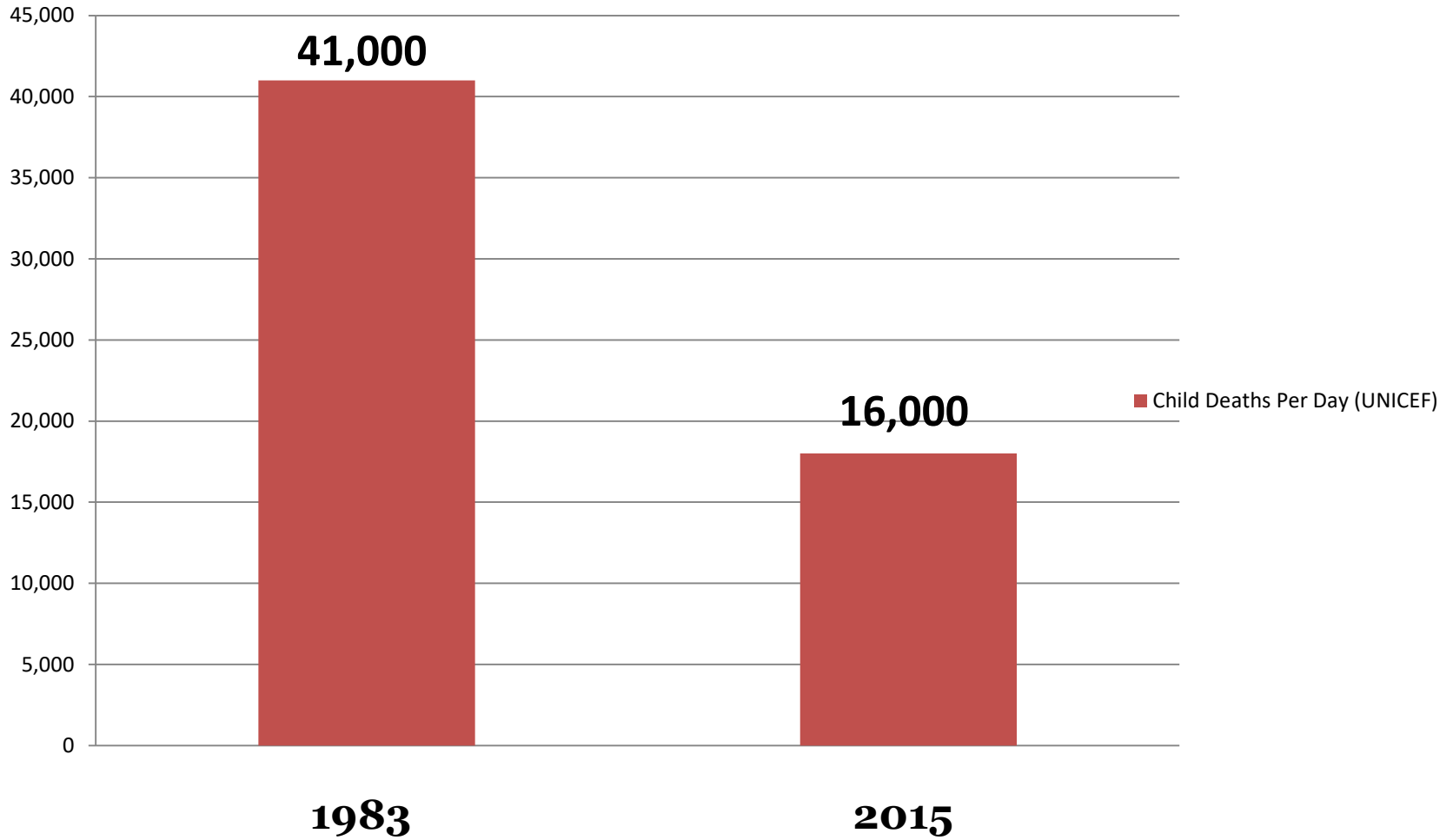
I want to convey my heartfelt thanks for the unflagging and satisfyingly successful efforts of RESULTS on behalf of vulnerable children and mothers everywhere. I thank you in my mind weekly, if not more often, for what you and your colleagues are accomplishing—but I thought I should do it at least once this year in writing.



RESULTS U.S. has lobbied for these maternal and child health programs year in and year out for 31 years and this maternal and child health bilateral funding alone has increased **from \$25 million in 1985 to \$715 million a year today.**



Child Deaths Per Day (UNICEF)



Since 1990 the world has saved almost 100 million children's lives including 24 million newborns –

RESULTS volunteers have been at the center of the advocacy on these issues since 1984.



In a *New York Times* interview in 2013 former UNICEF Deputy Executive Director Kul Gautam said:

To a great extent, it was because of the receptivity created by RESULTS that the United States funding for child survival increased so dramatically [starting in the mid-1980s]. And that led many other countries to come on board.



No other organization has been as critical a partner in seeing to it that microcredit is used as a tool to eradicate poverty and empower women than RESULTS and RESULTS Educational Fund's Microcredit Summit Campaign.

Muhammad Yunus, Nobel Peace Prize Laureate



In a 2013 *NY Times* interview World Bank President Jim Young Kim said:

RESULTS has such a lean and efficient model that nobody knows about them. They're incredibly dedicated and very knowledgeable about the issues. It's remarkable how much they've done and how few people have any idea about it.



What does it take to empower citizens like this?

Here is just one example of the *structure of support* that allowed those successes. This is a piece of organizing strategy that most advocacy efforts either don't understand or don't have the discipline to follow.



Most NGO advocacy efforts fail to provide a single legislative focus. But developing a legislative agenda that is *inspiring* and *focused* keeps staff and volunteers from flitting from issue to issue and instead allows them to drill down on just one issue and develop *deep relationships* with members of Congress and the media.



I'll say more about how the methodology works in a moment, but let's take a look at how it has been implemented more recently.



In 2007 RESULTS volunteer Marshall Saunders decided to launch an initiative addressing climate change. Marshall had seen *An Inconvenient Truth* three times in ten days.....



I coached Citizens Climate Lobby (CCL) for seven years. CCL has grown to more than 310 chapters in the U.S. and Canada. Here are some of CCL's achievements.



Citizens Climate Lobby

	2010	2016
Number of groups	14	380
Print media published	65	2,850
MoC/staff mtgs.	106	1,388
Conf. attendance	25	800



Citizens Climate Lobby

March 2017: 17 House Republicans co-sponsor bill saying climate change is real and requires public and private solutions

17 Republicans & 17 Democrats join House Climate Solutions Caucus



Climate Scientist James Hanson has said:

If you want to join the fight to save the planet, to save creation for your grandchildren, there is no more effective step you could take than becoming an active member of Citizens Climate Lobby.



Friends Committee on National Legislation:

	7-12/'15	2016
Number of groups	10	34
LTEs & op-eds	59	86
MoC/staff mtgs.	146	203



If you want greatness from volunteers
you must provide them with *a great
structure of support.*



One piece of the puzzle is an empowering monthly conference call. Here is how a monthly national conference call can be done in a *disempowering* way and how it can be done in an *empowering* way.



1. Guest speaker, 25 minutes:

Disempowering: All talk, no Q&A, volunteers are “Bumps on a log.”

Empowering: 10 minute talk 15 minute Q&A, interactive and energizing.



2. **Sharing grassroots successes:**

Disempowering: Share only the success, not the struggle.

Empowering: Share the struggle *and* the success.



3. Practice being more articulate:

Disempowering: Skip the practice or do a role play with no real coaching, just a thank you for volunteering.

Empowering: Real coaching, insights into how to make the talk better.



What does citizen empowerment and transformation look like at the individual level?

From climate trauma to empowered citizen.



....[O]ur director Mark Reynolds likes to say, “We’re betting the farm on relationships.” Then he tells us that we need to build relationships with members of Congress and editorial writers. Most of us CCL volunteers have never done that before!! What in the world does a relationship with a member of Congress look like? How do we connect with an editorial page editor?



Some of us have found models for those relationships in other parts of our lives. Gary in Boston uses the model of a work relationship....

My relationship model is different. I adore romantic relationships, so I use romance as my model. That first meeting with the editorial writer... it's like a blind date, only you've decided beforehand you are going to marry this fellow.



You are going to be sweet and interesting, but not too intense.... if it doesn't work out with the editor, you are going to marry one of his friends at the newspaper – the business editor, environmental writer, or city editor. Someone at this paper will find you interesting and compelling – it's just a matter being persistent until you find the right connection.



....I see the relationship with a member of Congress as an arranged marriage. If you live in her district, the member's aide has to meet with you. That's what our Congressman's legislative director (LD) told us in January. Since then, we've met [9] times with the LD. We schedule 45 minute meetings with him. He keeps us for well over an hour. He doesn't want us to leave!



Why? Because a good arranged marriage starts out cold and heats up over time. That's different than a love match, which starts out hot and slowly cools down.

...I see the editorial page writer as a painter. His canvas is the editorial pages. His pallet is filled with letters to the editor, op-eds, and editorials. I am his muse, model, and assistant....



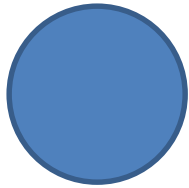
I want him to fill his canvas with colors that I like, so I'll have my group send 3 – 5 letters to the editor whenever the opportunity arises. The more colors I put on his pallet, the better chance of having him pick one or two of my favorite colors.

....During our conference I met with 20 congressional offices. I met with many folks whose view of the world was very different than mine.

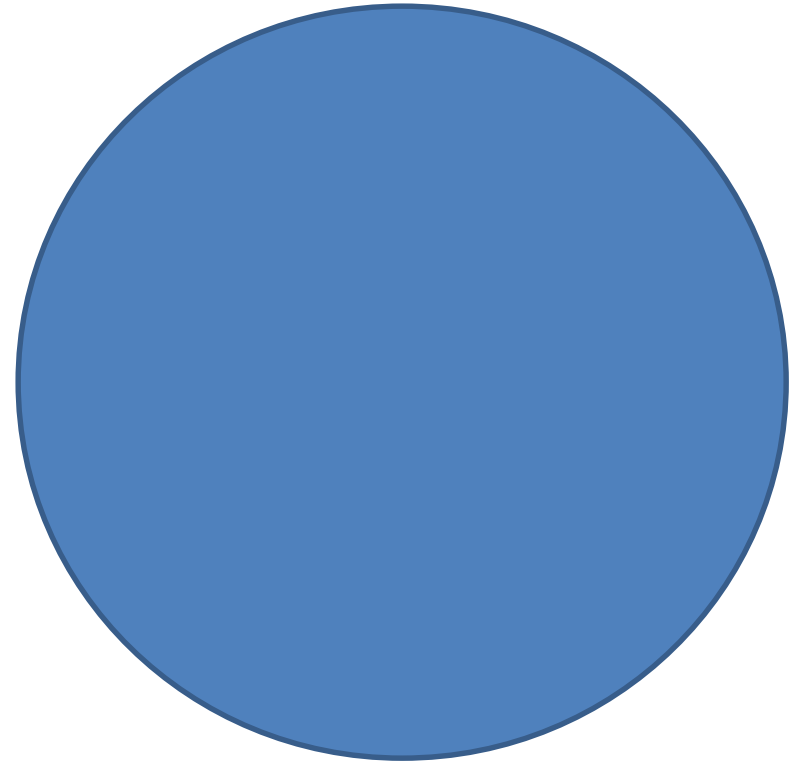


Going into their offices was hard. I had to let go of a lot of emotional baggage. I could no longer judge them or hold hostility in my heart towards them. I had to let go of my fear of climate change and my fear that they wouldn't listen to me. I had to center myself in love. Releasing fear and centering in love... this is sacred and profound work....





Your comfort zone



Where the magic happens



This is the true joy in life, the being used for a purpose recognized by yourself as a mighty one, the being a force of nature, instead of a selfish, feverish little clod of ailments and grievances complaining that the world will not devote itself to making you happy. I am of the opinion that my life belongs to the whole community, and it is my privilege to do for it whatever I can. I want to be thoroughly used up when I die, for the harder I work, the more I live. I rejoice in life for its own sake. Life is no brief candle to me, it is a sort of splendid torch which I've got a hold of for the moment, and I want to make it burn as brightly as possible before handing it on to future generations.

Man and Superman, George Bernard Shaw

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Why this deep advocacy methodology won't work in your organization.

NGO attitudes that can kill citizen empowerment and transformation:

1. We can't ask too much of our volunteers or they'll go away. (I call this the "I like the methodology but we'll need to water it down" syndrome.)



- Questions and comments
- Hands-on training



Why it won't work: NGO attitudes that can kill citizen empowerment and transformation:

2. We can't have volunteers write letters to the editor and op-eds because they will get it wrong and misrepresent the organization. (I call this the "volunteers can't be sufficiently trained or trusted" syndrome.)



Why it won't work: NGO attitudes that can kill citizen empowerment and transformation:

3. I do this work because I am persuaded by the facts not because of inspiration so I just want to get the facts across to the volunteers, not inspire them. (I call this the “I don’t believe this sentiment but act this way anyway” syndrome.)



Why it won't work: NGO attitudes that can kill citizen empowerment and transformation:

4. We just don't have the time, funding, or the bandwidth to go on the road to start the groups or to provide much in the way of ongoing support. (I call this the “everyone’s excuse” syndrome.)



Why it won't work: NGO attitudes that can kill citizen empowerment and transformation:

5. We are a multi-issue organization and can't focus on one issue over a year, even with this deep advocacy work, and besides, the volunteers would get bored if we focused on one issue over 12 months. (“I call this the “keep ‘em disempowered” syndrome.)



Other reasons deep advocacy won't work in your organization:

Selecting the wrong staff: You need staff who are entrepreneurial, unstoppable, and inspiring or committed to learning to be inspiring. They must have a true sense of calling that goes beyond the typical 9-5 job.



Other reasons it won't work in your organization:

Insufficient Humor, Joy and Celebration:

We work on difficult issues. Most groups struggle to approach their work with lightness and cheerfulness but provide wonk city instead.

Celebrating the victories along the way, large and small, will help bring joy and sustain the volunteers and staff for the long run.



Reasons you would want deep advocacy in your organization:

1. Dozens, hundreds and eventually thousands of letter to the editor, op-eds and editorials are published on your issue.



Reasons you would want deep advocacy in your organization:

2. Dozens, hundreds and eventually thousands of meetings with members of Congress or their staff on your issue.



Reasons you would want deep advocacy in your organization:

3. Dozens, hundreds and eventually thousands of members lit up about your issue and your organization and doing some fundraising for it.



Reasons you would want deep advocacy in your organization:

4. It gets to the point where well trained deep advocates is like having dozens and eventually hundreds of quality new staff working as volunteers.



This is the true joy in life, the being used for a purpose recognized by yourself as a mighty one, the being a force of nature, instead of a selfish, feverish little clod of ailments and grievances complaining that the world will not devote itself to making you happy. I am of the opinion that my life belongs to the whole community, and it is my privilege to do for it whatever I can. I want to be thoroughly used up when I die, for the harder I work, the more I live. I rejoice in life for its own sake. Life is no brief candle to me, it is a sort of splendid torch which I've got a hold of for the moment, and I want to make it burn as brightly as possible before handing it on to future generations.

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