

# PUBLIC AND PRIVATE RELATIONSHIPS

**Private relationships are about offering and receiving care.** They include our relationships with close friends, family, significant others, and other loved ones.

**Public relationships are about working together to get what we both want.** They include our relationships with colleagues, clients, customers, public officials, and fellow citizens.

**Both kinds of relationships are good and important! Just don't let them get them mixed up...**

- That is to say: there's a reason we don't call the people we organize with to complain about our mothers, or agitate our mothers about their relationship to power before bed!
- Bosses, salespeople, and politicians can try to manipulate us by pretending they're our buddies – to get us to think we have a private relationship, when we do not. Watch out for this.
- Sometimes we have both kinds of relationships with the same person – like when we become friends with a coworker outside of work, or when we work with a family member. In those cases it's especially important to be clear about when we're interacting publicly, and when privately.

**We can still be our loving and caring selves in a public relationship.** All the elements of healthy private relationships still apply: listening, sharing, clear communication, working through conflict, enforcing boundaries. *They just look a little different...*

IN PRIVATE RELATIONSHIPS...	IN PUBLIC RELATIONSHIPS...
We give of ourselves selflessly, without thought of personal gain.	We build <u>POWER</u> in service of our <u>SELF-INTEREST</u> , and we expect others to do likewise.
We spend time with people we like and avoid people we don't.	We work together with people and organizations who have shared self-interest.
We expect people to like us, accept us, and be loyal to us.	We expect people to respect us, take us seriously, and hold us <u>ACCOUNTABLE</u> .
We let our guard down and share freely about our wants, needs, and feelings.	We share our stories intentionally and strategically, based on a carefully-constructed <u>PUBLIC NARRATIVE</u> .
Friends are forever; til death do us part.	No permanent friends; no permanent enemies.

## Three first steps toward building a powerful public life:

- 1. Get connected with the COMMUNITY CENTERS OF POWER.** Find the places where neighbors gather on their own terms, make things together, and own what they make.
- 2. Get to know local LEADERS, and let them get to know you.** A community's true *leaders* – the neighbors who other neighbors trust and follow – may or not be the people with official authority. Spend time with them, do what they're doing, have *one-to-one relational meetings* with them...and do the same with the people they send you to.
- 3. Get involved with work that matters, both to them and to you.** It doesn't matter much what the work is, as long as it matters to you all – and lets you keep getting to know people, letting them get to know you, sharing stories, making things together, and inviting in more and more different kinds of people, groups, and organizations.