

A Promise to Keep

An emerging body of motivational material discusses the relative failure of people to keep the “goals” they set compared to the relative success they have of keeping the “promises” they make to themselves. A defined promise that you make to yourself is a great way to self-motivate positive personal change and growth.

Social scientific evidence exists to show that people generally have a deep emotional commitment to keeping the promises they make, and that the desire to keep a promise isn’t driven by a desire to “hold up their end of the deal.” An economics professor in Germany constructed an experiment to study the motivations people have in fulfilling their promises and the results compelled this conclusion.

Leaders know that keeping the promises they make – whether at home or at work – is essential to building and maintaining trust and creating conditions for even greater progress. They are on time for meetings. They are on time with work deadlines. They are on time for social engagements. It’s the same for leaders in the labor movement.

In fact, we may not think about this every day, but Article 6 of the UAW Constitution reminds us that when we joined our great union, we did so by signing a membership application where we made a “promise to abide by all laws, rules, regulations and the Constitution of the International Union.” (Emphasis added.)

This workshop helps participants identify and for a promise they want to make to themselves centered on increasing current union engagement and leadership. Participants will be challenged to embrace new, specified opportunities in the union through their promise using the SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Time based) test. Participants will commit their “SMART promise” to a written contract, sign it, and have a class member co-sign the contract as a “witness.”

By the end of this workshop, participants will understand:

- Their self-motivation level and its impact on keeping their promise
- How to form a specific promise, not a lofty goal
- How being accountable to their commitment will empower them personally and fuel the union.

For this workshop, you will need:

- Regular classroom set up
- Class participant sign-in sheet
- Name tents
- Two flip charts and markers
- Plain sheets of paper – one for each participant

- Pen or pencil for each participant
- Handout – Self-Motivation assessment quiz
- Handout – A Promise to Keep to Myself & My Union Contract

Duration: This is a 2-hour workshop.

INTRO – 15 minutes

Notes to Instructor: Welcome the class and provide class background and objectives as described in the cover page notes. Emphasize that the classroom is a safe space for all participants. Connect the class to labor and UAW experience and their leadership growth (“Union activists who keep their promises and commitments are entrusted with greater leadership opportunity”, “Making commitments to participate in union activities and keeping those commitments over time enriches your member satisfaction and leadership potential”). Highlight that this class is being held on the final full day of the Women’s Conference so that they can formulate an achievable promise to themselves to grow their union involvement and leadership based on the lessons they’ve learned throughout the week.

Say: Who in this room has made a New Year’s resolution (Raise your own hand.) Anybody want to share a resolution they made? (Take several call outs.)

Say: It’s August. Who’s still keeping the resolution?

Note to Instructor. Results will vary. Try to use participant responses to compare resolutions that weren’t kept (“want to lose weight”, “Want to quit smoking”) to those who really made a defined promise (“Want to lose 10 pounds by my daughter’s wedding by cutting out dessert Monday through Friday and walking 20 minutes every day”, “Want to cut smoking by limiting myself to six cigarettes a day”).

Say: A 2014 study ranked the most popular New Year’s resolutions. They were:

1. Lose Weight
2. Get Organized
3. Spend less, save more
4. Enjoy life to the fullest
5. Stay fit and healthy
6. Learn something exciting
7. Quit smoking
8. Help others in their dreams
9. Fall in love
10. Spend more time with family

Say: What about the resolution: “I’m going to get more involved in my union?” Has anyone ever made that resolution? What do you think the percentage is of those who successfully achieve their New Year’s resolution? (Take some guesses if you want.) The answer: 8 percent! Not a great track record.

Ask: Does anyone have some ideas about why those resolutions failed? (Take call outs. Possible responses include: “Not specific. “Not attainable.” “Too general.” “Not measurable.” “No timeframe”).

Ask: What about the self-motivation to succeed? Do you think that plays a role in making a change in yourself? Let’s take a short quiz to see how self-motivated you are.

Note to Instructor: Distribute “Self ‘Motivation Assessment Quiz” handout. Give the class about **5 minutes** to take the quiz.

Say: This quiz is designed to help you figure out where you fall on the self-motivation scale. Take a few minutes to HONESTLY answer the questions. We’re going to keep the scores private. Only you need to know the results. It’s a tool to help you. Add up your responses and see whether your self-motivation is “High,” “Average” or “Low.”

Note to Instructor. When it’s clear that everyone has completed the quiz, added their score, and seen what the results mean for them.

Say: We took the quiz so you could assess your self-motivation and better target the kind of promise you want to make to yourself. Let’s turn to how we can structure a specific promise.

STRUCTURING THE PROMISE – 15 MINUTES

Note to the Instructor: On one flip chart, pre-chart the undefined and vague first resolution on the 2014 New Year’s resolutions list: “Lose Weight,” On the second flip chart, Write the title SMART Promises” and write the following in a list: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Time Based. You will explain to participants that a well-structured promise will meet the SMART conditions.

Say: Before we begin to structure our personal promises to ourselves to raise our Local Union participation and leadership, let’s work together on breaking down a very vague resolution and turning it into a measurable and attainable promise.

Say: “Lose Weight.” Is that Specific? Can we Measure anything? Is there a Time component? How can we make “Lose weight” into a SMART promise? (Take call outs. “Add the specific target of 10 pounds.” “Add a time frame of “by my birthday.”) Continue to take call outs and offer suggestions yourself until a clear SMART promise is charted.

Note to instructor. After you've reformulated that resolution into a SMART promise, turn the page on that flip chart and have the class choose another resolution to transform. Go through the same SMART assessment and redraft the weak resolution into a SMART promise. Tell participants that you think they are ready to choose and draft their own promise.

CHOOSING AND DRAFTING YOUR PROMISE – 25 minutes (By this point, you should be about half-way through the workshop. You can allow for a 5-minute break here before starting the next half of the workshop.)

Say: I can tell that you're all ready to move to the next step: Identifying a promise you want to make to yourself and structuring it so that it is a SMART promise. Remember, your SMART promise will center on you getting more engaged in your Local Union and more focused on growing and building your personal and union leadership.

Note to Instructor. This phase of the workshop will require participants to focus on what they want their SMART promise to be. Some participants may have a specific idea about their SMART promise. Others may need a brainstorming opportunity to get thoughts flowing. Allow for small group brainstorming to take place at the tables, in pairs or with people turning their chairs to form groups of 4 (or so). Remind participants to refer to SMART promise flip chart to stay on track in the formation of their SMART promise. Make sure everyone has a blank piece of paper and pen or pencil to formulate their SMART promise.

Say: We're going to spend the next 25 minutes brainstorming in small groups to help you identify the SMART promise you want to focus on in your contract. If you already know your promise, great! You can work and see whether you pick up any tips to help you develop your idea even more. Use the sheet of paper to formulate your SMART promise. You'll need to do some editing and revising to get to the real commitment language you need. Once everyone is done, we'll move to the next step of transferring your promise to your contract. Don't forget to check in with the SMART promise flip chart to make sure you are on track.

Note to Instructor. Circulate through the room and offer assistance that may be needed. It will take some participants a few minutes to think of a commitment they want to fulfill and additional time to formulate it properly. Furthermore, because participants will probably have different levels of union experience, their promises will vary based on those differences. Some will be loftier than others. Whatever the case, check in often to ensure that promises are in SMART form and whether they could be even "SMARTer," with more specifics. When you see participants have all formulated their SMART promise, transition to the next phase of the workshop.

Say: it's commitment time. It's time for you to transfer your promise to a document that will be a contract with yourself. You'll put the specifics in the contract, including the dates for completion. You'll sign and date it, and a witness will sign and date it. Then, it's yours to fulfill.

Note to instructor: Allow 15 minutes for the contract-filling and signing part of this workshop. Distribute the handout entitled "A Promise to Keep to Myself and my Union." Go through the

document, explaining the different sections of the contract and their significance, in line with the SMART components. The signing portion may be significant for some, who want a close friend, you, or a classroom facilitator to serve as contract witness.

With the remaining time, have participants share their contract commitment to the class, either from their seat or in the front of the class. **Leave 5 minutes for yourself to wrap up.**

Say: Listening to all of your commitments to empower yourselves and engage with your union has been an amazing experience. Imagine the huge difference each of you will make when you return home and begin to fulfill your commitment, and how much energy and motivation you will gain by keeping your promise. Imagine the impact that the fulfillment of all the contracts being signed this afternoon will have across the country for 2014 Women's Conference delegates and the entire UAW! Keep making new promises to yourself and to our union and we will make our union even stronger – together.

SELF MOTIVATION ASSESSMENT QUIZ

HOW MOTIVATED ARE YOU?

These questions are designed to help you determine how motivated you are. Read the statements below and rank each one as follows:

5 = ALWAYS 4 = MOSTLY 3 = SOMETIMES 2 = RARELY 1 = NEVER

- _____ 1. I believe in myself and my capabilities.
- _____ 2. I am able to proactively deal with setbacks when they occur.
- _____ 3. I believe that if I work hard and stay positive I will become successful.
- _____ 4. I put maximum effort into each task and see any setbacks as a challenge to make improvements.
- _____ 5. I actively set goals to achieve success.
- _____ 6. Job satisfaction is extremely important for me to stay focused.
- _____ 7. Doubts and fears do not tend to overshadow my goals and prevent me from being a success.
- _____ 8. I have a clear vision for my future and think positively about the stepping stones I can take to get there.
- _____ 9. I don't tend to get stressed and worry about looming deadlines.
- _____ 10. When faced with barriers to overcome, I face them and don't abandon those goals by setting new, less challenging ones.
- _____ 11. I am able to use rewards and consequences to stay focused on achieving my goals.
- _____ 12. When I think back, I tend to remember my successes rather than my setbacks and failures.
- _____ 13. When someone finds fault in something I do, I can accept the criticism and use it as a positive tool for personal growth.

TOTAL YOUR SCORE AND SEE BELOW TO DETERMINE YOUR LEVEL OF SELF-MOTIVATION

41-65 – High: You get things done and don't let anything stand in your way. You make a conscious effort to stay self-motivated and you spend significant time and effort setting commitments and acting to accomplish those commitments. You attract and inspire others with your success.

27-40 – Average: You have a good level of self-motivation, but there is a lot more you can achieve. With the right improvements, you could really excel. Try to focus more on your achievements, however small you think they may be. Take the time to develop a clear vision for yourself to help identify the changes you want to make for yourself.

13-26 – Low: You let your personal doubts and fears keep you from succeeding. You've probably had a few incomplete commitments in the past and think you aren't self-motivated or capable of seeing those commitments to completion. Break this harmful pattern now and start believing in yourself again!

A PROMISE TO KEEP TO MYSELF & MY UNION

I enter this contract with myself to fulfill my responsibility as a UAW member by bringing my talent and participation to the activities of my Local Union, thereby growing my personal and union leadership skills and reaping the satisfaction of knowing that I am helping improve the quality of life for myself, my family, my UAW brothers and sisters and my community.

THEREFORE:

From _____ to _____

I promise to:

I plan to accomplish this promise by:

If I keep this promise, I will be rewarded with:

(Signature)

(Date)

(Witness Signature)

(Date)

HERSTORY – Handout 2

Outlining Your Story

SAMPLE OUTLINE

Inspiring political, social justice, and labor leaders all understand the value of storytelling to connect people for action and engagement. Storytelling is a powerful component of leadership building and it is at the core of effective labor-management relations and motivating union member involvement.

Outlining your union story will help you focus on the point(s) you want to make and the goal(s) you want to accomplish by telling it.

THE OVERALL MESSAGE OF MY UNION STORY IS:

Getting involved with my Local Union changed my life in ways I didn't expect, all for the better, and if you get involved it will change your life too.

MY LISTENER(S)/AUDIENCE IS:

The group of co-workers I have lunch with almost every day.

I AM TELLING MY UNION STORY TO MOVE MY LISTENER(S)/AUDIENCE TO:

Go to the next union meeting with me to learn more about our Local Union and maybe volunteer for a project.

THE "HOOK" FOR MY STORY IS:

I used to be totally against the union and said it was just there to protect lousy workers. But that all changed after I was targeted by my supervisor because of a personal disagreement and she disciplined me unfairly. I went to my steward, not expecting a lot of help. But she was so respectful and fought for me, even knowing how I had badmouthed the union. I learned a lot from that experience and it turned me around. Today, I am our Local Union Education Committee chair and thinking about running for an executive board position.

THE MAIN POINTS OF MY STORY ARE:

Main Point #1:

Ignorance is NOT bliss. It can make you miss opportunities to learn and find a whole new life path.

Main Point #2:

The union is for all workers by all workers. It's only as strong as the membership.

Main Point #3:

Union meetings have a bad reputation! It's where we all come together to share news, make important decisions, plan new projects, and socialize. My best friends are my union brothers and sisters!

FIVE KEY WORDS/PHRASES TO HELP ME REMEMBER MY MAIN POINT(S) ARE:

1. Former union delinquent
2. Current union activist
3. My union is my family
4. Responsibility
5. Solidarity