

# Are You Connecting?



Every time you reach out, there are four potential points of connection between you and your target audience. When you know all four and design your campaign around them, every minute and dollar you invest will have a better chance of paying off. Fail to connect on even one point, however, and you give your audience an opportunity to walk away.

You can learn **The Four Connecting Points** in a new online seminar designed expressly for public interest communicators. In two hours (spread over two days) we will cover:

- The basics of framing and strategic communications
- Message creation and delivery
- Classic case studies from the public interest sector
- An easy-to-use template for campaign design

**The Four Connecting Points** will be held on May 6th and 8th from 2-3 pm Eastern (11a-12n Pacific) each day. Tuition for the 2-hour class is \$195 per student. Organizations sending five or more students will receive a discount rate of \$150 per student. To register online go to [www.agoodmanonline.com/fourpoints](http://www.agoodmanonline.com/fourpoints).

Whether you are new to the public interest sector or a long-time doer-of-good, **The Four Connecting Points** can serve as a fast and comprehensive survey course or just a helpful refresher. Here's what recent students have to say:

I thought it was a great class – a lot of good take-aways (especially the template), and I appreciate the bibliography and offer to review proposed campaigns.



Cathy Hartman,  
*Utah State University*

The class served as an effective reminder of the things we must be thinking about to ensure a positive outcome for the causes we're engaged in each day. Great stuff and thank you for your advocacy!



Jeffrey Fleming,  
*US Fish and Wildlife Service*

I actually had a meeting today with one of the heads on energy use in the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources and I was able to share with him several of the points you made yesterday in our class. I love that this knowledge is so usable.



Eli Condon,  
*Minnesota Department of Natural Resources*

Free-range thinking™ is a monthly newsletter for public interest groups, foundations, and progressive businesses that want to reach more people more effectively. For a free subscription, send your request to: [andy@agoodmanonline.com](mailto:andy@agoodmanonline.com) or call 323.464.3956. Back issues are available on the web at [www.agoodmanonline.com](http://www.agoodmanonline.com).

*Free-range thinking™ is written by Andy Goodman and edited by Lori Matsumoto.*

## Why Do You Do What You Do?

When was the last time you thought about your answer to this question?

When Michael Ray was teaching at Stanford University's Graduate School of Business, he regularly cautioned his students to think very carefully before accepting any job. All too often, Ray warned them, graduates were seduced by high starting salaries and would then drift through careers that weren't closely aligned with their values. When I interviewed Ray in 2000, he said that if you asked employees in a typical workplace if they ever thought about why they do what they do, only one in ten would say they had.

you do?" The caller, it turned out, was a middle school student who was assigned to interview local nonprofits.

Deifell responded with the usual high-minded jargon, but after he hung up, the question still haunted him. He knew he hadn't answered it in a meaningful way. So he started asking it to others, and in that process he learned what happens when people actually stop, reflect and honestly tell you why they do what they do.

In 1999, Tony Deifell was Executive Director of the Institute for Public Media Arts, a nonprofit that helped kids create user-generated media years before YouTube opened this door for millions. One night when he was working late, the phone rang and Deifell (rhymes with Eiffel) was surprised to hear a very young voice skip right past hello and ask, "Why do you do what



Tony Deifell answers the question.

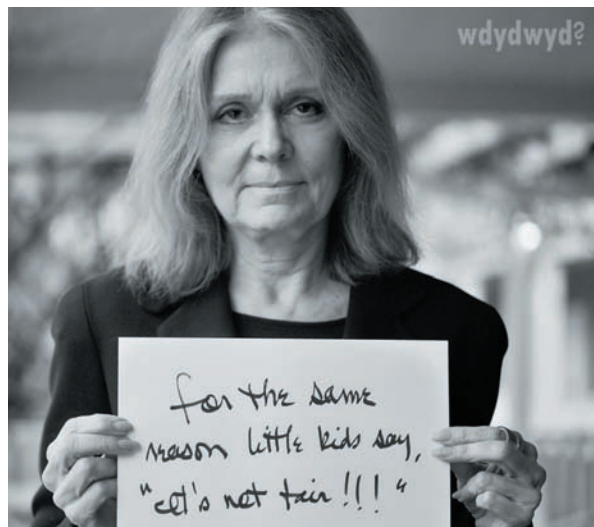
► In 2004, Deifell went to the Burning Man festival in the Nevada desert carrying with him the question and a camera. He photographed people holding up answers they had scribbled on pieces of paper. Right from the start, the answers were intriguing (“Because if I don’t, I’ll be punished”), provocative (“There ain’t no later”), off-beat (“Pimps gotta eat too”), and heart-felt (“So it’s not all about me”). Within a year he launched the “wdydwyd?” project, a website ([www.wdydwyd.com](http://www.wdydwyd.com)) displaying these pictures and inviting visitors to post their own responses.

As of today, roughly 3,000 people have uploaded pictures while over 360,000 have visited the site. Many of the answers are terse: “Why not?” and “Because I can” are the most common responses, Deifell says. (Steve Case, founder of AOL, fell into the “Why not?”

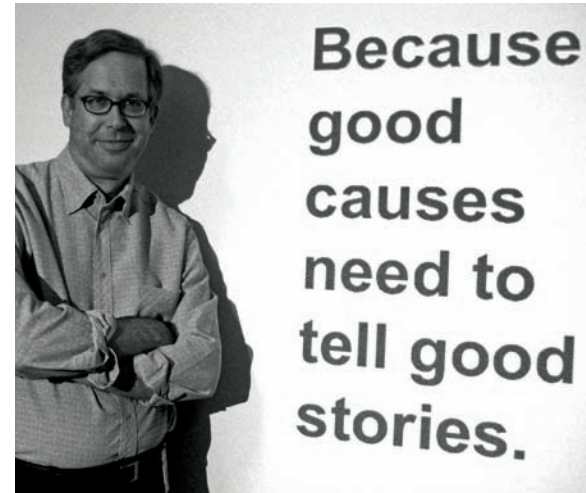
camp.) Many appear sincere and just as many seem flip. “Because the door was open” sounds borderline pretentious, but when displayed by a person standing next to an open hatch on a plane (wearing a parachute, thankfully), you have to smile.

And then there are the answers that just break your heart. Two days before she was murdered in Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina student body president Eve Carson posed for Deifell. On her hand she had written, “I want any excuse to work with my classmates (and help them do what they want to do) because that’s what I wanted to do.” Carson’s tragic death inspired many of her classmates to post their answers on the site as a memorial.

While contributors to the site are diverse, Deifell says that people doing public interest work comprise the largest single category. “To strengthen our democracy” is the ambitious answer presented by a W.K. Kellogg Foundation fellow, while an Echoing Green Foundation fellow hints at an interesting back-story with, “Too rebellious for the priesthood.” Visitors who click through the online galleries – created by Deifell and other



Gloria Steinem offered this response at a Social Venture Network conference.



My answer.

“collaborating artists” – will find many doers-of-good among the thousands of pictures.

Deifell’s own answer (“To be stirred awake”) underlies his motivation in launching the site and continuing to maintain it on his own dime. “People often need an invitation to be reflective,” he says. “It’s easy to lead a sleepy life.” Told of Michael Ray’s low estimate of the percentage of people who truly consider the question, Deifell says, “Even one in ten sounds like a lot. I regularly hear people say they haven’t thought about the question at all.”

When they do stop and think about it, Deifell

says, the rewards can be significant. “It becomes a stake in the ground – a reminder that can help you stay focused.” In my storytelling workshops, I often ask participants to tell their “Why I Do What I Do” stories. The process doesn’t have the same effect every time, but for many, it seems to realign them with their core values. And when they share these

stories with the group, they often speak with an authenticity and feeling that surprises even themselves.

Deifell has had similar experiences. “When people are attuned with the why, their lives are aligned,” he says. “The why is way more important than it gets props for.” Which brings us back to the question that started this story: Why do you do what you do? ■

## Send Us Your Answer

If you’d like to answer in a picture, email a photo of you holding a sign to [andy\\_photos@wdydwyd.com](mailto:andy_photos@wdydwyd.com). Tell a story in the body of the email or write more about why you do what you do. We will post pictures online and in future issues of this newsletter. If you’d like to post a written answer, join our group: [wdydwyd.ning.com/groups/agoodman](http://wdydwyd.ning.com/groups/agoodman).