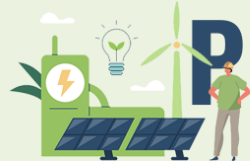


POWERING PROGRESS

Hosting a Book Club: Toolkit & Registration



Introduction

It’s been a really long year. We’ve worked hard and had a lot of really hard things on our minds and in our hearts. Sometimes, there is no better way to unwind than to curl up with a good book. This winter, Indivisibles are coming together in local groups and as a national organization for a book club on Anand Giridharadas’s book *The Persuaders*.

If you’ve been working with Indivisible or other movement spaces for a while, maybe you’ve felt the need for more tools and skills to message and communicate effectively to a range of people in your community. After hearing this desire over time from Indivisibles in the [Powering Progress](#) campaign and beyond, we’ve created a 2024 training series to do just that! And to kick things off, we’re hosting a book club focused on skillful communication with the folks we often think of as “persuadables” - folks who are receptive to progressive policies, but often susceptible to right-wing messaging (particularly racialized dog-whistle framing) that can pull them away from progressive support. Anand Giridharadas’s book *The Persuaders* brings readers into the work of activists and organizers across the country who aim to bring more people over to the progressive side without watering down what we’re working for or sliding to the center. Giridharadas makes the case for creating more onramps into the work by focusing on common goals. He provides guidance on finding a way to heal and change our fracturing country.

Join us in reading this amazing book and co-creating persuasive power. Then, we’ll continue building and applying persuasion and other communication skills as we move into 2024!

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Timeline + Important Links

Before we jump into the how, here are a few important steps links for you and your group.

- [Register your book club event](#)
 - Plan to hold a book club event with your Indivisible group before our national call on January 25. [Register it here.](#)
 - Reminder: The first 25 groups who register an event will get 10 customized Powering Progress Book Club shirts.
- [Register for our national call with *The Persuaders* author Anand Giridharadas](#)
 - We are so excited that Anand Giridharadas will be joining us for a national conversation about his book on Thursday, January 25 at 4pm ET / 1pm PT!
- [Attend our support call on Hosting a Book Club support call](#)
 - Is this your first time hosting an event with Indivisible? Are you a solo activist who wants to connect with others in your area about the topics learned in this book? Join us for a Q&A on hosting this book club! Register [here](#).
- Hold your group's Book Club event before January 25
 - The rest of this toolkit explains how to do so successfully.
- Submit your questions for Anand Giridharadas
 - As you read and/or discuss in your group's book club meeting, [keep track of questions you have for the author and submit them here](#). We'll use these submissions to plan our facilitated Q&A with the author and include the most common curiosities.
- [Request reimbursement \(as needed\)](#)
 - We are happy to be able to provide a reimbursement of up to \$200 per [registered book club!](#)
- [Book orders for your book club](#)
 - If you are **hosting a book club** please share this link with your members so they can order their books on time! Please note book request submissions will close Wednesday November 29th at 9a.m EST.
 - Books are being sent continuously and should all arrive by the first week of December!

Best Practices for Hosting Book Clubs

Before your event

- **Register Your Event**
 - Make sure you have your event registered so you can track attendees and send updates quickly and easily. Also, the first 25 groups to register their event will get the added perk of receiving 10 customized Powering Progress Book Club shirts.

[Register Your Event Now!](#)

- **Establish key roles**

- Have conversations early with folks you are asking to take on a role in the book club. Make sure everyone understands their responsibilities and is clear on how to execute them.
- This is a great opportunity to develop more leadership opportunities for highly active and engaged members in your group. Set some time aside with those folks and talk through some of the possible roles you think they would be a good fit for.

- **Recruit attendees**

- Make sure you communicate the date of your book club early so folks have a chance to order and receive their books and pace their readings so that they can come prepared to have thoughtful and engaging conversations. Explain why you decided to host a book club and express the value you think it will add to your group's work. This helps people see their role in the event and how it leads to more skill and culture/community building for everyone in your membership.

- **Distribute materials**

- We have created this toolkit as a helpful resource to guide your discussions and conversations as a group. If you plan to use it or pull significant questions from it, we encourage you to share it with your members so they can look out for relevant topics in their readings. This will help folks feel more comfortable and prepared to engage in discussion during your time together and may cut down on the time needed to search the book for keywords to participate in the conversation.

- **Set expectations**

- **Timeline**

- Be sure you are clearly communicating the timeframe with your group. This is not only the starting time of the event but should include the length of time you anticipate you will need for the full book club gathering and conversation. Be sure you are also communicating break times if you plan to have a longer session (and if food will be provided).

- **Participation**

- If you have any expectations for participation be sure to communicate that early and clearly. Allow people the opportunity to decide if that space will work for them and if they will feel comfortable.

During your event

- **Opening:**

- Open with group info. Remind folks of any regular meetings or ongoing work your group is doing. This is a great space to make sure everyone has all the relevant information about your group's upcoming schedule.
- Talk a little about why you decided to participate in this event and hold a group conversation about this book. People want to hear how this will help your group grow their activism.

- Bring folks together on the shared ideas of what you hope to accomplish before diving in. This helps people have something to center their conversations around and supports keeping people focused on the goals you have set for your group.

- **Middle:**

- Discuss the book! We've included discussion questions below.

- **Closing:**

- Remind folks of your next meeting date, location, and time.
- Let people know about future events and [the national call with the author](#) on January 25th!
- Open conversation with your members about leadership opportunities you have coming up. Reach out to the Powering Progress team if you want some support thinking through how to build that into your next Powering Progress event.

After your event

- **Communication**

- Send thank-you emails to attendees for coming to the book club and participating in the discussion. Be sure you shout-out some of your favorite moments from the conversation and what you think your group benefited from.
- Celebrate on social media and in your group's communications.
- Plan your next Powering Progress event!

Book Club Discussion Guide

This is a guide with (1) an outline of the major topics and activists by chapter and (2) a suggested set of questions to lead you in your group discussion. Please use what you find helpful; however, we also encourage you to come up with questions as a group.

[Keep track of questions your group has for the author during your book club and submit them here.](#) We are collecting questions from your events to ask him during our national call with the author on Jan. 25th.

[Submit Your Questions For the Author Here](#)

During your reading

We've written out the chapter topic/activist to help you keep track of the content:

Chapter 1: "The Waking Among the Woke"

Core people interviewed: Linda Sarsour, Loretta Ross, & Alicia Garza

Chapter 2: Can Love Change a Mind?

Core work explored: Antiracism training practices

Chapter 3: A Movement That Grows

Core work explored: Bernie Sanders' presidential campaigns

Chapter 4: The Inside-Outside Game

Core work explored: Alexandra Ocasio-Cortez

Chapter 5: The Art of Messaging

Core people interviewed/work explored: Anat Shenker-Osorio

Chapter 6: The Vaccine Against Lies

Core people interviewed/work explored: Diane Benscoter & John Cook

Chapter 7: Meaning Making at the Door

Core people interviewed/work explored: Cesar Torres, Steve Deline, George Goehl, & Deep Canvassing

To make the most of your reading, we invite you to note your reflections as you read. When we take a few minutes to take notes and track our personal takeaways, it helps store learnings for the long term. We also encourage you to underline and write in the book as you go to help track sections or sentences that really stand out.

If you prefer more structure, here are a set of prompts for you to reflect on as you read each chapter that might help you be better prepared for your larger book club conversation:

- What are 1-3 key takeaways for you from this chapter?
- What surprised you or made you say, “Wow! Yes!” ?
- What did you find yourself uncertain about or disagreeing with?
- Did anything stand out as something you could apply in the work you do as an Indivisible member?

During your group conversation

As the subtitle of *The Persuaders* suggests - “At the Front Lines of the Fight for Hearts, Minds, and Democracy” - there are a few buckets we need to focus on when talking to and attempting to move persuadables. We have broken down the questions into categories that the book has so eloquently walked us through. These are a starting point and a place for your group to begin a conversation, but what we are most excited about is to hear feedback from you all on where the conversation naturally leads!

Hearts

1. What’s one change you can make in your approach to canvassing/conversations with “persuadables” that focuses on the idea that “people will forget what you say and do, but not how you make them feel”?

2. The author notes that love is five times as powerful as fear (emotionally). How can we implement that in our approach to the work for big changes in our country? How do we lead with love?
3. Can you recall instances where empathetic listening positively influenced a persuasion conversation?
4. Consider the importance of empathy and active listening in persuasion conversations. How do you currently practice these skills, and how might you further develop them based on the insights from the book?

Minds

1. How has *The Persuaders* shaped your understanding of persuasion conversations? Can you identify specific techniques or strategies from the book that you believe could enhance your ability to engage in these conversations?
2. What's one way your group could create more onramps to the movement and mass mobilization with folks we agree with on some major issues (but not everything)?
3. Considering the prevalence of disinformation in today's society, how can we approach conversations with people who have fallen prey to misleading information and conspiracy theories, especially when discussing political or social issues?
4. Are there specific strategies or techniques you think would be effective in gently guiding someone away from disinformation and toward a more informed perspective? How might empathy and active listening play a role in these conversations?
5. *The Persuaders* touch on the intersection of race and class. How can an understanding of these narratives enhance your persuasion skills, particularly when discussing policies and initiatives that impact different racial and socioeconomic groups?
6. Giridharadas suggests that meaningful political persuasion requires an understanding of how systems impact the everyday lives of people. How can incorporating a systemic perspective into your political conversations help you present a more compelling perspective? Can you think of specific political issues where understanding the inside/outside approach might be particularly effective?
7. How do you envision incorporating the lessons from *The Persuaders* into your future persuasion conversations? Are there specific issues or contexts where you anticipate applying the insights gained from the book?

Democracy

1. What does democracy look like and feel like? How would your daily life look different if we built and strengthened our democracy? How can you talk about the policy issues your group is working on in a way that doesn't use jargon/technical terms but instead provides tangible ideas folks can connect to?
2. What's a broadly popular topic/issue you think we could "shift the Overton Window" on, as far as stretching the boundaries we usually work within for that topic?

3. The author suggests that we can translate the public will into law through ideas shaped by writers, artists, and activists. What are some new approaches your group could take based on this idea?
4. Giridharadas emphasizes the importance of understanding power dynamics in political discussions. How might recognizing and addressing power imbalances contribute to more effective political persuasion? Can you recall instances where recognizing power dynamics influenced a political conversation you were a part of?
5. The author emphasizes the role of community-led initiatives in creating meaningful change. How might involving community voices and experiences enhance your persuasion efforts? Can you think of ways to incorporate community perspectives into your discussions?

Social Reminder

Include food! Find a locally owned coffee shop with enough space to accommodate your group or host a hot chocolate bar where everyone brings their favorite flavor and toppings.

Be sure you are taking pictures, sharing stories and uplifting things you and your group learned on social media. Be sure to include as many specifics as you can (tag members in attendance, tag the author, share quotes you all found interesting, and remember to tag Indivisible!).

What's Next?

The local Book Clubs and our national call in January are just the start of our 2024 cycle on building persuasive communication skills. We'll keep you in the loop on all next trainings and opportunities - and we're excited to hear how your group puts these new skills into action within the Powering Progress campaign and in your communities and work beyond!

If you have questions, don't hesitate to get in touch - you can reach us at SupportTeam@indivisible.org.

Thanks for joining us in the journey to persuade!

- The Indivisible Powering Progress Team