

Words to Win By
Season 3
ECON 2

ANAT

In the summer of 2023, America entered into a resurgence of labor organizing the likes of which hadn't been seen in generations.

[WGA West: Your fight is our fight, our fight is your fight, we are all in this together. Every worker has a right to a fair wage.

KTLA 5:

"How long are you guys prepared to strike?" "As long as it takes.

FOX 11 LA:

SAG-AFTRA Strong! SAG-AFTRA Strong!

KTLA 5:

I think this is just the beginning, and workers right now are stronger than ever.]

ANAT

"Hot Labor Summer." Across the country, from writers to delivery drivers, from baristas to automakers, people were joining together in union to demand better, calling out corporations for their shameless profiteering off working peoples' efforts.

[CBS NEWS, FRAN DRESCHER: "I am shocked by the way the people that we have been in business with are treating us!" "It is disgusting. Shame on them!"]

ANAT

"Hot Labor Summer" continued well into fall. By the end of November, the country had witnessed 380 labor actions in 2023 alone.¹ President Biden joined the picket lines alongside striking auto workers – the first sitting president to do so, *ever*.² The demands and courageous actions of working people were *finally* front page news.

Whether making cars in Detroit or making us laugh in Hollywood, working people didn't just tell us – they *showed* us – that the many can in fact stand up to the money. In doing so, they challenged deeply embedded storylines in this country.

One: that unions are not merely good for working people – they are critical. They offer the only possible countervailing force against the rapacity of the wealthiest few, and the politicians they've paid for.

¹ [Cornell](#)

² [CNN](#)

Two: that corporations – not the “undeserving poor” or “meddlesome” unions – are the true cause of our financial hardships.

Three: that we do indeed make the future by the actions we take together.

And it *worked* and *continues* to work. According to Gallup, as of August of 2023, two thirds of Americans approved of labor unions, compared to 48% in 2010. And the popularity of unions, as well as recognition of the integral role they play, keeps growing. But this resurgence didn’t come out of nowhere. Arguably, it is a flower sprung from a seed planted over a decade ago, fertilized by all that working people were forced to endure over the pandemic with little more than accolades and pans clanging in gratitude. That seed? The Fight for 15 and a Union.

[THEME SONG: by T.R. Richie

People say to me, you gotta be crazy. How can you sing in times like these? Don't you read the news? Don't you know the score? How can you sing when so many others grieve? By way of a reply, I say, a fool such as I. Who sees a song as somewhere to begin.]

ANAT

Welcome to part two of our finale for Season 3 of Words to Win By. I’m Anat Shenker-Osorio. I develop, test, and deploy political messaging to help candidates, organizers, and activists around the world win progressive victories.

Last episode, we discussed the reasons Democrats should talk about tangible issues rather than the almighty, abstract “economy” and cast themselves in explicit contrast to Republicans who abet the greed of corporations and the wealthy few. We left off with an evergreen lesson from message testing: make your audience the agents in your tale.

Today, we’re taking that further, exploring recent examples where working people have seized this protagonist role. And, in so doing, provided a vital lesson to Democrats intent on recapturing the love and loyalty of this demographic.

To start with, unions are explicitly good for Democrats. After FDR came out swinging by empowering unions, Democrats reversed their electoral fortunes and won seven of nine presidential races. He signaled Republicans were for the bosses and Democrats were for the people. And so, for working class voters, voting Democratic wasn’t just a thing you did but part of who you were.

And sure, that’s way back when. But even today’s Democratic Party gets a union boost. In a comprehensive 2021 analysis, Center for American Progress found union working class voters 6 points more favorable toward Biden than non-union ones. More critically, in 2020, white union members were 18 points more likely to vote for Biden than their non union counterparts.³

³ [Center for American Progress](#)

It's little wonder unions have this effect. Unions provide working people the lived experience of coming together across races, accents, faiths and backgrounds to get more for the many, which helps inoculate them against right wing attempts to divide in order to rule over and screw over working people. Any wonder why Republicans keep doing everything in their power to destroy unions?

So today, we're going to walk through what labor organizing has to teach all of us, Democratic politicians and everyday working people, about winning. For Democrats, a necessary step to that is taking sides.

Faiz:

Labor is telling you, I am in a fight. You know if I'm a member of UAW, if I'm a member of teamsters, I'm taking on UPS, I'm taking on the big three automakers, and I'm saying I want better working conditions. I want better wages. I want respect on the job and I'm willing to take on this fight. And they're basically broadcasting to the political universe: this is how you win for working class people. You gotta tell people, pick a side here. You really wanna broadcast and let people know this is a values orientation.

ANAT

That's Faiz Shakir. Faiz was Bernie Sanders' presidential campaign manager in 2020. When Sanders called \$7.25 an hour a starvation wage and ran on raising it.⁴ Faiz is now the executive director of More Perfect Union – a media organization telling the stories of working class people.

Faiz has clear guidance for what Democrats and progressives ought to do to improve how voters see their economic approach.

Faiz Shakir:

The Republicans have the easier argument. It is essentially: give up on the system, screw it, don't care about government any longer. Instead, care about yourself. Be selfish. Focus on your own self. Focus on getting the highest tax return. And don't worry about solidarity in this economy. And our challenge as Democrats, as people, as progressives who believe in the role of government is to now fight the uphill fight and say, don't give up on a system that can and should do better for you. But in my view, one of the things that we can do practically for a lot of working class people who don't know about necessarily every aspect of what government's doing, is to demonstrate a fight on their behalf. That means when you, when you have a fight, you're broadcasting to people that there's a side, right? There's A versus B, there's a choice. And I'm on this side and other folks are on a different side. And I would argue that that's the one thing that seems to be missing in action. If you pick some of these fights, CNBC will be going nuts. Why are you willing to tank the economy? Why are you hurting business? Why are you, you know, creating a terrible position in the investor class of this nation. That will be fed, that narrative is easy. It has been populated in people's minds. It's not necessarily

⁴ [CNBC](#)

the safe and easy political battle of late, but it is the history and lineage of the Democratic party. It's what Democratic party voters expect. It is when we have been at our strength during FDR, JFK, LBJ, we picked and owned these fights. In fact, one of my favorite quotes of Franklin Delano Roosevelt is he goes into the, you know, Democratic national convention and says, "I welcome their hatred." He says to the corporate class, "I welcome your hatred." I am taking these difficult fights on for you. And he wins in a landslide. I want that to be projected from this Democratic party. I like fights. You turn the dial and move the Republican side. Do they welcome fights? Right? For all of their faults, they got a billion of them. Having a little piece of just that DNA that says, I welcome scraps, I welcome a fight.

ANAT

Democrats should *want* to be seen as siding with the working class and working people. And yeah, I mean against the rich. That means abandoning the centrist neoliberal fantasy that there aren't sides, that Democrats can be the party of capital *and* labor by "growing the economy." They need to stick their necks out and get in that ring. When Democrats don't, in an effort not to offend, they end up being viewed as weak.

Anat:

We've been doing focus groups with swing and surge voters and we frequently engage them in a metaphor exercise where we ask them, if you had to compare the Democratic party to an animal, what animal would it be? Would you like to take a guess what the ubiquitous animal choices are?

Faiz:

Uh, I'm, I'm trying to think of the most empathetic animals.

Anat:

Oh, that's very kind of you to default there. It is always a sloth, a slug or a turtle, it is always a slow moving animal. And with Republicans, it's always an apex predator. And it's usually said like this, well, I don't agree with 'em, I don't like what they're doing, but you gotta give them credit. They get what they want done, they make it happen. There is a prevailing storyline that's existed in our country for a very long time that the reason for our wealth, the reason for our wellbeing, the reason why America is quote the richest country on earth, as is often repeated, is because of these magical, rich people with their magical money pants from which they produce jobs. And even a phrase that I think about a lot like "hard work should be rewarded," actually privileges the storyline that your paycheck is like a diamond that you find on the ground. I'm being rewarded. When in fact the money to pay people comes from their work. That's just Capitalism 101.

Faiz:

That ideology we're up against has a name, it's trickle down economics. It doesn't function or work, but it is still, to your point, the prevailing media ideology. And it's manifested in its different ways. Think about how they talk about labor. Labor's a cost.

We need to minimize the amount that we pay the workers. We need to find the bottom here. Every—because the labor is really kind of just screwing with the profit. And if you're only seriously in profit maximization, which is now the mentality of trickle down, right? If you're profit maximization, where does that profit go? It only goes to the top. The point of the profits in the compact of America was that if the firm does well, the workers would do well there too. But that is not what is going on. One of the challenges in this modern economy, Anat, that we're now dealing with, is the idea is that you no longer try to keep workers around. When you have that as a mentality at the top, the compact in America has eroded. They are no longer invested, they being big capital, invested in a desire to see a working class reach a solid middle class lifestyle with decent healthcare, decent retirement and decent pay. A Dollar General or Starbucks or you know, Amazon, they're fighting that notion tooth and nail that workers should stick around and have solid middle class jobs at their corporations. If we're breaking that fundamental compact, what is the role of the human now? What is the role of decency and dignity to live a life? And that's what we're fighting for is just that notion that fundamental to life itself – the human condition – is purpose, is mission, is respect, is feeling like you wake up every day to do something meaningful.

ANAT

As we covered last episode, despite the much heralded economic gains we've seen over the last couple of years, many Americans are still facing more month than check. So, what are we going to do about it? For Faiz, the answer is to zero in on working people – their stories, their struggles, their successes.

Faiz:

So I think we have a media problem in this country. The working class issue that we're talking about with wealth inequality being what it is, you've got an incentive structure in media that wants to placate the top in many ways just needs the funding from the wealthy. You're gonna have a small class of elites running everything from football teams to media discourse. And then the question is, where is a voice for working class people? And when I look at this situation, I don't see any incentive structure for media to even care about it.

ANAT

And so, Faiz started More Perfect Union. A media organization giving a platform to working people, in other words, hundreds of millions of Americans.

Faiz:

One of the major findings of my part was like the working class stories has a huge audience. We got 350 million views in two years. There's no doubt in my mind that there's an audience for it. And if media was interested in just clicks and impressions and views, there were people be doing these stories, but they're not. I look around having had success in two and a half years of doing it, and I see very few people marching to try to compete with me to do this.

Anat:

So much for capitalism and you know, if there's demand, there will suddenly be supply. Turns out to not be true.

Faiz:

More Perfect Union launches by going down to Bessemer, Alabama and talking to Black Amazon workers who work in a factory there.

[More Perfect Union: The workers in this Alabama warehouse — mostly Black, mostly women — are on the verge of making history]

Faiz:

And until we had first gone down there, I had never seen any of these workers visually. You might've read a quote from them in the Wall Street Journal or something, you had never seen them. So we're gonna show you them.

[More Perfect Union: This is a human being, that's somebody's dad, somebody's husband, somebody's grandfather or uncle. And Amazon just viewed him as just a means for them to make more money.]

Faiz:

So you're gonna see passion, you're gonna see emotion, you're gonna feel a connection. Because as much as you might know facts and figures and what they're after, it's really the resonance that this person sounds and feels like somebody I know or can associate with.

Anat:

I've worked on labor messaging for a very, very long time. When we do experiments around whether or not we should do X, Y, Z for workers versus whether we should do X, Y, Z for working people, there's actually a statistically significant difference in terms of perception and this idea of, you know, the canard that feminism is the radical notion that women are people. I sometimes like to tell people that progressivism is the radical notion that people are people.

Faiz:

I don't want liberals, progressives, Democrats to feel like what we do is out of just purely out empathy of like we need to get poor people some nice things, you know, they're struggling out that we shouldn't. No, that's not the right emotion. I want you to feel anger. These people have been screwed, screwed by corporations and they've been screwed by a government that has not had their back and I want people to at least channel anger on their behalf. See homeless people? Angry on their behalf. Don't need \$5. That sure, that'd be nice for the moment. They really need a society that fights and puts an

orientation structurally around their lives should be better. That's what we're fighting for. That their lives truly do matter in our sense of the worldview.

Anat:

Walk me through this idea of raising up the stories of working people in America, what they're doing, why they matter. How does that then down the road become what you obviously desire, which is changes in the material conditions of people's lives?

Faiz:

If you tell the story of a few people in one part of this country who are trying to change their economic conditions for better and are succeeding, that if we tell that story, it will have deep resonance with lots of other people in this country who will say, oh, didn't know you could do that interesting, amazing. What was the story of Starbucks here? Let's cover a few Buffalo workers and tell you about their organizing and we wanna tell this story, we wanna broadcast it on a national platform. Voila, what happens? You have baristas all over the country watching the videos of their fellow colleagues organizing their workplace. Then, hey, I'm gonna do that too. And boom, here we go, nationwide sweep. Well over 300 stores right from coast to coast and all red and blue areas. That's what happens when you just unlock that consciousness a little bit.

Anat:

I'm smiling a lot because I realized that we actually have the same theory of change. The reason that I disciplined myself to make a podcast in which every single episode is about a win, is because I wanted to show people that progressive wins are not only possible, they occur frequently, and this is how you do them.

ANAT

One movement that certainly embodies that theory of change – and absolutely warrants a celebration:

[Democracy Now: Are we ready to fight for 15? Are we ready to fight for 15? Protests are being held across the country today in what organizers call the largest ever mobilization of underpaid workers. Fifteen and a union! No music! Fifteen and a union!]

ANAT

On November 29, 2012, in New York City, more than 200 fast-food workers walked out of their workplaces in protest of their working conditions. Their demand: \$15 an hour and a union. Corporate America, everyday Americans and even Democratic leaders thought it was an audacious ask.

No matter, the Fight for \$15 and a Union was on. In 2013, workers in other major cities – Chicago, Detroit, Seattle – joined in another walkout. Then, workers in other industries, healthcare, childcare, retail – joined in. By April of 2015, the campaign was the largest collective

action by low-wage working people in US history.⁵ Tens of thousands of people were out in the streets.

To be clear, raising the minimum wage is and was massively popular. In 2012, at the time the Fight for 15 and a Union got mobilized, polling by Lake Research Partners found that 73% of Americans supported some sort of hike.⁶ But consultant consensus was that raising to \$12 an hour was the right move.

Advocates and organizers didn't think so. The Fight for 15 and a Union boldly stated their demands, garnering media attention in the individual cities where they staged protests and radically resetting the terms of debate.

It's taken time and energy to make a movement big enough to tip the scale on favorability and rack up wins in cities and states across America. A movement created and powered by the people most impacted.

Terrence:

You know a lot of events in your life are memorable. I can remember the first time riding a bike, first time getting a big wheel on Christmas. And I can clearly remember the first day being introduced to the Fight for 15 and a Union. I didn't know how life changing it would be at the time.

ANAT

This is Terrence Wise, a leader at the Missouri Worker Center, Stand Up Kansas City, and the Fight for 15 and a Union. He's been in the fight for just over a decade but he still remembers the first day he was approached to join.

Terrence:

I was working two jobs at the time at Burger King and Pizza Hut. And, uh, my fiance, Mo had just called me and we were kind of arguing because it was a disconnect notice on the, like, bill and I heard the door open in the back and I looked up and it was three workers that walked in it. One had a Domino's uniform, one had a Subway uniform on, and another had a McDonald's uniform. And I was like this is an odd bunch, you know, coming in the store together. And, uh, they approached me as I was cleaning the lobby, and they were like, hey, can we ask you a few questions? I'm like, sure, yeah. What's going on? You know, how can I help you? They were like, do you think workers deserve a living wage? Do you think workers deserve healthcare, vacation benefits, paid sick time off? I'm like, yeah, anybody working should, uh, have those things. And they were like, well, workers are coming together to win those things in Kansas City and across the country. Would you like to sign on and join us? And I'm like, yeah, you know. You think you're just signing a paper. I didn't see myself signing this and marching on the boss or calling out Chris Kempczinski, the CEO of McDonalds, in interviews or going on

⁵[Fight For 15](#)

⁶ [AFT](#)

television and telling the story of my family living in poverty. I didn't see it as that, uh, in the beginning I saw it as just signing this worker's bill of rights.

Anat:

Can you tell me about how you came to understand labor?

Terrence:

I am a second generation fast food worker. And what I mean by that is I watched my mom work fast food for 30 years. And I watched her get up every morning and go to work – this is like 4am, 5am – all dolled up every morning, enjoying her job. And despite the fact that she worked full-time, and my father as well, we lived in government housing, we received food stamps. I can remember, back in the day, having to sign the little booklet for the food stamps when the mailman came to the door. And watching her work 30 years in the industry only to retire with no pension, no benefits, no retirement. Yeah, I see the same thing for me. I've worked in fast food for over two decades, 20 years. And, uh, I raised three girls here in Kansas City, Missouri with my fiancé. And despite the fact that both of us work full-time, we've, uh, experienced homelessness while working two full-time jobs. We get food stamps, uh, Medicaid, the same conditions that I watched my mother and father go through, it's repeating itself. My mom always told me, just, uh, work hard and be a good citizen and everything will be fine. Everything will take care of itself. And, uh, I did that. I worked hard, two jobs, sometimes three jobs. But despite the fact the harder that I worked, it seemed like my family could never get by or get ahead. I could remember nights like, what am I doing wrong? What's going on here? I'm working hard. I come to learn through the movement that it was no fault of my own. If somebody came up to you every day and just stuck their hand in your pocket, like literally and took money out, say, this is mine, and just walk away. You wouldn't let them do that. You'd be like, what? It'd be a fight. Or if someone was physically harming your children, punching them in the stomach, taking their food off the table, you would fight. You wouldn't care who on planet earth it was. Well that's what these corporations are doing. They're harming our children. They're harming our communities. They want us to think that it's the fault of the other one in your community. They want you to blame it on crime in this part of town and that person and that individual, that group. And that's a lie that you have to overcome.

ANAT

The Fight For 15 and a Union was groundbreaking. Demanding a living wage in an industry that most Americans had been conditioned to think of as “unskilled labor” done by teens and therefore not intended to provide for a family. It was also a declaration that all labor has dignity and all working people have rights, including the right to join together in union. And it was an unapologetic demand to more than double the present minimum wage.

Terrence:

And even that made my eyes, like, we're asking for what, what? We're asking for 15? It's hearing folks say, not only, it's not only that we want a union, we want a seat at the table.

We want the books open and we want to be an intimate part of what's going on in the workplace, and how our eight hour work days look. We want eight hour work days, like, can we get those? But we were very specific. So it was no question, what are y'all out here marching for? \$15 and a union. You can't misconstrue it. That will be the message, not only here in Kansas City, but across the globe. Sometimes you gotta be that open and that blunt and that crystal clear when you're making demands so no one else can spell it out for you. We could've been like, good jobs and freedom. And they would've like, we'll give you, uh, \$12 in free employee meals. They get to dictate the terms then. So we were just crystal clear on the demands from the jump.

Anat:

So you sign the paper, you're on board here you are! What formally happened?

Terrence:

We did what was done in the Civil Rights Movement. the Civil Rights Movement didn't just pop out on the scene. Folks organized, they knocked doors. And then you gotta take action. When folks turned on the evening news in the sixties and saw hoses on children and dogs attacking people. We did that in the fight for 15. We, when you turned on your evening news, you heard about fast food workers, homeless, working two and three jobs, struggling to feed their kids, going without utilities and while working in the richest nation on earth. And I can even remember early on some of our customers in some of our shops coming in and being like, I didn't know that you didn't have healthcare. I didn't know that you were homeless every day I came and you served us. We did sit-ins, die-ins, civil disobedience. We went on strike. Speak outs in stores. I can remember several occasions going into my restaurants where I worked, standing on tables and speaking out. Not only that, but, uh, taking our power to the ballot box. We're not putting you in office if you're not for workers 15 and a union, creating a clear avenue in legislation for, it's easier for workers to join unions. We were able to put that narrative forth by coming together and doing the hard, hard part of telling our story and telling how it is. And not only me telling that story, but then you hear hundreds and thousands of workers across the country telling the same stories. And, uh, the American public hearing that and seeing that, and, uh, our elected leaders like hearing that and seeing that, and us forcing you to see the narrative and, uh, understand that we need change, man. These workers need a union. These workers need living wages. These workers deserve dignity. 'Cause we didn't have millions of dollars to organize money. All we had was each other and our stories and our lived experiences and, uh, us coming together was able to change the narrative in this country.

Anat:

Throughout this entire process when you're, you know, standing on tables and telling your story and... what was the most common opposition message?

Terrence:

Everybody knows the, why don't you get a better job? What makes you think fast food workers are worth \$15 an hour? Oh gosh I can remember early on, uh, people like, I have a college degree. I don't even make 15 an hour, you hear what I'm saying? Ha, I used to tell people, if you got a college degree and now you're not making \$15 then maybe you need to be organizing, maybe you need to be standing on, uh, some chairs and doing some speakouts and coming together with your coworkers. I can remember us saying it's 64 million folks in the country who make less than \$15 an hour. You mean there are 64 million other jobs that we can all, all of a sudden jump into that are gonna pay a living wage, that have a union. I always tell people that, uh, and those are what the corporations want us to be talking about those things instead of, why don't you lift wages for your workers and give your workers healthcare and paid time off?

Anat:

You spoke about how deliberate division is essentially a tool of the corporations and of the billionaires. How do you overcome that?

Terrence:

How you overcome 'em is confronting them. If you're not a part of a movement, a part of the solution, you're part of the problem. This is the working class that is a part of all of these movements. Where does everybody spend the majority of their day? Even right now at this hour, everyone's in the workplace. And it's only fitting that with us spending so much time in the workplace, that we are organized not only to fight for wage equality and racial equality, but every equality. The Fight for 15, even from the jump, we knew that we had to bring white, black, brown, gay, straight, all together under one umbrella. We had to be very inclusive and, uh, not leave anyone out. When I look around our meetings, it's so diverse. It's, it's like rooms you've never seen in this country of working class folks coming together – undeniable power. And if you're not sharing that message with everyone, and now organizing every one of your coworkers under that umbrella, then someone else will tell them a lie.

ANAT

Terrence is giving a masterclass on how to confront, refute and inoculate against the standard set of right wing arguments to any attempts by working people to claim what they are rightly owed. Turn folks against each other. Whether it's pitting U.S. born people against new immigrants, or white collar people against fast food workers, we must expose the tactics of the capitalist overlords trying to get us pointing our fingers in the wrong direction while they pick our pockets and deny everything our families need. This is a lesson Democrats looking to woo working class voters would do well to learn. Right after they realize “working class” isn't a synonym for white.

Thanks to the tireless efforts of Terrence and others like him, Kansas City lawmakers raised the minimum wage to \$10 an hour. Not nearly the number they asked for. But a step in the right direction.

And then, that same year, the Missouri legislature passed a preemption law, overruling the Kansas City increase, shoving the minimum wage back to \$7.25. It was a crushing disappointment. A reminder that the corporate donors lining politicians' pockets often call the shots.

But, despite this, we have also seen that the many can defeat the money when they stand united.

In 2014, Seattle passed a law to raise the city's minimum wage to \$15 an hour. Then, San Francisco followed suit. As of January 1, 2023, Washington, California, Connecticut and Massachusetts all passed a \$15 an hour minimum wage state-wide and another ten states are heading toward that with approved annual increases. This brings us to 30 states plus Washington, DC with minimum wages above the federal minimum.⁷

Terrence's leadership in this ongoing fight continues, and so too does his infectious optimism.

Terrence:

I smile every morning. I wake up and somebody's taking action. And the UPS workers are winning a contract, and the actors are on strike. 10 years ago, I can remember before the Fight for 15 in elections and everyday news, you heard about taxes, maybe gun control. You didn't hear about a McDonald's worker and, and their plight. I don't like to toot, but I think the Fight for 15 and a Union showed, uh, the working class and average, everyday Americans and how to get back in the fight. When we first began to walk off the job 10 years ago and go on strike, we lit a fire in the country. We've seen like folks out in the streets literally seeing each other. I know that folks are turning on the news, like fast food workers working two and three jobs, can't get by. And regardless of where you worked at in the country, you was like, that's me too. I'm struggling. I work full-time. I have two jobs. Me as a leader and an activist, I enjoy these moments. Like, because if you don't, man, it's hard out here. So you gotta take solace in these moments of the working class standing up and fighting back.

ANAT

Before the Fight for \$15 and a Union, the prevailing guidance on how to advocate for wage hikes was to talk about practical matters. This meant making arguments about our “consumer driven economy” and how paying people more would mean more customers in our stores and, you guessed it, a way to grow our GDP.

But this narrative reduces working people to their consumptive potential. It's a morally bankrupt argument.

Instead, the bold leaders of the Fight for \$15 and a Union, like the present day organizers across the country, are making values-based arguments. In essence, most of us believe that people who work for a living ought to earn a living, with time left over to have a life.

⁷ [NCSL](#)

This shift in framing coupled with what were once deemed audacious asks is what has moved public opinion and with it public policy.

Thanks to courageous people, advocating for the recognition of their own labor, this idea, once considered absurd, has now become a benchmark. The National Employment Law Project calculated that this movement had added 150 billion dollars to the pockets of 26 million people, and that was as of 2021.⁸

If there's one thing I hope I've driven home over the course of six episodes, it's that public opinion is not fixed. And it is the job of effective campaigns to change it.

We do this by telling stories with *people* at the center. Terrence and the other members of the Fight For 15 and a Union showed themselves as whole people by narrating their real lived experiences. They personalized what it meant to live on a starvation wage. These aren't just workers. They are people who work to care for their families, to make a better life for their loved ones.

The only answer to a collective problem is collective action. You don't have to like the person you're standing next to in order to come together in common cause.

And finally. We must relish, not run from, having righteous fights. As Faiz said, If Democrats stick their neck out for working people, yeah, the corporate controlled media will break out in hives. But on the other hand, working people – the vast majority of Americans – will know Democrats are on their side.

If you want people to come to your cause, you must be attractive. And like any magnet, having a polarity means you will also repel. The folks who are determined to seize, hold power and rule only for the wealthy, white few ought to loathe what you're saying. Otherwise, what are you saying?

CREDITS:

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To find out more about More Perfect Union, check out Perfect Union dot U S.

⁸ [NELP](#)

To find out more about the Fight For 15 and a Union, check out Fight for 15 dot org. That's fight for one five dot org.

To find out more about the Union of Southern Service Workers, check out U S S W dot org.

To find out more about this and any of our episodes, go to Words To Win By hyphen POD dot com.

If your words don't spread, they don't work. So please let others know and rate and review the show, wherever you listen to your podcasts.

[THEME SONG: A song is somewhere to begin. To search for something worth believing in. If changes are to come, there are things that must be done. And a song is somewhere to begin.]