You’re reading this because you want to create change on an issue that’s important to you. But you can only create change on this issue if you have the right strategy. So let’s start from the beginning.

**What is the Theory of Change?**

The Theory of Change answers how you can engage with those who have power to create the change you want. It takes the form of the statement, “If X action is taken, then Y positive impact will be created.” To address any issue, you must first clearly identify who has the power to create the change you want. Those with power might include government officials, corporate executives, or even your local school board — it will differ depending on your specific issue.

**Shifting the Balance of Power**

Now let’s analyze power. Creating change is about shifting the balance of power with the resources that you have. Your resources might include your voice, your vote, your money and those of your allies. To win on an issue, you must organize your resources to give you more power over the opposing side. Now it’s time for you to put this into action.

**For your issue, answer the following the questions:**

1. What change do you want?
2. Who has the power to create change?
3. What do they want?
4. What resources do we have that they want?
5. How can you organize your resources to shift the balance of power?
Let’s examine the farmworkers movement created by Cesar Chavez in the mid-1900s.

During that time, grape growers in rural California had so much power, money, and influence that they disregarded the federal minimum wage and created a norm of farmworker exploitation. That power balance began to shift when Filipino and Mexican farmworkers united under the leadership of Cesar Chavez and others.

**Shifting the Balance of Power:**

1. **What change did they want?**
   Better working conditions and fair wages for farmworkers.

2. **Who had the resources to create that change?**
   The farm bosses had the power to improve working conditions and increase wages. Elected officials also had power to influence farm bosses and create better policies.

3. **What did the people in power want?**
   The farm bosses wanted labor from the farmworkers and money from consumers buying the grapes. The elected officials wanted people’s votes.

4. **What resources did the farmworkers have?**
   Farmworkers had labor, votes and consumers as their allies.
5. How did they organize their resources to shift the balance of power?

**Theory of Change:**

Farmworkers can stop working and go on strike so the farm bosses are forced to pay attention to their demands. They can ask consumers to boycott grapes so that the farm bosses face financial pressure to meet the demands of the farmworkers. They can also go vote and influence their allies (ie. the grape consumers) to vote so that elected officials can put pressure on the farm bosses.

**Impact:** Ultimately, the efforts of Cesar Chavez and others led to the Delano Grape Strike, a five-year grassroots organizing effort that ultimately reduced consumer demand for non-union grapes and forced the farm bosses into a collective bargaining agreement. The power balance did not become equal, but it significantly shifted toward the farmworkers.

**Now it’s your turn!** Who holds the power for the issue you want to address? What actions can be taken to shift the balance of power?