

Why Strategy and Tactics?

More than 2,000 years ago, Sun Tzu—the Art of War taught:

*Strategy without tactics is the slowest route to victory.
Tactics without strategy is the noise before defeat.*

In other words, planning without action is futile, action without planning is **fatal**.

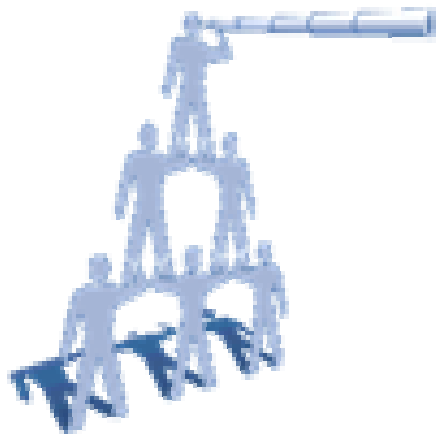


Strategy—determining what is important to do.

Taking time to determine your strategy increases your chances for success and the possibility of reaching your goal. By determining your strategy, you will better understand both your current reality and how you are advancing toward the future you are trying to create.

Strategy

		Flawed	Sound
Tactics	Flawed	Destined to fail from the start	A difficult & poor effort
	Sound	Tempting disaster	A good chance for success



A "grand" strategy entails the broadest conception of how an objective is to be attained and serves to coordinate and direct all appropriate and available resources (human, economic, political, moral, spiritual, etc.) to attain its objectives.

Other more limited strategies will likely need to be applied to achieve particular objectives in subordinate phases of an overall struggle toward the goal. This level of strategy defines the plan for a major phase or campaign within the grand strategy.

Your strategy will help you to better channel your resources towards the outcome you want to achieve.

The costs of change can be very high. Having a well thought-out strategy can reduce human casualties as well as other costs and sacrifices that may be required to succeed.

Smart strategists lay out strategic, achievable and measurable objectives. They also acknowledge and celebrate their achievements along the way.

Source: *Grassroots and Nonprofit Leadership: A Guide for Organizations in Changing Times*, by Berit Lakey, George Lakey, Rod Napier and Janice Robinson)

Strategy involves a gathering of **many** decisions—with a focus toward a plan:

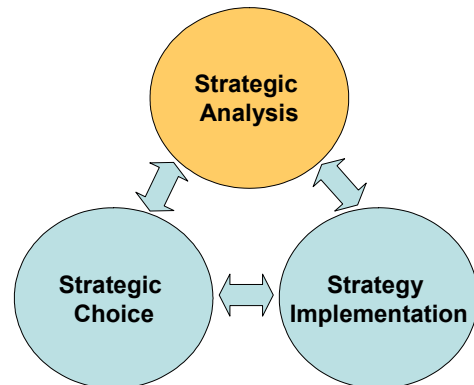
- Selecting key **objectives** and appropriate targets (people, organizations, laws, etc.), reaching a clear understanding of the specific interim goals to implement the strategy.
- Reviewing your **resources**: Understanding allies and opponents, resources available and needed (e.g., people, time, money).
- Deciding which **tactics** to use and when.
- **Implementing** the tactics chosen.
- **Monitoring** and **assessing** the results of your tactics to apply the lessons learned to plan your next steps.



Why is a strategy important?

Having a strategy helps you:

- keep the initiative in your hands;
- enhance your ability to see opportunities;
- use your strengths to the best advantage; and
- minimize your weaknesses.



What are TACTICS:

A “tactic” is a specific or concrete action taken to affect a given situation.

- ✓ The success of an individual tactic often depends how it was used in conjunction with other tactics.
- ✓ A tactic is an action tool that is part of a *larger strategy*.



When your only tool is a hammer, every problem looks like a nail.



“New” Tactics

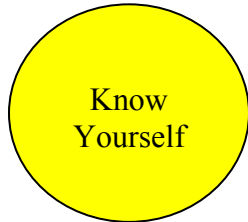
In reality, “new” tactics are the endless variations that we can make out of the ideas, resources, skills and capacity that we apply to a situation.

“There are not more than five primary colors (blue, yellow, red, white, and black), yet in combination they produce more hues than can ever be seen.

In battle, there are not more than two methods of attack--the direct and the indirect; yet these two in combination give rise to an endless series of maneuvers.

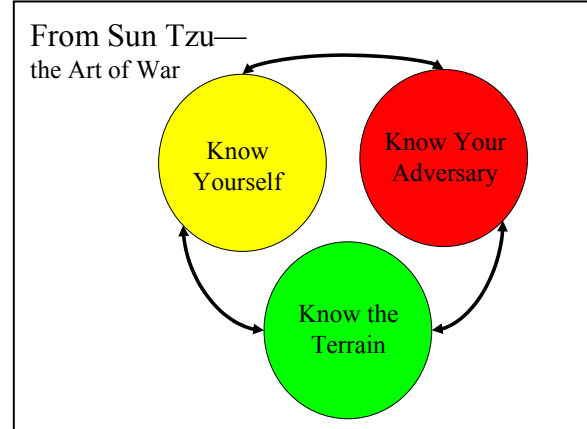
The direct and the indirect lead on to each other in turn. It is like moving in a circle - you never

come to an end. Who can exhaust the possibilities of their combination?” From Sun Tzu—The Art of War



What are your goals, strengths and limitations? Who are your allies?

It's important to do an honest assessment. Don't get caught believing your own propaganda. Be as realistic as possible when assessing your strengths and weaknesses.

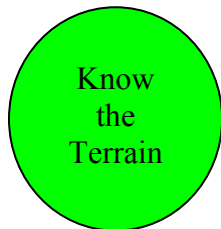


Who is your adversary? What are their goals, strategy, strengths, and weaknesses? Don't believe your adversary's propaganda either.

Understanding Your Adversary – Opponents & Allies—Assessing the dynamics of power

In addition to assessing and evaluating your adversary, also assess and evaluate your *potential* opponents and allies in relation to your strategy:

- Position
- Decision-making ability
- Reputation
- Social Influence



Where will the battle be fought?

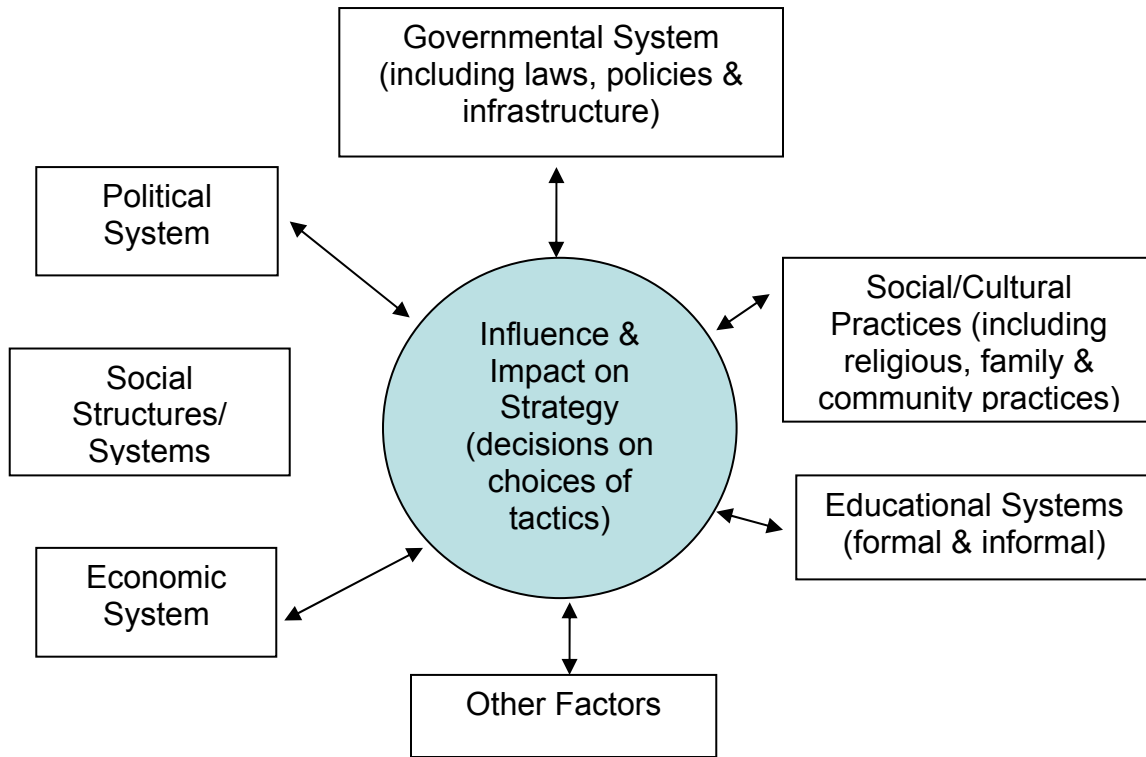
- Assess the conditions (political, physical, social, cultural)
- Assess points of strength and weakness related to the terrain
- Assess potential openings that can be used to advantage
- Assess danger areas

Know the Terrain – an essential element for reaching your goal

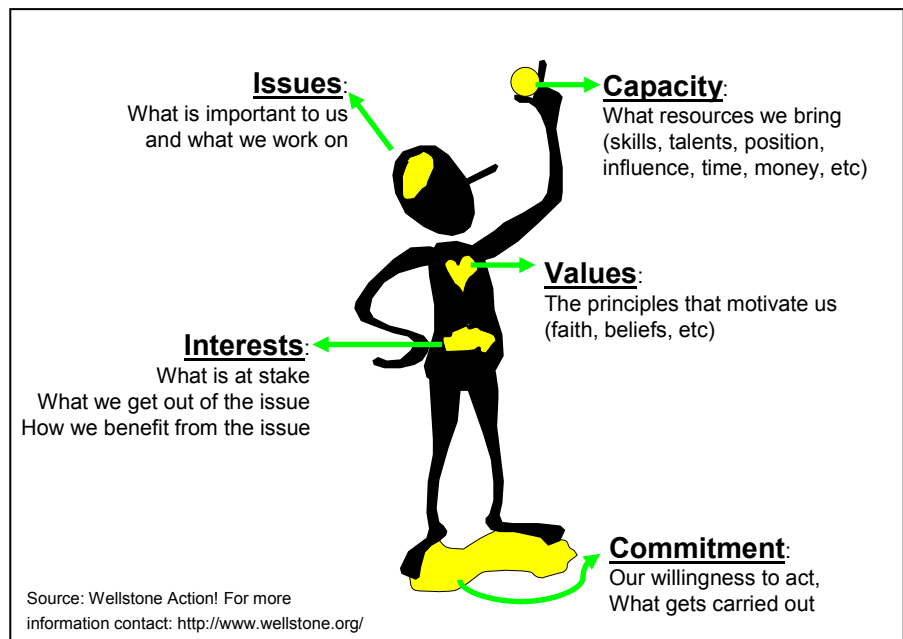
Like a mountain climber:

- Research the terrain
- Determine a route to reach the goal
- Make on-going decisions about the conditions.

Know the Terrain – Areas for exploration (dependent on your context)



It's important to understand and assess accurately ourselves, our allies and our opponents. Building good strategy and selecting appropriate tactics can maximize the number of potential allies and minimize the number of opponents. This process takes time and an ability to listen. Understanding how and why an issue may be important to different people can help. What moves someone to actually work on an issue, commit their skills, time and resources to the issue? Does the motivation come from the heart—their values (principles,

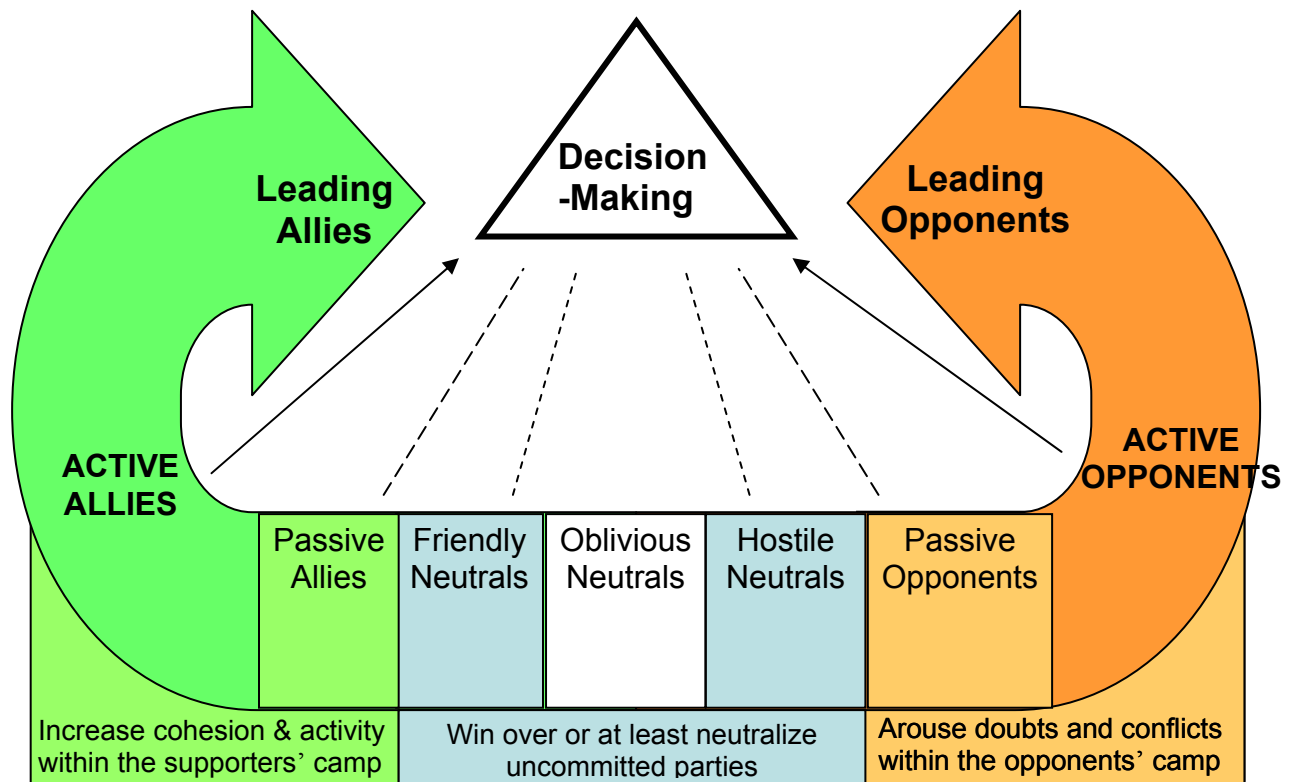


beliefs, faith) or does it come from their vested interests—how they might benefit from an issue. (See diagram)

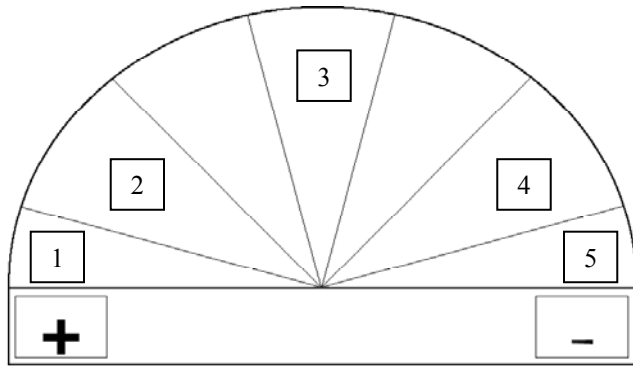
Put your knowledge to work

- The following chart can help you to think about where you would place people, organizations and institutions in relation to your issue.
- Use the “Spectrum of Allies” exercise with your group or organization. You can find this exercise at the Training for Change website under “tools”:
<http://www.trainingforchange.org>

Understanding Allies & Opponents



Source: "Spectrum of Allies" refined by George Lakey, from Training for Change:
<http://www.trainingforchange.org>



You can draw a diagram on a piece of paper. For a group, use a very large sheet of paper. It is helpful to use “post-its” or moveable pieces of paper so you can move your ideas around and debate where they might best be positioned. Modify the diagram by using a simplified version of the spectrum by creating only 5 segments to represent the following elements (moving from LEFT to RIGHT).

+ Side

1. Active Allies
2. Passive Allies
3. NEUTRAL: You can view this segment as one rather than 3 separate segments.

- Side

4. Passive Opponents
5. Active Opponents