

YOU CAN / YOU SHOULD /
YOU HAVE TO ORGANIZE

HOUDINI

We can’t change the system if we can’t even survive in it.

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Erik Houdini · November 9, 2026

A lot of people talk about organizing as this thing that you do so you can eventually overthrow the system or replace capitalism or what have you, like that big revolutionary change. And that's great. I think that's a great thing to be mindful of, and it's definitely part of why you want to work organizing. We can't make any systemic changes if we're not organized. But organizing is more than that.

I think if you look at organizing only as that, as the objective, you're going to get discouraged pretty quickly because that's such an overarching objective. It's not really actionable. It's not an actionable objective. It's not something that you can complete. It's something that you have as the dream, you know?

So James Cameron has been making movies for a long time. The whole time he was making movies, in the back of his mind, he had the concepts for Avatar already worked out. That's kind of what revolution

is when it comes to organizing. As you're organizing, you're thinking about that Avatar, that great dream project. But you're not going to get that dream project done, not yet at least, not until you organize more and achieve smaller actual victories. You can't make Avatar until you've released Terminator 1 and 2. And Terminator 1 and 2 are pretty big achievements in and of themselves.

So, for example, recently, due to life circumstances, due to the reality of living in poverty, I had to rehome my dog. Now, I had done everything I could to prevent this from happening because, like any normal human being, I love my dog. But due to life circumstances, job, work, lack of living situation, I had to rehome him.

And being organized came into play in that moment because it could have been a lot worse. I could have had to just surrender him to the humane society. And our county is notorious for their high kill rates at the humane society. So essentially it's like, things got to the point where I can't keep my dog. The only thing you can do is give him to somebody to have him put down. He'll be put down in seven days once you surrender him. It's heart-wrenching. It's brutal. It's really one of those things where you feel like the

only thing you have left is to just endure the cruelty of the universe, to know that your best friend, that creature that has been your companion for so long, you've failed. You've done everything, you've tried everything you could, and you failed. And now you're at that point where it's like, literally either I'm on the street permanently homeless without a job to keep my dog, which is what a lot of people do choose to do, or I'm surrendering my dog to keep my job and keep having some semblance of normality.

But being organized saved my dog's life and it saved me a whole lot of emotional turmoil. I was able to get a new home for my dog through someone in my DSA chapter who had a farm and whose in-laws have family members who can help foster him. This has been a huge, huge miracle because that takes so much emotional weight off my chest. It's not, "Oh my God, I have to surrender my dog. He's going, I don't know what's going to happen to him. I don't know what…" Now I get photos. He's playing with the birds on the farm. He's happy, he's healthy. And I know he's not going to get put down. And that's only because we're organized.

Now, does this change the systemic capitalist profit-motivated structures that caused me to have to

rehome my dog? Does it change the landlord's orders? Does it change the reality of the economic circumstances that keep so many people in precarious, semi-unhoused situations? No, it doesn't change any of that. It really doesn't. But it allows the extension of survival.

Because I'm gonna be real, if it came down to the point where it was rehome your dog to the humane society, which has a seven-day put-down policy, or become homeless and lose my job and lose my shelter, I would have chosen to become homeless and lose my job and lose my shelter over allowing my dog to be put down. That's simply the right thing to do. It's simply where I stand as a human being.

And the system wants to break us with its cruelty. There is a reason why this county has the highest rates of animals being euthanized out of any county in Florida. Who runs it? Who runs the humane society control? It's a wannabe Republican celebrity, Grady Judd. The cruelty is the point. The cruelty has always been the point. When someone is poor and on their last legs and they have no choice but to surrender their best friend, knowing that their best friend will be put down, that breaks the human

spirit and makes them easier to police and makes them easier to exploit.

So when we talk about organizing, we talk about it like this: it's this endless struggle to achieve some mass movement that can overthrow and change society. Like, yes, that's part of it. We want to change the system so that the humane society doesn't have the highest euthanasia rate. We want to change the system so that the people who profit from the cruelty aren't in charge. We absolutely do. But we can't change the system if we can't even survive in it. And we can't survive unless we are organized. So getting organized is so much deeper than the idea of revolution. It's literally life-or-death survival in the moment for people in the working class.

They tell us these lies about doing it on your own, about how a real man doesn't ask for help, about how if you really had it together, you wouldn't need to lean on somebody else. You would be your own pillar. But that's not how it works, especially not for the working class. I mean, you might be able to be your own pillar if you're a millionaire, but even they have to pay somebody to fly their private jet. They don't fly it for themselves.

People ask me why I do the mutual aid. Why do I always post about doing mutual aid? Well, I'm gonna be real, a lot of it isn't really about the other people that are being fed. It's about this being a meal that I know won't come from a gas station hot box or out of a cup that got microwaved. It won't be a cup of noodles. It's me showing up and wanting to show up and help because it benefits me individually. That's the mutual aid. I get a meal, I help serve it. Because it's a morale booster. It gives me just a little bit of strength to keep pushing through and survive and handle the exploitation that comes my way because work don't stop, rent don't stop.

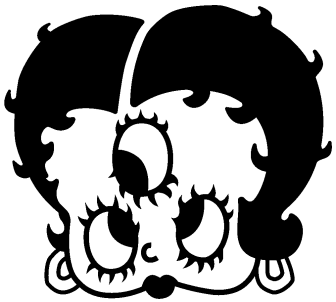
But in that moment of horizontal organizing, you see that, well, not everyone in this world is out to fuck you over. Not everyone in this world is out to say, "Fuck you, got mine." And not every relationship has to be predicated on the profit motive. And that's motivating. And one of the people who helps with the food share is also the person who helped with my dog. That's the mutual aid. That's the rub. That's the organizing. That's the networking. That's the whole point. And that's how we survive this shit.

So if you're someone who has been hesitant to get organized because you feel like it is pointless,

because you feel like there's no way that we can win, maybe take a step back and stop thinking about it with such grandiosity and start thinking about it as some of the small things that you could do to survive in this cruel, cruel world of capitalism.

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