CALL OF DIABLO

CULTIVATING ANTI-RACISM IN DIABLO VALLEY
Spring 2017 • Vol. 1
CALL OF DIABLO:
CULTIVATING ANTI-RACISM IN DIABLO VALLEY
A PUBLICATION OF DIABLO FOR PEACE

Diablo For Peace is a non-partisan collective of families of the East Bay Area concerned about the future of our country. Our purpose is to bridge the gap between generations, from Baby Boomers to Millennials and younger, through constructive discussion, education, collaboration and peaceful activism. Our intention is to create an intergenerational and multicultural community that serves to protect the integrity of the place we proudly call home, and to create a safe environment for all people who feel vulnerable in this era of uncertainty and increased violence.

This zine is a free publication intended for education and discussion. It is a compilation of works by many writers, who are cited under their pieces and once again in the Works Cited page. We strongly encourage our readers to seek out the sources provided and share this information with others.

Contents

1. FROM We Should All Be Feminists by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie
2. FROM Freedom is a Constant Struggle: Ferguson, Palestine, and the Foundations of a Movement by Angela Davis
3. Reflections on my own personal intersectionality, social awareness, and where these crossroads place me as an advocate and ally – Andrea Miralles
4. The Importance of Whites Educating Other Whites About White Supremacy - kraig bellows
5. FROM Teaching Community: A Pedagogy of Hope by bell hooks
6. To Love California Is to Know Her - emmy akin
7. Re-thinking Radical Self-Care - Andrew Kodama
8. Local Organizations to Support
9. Slides from Racism 101 Presentation
10. DISCUSSION QUESTIONS
11. Works Cited

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FROM We Should All Be Feminists by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie

“If we do something over and over again, it becomes normal. If we see the same thing over and over again, it becomes normal... If we keep seeing only men as heads of corporations, it starts to seem ‘natural’ that only men should be the heads of corporations (13).

“Each time I walk into a restaurant with a man, the waiter greets the man and ignores me. The waiters are products of a society that has taught them that men are more important than women, and I know that they don’t intend harm, but it is one thing to know something intellectually and quite another to know it emotionally. Each time they ignore me, I feel invisible. I feel upset. I want to tell them that I am just as human as the man, just as worthy of acknowledgment (20). These are little things, but sometimes it is the little things that sting the most (21).

“Gender is not any easy conversation to have. It makes people uncomfortable, sometimes even irritable... Because thinking of changing the status quo is always uncomfortable (40).

“Some people ask, ‘Why the word feminist? Why not just say you are a believer in human rights, or something like that?’ Because that would be dishonest. Feminism, is of course, part of human rights in general -- but to choose to use the vague expression human rights is to deny the specific and particular problem of gender. It would be a way of pretending that it was not women who have, for centuries, been excluded. It would be a way of denying that the problem of gender targets women. That the problem was not about being human, but specifically about being a female human (41).

“Other men might respond by saying, ‘Okay, this is interesting, but I don’t think like that. I don’t even think about gender.

Maybe not.

And that is part of the problem. That many men do not actively think about gender or notice gender. That many men say... that things might have been bad in the past but everything is fine now. And that many men do nothing to change it. If you are a man and you walk into a restaurant and the waiter greets just you, does it occur to you to ask the waiter, ‘Why have you not greeted her?’ Men need to speak out in all of these ostensibly small situations (42-3).

Adichie, Chimamanda N. We Should All Be Feminists. 2015.
“How would you define “black feminism”? And what role could it play in today’s society?

Black feminism emerged as a theoretical and practical effort demonstrating that race, gender, and class are inseparable in the social worlds we inhabit. At the time of its emergence, Black women were frequently asked to choose whether the Black movement or the women’s movement was most important. The response was that this was the wrong question. The more appropriate question was how to understand the intersections and interconnections between the two movements. We are still faced with the challenge of understanding the complex ways race, class, gender, sexuality, nation, and ability are intertwined-- but also how we move beyond these categories to understand the interrelationship of ideas and processes that seem to be separate and unrelated (3-4).

“We can’t only think about crime and punishment. We can’t only think about the prison as a place of punishment for those who have committed crimes. We have to think about the larger framework. That means asking: Why is there such a disproportionate number of Black people and people of color in prison? So we have to talk about racism. Abolishing the prison is about attempting to abolish racism. Why is there so much illiteracy? Why are so many prisoners illiterate? That means we have to attend to the educational system. Why is it that the three largest psychiatric institutions in the country are jails in New York, Chicago, Los Angeles: Rikers Island, Cook County Jail, and L.A. County Jail? That means we need to think about health care issues, and especially mental health care issues. We have to figure out how to abolish homelessness. ... This would be a way for people to move away from that notion of bad people deserving punishment and to begin to ask questions about the economic, political, and ideological roles of the prison (23-4).”

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Davis, Angela. Freedom is a Constant Struggle: Ferguson, Palestine, and the Foundations of a Movement. 2015.
Reflections on my own personal intersectionality, social awareness, and where these crossroads place me as an advocate and ally

Andrea Miralles

Take this quote from an Outspoken Linguists blog post I wrote in October 2016:
“If we valued women and her collective needs (as much as those of men, dare I say?), we would assure that she lived in a society where her division of labor didn't mean she were unequally represented and provided for in return. Then, the endeavor would be met with enthusiasm and meaning, with no shade of negativity. Our collective awareness of social inequality, acceptance of it, and how we fight it will determine how we live the rest of our lives as men and women on this planet.” Now apply it to racism and how we disregard or have not properly addressed the collective needs of colored people, just as we have done so for women. Growing up in Walnut Creek white-washed me, but growing up darker than a white person and with ambiguous Asian features didn’t give me the privilege of willful ignorance toward racism. As an empath, I can’t help but to see and feel racism and promptly break down because of it. Growing up Catholic, I was taught to love all people; there should be no racial, skintone caveat. Growing up biculturally, it was easy to compare cultural American vs. Filipino stereotypes and racism. This double consciousness stacked on top of my apparent womanhood hands me a third eye into discrimination and inequality. My point is that my intersectionality makes me terribly sensitive to sexism and racism and the power structures that enable them.

The result? I am an advocate for minorities, consistently write on social issues, activate, volunteer with underprivileged communities, listen and support POC, and ALWAYS call out racism when I experience it. I see the inextricable link between racism and sexism, and my feminist blood applies my deepest pinings for gender equality to racial equality, such that I would apply my following excerpt 100% to racism and the plight of people of color. “I know it’s hard to unlearn decades of socialization telling us what is ‘masculine’ or ‘feminine,’ but it’s 2016. Those decades, and these centuries of painting people as pink and blue have culminated in a mass, necessitated unlearning of the categorization, and it’s not only to be politically correct. It is to live with compassion, empathy, understanding, and non-judgment, to foster socially equal communities in the realm of gendered expectations, of which there should be none.

[I want] Results, not progress. Progress relaxes gender norms; it doesn't change them. Progress doesn't get me 21% more money yearly, doesn't put me less at risk of rape, sexual violence, poverty, human trafficking, lack of an education, illiteracy, forced family planning, etc. There need to be deliverables on gender equality and women need to see them deployed and eventually flourish. They need deadlines, and we need a world of project managers spearheading change. We need individuals with big ideas to be the change agents needed to make the future better for you, your sons and daughters, and your peers. Everybody has a particular perspective, and everybody can elicit change.

Who’s taking charge?”
The Importance of Whites Educating Other Whites About Our White Supremacy

kraig bellows

I have been crossing social borders and imagining a world free of violence for all of my adult life. Mind you, my adult life has only been 6 years long, but the moment that I decided to engage the world with a heart made of truth and a soul generated by love, I knew there was no turning back. I am a 24 y/o upper middle class white queer man born in Walnut Creek to an old Walnut Creek family; we have a street named after us. I am currently an educator / administrator at a social justice charter school in East Oakland that is self professed as by people of color, for people of color. Now, you may ask, how did a Walnut Creek punk end up at a school in East Oakland serving the grandbabies of the Panthers and the children of immigrants at a school by people of color for people of color? I could write several volumes about my position and positionality, but I’ll lend you the condensed version:

1. I have an understanding that whites must educate other whites to take the burden off of People of Color (PoC). I once was in an argument with a Black woman coworker who I had rapport with. Within the argument I told the woman that I thought she was being aggressive and she reacted in anger; exploding out of the room in exasperation. Later my professor and mentor, a white woman, told me that there is a very hurtful stereotype around angry, aggressive Black women and that this stereotype was based in the white supremacist notion that Black folks, and especially Black women should just accept white supremacy. She told me that it wasn’t necessarily me that was the problem, but rather the long line of white men in front of me who have used that stereotype to minimize the experience of my coworker and Black women like her. I now take other whites aside when I can tell that PoC are too exhausted to educate.

2. I understand that living in a position of privilege in this society (upper middle class able bodied white male) means that I must think about the impact of my words more than I think about the intention of my words. I had no intention to trigger my Black woman coworker, but because I stand behind a long line of ill intentioned white men, my impact was negative and hurtful. As a white person who wishes to do better, I must center the feelings and priorities of PoC instead of my own in an attempt to make up for lost time, or how I approach reparations. When coming into consciousness about whiteness, we need not feel guilty or ashamed, but we do need to hold ourselves accountable for how we have been socialized to perpetuate white supremacy.

3. I have a commitment to educate myself about the history of my people abusing, exploiting and violating the rights and autonomy of other peoples. Recently, one of the deans at school (a tall, broad, compassionate, and inspirational Black man) had recently returned from South by Southwest with his RnB, Soul, Hip Hop act. He was relaying how he encountered these white women approaching him at a house party. He was alone with them and kept talking about how he was trying to get away from them. This confused me. I thought of asking why, but then I went back into my critical consciousness and decided to think about it myself. After a bit of thought, I remembered how many Black men have been murdered specifically because they looked at white women. I took a little bit of my time instead of swinging for an immediate answer, again holding myself accountable for my ignorance so as to not negatively impact or burden a PoC with a question that would have seemed tedious and basic to them at best, and violent at worst.

Us whites have a lot of work to do and I believe that these tools are some of the most important in our arsenal to move from burdening others to holding ourselves accountable in this mess we call whiteness.
FROM Teaching Community: A Pedagogy of Hope by bell hooks

“While it is a positive aspect of our culture that folks want to see racism end; paradoxically it is this heartfelt longing that underlies the persistence of the false assumption that racism has ended, that this is not a white-supremacist nation. In our culture almost everyone, irrespective of skin color, associates white supremacy with extreme conservative fanaticism, with Nazi skinheads who preach all the old stereotypes about racist purity. Yet these extreme groups rarely threaten the day-to-day workings of our lives. It is the less extreme white supremacists’ beliefs and assumptions, easier to cover up and mask, that maintain and perpetuate everyday racism as a form of group oppression.

“Once we can face the myriad ways white-supremacist thinking shapes our daily perceptions, we can understand the reasons liberal whites who are concerned with ending racism may simultaneously hold on to beliefs and assumptions that have their roots in white supremacy (29-30).

“Often individual black people and/or people of color are in settings where we are the only colored person present. In such settings unenlightened white folks often behave towards us as though we are the guests and they the hosts. They act as though our presence is less a function of our skill, aptitude, genius and more the outcome of philanthropic charity. Thinking this way, they see our presence as functioning primarily as a testament to their largesse; it tells the world they are not racist. Yet the very notion that we are there to serve them is itself an expression of white-supremacist thinking. ...This was an aspect of white-supremacist thinking that made the call for racial integration and diversity acceptable to many white folks. To them, integration meant having access to people of color who would either spice up their lives... or provide them with the necessary tools to continue their race-based dominance (for example: the college students from privileged white homes who go to third world to learn Spanish or Swahili for “fun”, except that it neatly fits later that this skill helps them when they are seeking employment) (33-4).

“Clearly, the most powerful indicator that white people wanted to see institutionalized racism end was the overall societal support for desegregation and integration. The fact that many white people did not link this support to ending everyday acts of white-supremacist thought and practice, however, has helped racism maintain its hold on our culture. To break that hold we need continual anti-racism activism. We need to generate greater cultural awareness of the way white-supremacist thinking operates in our daily lives. We need to hear from the individuals who know, because they have lived anti-racist lives, what everyone can do to decolonize their minds to maintain awareness, change behavior, and create beloved community (40).”

To Love California Is to Know Her - emmy akin

In fourth grade, I learned a certain narrative of the Gold Rush. We were taught that people sacrificed their lives to get to California. We were taught that people, families died on the way—specifically European descendants, traveling to mine gold out of Californian earth. I did learn many things about Native Californian history as well, but it wasn’t until I was already an adult when I realized the gravity of the genocide that occurred, and the violence against Native Californians by the State and its residents that continues to this day.

Here’s a quick history of California that I didn’t get to learn in Walnut Creek School District, starting with its American occupation:

Between the Gold Rush/Statehood to 1900, about 50 years, the population of Native Californians dropped from an estimated 150,000 to 16,000 (Madley). There is a specific case in which four white men from Napa County kidnapped and murdered at least 136 Native Californians within Contra Costa County borders—without any legal consequences (Madley). Benjamin Madley says it best in his book An American Genocide: The United States and the California Indian Catastrophe: “By excluding Indians from the community of citizenship, legislators, law enforcement officials, and judges also severely eroded non-Indians’ moral boundaries in dealing with Indians, particularly for those non-Indians who equated citizenship with humanity.” Sound familiar? After statehood in 1850, Native Californians were not recognized as United States citizens. They lost rights to most of the land that they originally were able to own during Mexican and Spanish occupation. Many were enslaved. Starting in the 1870s, Native American children were sent to boarding schools, where they were forced to speak English and learn United States culture, or else they would face severe and sometimes fatal punishment (Hinton, 173). Most of the boarding schools were closed down during the 1950s through 1990s. In the 1920s, the United States finally recognized Native Californians as US citizens (Indian Citizenship Act). With that, children were finally allowed to attend public schools. During the 1950s and 60s, the United States Congress passed the California Ranchería Termination Acts, which took the federal rights and lands from around 45 different tribes, including the one I work for now. 56 years ago. Most rancherias have been recovered by Native Californians through extensive legal battles and self-representation. However, there are still many tribes fighting for their right to their land, including here in the East Bay. It wasn’t until 1990 when the Native American Languages Act passed, which states that Native Americans have the right to preserve, protect, and promote the use, education, and development of their languages (Hinton, 181). Less than 30 years ago, languages older than European presence in the US were given the right to be taught and respected as a language.

There is so much history and so many current issues about Native Californians we don’t know about, specifically because of disproportionate narrative and white erasure. People don’t often know about the Ohlone’s struggle to protect West Berkeley Shellmound. Or the Shasta dam the Winnemem Wintu are fighting against. Or the Mishewal Wappo trying to get their land back in Napa/Sonoma County. Or that in 2012, Choinumni grandmothers successfully protected their sacred mountain in Fresno from being the dumping grounds for a mining company. The fight continues. It never stopped.

That’s the power of voice. That’s why we need to hear different narratives. That’s why we need to hear the stories of Native Californians from their voice. We as Californians have a responsibility to listen to the Native Californian population, honor their struggle, and stand with them whenever and wherever possible. (citations can be found in works cited page)
Re-thinking Radical Self-Care - Andrew Kodama

You have likely heard the term ‘self-care’ before. It is a necessary part of existence and even more vital when it comes to resistance/liberation work. As much as we may feel the need to dedicate every waking hour to this struggle, it is simply not realistic and in fact it is detrimental not only to our own health and well-being, but also that of our community. If we are cranky, tired, and over-worked, our effectiveness in this larger fight lessens. We’ve all experienced burn-out and it is extremely important, especially in activist work to take care of ourselves. The first step is understanding yourself. This means understanding the signals your body and mind are giving you when you are pushing it past the limit. The second step is identifying what effective, radical self-care looks like for you. There is no universal key to self-care and it will look different for everybody. For some folks, self-care means unplugging from technology and hibernating with a book. For others, self-care means going to lunch with a good friend or spending time completely alone. All of this requires understanding yourself, what you like, where you get energy and support from, and what you feel you need to do to be in a good place mentally, spiritually, physically, etc.

There are many different theories and writings based around the concept of self-care. Some things I’ve personally grappled with in regards to self-care (though not limited to) are listed here:

1) What is the line between self-care and self-indulgence?
2) How much is self-care, or rather the ability to practice it, tied to privilege and social standing?
3) What self-care method works best for me at this specific given point? (re: nuanced self-care)

Some resources that have been extremely helpful to me recently in conceptualizing self-care have been amazing activists/writers Audre Lorde and Harsha Walia. Audre Lorde says, “Caring for myself is not self-indulgence, it is self-preservation, and that is an act of political warfare.”

In her book *Undoing Border Imperialism*, Walia conceptualizes creating the worlds that we want to see through what she refers to as “healing justice”. Walia sees “healing justice” as a liberatory self-care that focuses on collective well-being as opposed to individualized methods of self-care. These include practices of community-based dinners, neighborhood garden associations, and communal based methods of self-preservation in our capitalist system. Walia also stresses the importance and significance of basing many of our social relationships in political activism/organizing.

Whatever the case, unpacking self-care, and what it looks like for you, is a continual process and should always be reanalyzed and reworked to fit what you need. Taking care of yourself is imperative!

Take time to relax, destress, debrief, rejuvenate, exfoliate, and love yourself!
Local Organizations to Support

Search these groups on Google or Facebook to find more information on how to support them, should you have disposable time or income to do so.

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<td>HandsOn Bay Area</td>
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<td>Kids for the Bay</td>
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<td>Racial Justice &amp; Immigrant Rights</td>
<td>Arts</td>
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<td>Art Bison Design Coop</td>
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<td>Los Pobres Artistas</td>
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<td>EastSide Arts Alliance</td>
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<td>Black Organizing Project</td>
<td>RYSE Center: (Richmond)</td>
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<td>Showing Up for Racial Justice</td>
<td>Youth Spirit Artworks</td>
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<td>Arab Resource and Organizing Center</td>
<td>Foundations</td>
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<td>Council on American-Islamic Relations</td>
<td>The Pollination Project</td>
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<td>La Peña</td>
<td>Walnut Creek Civic Pride Foundation</td>
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<td>Anti-Police Terror Project</td>
<td>UC Berkeley Student Organizations</td>
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<td>East Bay Community Law Center</td>
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<td>Multicultural Community Center</td>
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<td>DVC Student Organizations</td>
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<td>Latino Student Association</td>
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<td>Democracy Now!</td>
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<td>News From Native California</td>
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<td>East Bay Food Not Bombs</td>
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Our Mission

We are a non-partisan collective of families of the East Bay Area concerned about the present and future of our country. Our purpose is to bridge the gap between generations, from Baby Boomers to Millennials, through constructive discussion, education, collaboration and peaceful activism. Our intention is to cultivate an intergenerational community that serves to protect the integrity of the place we proudly call home, and to create a safe environment for all people, especially for those who feel vulnerable in this discordant moment in time on earth.

Expectations

1. All voices and experiences must be valued and respected. We are generations and families of different economic, political, and cultural backgrounds, with vastly different life experiences and realities; that diversity combined with compassion is our strongest asset. It is the responsibility of each member to have an open mind and heart to mindfully listen to all experiences and ideas. All discussions are meant to be constructive and educational, and we choose not to speak violently.
Racism vs Prejudice

Prejudice is when a person negatively pre-judges another person or group. A person of any (racial) group can be prejudiced towards a person of any other (racial) group. Racism refers to a global system that establishes a hierarchy of superiority and inferiority along lines of race, that allows the dominant racial group to claim and maintain material, social, and political benefits. This works to both strengthen and further normalize the ‘superiority’ of the dominant group while at the same time operating to oppress the ‘inferior’ races. That is to say, the dominant group is dominant because of their oppression of others. In the case of the United States, white people are the only racial group to have ever established and retained power. (source: debbyirving.com)

Racism is a power structure. What are other examples of racist power structures in the Bay Area?

Law Enforcement: 90 people were killed by police in Oakland between 2000 and 2016; 74% were black men and women. (East Bay Express). Racial profiling affects Black residents/oC in the East Bay daily.

Education: “The schools we go to are reflections of the society that created them” - Assata Shakur. OUSD has 6 times as many cops on their payroll than it does counselors. Black students make up 80% of arrests on campus while white students made up ZERO in 2014. Race also comes up as an issue when we think about the ways we frame demands. Do we want school integration because we believe in the effects or do we want school integration because theo

Narrative: media representation, history books...Specifically, think of how we frame discussions surrounding deaths of black and brown children. We use ‘innocence’ as a way to find outrage in these situations. As if the only way black and brown murders are reprehensible to us is if they appeal to our (white) standards of respectability. (i.e- Jordan Edwards)

Redlining is the practice of denying services such as (but not limited to) loans, healthcare, and healthy food access to particular neighborhoods.

What are other examples of racism in the Bay Area?

Intersectionality

“Intersectionality is...a way of thinking about identity and its relationship to power. It shows us the necessity of understanding overlapping social identities and the ways in which these identities are tied to power/oppression and privilege/domination.

Originally articulated on behalf of African-American women by scholar/activist Kimberle Crenshaw, the term brought to light the invisibility of many constituents within groups that claim them as members, but often fail to represent them.

Intersectional erasures are not exclusive to black women. People of color within LGBTQ movements; girls of color in the fight against the school-to-prison pipeline; women within immigration movements; trans women within feminist movements; and people with disabilities fighting police abuse — all face vulnerabilities that reflect the intersections of racism, sexism, class oppression, transphobia, able-ism and more.

Intersectionality has given many advocates a way to frame their circumstances and to fight for their visibility and inclusion.”

Intersectionality reminds us that cultural patterns of oppression are not only interrelated, but are bound together and influenced by the intersectional systems of society.
Being uncomfortable, or white fragility

Dr. Robin DiAngelo

- Whiteness is a location of structural advantage, of race privilege. (Frankenburg, 1993)
  - Whiteness is a tool of an economic system, therefore changes over time
- Recognizing and discussing whiteness is in itself a challenge to this power structure
- “White fragility” is the academic term that refers to emotionally charged reactions that people in racially privileged positions display in conversations about race, political/social/cultural structures, and history
  - Triggers: suggesting that a white person’s viewpoint comes from a racialized frame of reference; PoC talking directly about their racial perspectives; feedback that one’s behavior has a racist impact; seeing a PoC in a main role of a film/show
- Resulting emotions: anger, guilt, hostility, defensiveness, fear
- If you find yourself feeling any of those emotions during the future, or even right now, it is a sign that you have a great opportunity to step back and check in with yourself
  - What specifically makes me feel this emotion?
  - Why do I feel defensive/angry/etc?
- “Fragility” comes in other forms: masculine, straight/hetero...

Who is an ally?

- **Aliy:** someone who does not represent an oppressed demographic, but strives to support another demographic’s cause and defend their rights
  - *Ally is not a self-given title, but rather a continuous process*
- Being an ally can feel uncomfortable
  - An ally is conscious and critical of their perspective, perceived self, and language and is open to feedback/criticism from others
  - Calling out vs. calling in
- An ally does not plagiarize or profit from the work of the people they stand in solidarity with

“Being an ally is a process not an identity.”
- @FeministGriote

Being an ally is “a way of living your life that doesn’t reinforce the same oppressive behaviors you’re claiming to be against.”
- Mia McKenzie

“Being white means being listened to and taken seriously—you hold privilege so KEEP USING THAT to dismantle systems that uphold you as the oppressor instead of playing victim whenever you’re being called out for speaking up. Black and brown lives will always matter more than white feelings.”
- @wassgoodlucy
What is allyship?

- Being an ally is simultaneously an act of accountability and selflessness
  - **Accountability**: recognize one’s position in the power structure & proactively educate oneself on this complex reality
    - You are not owed a lesson
  - **Selflessness**: listen, listen more, choose not to speak in order to yield space for otherwise silenced, oppressed or marginalized people (physical space, air space, emotional space, etc.)

  “Stand up, but don’t stand in front” - Loretta Ross, co-founder of SisterSong

- Being an ally requires active study and work
  - Organization of and participation in acts of solidarity such as: protests, discussions, book clubs, community services, volunteer work, food/meal shares, fundraisers, etc.
  - Donating time and money to organizations or paying for people’s work

- “Now what?”
  - Donate money, go to protests, go to meetings
  - Start conversations, speak out, be an active bystander
  - Use your social capital to make a positive difference

final thoughts

“The battle is and always has been a battle for the hearts and minds of White people in this country. The fight against racism is our issue. It’s not something that we’re called on to help People of Color with. We need to become involved with it as if our lives depended on it because really, in truth, they do.” -- Anne Braden

“Black people don’t need to be convinced that anti-black racism, structural inequity and skin privilege are facts; white people do… White people have to do the hard work of figuring out the best ways to educate themselves and each other about racism. And I don’t know what that looks like, because that is not my work, or the work of other black people, to figure out. In fact, the demand placed on black people to essentially teach white folk how not to be racist or complicit in structural racism is itself an exercise of willful ignorance and laziness.” -- Darnell L. Moore
Discussion Questions
(credit to Showing Up for Racial Justice)

1. Have folks introduce themselves and say a few words on why they came tonight and/or any questions they are coming with.

2. What is your mutual interest in ending racism? How would the world be better for you if we could end racism?

3. What’s a mistake you made that you learned from? What allowed you to learn from it?

4. Why do you think we’re taught there isn’t enough for all of us? Who does that belief benefit?

5. When’s a time you took action with other people about something you cared about?

6. How do we make the abuses of the criminal justice system relevant to those who live in areas with lower crime rates?
Works Cited

1. Adichie, Chimamanda N. *We Should All Be Feminists*. 2015.

Notes