

Kit One

Finding our way in this work

Personal Reflection Guide





Finding our way in this work

We are gathered around our collective yearning to dismantle racism and its structures of dominance. But the road to a better world is not a well-marked highway, and there are no clear directions. We must find our way together.

At the heart of our first kit is a set of questions, and an invitation to pause and to reflect. What is “The work?” What is “My work?”

You’ll need...

- ✓ The most distraction-free setting you can manage to arrange
- ✓ About twenty minutes
- ✓ Tools for writing or drawing (we encourage paper and pen or pencil over a keyboard and screen)—paper, notebook, pencil, pen,....

A note about the questions

These questions are simply invitations, not requirements. We mean them as sparks or provocations that raise a dialogue in yourself and among your group.

If you feel drawn to different questions, then trust those different questions. If our questions cause discomfort, we hope you’ll take a moment to inquire. We invite you to sit with the discomfort, investigate it (maybe even interview it!), and see what it has to say to you.

When you’re ready...

...write freely in response to the prompts on the next page.

Not sure about that “write freely” bit? See the suggestion for “freewriting” on page 4.



Writing to reflect

What do you stand for?

Write a few sentences about the world you long for, the liberation you stand for. You can use the poem on the next page as inspiration.

If it feels too difficult to dream, maybe part of what you feel is anger, frustration or hopelessness. If so, write into that. See if you can find the core of what you feel in this moment. If it's not too much of a stretch, imagine a future where that is transformed. What does the hour or the day feel like when that suffering ceases to exist?

Why do you care?

What draws you to this work? What have you and your people experienced that makes you long for another world?

How do you see “the work” of racial justice?

What does it mean to you to do “the work” of racial justice? And in this moment, how do you see your participation in it?

What does freedom feel like for you?

Try to find words that describe what freedom, liberation, thriving feels like in your body.

If you have time, assemble what you worked with so that you can share it with the group. During your group meeting you're invited to share some of this with the group.



V'ahavta

Aurora Levin Morales

Say these words when you lie down and when you rise up,
when you go out and when you return. In times of mourning
and in times of joy. Inscribe them on your doorposts,
embroider them on your garments, tattoo them on your shoulders,
teach them to your children, your neighbors, your enemies,
recite them in your sleep, here in the cruel shadow of empire:
Another world is possible.

Thus spoke the prophet Roque Dalton:
*All together they have more death than we,
but all together, we have more life than they.*
There is more bloody death in their hands
than we could ever wield, unless
we lay down our souls to become them,
and then we will lose everything. So instead,

Imagine winning. This is your sacred task.
This is your power. Imagine
every detail of winning, the exact smell of the summer streets
in which no one has been shot, the muscles you have never
unclenched from worry, gone soft as newborn skin,
the sparkling taste of food when we know
that no one on earth is hungry, that the beggars are fed,
that the old man under the bridge and the woman
wrapping herself in thin sheets in the back seat of a car,
and the children who suck on stones,
nest under a flock of roofs that keep multiplying their shelter.
Lean with all your being towards that day
when the poor of the world shake down a rain of good fortune
out of the heavy clouds, and justice rolls down like waters.

Defend the world in which we win as if it were your child.
It is your child.
Defend it as if it were your lover.
It is your lover.

When you inhale and when you exhale
breathe the possibility of another world
into the 37.2 trillion cells of your body
until it shines with hope.
Then imagine more.

Imagine rape is unimaginable. Imagine war is a scarcely credible rumor
That the crimes of our age, the grotesque inhumanities of greed,
the sheer and astounding shamelessness of it, the vast fortunes
made by stealing lives, the horrible normalcy it came to have,
is unimaginable to our heirs, the generations of the free.

Don't waver. Don't let despair sink its sharp teeth
Into the throat with which you sing. Escalate your dreams.
Make them burn so fiercely that you can follow them down
any dark alleyway of history and not lose your way.
Make them burn clear as a starry drinking gourd
Over the grim fog of exhaustion, and keep walking.

Hold hands. Share water. Keep imagining.
So that we, and the children of our children's children
may live.

Aurora Levins Morales is a disabled and chronically ill, community supported writer, historian, artist and activist. Learn more about Aurora and support her work by visiting her web site: www.auroralevinsmorales.com



Freewriting

Freewriting is a way to overhear yourself saying what you really think.

Many people use a technique called *freewriting* to open the flow of their thoughts. Many people have formed a habit of writing and editing at the same time—correcting spelling and grammar, making changes to please their inner voices (and those of their mothers and English teachers).

Freewriting opens the spigot, seeking a direct connection between the busy flow of thoughts in your head and the busy movements of your pencil or pen. Because it removes the “editors” from blocking or altering that flow, it often leads to surprise. You may experience a sensation of overhearing your own thoughts.

There’s only one rule in freewriting: Don’t Stop, keep writing.

Start moving your pen, and keep going. Maybe set a timer, and only allow yourself to stop after it rings.

If you’re stuck you might have to write, “I’m stuck I’m stuck I don’t know what to write.” You might feel silly at some point, so maybe you find yourself writing, “I feel silly just writing all these words on the page that don’t really have anything to do with anything.” That’s okay too. If you keep writing, eventually something starts to come out that DOES have to do with what you’re thinking, and the words start to flow, and very often you find yourself writing things you didn’t know you knew.

Enjoy!



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OSU Racial Justice Pathways

This document is part of the OSU Racial Justice Pathways set of learning and reflection kits. Visit racial-justice-pathways.mn.co to listen to the audio mixtape that accompanies this guide, find more resources and guides, and join your colleagues in applying these ideas to your own life and work.

Questions or comments? Email hello@fitassociates.com.

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