

# compassionate activism

## Healing from Toxic Whiteness

### Transcription of Training Session 1 - October 8, 2016

Sandra: Hi, everyone. Thank you for showing up to the first session of Healing from Toxic Whiteness in Order to Fight for Racial Justice. So this is our first session and we're really excited to kick it off. We have a ton of, a huge response to the online workshop that we gave a couple of weeks ago. We had over 12,000 people and we have almost 500 people signed up for this ten-week program.

I think that's kind of showing us that there's a real shift that's happening in our culture and society that says that we do acknowledge that white supremacy, systemic racism is happening. And we want to be doing something about it. Which is in contrast to the lies that we've been taught: that we're post-racial, Obama's President, racism is a thing of the past, people are making it up.

Clearly with everything, all the conversations happening, both in the United States as well as abroad, it's folks in the media as well as in our personal lives - I think we are being regularly confronted with the fact that this is real. Systemic racism is real and what can we do about it, both as white people and people of color.

This space, obviously, is more specifically focused on white people and what white people can do about it. Knowing that we were raised in a deeply, deeply racist society and just because we want to be anti-racist doesn't mean that we can suddenly poof and be anti-racist all the time. This is a process, actually. And a process that can be very emotionally difficult. And we're here to create that space.

I just want to get started with doing a little bit of an introduction. First, I want to just introduce myself. I'm Sandra Kim and I'm the founder of Everyday Feminism and I also created Compassionate Activism as really a way of teaching folks how to be with emotionally charging situations. Really stemming from systemic oppression and also related to all different types of interactions; the way that we relate to ourselves and other folks.

One of the reasons I decided to create this particular program is because as a person of color, it's been part of my daily experiences growing up to deal with how racism presented itself. Primarily through seeing me as a perpetual foreigner, that I don't belong, that stuff that comes from my Korean background are weird and different - not just different but weird. And getting othered in that way, being exoticized as someone who's being perceived to be an Asian female.

It took me a while to understand what might be happening in the reactions I was getting from white folks when I talked about racism, which is so evident to me and to so many people of color and yet seemed to be so not clear to a lot of white folks. And getting a very visceral strong reaction: being like, "I never enslaved anyone. I never colonized anybody." And being really baffled about the level of anger and pushback that I was getting when I would mention the fact that Europeans did colonize. It's a fact of history.

It occurred to me conversation with friends that it's like they're traumatized. And it just came out. Then in a couple minutes I was like, "Wait. They *are* traumatized." From there I began to explore what that meant because I could see, coming from a trauma-informed background due to the work that I've done both personally and professionally, I could see the manifestations of trauma in the level of reaction, in the level of pushback from so many white folks about systemic oppression and about racism.

Really noticing how that wasn't a part of the conversation of how white folks can be involved in dismantling white supremacy. That was really the start of this conversation for me and I remember talking to people of color about it and them being like, "Yes! They are so traumatized. They need a lot of healing." And then talking to white folks who were also doing this work and them being like, "I don't know what you're talking about. What do you mean by that?"

In explaining that, "Whoa, oh yeah. I can see it now." But it just wasn't a framework, a way of thinking about it that we had.

There's a weird sound.

Josette: Yeah, there's a weird sound and I'm also not a cohost anymore, apparently so let me... I can't mute anyone. Let me make you a cohost again. Alright. Okay. Great.

Sandra: That's a little bit of my story and I want to pass it over to Dara, who is helping to do training. She can introduce herself and tell why she's here with this program...

Dara, do you know how to unmute yourself? That's a possibility.

Josette: Yeah, Dara, you can, on the bottom left-hand corner there's a little microphone. It says to turn off mute.

Dara: Hey. Got it, thank you. I needed to go back to my individual picture.

My name is Dara Silverman. I've been a community organizer for about 20 years and I've been a white person my whole life. I grew up in upstate New York. I live in upstate New York now. A big part of it for me is that I chose the process of organizing in low income communities of color. A number of the people I was working with, who were people of color, said, "Hey, how come you're not organizing your own people, in your own community?"

I was like, "Well, who would that be? I'm white, I'm Jewish. What would it be like to organize my own community?" At the time, I was the director of a group called Jews for Racial and Economic Justice in New York and for the past two years I was the founding director of Showing up for Racial Justice or SURJ. But a big part of the process for me was really realizing for myself that I wanted to be free.

I wanted to live in wholeness as a white person and notice all the ways that white supremacy and racism targets and limits people of color impacts white people differently. For me, there were ways that it was separating me from my family, from my community. And even as a Jew who has a lot of connection to my culture, that there are ways that I have lost part of my culture through assimilation as a white Jew.

I think for me it's really been about - as someone who's really committed to liberation and to all of us being free - that we need white people in that as well. We need to be developing a different white identity that's not grounded in white supremacy. But we can't just ask people

to stop with the behaviors that we've learned our whole lives and that our cultures and our families have been steeped in for generations.

We have to actively do this healing and unlearn what we've been learning and create new practices. This course is really about how are we doing some of that healing and how do we build towards creating those new practices.

Sandra: Awesome. Thank you so much, Dara. I also want to introduce Josette, who, without her this program would just not happen.

Josette: Hey, everyone. Thank you, Sandra. Thanks for sharing, Dara. I am the person who - I hope everyone who was not able to enter is now entered. Let me know if you lose the call or something like that, you can email me always.

I am Josette. I have been with Everyday Feminism for almost two years, which blows my mind. And I am the Program Director. I'm sort of in charge of the logistical end of things: making sure things run smoothly, making sure our strategy goes well. And this is a program that I have been wanting my entire life. Because while I am not white I grew up in very rural central Florida and the majority of the people around me were white.

And I could see these beautiful values that folks had - family, community, protecting their community - being enacted in ways that were very violent and scary for my family, myself, and others. I saw that disconnect growing up and it was hard. Because there were people that I loved who would look at me and say, "Oh, my God. I can't believe that woman is letting her daughter date a Black man". And they would say that to me because I was a safe person or whatever to say that to.

I remember being like, "I really care about you and that's really painful".

This program - with the Compassionate Activism model - has been very helpful in my own life and I'm very excited to see how it works with applying this to larger systemic issues. This particular one, hence very exciting. I'm so happy to be here and that all of you are joining us.

Sandra: We just want to have Josette share a little bit from the chat box because I know people have been introducing themselves. Just so we know who's in the space. Because obviously it's not just us. We're here together in community.

Josette: We have a ton of people from Seattle. We have Los Angeles. Upstate New York. We have New Hampshire, Wisconsin, Illinois, Florida, Oakland, Louisiana, St. Louis. Folks are really from all over the country. We also have folks internationally. I saw Senegal earlier, The Netherlands, UK, Canada. Those are the ones that I saw. We have Princeton, England, DC. Folks are chatting now. A lot of folks in New York; New York City and New Jersey.

There's a lot of very big range. We also have Wyoming, which is very exciting. I actually live in Colorado. Wyoming is right up North, I believe. I just moved here, sorry. A little bit of geography.

We have a wide range and a lot of folks who are sharing why they're here and folks are really dedicated to social justice. And I think that is there. And what I saw was confusion or fear or not sure, a worry about moving forward; how to do that. I think we have the "what" is pretty solid. I think that the "how" is where they're looking for support.

I'm so glad that we're all here to support each other in that.

Sandra: And you know we did a survey both for the workshop as well as for this program and we've had hundreds and hundreds of folks responding to it. Primarily white folks just talking about how hungry and how terrified they are, also, around causing more harm accidentally. Because they understand they don't know what's racist. And that's what I want you to understand - how everything is so interdependent. It can be a really scary prospect.

We want to really hold space for folks. That's what the Compassionate Activism model is; it's showing us how to hold space for ourselves. And for other people as we begin to do the difficult work of unpacking how we have internalized messages about racism and manifest them in our lives.

I want to talk a bit about what this program is and isn't. This is the first thematic version we've actually done. We've done a couple of Compassionate Activism programs focused on healing from systemic oppression for marginalized folks. And this is the first time we're doing talking about white supremacy for white folks. And it's going to be different from other programs you maybe have seen or other books that you have read. It's really focused on, for example, the history of systemic racism in this country, in other countries if you don't live in the United States.

That's going to be part of the model is seeking out that information about what actually has happened and how that shows up now. And that's not going to be a focus of this new program. There's understanding that that information is more really out there because you have to go searching for it. It wasn't taught to us in school and that was intentional.

At the same time, we're trying to fill the need that we see that is the grappling with that history and the lies that we have been told. It's also a virtual program so doing things in person also creates a different sense of energy, a different type of community. Here, because we're virtual, it's more that we can lean on this practice. This model of Compassionate Activism helps us navigate and build trust with each other by using this process.

What will likely happen is that things will come up. Things will be said and you will feel some stuff. It'll be difficult. That's part of the process and that's to be expected. And to really lean in on the practice and use that moment in real time to work through it by being with it. I'll talk more about what that actually means.

The other thing is that this program is focused obviously on systemic racism and at the same time all systemic forms of oppression are interrelated. So to talk about racism without talking about sexism, homophobia, transphobia, ableism, classism, fatphobia; it would be inaccurate. At the same time, we have a very limited amount of time to talk. So the way that we're going to do this is: this three-hour session is going to be presenting the framework of how white supremacy and systemic racism has been emotionally harmful to white folks.

You can really easily liken it to the ways that different systemic oppression has harmed other people with privilege. It's a similar dynamic with specific manifestations, with specific toxic messages; they are different. But the dynamic is still similar. Just keep that in mind, in that the reason why we're not talking about how systemic racism intersects with other forms of systemic oppression is that we don't see that as there; we obviously do. But we have a limited amount of time to talk about them.

This is the session where we present the framework around how white supremacy is traumatic for white folks. The next session - there's a three-hour session happening next Saturday - is when we'll be looking at the Compassionate Activism model and the five practices that are

the foundation that we'll be helping you to hold space for yourself and other folks to engage in difficult conversations.

Then we're going to be doing several - I think about six - six practice sessions, each 90 minutes long on Thursdays usually, where you'll learn the process that you can really lean on and just follow. Just follow really closely to help you get a little more confident over time until you get to the point where you can use the practices with more fluidity, with more ease. Because this is new. This is not something you have been taught. It's going to take a little bit of practice to be able to actually use it.

It's going to be easier when I'm guiding you through the process. And then when you're on your own, It's going to be like, "Ah, I can't remember!" That happens. That happens. It's just a matter of referring back to the videos that you'll be getting as well as the sheets with the notes from the PowerPoint. There's also coaching that's available with us for individual one-on-one. There's also email available; though I do request that you be judicious about when you use that. Sometimes it might be better to just do one-on-one coaching call rather than us just trying to solve all the problems of racism in your life via email.

We also have a Facebook group; which Josette will be sending that information about how to join that. It'll be a place for you to connect with other folks, to share questions and articles to help you in this process in between the sessions as well as continuing forward. This is also all going to be in the online portal that you can access through Everyday Feminism website, which we'll also send some reminders about accessing through email in case you forgot about that.

That's where you can find all the different materials.

I also wanted to talk about how to best engage in this program. This is a real-time program. This is not a program about, "Well, let me just head out and do it later." The whole point of this program is to notice what is coming up for you in this current moment. If you're noticing that you want to pull away, sit and notice that. Where is that coming from? If you're getting upset, that happens. Sit and notice that.

I'll be teaching you much more explicitly, what does that mean: to sit and notice it using mindfulness in the next session. But It's probably going much more into depth in the next session. Understand that wherever you are in the process, there's no right or wrong to it. Don't beat yourself up for not showing up for every single live session and not being engaged fully every single time with everything. This is not about perfectionism. It's not about being the perfect white ally. It's not about self-flagellation. It's not about proving anything.

This is just about you being you and where you are in your process. And really holding the space for yourself to be there. Because that's when we're going to start to really examine and unpack and choose something different. I'll talk about in a minute how us running away and trying to make ourselves perfect isn't productive to dismantling systemic racism.

That is -

Dara: Sandra, can I just jump in just real quickly on that? Just because I feel like we're in this moment, particularly with the elections and Donald Trump, where there's such a public and visible overwhelm of white supremacist behavior. Of white men particularly in terms of the arrogance and the expectations. I feel like one of the ways this course is going to be useful, too, is noticing our reactions to that. I think particularly for people who are political or who do have progressive or liberal thoughts, there can be sort of a, "That's not me."

I think this is one of those moments where it's really about taking a breath and being like, "What parts of this are from where I'm from? Where have I heard what Donald Trump is saying before or what my Senator is saying to justify what he's saying?" How to use these practices, not just in the time when we're on these sessions but in ongoing ways and particularly in this moment when things are so up. How can we notice what our feelings about it are and how we maybe are trying to distance ourselves from other white people and if there's an opportunity to get closer with people who are around us?

Sandra: Great. Thanks for laying that out.

Josette: We have a quick question come in I just wanted to answer. Some people have asked: Is there a way to only have the speaker in view because watching other people moving around is a little distracting?

There is on the top right-hand corner, there's an option. I'm not good at right or left, apparently. It'll say speaker view. There's also one that'll say gallery view. If you are in gallery view, you're going to see, I don't know how many people. We have 145 on the call right now so maybe 12 of those people - who knows - are going to be on your screen.

But if you do speaker view you'll have whoever's speaking in the front and there's going to be little windows in the back and the top. Let me know via email, please: [Josette@everydayfeminism.com](mailto:Josette@everydayfeminism.com) if you still need help figuring that out.

Sandra: Great, thanks.

Yeah, having all the faces can be kind of distracting so thanks for raising that as a question.

Actually, going back to Dara's point, we intentionally wanted to extend the program through Thanksgiving. So we'll be having some practice sessions before and after Thanksgiving to help you, because that's the other time that often these conversations are difficult for us because they're with people we love and family.

Let me share.

The goals for today's session are: Understanding how white supremacy is emotionally harmful to white folks. How it shows up in yourself and the ways that you think and act. Then you're going to get some tools to use mindfulness, to work with the pain and the difficult feelings that are arising for you. As we keep saying, it starts with the noticing.

That's the starting place where all the rest of us were.

To let you know: We will be taking a break about halfway through at around 2:30 so you will be getting that. Today we're going to be going for a three-hour session. So we'll be stopping at 4:00 our time, Eastern Time. So let's get started.

This framework is something that was developed looking from a trauma-informed perspective and where is - how is that magnified. There's a reason why, when we have these conversations with white folks who have less developed racial consciousness, there's a lot of flailing. There's a lot of flailing; call it whatever you want to call it. Call it white fragility, white tears, white silence; but there's a lot of flailing and there's a lot of self-flagellation involved and happening. Everyone's just kind of getting hit along the process.

And I believe that there's a reason why things happen. The question is why are they happening in the first place. If there is something statistically prevalent, that's because a system was designed to create that. The system is always perfect. So what is this system that we were

raised in that we're seeing such a dominant pattern of folks flailing emotionally? And I use this not to look down or shame or anything.

In my mind, I see a lot of this happening with feelings. There's no right or wrong to feelings. They are just what they are. The question is: Where is it coming from and how are we going to relate to it?

Thinking about white supremacy - when we talk about white privilege, oftentimes, obviously the focus is around how white folks materially and socially benefited from it, which is without a doubt. You can look at every life outcome and statistic and it's always going to be along those lines of race. At the same time, there's been a lot of emotional harm to process that we haven't talked about.

In thinking about: What were the messages that we've been taught, consciously and unconsciously? Because a lot of it is just through the environment: the media, your history books, the way our families have talked about things. Some of it's been explicit but a lot of it hasn't been, which makes it really, really tricky.

One of them is that being a racist is one of the worst things you can be. I think that's been more obviously talked about and there's a lot of big fear of being called a racist and being associated with the KKK and that level of extreme violence and hatred. At the same time, we have all been given so many toxic messages growing up that says that you need to behave in this way, that's actually racist, and they do personally benefit white folks.

A lot of it is by erasing the experiences of people of color so that you don't notice what's happening. You don't notice that you getting to be normal is a way of othering and making everybody who's different from you, particularly communities of color, as being bad or wrong.

The trick of letting this happen, the trick of the way that this has really gaslighted folks is that either these behaviors are not racist or they might even be anti-racist. Like being colorblind; that's often something progressive white folks lean upon is, "We don't see color. And why are you bringing race up? You're the racist!"

When we actually attempt to address racism we get squashed with the so-called anti-racist attitudes that obviously don't work. They aren't based in truth. Since we think about how we don't personally benefit from racism and it's not like this intentional, "I hate you so I'm going to commit violence against you" so it's not really racism, you think that, "Oh, then I don't have anything to do with it. I don't have to do anything about it. It's in the past." Or, "It's over there. And it has nothing to do with me."

All of this just means that we keep running away from the harm that it caused. We as a society have really struggled to even acknowledge the harm that's happening to people of color. Which is why we have really not had much conversation, barely any conversation, about how it's been harmful to white folks.

In the feminist movement there is some discussion, discourse around the impact of patriarchy upon men and how it's been tremendously toxic to their emotional system. Of "Boys don't cry" and all the insults from that are basically around being women and are tied to having emotions, because those two are linked in the form of patriarchy that shows up in the West.

There's been some degree of discussion there that needs to be further developed and fleshed out. And we are just starting to have that conversation about white folks and white supremacy. I also don't want to say that I'm the only one who's thought about this; I'm sure

there have been other folks. But I happen to have a platform that is very large in trying to get it out there to people.

When you look at this, you have to really think about so how does this mess with your sense of self in the world and your emotional system. It's really that - when I say that it's like you've been brainwashed and conned, it's not like - it is actually being brainwashed and conned. It's a great bargain that's been promised to white folks.

In thinking about what has been lost in the process of becoming white as white supremacy has defined it as opposed to it just being a human being who has shared humanity with people from all different backgrounds. And in thinking about, "What is my skin in the game? What is my - Why is my liberation bound up with the liberation of people of color?"

One of the things - just a little. This is a little piece of that history we're probably going to cover - it's critical - is to talk about how whiteness was created. Whiteness is something distinct from people who happen to be white. Whiteness is not inherent to white folks; It's something that's been imposed upon them and accepted by white folks.

That's a really critical distinction to make because human beings are not inherently right or wrong. We are just here. The question is what do we do with our time together? With ourselves and with each other? And white supremacy, like other forms of systemic oppression, have come to disconnect us from each other. To create notions of who is superior, who is inferior, who is right, who is wrong. Who has value, who matters, and who doesn't. Who is deserving of protection and who don't we care about if they get hurt.

These differences that we have as human beings, there's no right or wrong to that. There is a wonder and a magicalness to all of those differences that we hold as individuals and as cultures. We have different languages. Our histories. And to see them either as inferior or superior, one as being normal, that's where we start to create problems. That's where we start to get oppressive when we combine this notion of superiority via this notion of normalness.

"This is normal" with institutional power, with international power, to actually translate that sense of superiority into colonization, into enslavement, into the prison-industrial complex, into how we view government assistance, into our education system, into the police, into housing, into our textbooks.

It's who controls that. That power over distribution of resources combined with this idea of superiority, of normalness, that we get that we start creating these oppressive conditions. To understand that whiteness was something that was created, created primarily by the wealthy land-owning English folks back in colonial America.

Before this there were English Americans, there were Danish Americans. There were German Americans. People were just where they were coming from and living in the United States or living in the Americas. What started happening is that so many people from Europe came that weren't wealthy, they did not own land, they were not the elite and they had a lot more in common. These white folks had so much more in common with Black and Native folks in the Americas that there were definitely moments of solidarity, where people came together to resist against the ruling elite.

That obviously freaked them out. In creating this sense of whiteness and institutionally positioning white folks, giving them certain benefits so they wouldn't join forces with Black and Native folks. Mind you, of course I'm giving an extremely condensed version of this history



so don't... There's going to be much more that you can learn than what I'm saying to you but I'm just giving you the quick summary version of what was created.

What happened was that folks who came over to the United States from Europe, they gained white privilege but as a Faustian bargain. They got access to education, to jobs, to better pay, to better housing, to a little bit more political say and at the same time they lost their connection to where they came from, why they came from Europe in the first place.

Think about the fact that people who immigrated over knew the likelihood that they were going to die was pretty high. Either on the way over or when they were here. If not them, their children. They knew their children would probably die. What was so terrible happening in Europe that this was actually their best opportunity? You've got to think about that. Of how that level of exploitation and oppression that was happening in the United States was also happening in Europe.

It just got exported over here and morphed into its own beast. In losing that history, that awareness of where people came from and buying into this myth of the American Dream, of this meritocracy, of pulling yourself by your bootstraps, not paying attention to how that was on the backs of people of color and at the exploitation of poor white folks.

By creating this divide that was artificial, the poor white folks could find better solidarity with and try to change the power structure of the U.S. They couldn't do that. They had to look down upon and justify their own stereotypes, their own racism against people of color and disconnect them from people who were in much more similar situations than they were. The lack of compassion, the lack of empathy from folks who were very similar to them happened.

It's really, really critical to be aware that this was a Faustian bargain. This continues to be the Faustian bargain. We see it with the Republican Party. The Democratic Party is not great around this, either. And the Republican Party is very explicitly creating a Southern strategy to pit poor white folks against their economic interests by using race constantly in dog-whistle politics.

All these things you can Google or find books on, if I happen to be using words that don't make sense. Dog-whistle politics is basically using code words for racism. So it didn't appear racist but actuality is. For instance, the term "welfare queen". Who do we do as a welfare queen taking advantage of the system when the reality is that the majority of people on welfare, or out getting government assistance, are actually white folks.

Just thinking about that: that racism is this tool that's been used to distract us from the actual people who have created the system. People, I find, in conversations revolving around Trump are often talking about, "Those ignorant white folks in the rural areas, in the South, and whatnot." I'm like, "They didn't create the system. They're getting screwed over, too. They've bought into the system and they're getting some benefits from it, but they didn't create the system."

Yes, we need to have conversations with them. We need to be building solidarity in order to address the people who actually did create the system, who are the ones primarily excessively benefiting from it. So keep this in mind, this system wasn't created because people felt like it. It's a tool for economic exploitation for a very very small number of elite people. Compared to the number that we have, it's a very small number. We should never, ever, ever forget that.

Josette: Can I make a couple of announcements really quickly? We're getting a lot of questions about whether or not these PowerPoints are going to be available. They will be. We have written it in many emails. We will continue to remind you about that. And we wanted to make an overall arching announcement so folks can not need to ask in the chat.

We have some comments that the chat is a little bit distracting. We ask that anything off-topic and any messages be saved for the Facebook group, perhaps. Finally, if you find the chat very distracting, you can turn it off by opening up the chat box and moving it to the side of your screen. That way there's no popups when there's a new message.

Great. Thank you very much.

Sandra: I kind of want to reiterate: focusing on the topic at hand. I'm obviously trying to sum up a lot of different things that are not a perfect summary. There may be some different things occurring to you. So I just want you to notice what is coming up for you and as you engage with this, do your own homework about this. Don't just take my word for it. That's not what I'm asking.

I'm asking you to think about this and what's coming up for you and to keep the focus on asking clarifying questions for what's going on here. Not so much going on tangents. Because this is a limited space and we want to keep the focus.

We get to have those conversations later in the Facebook group if you want to, just not right now.

Josette: And we had a request for making the PowerPoint full-screen... Okay.

Sandra: When we talk about why it's important how white people's liberation is bound up with being in solidarity with POC, we really need to talk about how we often look at the work of white allyship. It has all sorts of issues and happens in all sorts of interesting ways. Some of them really great; some harmful and not so great. And in the work.

The understanding is that this is not about white folks needing to save POC from racism that's out there and it's not a part of us as human beings. POC and white folks, we have all been hit with the toxic messages of systemic racism. So the difference that happens is that people of color, we have our own experiences and a certain degree of connection to the histories. Because it's the history of our families.

Our direct personal experiences of the history of our families, our communities, that help counter the lies of white supremacy. This is not something that white folks have. White folks pretty much just have the lies of white supremacy and then perhaps, if they have done their own proactive researching in books or have friends who are people of color and have really created a trusting listening space. An affirming space for people of color. Then perhaps that's different.

But you have to understand that this is something that we've all been bombarded with and you cannot go from being in a deeply racist society and jump over to being anti-racist just because we want it to be true. We have to do the hard, hard, hard work of unpacking how we've all been unconsciously conditioned to be racist.

There's no way around that. We're all conditioned to be racist, sexist, homophobic, transphobic, classist, ableist, fat phobic. We all have been conditioned to think like that. We're also taught that there's a certain ideal. The ideal of: white, man, cisgender, straight, able-bodied, athletic build, right? And that's all the model of success for us.

Everything else was created to be other, to be made the other. We all have these living within us. When we want to run away from that, when we want to deny that, that actually means that we're cutting off part of ourselves from that pain that we've experienced for not fitting into those boxes. Even when we have those identities, people are really incredibly diverse and that one box is not able to contain all that we are. Even when you have all those identities and all of those privileges.

Just knowing how that's not real and that that has been put upon us. We have to do the hard work of how that's harmed us, of how we've been kept ignorant and in denial. If we can get in touch with that, we can hold all of our self. We can hold all of our self and that's when we start moving from a place of emotional wholeness, that's when this work gets transformative. That's when we move away from being fearful to moving into our values.

This is why I've created Compassionate Activism. It's because what oftentimes happens is we end up perpetuating the dynamic of policing and punishing each other and ourselves as we do this work. Because we don't want to up perpetuate systemic oppression. Yet, it's actually by perpetuating it when we start to dehumanize people when we blame, judge, shame them, and deny what's going on and the ways that we've been harmful because we don't want it to be true.

Then we don't acknowledge when we have been harmful.

You see how it just kind of builds upon itself and you can see in the toxicity that often exists in call-out culture. I think there's a pointed role that calling out folks can have in certain situations. And it's oftentimes not used in ways that actually acknowledge the humanity of everybody involved, that both are true.

What is the alternative when calling somebody out in that public way is not the appropriate approach or maybe not the first approach you want to do? There are some other ways that we can call people in, that we call ourselves in. As well as other folks. Really, holding the space for the pain, the grief, the fear that comes up as we start to unpack.

What does it mean to have grown up in a deeply oppressive society? When we were children we were just like sponges, absorbing all of this. It's when we can actually be emotionally honest with each other - we just don't jump over like, "Oh, what do you want me to do? Well, I'll do this." It's sitting with the impact on ourselves and being really emotionally honest with each other and with ourselves.

That's where we start to restore trust between white folks and people of color. And also among people of color, because we've all got beef with each other as well. It's a constant work that we're doing and it starts with ourselves. It starts with being emotionally honest with ourselves and bringing all of that to the table in a thoughtful, mindful way so that we can actually align our behavior, our actions, with our values.

This is when I say that the only way out is through. The only way out is through. We can't just pass through into Kumbaya land. We need to do some healing work.

I say that we need to do some healing work because compassion is the desire to actually alleviate suffering in the face of pain. Compassion is a word that's often used to tone police so I want to be clear that's not what I mean. What we're saying is that compassion is what calls us forth to take care of the pain. It also allows us to get in touch with the pain.

That can be a really scary thing because the ways that we've been taught to access our pain is really incredibly counter-productive and it blows up in our face. What we normally do is that we're taught to actually deny the pain of systemic oppression in our lives. That's the only way we're not going to try to change it. If we believe that this is actually not harmful or, it was harmful but it was our fault - it's my fault this happened. If I just hadn't done this; if I had just done this instead. All that victim-blaming, all that shading, all that judgment.

Being like, this never really happened. It's not that bad. We minimize it, we deny it, we try to change it. That's how we've been taught to interact with our pain. If it was raining outside and if I resisted it. If I was like, "How? Ugh. It can't be raining. I don't want it to rain. It just can't be happening. This sucks! No, no, no, no no. Why can't it just be different? Why can't it just be sunny?"

Well, if I try to make it warm - if I got mad at the wind, if. If I got mad at the weather gods and was like, "How could you do this to me?" Or like, "? Why is my body so weak that it's getting wet and getting cold? I'm getting sick. Why do you suck so much?-" - that sounds pretty ridiculous.

That sounds pretty ridiculous to do that. And if you think about how we deal with our own fears, our own anxiety, our own pain that's actually what we do a lot of. We say, "What is wrong with me? I just need to be strong. I just need to get through. It's not that bad. You're just exaggerating." Or "I can't believe - what is wrong with - I can't believe you! You're just such a bad person."

On the other side with the weather it's like, "It's raining. I'm getting wet. I don't want to get wet. I can go get an umbrella. So if instead, we were like, "I'm really scared right now. I'm really scared because I'm hurt. I have this pain, this thing that I don't want to feel again. Okay, I have this pain. All right. Okay. That's happening. Oh, it's coming from this place. Oh, I can do something about that. Oh, I want to do something about that."

There's a shift that actually happens when we stop resisting it. When we stop making ourselves wrong for feeling and we make other people wrong for feeling it. This is the Compassionate Activism model that we're going to teach you. A step by step process of practices to help you incorporate this into your everyday life.

So for folks are like, "You want us to access this pain. It sounds like a terrible idea," just play with me a little bit. See how it goes. It's probably going to be different because we're really going to do it in a different way.

To start out, there are three core pains caused by white supremacy. And so a lot of the behaviors that we see manifesting are coming from these things. We wanted to give you something more simple to understand all of the combined toxicity and chaos that is the flailing that happens when people start realizing that racism is happening.

The first is disconnection from the reality of systemic racism and its impacts on people of color. We're going to jump over to Dara, who's going to talk a little bit about that.

Can you unmute yourself?

Dara: Yeah. I'm here.

This core pain is really about: what are some of the ways in which whiteness is taught as the norm. It goes from things that are really small - like Band-Aids that are made as the same tone as white people's skin and not the tones as people of color's skin to policies and

practices and systems that are reinforcing racial superiority all the time. It's the ways in which, for white people, we're seeing the world and we think that our experiences are the norm and that it's the frame of reference that everyone has.

What is left out is the history of racism, and the history of assimilation as white people, the cultures that we've given up as Irish or Italians - or wherever it is that we came from - in order to be white. What this can result in a lot of times for a lot of us is really about the ways in which we're taught to center our experiences and to see anything that is different for people of color as not the norm and as being different. As not the mainstream. As not the center and as really different.

That can mean exotifying it. It can mean ignoring it. It can mean dismissing it. There are a lot of different racist behaviors that can come from this that aren't necessarily intentional but are the ways we are taught. Again, with all of this, it's the system that we're a part of and we're taught this as a part of that system.

Some of the behaviors that we can have are things like: assuming that the experiences of people of color are the same as our experience or that we know what the experience of people of color is. We can minimize or justify or explain away racism. There are a lot of ways in which this can happen. It can happen in interpersonal situations; it can happen in group situations. And I think one of the ways in which it can also happen is to see, as white people, that we have all the answers.

You've probably heard the term white-splaining. Sort of like mansplaining. Which is when white people feel the need to explain where it is that we're from. What that means is that we often can't see the things that we can't see. And that's not seeing, for a lot of us who are white, is a big part of not even understanding that our experience isn't at the center of things.

For all of us who want to be whole, it's really a question of how do we learn to see those things that we can't see or know that there are things that we can't see. There can be a lot of work done to maintain white supremacy that's about minimizing or justifying or explaining away racism. You can think about that.

I keep bringing up Donald Trump. It's probably on my mind because of what happened so recently. When you think about his behavior, there's this recent case that came out about some of his behavior, some of the horribly misogynist and sexist things that have happened. But there have been many, many indications that he is a sexist person, that he is a racist person, that he has these behaviors.

What has been done is the minimizing and the justifying and minimizing and explaining away of his behavior and we do this all the time.

So I think part of the way that can happen is that if someone comes up to us who is a person of color and says something like, "I just experienced racism from someone else in our work, in our school, in our neighborhood or our community," and you say, "Oh, that probably isn't what happened. You're probably getting it wrong. It probably wasn't like that."

I know for me there have been a lot of moments like that as I've been on this journey because I did not become the anti-racist person that I am today all at once. It was a long process. Along my way I made a lot of mistakes, as we all do because we're in this community where we're being taught that our view is right and that everything that we're saying is true.

In that process, people have said to me, “This racist thing happened,” and there were times where I said, “No, it was something else. You probably misinterpreted it”. I think part of the question for me, really, was learning to trust people of color. Learning to trust people of color and their experience and not to dismiss what they’d experienced personally or feeling I had to understand it for it to be true.

One of the things that was mentioned earlier in the chat was that there is a - not some new phenomenon, but something recently of “if you name racism, then you’re racist”. This is something that’s really been perpetuated in mainstream society that the naming of something as racist, that even naming that there is racism is problematic. And that that’s actually the problem and not the system that we’re under that’s reinforcing economic and social privileges for white people over people of color.

One of the things that can happen with this core pain about disconnecting from the pain of systemic racism is that we can say, “Oh I was accused of racism but I’m not really racist. I didn’t enslave anyone. It’s not my fault that slavery happened. I’m not a colonizer. That was my ancestors. I’m not.”

One of the things for me - I can’t remember if I told this story - when we had the pre-sessions about a month ago. When I was 14 - I’ll tell it briefly so I don’t take up too much time. When I was 14, some young people at my school were making a video about racism in New York, which is where I grew up, and they interviewed a bunch of students.

They interviewed me and I didn’t really think about it and then they showed the video in front of my class and then in front of the whole school. The video was me saying, “I don’t think there’s that much racism in Ithaca,” and then the rest of the video was people of color talking about all the racism they experienced. And afterward I was embarrassed and I felt like, “Oh, they took that out of context. That wasn’t what I meant.”

I think a big part of this was that I was 12 years old and in the United States most white parents don’t start talking to their kids about race until they’re 12 or 13. Most parents of color start talking to their kids when they’re four or five. That gap of all those years. My parents were political, we talked about class, we probably talked about race in some ways but I didn’t really get it.

Part of the process on all of us for getting it is listening and trusting people of color. Not blaming people of color who name our racism and when that happens there can be a real barrier to avoiding looking at racist thinking and actions. Up until that point I hadn’t really had to examine any of my actions. That was the point where I really had to start doing that and do it in a deeper and more systemic way.

A big part of becoming more racially-conscious is listening to the voices of people of color who are both in front of us and with us but also reading and through - now we have so much in terms of Twitter and social media but also in terms of media and TV shows and movies. So many ways to learn about the experiences of people of color.

While we can be afraid of making mistakes in that process and we’re going to get more into that later, I think one of the biggest pieces of this is really learning to be gentle with ourselves as learners. And one of the things that we talk about a lot in a meditation of beginners’ mind. How do we have beginners’ mind as if everything is new?

For a lot of us in this process is how we hold onto that idea that everything is new so we can do that in an ongoing way? How do we trust the people of color around us and who we’re

hearing from? Not universally, not everything that someone says - because that's also a liberal way of thinking, if we trust everything that every person of color says to be correct without having some critique. Some analysis that people can have different views. But also to really hear when people are talking about racism and about the ways that that shows up in daily life and systemically, how to do that more broadly.

I'm going to wrap up there about that first core pain of disconnecting from the reality of systemic racism and from people of color and turn it back over to Sandra.

Sandra: Yeah, and one of the ways that this can show up as we become more racially-conscious is that there's this fear that you'll never really know enough. And it's just like, "How deep does this rabbit hole go?"

A lot of the things that came out of the surveys that we did was this deep, deep, deep fear of causing more harm while knowing that, because privilege means that you don't know what you don't know and it's a constant process to learn, that there will always be things that you haven't thought of before. Because it's not part of your personal experiences that impacts people of color. But then, how can you make sure that you never, never, never do anything racist.

This can often show up as people being afraid of doing anything. Because they're not sure what the non-racist thing would be. At the same time knowing that remaining silent contributes to violence and it helps to continue the silence from white folks. It's a really unsettling place.

For some folks, as they delve more and more into this, to become unsettling and can even feel overwhelming.

I'm mostly noticing that there's a couple of typos in these PowerPoints and I know people get thrown off by that so just FYI, we see them. We'll fix them later.

We want to do a quick reflection around - and we're going to do this in pairs - how does this pain of being disconnected from the reality of white supremacy and how it impacts people of color, how does that show up in your life and how do you relate to that?

As I talked about before, we often resist. Try to make it go away: deny, minimize, or try to make somebody wrong for the feelings that we have. Either we make ourselves wrong or somebody else wrong. We judge, shame, blame as opposed to just dealing with the pain and having it exist.

It exists and it needs to be taken care of. What we're going to do is talk about this in pairs and then come back to in a little bit. And then we'll be going on a break because I know that we've been talking a lot. So the way that these breakup rooms happen, I'm going to have Josette talk a little bit about them since this is the first time and there are often some technical issues.

Josette: Alright. While I do this, Sandra, do you want to put the prompt in the chat so folks can have that available?

So breakout rooms are where we divide the 246 people are here now into pairs. Generally, about 75% of the time it goes smoothly for those folks. There's 25% of people who, for some reason, the software won't work as well. We're working with them on this. It's been a struggle. "Them" being the software people.

So basically, we are going to pair you up. It's going to be randomly assigned. If you enter the room - you'll have a dialogue come up if you're on the computer - if you're on a phone I actually don't know how this works. Hopefully, it's similar.

Sandra: You get pulled in, too.

Josette: You get pulled into the room automatically, great.

If you're on the computer, you'll have a little screen that says, "Join the breakout room" and if you don't click on it, you'll get pulled in to join one automatically anyway. If you're in a room and there's no one else there, we ask that you take a moment to wait; don't exit out. Sometimes people are figuring out how to join. If you find yourself in a room by yourself, that happens sometimes and we ask that you just answer the questions on your own instead of with a partner.

If, later on, you find that you're consistently in a room by yourself, it might mean that you have an older version of Zoom that you need to upgrade.

That all being said, do not worry! You will be fine if you have a room to yourself or if you have three people in your room; however it works out. This is just a time to take reflection. It doesn't matter if you're alone or with someone else; you can do the activity.

Great. And if you have any questions, when we come back we'll ask about how it went with everyone. And hopefully it works 100% of the time, which would be great! And that's all for Josette.

Sandra: Technology.

Yeah. And like Josette said, it's normally because you have an out-of-date Zoom version. So that's what we ask people to, if you've been using it, then to do it again and to download just in case. If you're not sure about what the answer to this question is for you, just notice how you're relating to this question then. If you're stuck on this question, like, "I don't like this question. I don't want to answer this question right now," well, that's what coming up for you right now.

Sit with that. Be with that and how you're relating to this question. Is there any sort of resistance? Is there any sort of making someone wrong? Are you being with the pain or whatever is the source of you not wanting to do this question?

There's no right or wrong to this. It's just noticing what is coming up for you as you explore this prompt. Whether or not it's about the question itself or the question in its existence.

Josette: We haven't started up the groups yet. That's why no one's in a group yet. Also we had a couple requests about not wanting to be in a group. I'm not sure if that's logistical, or if it's possible. I don't know.

Sandra: I don't think it's logistically possible right now for us to do that. What we can do is: you'll be invited into a room and you can choose to not do that. Ignore the invitation. That's the only way we can do that. That means there are going to be a couple more people who are alone in their rooms so just - folks who find yourselves by yourself - that's fine.

Just talk. Or I think you may want to - let's not complicate it. Just talk by yourself.

Josette: Your right, however you want to do that.



Sandra: It is an invitation... It is an invitation.

Josette: Great.

Sandra: Do you want to do that, Josette? Who wants to do that?

Josette: Oh, I can't. You have to do it, unfortunately.

Sandra: We're going to have the... So it's 2:07 right now. Let's come back at 2:20. You have ten minutes. That's 5 minutes to speak, each. In ten minutes, I'll bring you back. I can't give you an update, sorry. Because I can't talk to you once you're in the breakout room.

This is the process for everybody to get their invitations so just wait there a second...

It looks like people are still getting into their breakout rooms now so accept the invitation to join the breakout room if you want to. If you don't want to join the breakout room, that's fine; you can ignore it and just sit here and do the work either out loud or to yourself in writing. Either one...

If you wanted to join a breakout room and you notice that you don't see an invitation anywhere and you're still hanging out here just do the work by yourself...

Josette: Do you hear this?

Sandra: We're starting to come back, folks.

We're going to take about 20 seconds for everybody to come back. It looked like most people got into rooms who wanted to be, hopefully...

We're coming back into the large group, folks. We're trickling in...

All trickling in. Okay. So we think we're all back. So, there weren't so many technical issues but everyone keep their fingers crossed.

Now we're going to do some other technical thing that other people seemed to really enjoy, which would be the white board. Josette, do you want to tell them a bit about - also what I want people to do with the white board. People who have access to the white board to put in a word or two about how that went for you. That's just a fun thing for you if you like to do that. Otherwise you can put it in the chat box what came up for you.

What did you notice as you were answering this question? What did you learn as you were answering this question? What was it like to talk about this with somebody else? These are often the conversations we don't have.

Just generally, what was your experience like?

And Josette, if you want to talk a little bit about how to use the white board as people are also sharing in the chat box, that would be great.

Josette: So, if you are going into full screen make sure the little expand out icon on the top right-hand corner of your screen. You will see a green box saying, "You are viewing Sandra Kim's screen." Next to that, there's a button called "options"; it'll say "annotate". And you can get all sorts of fun tools, such as: text, draw, arrow, erase, color, etc.

We ask that folks who have a short answer - however that came up for them, two to four to five sentences - you can write it or draw or type it into the screen. If you have something

longer, we ask that you use the chat because otherwise it takes up a lot of space and people can't write anything on there.

So great.

Let me know if you have any questions in the chat. I saw that "I don't have those options." Okay. Gabriella, make sure that if you are in full screen, do you see the green box that says, "Sandra Kim's screen"? Let me know if you're seeing that. Next to it, does it say "options" or doesn't it say "options" there?

We actually have the text piling up so now we're going to have anyone who has more than two words to write on the chat box and one-word ones can go on the board because now we're filling up. Because we have a lot of people in here.

Sandra: I also want you to know, as people are answering in both the chat box and the white board, there's no right or wrong to whatever came up for you. What comes up for you is going to be different than what comes up for other folks and that's perfectly fine. There's no right or wrong to that. I know that this exercise may be the first time you've talked about this and shared it with either yourself or somebody else.

It can make you feel worse, actually. With other people it can feel liberating because they need to tell somebody how they're feeling.

Josette: Sandra, there's a lot of feedback. Can you mute everyone. Actually, make me a cohost because I can't mute anybody right now.

Sandra: There you go.

Josette: We actually ask that folks not put any more text on the screen because we can't read very much of it. So we ask: everybody in the chat now, please! Everyone in the chat. We usually have 40 people in every session because different people show up at different sessions. Right now we have 138.

Lots of different answers and we're full of space now, basically.

Sandra: Josette, can you start reading a little bit, whatever people are sharing.

Josette: Sure thing. absolutely. Some people felt relief about being able to talk with other white people about this issue. Feeling unsure and hesitant at first but once it got going, they were able to relax and open up. They really appreciated the chance to talk. It was hard to confront people who share your political views but don't understand racism.

A lot of deep honesty. Powerful and empathetic. Hard. Difficult. Challenging. Tears. Fears. I can't read that. Feeling very supported. Guilty. Some pain.

I mean, there's a gigantic, very large range of helpful and hopeful. Couldn't remember the question but had a great talk anyway.

In the future folks can definitely - The chat has the prompt, if for whatever reason you can't see it you can write it down, screenshot it, etc.

Appreciate the community. Thoughtful. I felt shy and embarrassed initially.

So there's a wide range.

Dara: And a lot of people having feelings and having a lot more feelings than they expected even in such a short period of time.

Sandra: I think that what it shows is that it's there. It's right underneath the surface and hasn't been given the space to breathe and actually be further expressed. We've been repressing. We've been pushing away. We've been resisting. And that's what we do with something that we don't know how to take care of it.

All of these things that are coming up. It makes sense. It's very understandable.

Dara: A couple of people are talking about this in the chat as well. One of the things that pops up a lot for white people is when talking about anything, and particularly about race, is to get it right and to be perfect. Letting there be some messiness and having that opportunity to have feelings and not have all the answers is so important.

Because it is such a white construct, that perfection. And that's part of what maintains white supremacy and capitalism. And having that messiness, as Carmina says, that's part of why having the white board is good; because it's so messy. That's what life is like.

Thanks, everyone.

Sandra: I think one of the things we need to understand about white supremacy and patriarchy and other forms of systemic oppression is that it gives us a grounding. It actually gives us something, a shared narrative, a shared set of values, understanding, and goals. We know how we're supposed to behave according to the rules of white supremacy.

When we are like, "We don't want that," we're suddenly like, "Oh, what are we going to do, then? I don't know what else to do." We're going to create the road by walking. That's a very unsettling sort of space so that's why community is so important to be a part of.

We're just going to take one or two questions right now because I want to make sure we get a break at 2:30. We're also going to save the white boards, I'm hoping, so people can get that later.

We're going to take a question or two if people have questions about the content. I know for some folks, lots of feelings are arising so if you feel that - and we're going to be talking at the end of the day of today's session how to be with those feelings specifically so - don't ask questions about that.

If you have questions about something about the content, like the points of the content, then that's something that we can take right now.

Josette: I'm not seeing any questions pop up in the chat so if folks want to...

Okay, we've got a couple questions.

One is a little confusing to me so I'm going to go the second one, which is: How does the pain manifest behaviorally?

That's something. I don't know if that's a content question, Sandra, or if you want to tackle that or maybe we can talk about that when we get to that point?

Sandra: I think that it's useful to notice how does pain manifests. We already talked about behavior: as minimizing, shaming, judging, denial, running away if racism happens. That's

how it behaviorally manifests. How it may manifest in your body is oftentimes as tension, as a tightness, as clenching. It can show up in different ways in your body.

That's what we need to be paying attention to.

Expanding on the term "white supremacy": Dara, do you want to do a short, sweet response to this? For me, it's like a big thing.

Dara: How it manifests behaviorally?

Sandra: No, no. Someone asked to explain the term white supremacy. I feel like if I answer that, it's going to be super long. Do you have a short and sweet -

Dara: Oh, sure.

As briefly as possible, I guess the idea is when you think of a house with a rainbow over it, then the house is a type of behavior. So racism is a house and the system that it's a part of is white supremacy. So in a similar way, you can think of sexism as the house and patriarchy - which is a system enforcing power for men - as the system it's a part of.

Does that make sense, Allie?

Josette: Yes. They responded, "Yes, thank you."

Dara: Awesome.

Then I saw there were some questions about anti-Blackness in this moment. "Is anti-Blackness creating a different disconnect between white people and Black people and white people and other non-Black people of color?"

And then I think, "How is anti-Blackness showing up specifically?"

Sandra, do you want me to start on that and then you can jump in? Or do you want to start?

Sandra: I'll start with this. I think I have an appropriate size answer for this. The way that racism is constructed, it's grounded in anti-Blackness but it's not the only way that racism shows up. In terms of anti-Asian sentiment and in terms of the justification of colonization and taking lands away from Native folks. It's in how we view people: immigrants particularly from Mexico, for example. Latin from Latin America vs immigrants from New York and stuff.

There are different ways that racism manifests and there's kind of this spectrum of sorts that the closer you are to whiteness vs Blackness. So Asians, for example, are put on the spectrum as closer to whiteness, further away from Blackness. So we're seen as the model minority and used to justify why Black folks have the statistical life outcomes that they have. Which is oftentimes poorer than white folks.

Many Asian Americans, at the same time, that gets all collapsed. We actually have a lot of poverty in Southeast Asian communities that gets collapsed with East Asian American communities. Then the disparities in that get collapsed, too.

That's why it's so complicated. That's why I asked Dara to do the first one; there's so much involved.

The point is that it's really a hot mess. Just question the statistics in terms of why are they being created and who's being left out of the conversation. Who's creating the conversation? Who has the resources to make the decisions? Start thinking about power.

Because it would take a long time to break out every single little thing. Just think about why we have these notions and if what people are saying is to be blamed for that. Think about who's benefitting from that myth happening. That's what I would recommend doing. And for folks who don't have a strong analysis, who find analysis to be really overwhelming, books. We're also going to be creating a resource later to help people dive in more.

Josette: And our website breaks this all down in many, many different ways. Thousands upon thousands.

Sandra: Yeah. That's really why it exists. Because there's so much information to cover and to do it justice in two-minute answers is a lot.

Dara, do you have something more to add to that?

Dara: Yeah, one other thing I would say, I pasted an article into the chat. A great article for folks to check out called "Race Files". It's called "Blackness Is the Fulcrum" and basically it's the idea that anti-Black racism is the lever that holds both racism and capitalism in place.

It's like what Sandra was saying about the gradation of people of color and how close other people are to Blackness is how targeted they are. It's about how Blackness is framed as both the opposite of white and the negative. And it's being used because of the way that enslavement happened with Black Africans.

It's really what this country was built on economically. And it hasn't changed because there hasn't been any sort of truth and reconciliation process or any sort of reparations. That legacy is still - we're living in it. It's still seeped into this country. So much of racism is based on anti-Blackness and on maintaining that power structure.

Sandra: And also ignoring the fact that Native people are still alive today.

Dara: Yes.

Sandra: Part of that silence around Native issues is keeping this structure in place and not wanting anyone to know that we are still living on colonized lands. And what are we going to do about that?

So I want to stop there and give us all a break. Please come back at :45, whatever time zone you're in. That's 2:45 for Eastern. So the 45 minute mark, ten minutes! Thank you, everybody...

Dara: Sandra, we can hear you typing.

Sandra: Oh, I was just saying that we were on a break...

Hey, folks, we are coming back, hopefully. I still see some empty chairs so while we're waiting for folks to trickle back I want to talk about some of the questions we got in the chat box over the break.

One of them is talking about the fact that we have folks from all around the world. We are a US-based organization and we are US-based staff and that's the context that we're coming into this conversation with. Obviously white supremacy isn't only here. It is very, very, very much international.

What we had talked about earlier, that is about as much of a history lesson as you're going to get from this program. Like I said, this is not trying to cover the history of how this showed up in your communities, with your people, with your countries. Because we see everyone's in a

different place and there are other books and movies and websites that can do a much better job of that than what I can do here.

The other thing to note is that the specific context, the specific actions historically and currently; they're going to be different. But the dynamics are going to be very similar across the board. Even in countries like - I'm from Korea. I still have a lot of family in Korea. I've seen white supremacy show up all the time in Korean culture right now.

Like, English words show up as very cool words. And in terms of what kind of physical features we like. Whether it's bigger eyes or longer noses, lighter skin. It's in cultural arts, literature, in terms of decorations. What we think is better. What kind of furniture we think is better: what we see as Western furniture vs Korean furniture.

That all still manifests even though the population of Americans and white people in Korea is very small. It doesn't need to happen. White supremacy has been exported, particularly nowadays by the internet, by media, interdependent economics. We don't even need to have white folks in the country for there to be white supremacy.

Just understanding that is really important.

Dara: Can I jump in on that in one piece? I think there's also a piece I saw where there were a bunch of different Canadians had written about indigenous populations. And as Sandra was saying earlier, the whole legacy of indigenous colonization in America is something that's so deep and that Canada is grappling with as well. That is the case in many, many countries there was an indigenous population that was displaced.

I know there was someone who was from the Netherlands, and I just wanted to point out, because they have a whole racist tradition of this Black character: Black Pete. Who's a person in blackface who accompanies Santa in the holiday season and is incredibly common in the Netherlands. I think it's one of those pieces where we can have that feeling or a focus on the US as the center of a lot of things and as the center of capitalism and global capital. But every country has its own legacy of racism. Even countries that have a majority people of color, like Sandra was saying.

I think that it's crucial for us to talk about that. Both in the United States and in other countries, no matter where we are based. It's important to have this conversation. We can talk about the impact. Just one last thing that I saw someone saying in the chat is about what effect that has on people with privilege.

I think the impact - and we're going to get into this more in this next section - is the pain and disconnection that a lot of people with privilege have. I think in the same way that we as white people are disconnected and are healing from our toxic whiteness, that other communities of privilege have those same sort of pains.

It's not the same way that people of color are impacted by racism that white people are, but it hurts all of us. It takes away part of our identity and humanity.

For me, the whole goal of doing social justice and anti-racist work is not to liberate other people but it's also to liberate myself and my people.

Sandra: That's great. Thank you so much.

We are a little bit behind schedule so we are going to jump right into it. That's always the way it goes, right? So much to cover, so little time.

All right.

We're going to move on to the second of the three pains: which is the pain of disconnection from yourself and your emotional system. Which is a great follow-up from the conversation we were just having now that Dara, you were pointing out, so take it away.

Dara: All right.

So the pain of disconnection from yourself and your emotional system. Take a minute, maybe put your hand on your chest, and take a deep breath. And let that out. Maybe take one more.

There are so many things in our culture that teach us that our body is separate from our brain but in reality it's a lot more integrated than we think. It's because of our conditioning that is both conscious and unconscious that teach us that racism is something that happened in the past. And that there were reasons for it. There were justifications for it.

Part of what that means is that for white people to perpetuate a lot of things. I think about soldiers coming back from war and all of the atrocities that, for example, soldiers in the United States have gone and perpetuated in Iraq. You have to dehumanize the person who you're killing. To be able to do that, you can't see them as the same as yourself.

To be able to do that is a manifestation of our ability to separate our minds and our bodies. So what we're taught is that people of color deserve what happens to them. Whether that's people in Iraq or indigenous people. Go into Western Massachusetts and the whole history of colonization there - of white people giving illness-laden blankets and goods to indigenous people - that's a part of the legacy that I learned when I go to that area.

The people who did that, Lord Jeffery Amherst and the like, are still lauded and there are sculptures and there are towns and there are streets that are named after them. It's the same thing with the Civil War. There's a whole campaign to take down symbols of the Confederacy. We're taught that people of color deserve what happened to them. And to believe that we also have to believe that it was white people who were saving the people of color and the other white people who didn't know what they were doing.

Part of what we're taught is that what's racist isn't racist and that what is anti-racist is racist. Like I talked about earlier, this whole idea that by naming racism you're actually being racist. What that results in is that there's a real dehumanization of people of color and the pain that they go through. There've been some recent studies that have come out of medical students and doctors, that white medical students and doctors don't believe Black people experience as much pain as white people.

Or, I recently saw this interview where they were talking about Gregory Hines, who was a really amazing dancer and actor and comedian. And he had a show that was on for a while that was three generations of Black men: his father, him, and his son. They had a writers' room of mostly white writers, because at that time in TV, that's all they had who were writers. They had a scene where the grandfather was hugging the son and one of the white writers said, "Wait, is that how Black people are? They hug each other?"

And it's such a ludicrous notion, that that could be a thing but the reality is that there are still white populations who are still disconnected from the humanity of people of color. And I feel like we see this over and over with every shooting by the police is this disconnect of the humanity of the person who they're shooting.

That's part of what makes it so crucial to be building in and understanding of both the compassion and the humanity of people of color. And then also not victim-blaming people of color when there is something that happens that targets people of color. With all of the police shootings that have happened, there can be, "Well, they were in the wrong place at the wrong time. Why didn't they put their hands up? Why were they driving that car?"

There are so many different things and I feel like you can look at some of the recent examples like Philando Castile in Minnesota, where he had been stopped dozens and dozens of times and gotten tickets for all sorts of minor infractions as a Black person driving in Minnesota. That's just the norm that for a lot of us as white people, we don't ever experience.

It's refusing to even entertain the possibility that both we and the system - the policing system - might have implicit bias. By implicit bias: it's the idea that we might have within us a bias against something that we see as built in but has actually been learned. If it's built in, that's implicit, as opposed to explicit, which is being named or being owned.

As we become more racially conscious, all of this pain from disconnecting ourselves from racism and white supremacy, we can realize that the world we were taught is not the world that is the actual reality. It's not the world that people of color are living in every day. I often think about this as that movie, *The Matrix*, that came out many years ago.

Where there's the red pill and the blue pill. And Keanu Reeves is this white savior character who's being mentored by an amazing Lawrence Fishburne. He wakes up and Lawrence Fishburne says, "You can choose to live in this world that is actual reality or you can choose to go back to the dream state that most people are living in." I think about that a lot as a metaphor for white people in mainstream society.

Are we going to go about living in a world where we're going about thinking that our view is reality or are we going to live in a world that the majority of people in our country live in? We can realize that we've been taught something that isn't actually true.

We can also feel really overwhelmed by the guilt of the ways in which we're privileged in this world. The fact that, when I'm stopped by the police, they might say to me in a lazy way, "if you have any drugs in the car," but they don't actually search my car. The assumption of innocence for white people is a big piece of that.

How we can feel overwhelmed by that guilt is a really big deal. There can be that challenge of knowing that we have those privileges and how we can use those in an ongoing way. And feeling the way that we've had to disconnect from our bodies and our emotions to live in this society. As we're learning about this disconnection, we can also get really hypersensitive as white people and really fear that we're going to make a mistake.

It can be sort of an overcorrection. This leads to that perfectionism of white supremacy, trying to get it exactly right. We can feel like we're going to speak over people of color. That if we hire people of color for their opinion we might be perpetuating racism. And sometimes during this phase, as white people, we can talk a lot!

Because we're like, "Oh my god, I have this little bit of knowledge and I want to talk about it because I've all of a sudden realized that racism exists!"

It's sort of like when anyone has a new fascination and they want to talk about it a lot and take up a lot of extra space. Sometimes I think about it a bit like vomiting. We just have this



desire to share the little bit of information we have. Sometimes in this space it's important to know when to shut up as well and just hold some of the thoughts.

It also can be really scary. Because there can be pieces of, if I recognize that this country was built by enslaved Africans, what is the debt that is owed? If I realize that the land I grew up on was stolen by indigenous people, am I allowed to live on this land?

There can be real questions around cultural appropriation. I've had people ask me things like, "Can I go to the taco stand? Is it okay if I take the Chinatown bus?" I think part of what's important here is to recognize the difference between our individual actions and the institutions that are reinforcing this pattern.

A big part of the work here is really recognizing when our fear is taking control of us and to notice how we feel it in our bodies and to reground ourselves in our bodies. When I feel myself disconnecting or disassociating, I try feel my feet. Or I feel my breath. And that can reground me. Oh, wait, there's a body here. Let me take a minute and feel all the feelings.

I'm going to pause there so I don't talk too much on this. Sandra?

Sandra: Thank you. I just want to emphasize that these are coping strategies that we take in order to run away from the pain that we're experiencing. To be present to the way that racism and other forms of systemic oppression are showing up in the world or in ourselves, there's no way to get around that being a painful process.

And that's okay. If you weren't feeling pain in the presence of injustice, that just means that you're not in touch with your pain. Because that's a natural human reaction to there being violence is to be hurt by it. Even if it's not physical, it emotionally hurts us to witness it.

This is why we do all these things to get away from this pain. To actually running away to being judgmental. It doesn't actually help us deal with the racism that's showing up. It actually has us do everything but focus on what's going on. Or we are coming at it from a place of fear and guilt and therefore how effective can we be when we come from that place? Not really.

Even when we engage in action, it's oftentimes not appropriate and oftentimes it has some unintended consequences that counter our intentions.

We want to take just a minute, maybe not ten minutes. Maybe like seven minutes to think about this. If and how does this pain of being disconnected show up in your emotional system? Disconnected from yourself and your emotional system. Once again, how do you relate to the pain when you see another video of a police murder? When you see a video of Trump talking? When you see your family and yourself engaging in and expressing implicit biases?

How do you relate to that? Do you try to run away from it? Judge somebody? Shame? Blame? Make it go away? Minimize it? Deny it? Or do you kind of move toward it and embrace and be like, "Oh. That's really awful."

How do you relate to it? You can be doing all of those things, too. It's not one or the other.

We're going to, once again, move into the breakout rooms. I'm going to put this question in the chat box. It's the same question: How is this showing up in your life and how are you relating to it?

I'm going to open up the rooms for you and sent it. If you see the invitation to join, please click yes and join it. If you decide not to, that's okay. Just ignore the invitation. Ignore me in the main room. If you want to do it by yourself, that's fine. Just do it by yourself...

Okay. Where is the background noise coming from?

Josette: I think everybody. I think people are coming in after that. I just muted someone just now. That might help.

Sandra: Okay. While you do that, it sounds like there were some really good conversations happening, hopefully. That worked out for most people, technology-wise. We are having, there are a couple of people that didn't seem to get invitations. If that happens, please tell me in the chat room. We can't tell if folks have deliberately not accepted invitations versus they didn't get one and were never assigned.

They happen automatically. So just let me know in the chat box and we'll do it..

I also noticed there are various typos in this PowerPoint...

It's leaving me alone to type something always and I had a typo so if that throws you off, sorry about that. Let me know and we'll get it next time. And it happens.

We're going to go to the white board. Same thing. We're going to save this and we're going to clear it so that people can also continue to write here.

What came up for you? Just, if sharing something long, please do it in the chat box. If you have word or two you want to share in the white board, please do so. And really, the same question: what came up for you? What did you learn? What did you notice?

Josette: I'm going to read as it comes. That way I can get some of the answers I didn't get last time.

Anxiety. New language. Inadequate perspective. Remember compassion. Insight. Agitation. A heart. Ana's sharing about pain. Felt bad.

Okay, here we go. Go on, slider.

Powerful conversation. Fear of deep pain. Affirmation. Desensitization. A light bulb. Inability to feel empathy. Feels like details of Canadian racism are different from American racism. Kicks up the minimizing/ignoring. The freezes response. Numbness. Emptiness.

Nice to hear my difficulties are shared by others. Connection. Felt bad. Yeah. Glad I'm not alone. Turning away.

Sandra: This desire to run away from the pain and trying to get in touch with it and having there be emptiness, numbness, disconnection, feelings of inadequacy; it's really hard being desensitized. That's what makes us. It's the reality of pain. Racism is incredibly painful because it's incredibly harmful.

Of course there'd be a lot of pain if you were actually truly present to the full impact. To the full impact not just of this generation in this current moment, but in the past and how that has been continued on and passed down to us generationally.

So that makes sense. It makes sense why we would want to deny the pain. We want to say that what happened is really not that terrible and it's just not true. So we can't actually do

anything about the racism that's happening until we know how to embrace the pain. Not because you prefer it and want to be that way forever but because it exists.

And it's a part of us. And if we want to move forward as whole people in doing this work then we need to embrace all of ourselves, including this pain. I think that's the ultimate way of creating a different world, a transformative world. It's reaffirmed in our wholeness and all that we are in all of our humanity and then choosing: how do we want to manifest? How do we want to engage with this world and with ourselves?

I wanted to stop and take a quick question or two about the actual content. Not about how to be with the pain because like I said, that's going to be happening in a little bit.

But just people who have any questions about the content and the points of this.

Josette: So far folks are still responding to the question we just asked. But if anyone has a question, if you're on the phone and you have a question, to unmute yourself is \*6. Since you don't have access to chat, you can actually just jump in.

Sandra: Point number two was beautifully explained by Dara, so we're going to move on to Core Pain number three. Sorry about the white board going away. We're now going to go back to the PowerPoint.

This is about the pain of being disconnected from people with different degrees of consciousness. And to clarify for folks who were in that workshop, we actually switched this. It used to be the pain of disconnection from other white folks. But after some feedback and some conversation with Dara and me, we realized that more specifically what we're talking about is people with different degrees of consciousness.

Which could be and with white folks. it often is, but also can be with people of color. Because we have our own experiences and we have our collective history and communities inform us that this is real. We also will receive all these toxic messages about race and people, including ourselves. And we have to do the work of unpacking and freeing ourselves from internalized racism.

That's the context for this conversation because it's a bit different than what we saw at the workshop.

Dara: Thanks, Sandra. I was chatting and being like, "Where is the new version? I don't know where it is," so I'm really glad that you put it up there.

I think a big piece of this one is that there can be, as we begin to get an awareness of racism, there can be this feeling of, "I'm different from other white people now. I'm not in the same place as other white people." That can come across in different ways. Sometimes it comes across as a little snotty: I have it figured out. Why aren't you as good as me?

But there's also a piece that can also be really lonely in that because we have no one who we can be close to. And we're looking for people who can share our feelings about what's going on without putting the burden on people of color.

I saw in the chat that Sasha had put out: when people of color are having feelings or pain about some things that are happening, and I say this to my parents, too. With all of the police shootings happening, a lot of people of color in my life who I work with, I can be like, "Okay, we work in racial justice. This is horrible, and we're going to keep going." But sometimes

people are reacting to it in different ways because they're like, "Oh, this is like someone in my family was just killed."

They're not going to immediately switch into action mode. Some of that for us, as white people, is allowing space for that. But also realizing, what are our feelings about it and not feeling like we have to gloss over those and just go into action mode as well.

A lot of the conditioning with this is that we're taught that what white people are doing is normal and deserves to be at the center. That bringing people of color into the center and addressing the racial inequities that they're facing is seen as oppressive to white people.

I think this can also link to, for a lot of us, we're also the liberal person in our family. And people, I saw Tara just had a question about what do you do as the liberal? And how can you not bring things up. I think this is that piece with that core pain. For a lot of people, when they go away from home to college or in a different place, they can learn new things. And they can come back and be like, "I figured out all these new things!" and try to tell their family.

And their family is like, "What are you talking about? We already have a way of thinking about things."

It isn't the only way of thinking about this. I think, for a lot of us, it's how we build our understanding of the fact that sometimes we might have been exposed to something that not everybody in our life was exposed to. How to talk to other white people, not in a: if you can imagine someone standing there with their hands on their hips like, "Yeah, I have it all figured out."

But more like, "How can we call other white people into this?" I think about this a lot. For me as a Jew, there are only two times of year where my whole family gets together: Thanksgiving, where we celebrate colonization and then Passover where we celebrate liberation. There's a constant deconstruction of the colonization but there are times where we get together and that's when all the big family fights happen.

So for me, when I think about the times where I come in and I'm like, "I have it all figured out" I think about those tables and about those things that I said that worked or didn't work. For white people, I think one of the things that can happen is that in these moments we can have a real desire, as we become more politically conscious, that view of people who aren't as racially conscious as us and we want to separate or distance ourselves from them.

This is the thing: how do we bring people in? is sometimes more about our own emotions and we want to be right and be perfect and all of that. Even when we're with people who are in a different place. it's not the most effective thing to be perfect in those situations. In fact, oftentimes, it's a lot more perfect to be a little bit better.

Well, maybe not perfect. Better to really ask questions and to listen. If you have people in your family who support Donald Trump, how do you talk to them about this in ways that aren't, "You're stupid and uninformed" but like, "Hey, what's going on with you? What are the things that are attractive about him? What are some of the things that are really challenging?"

How do we call in our relatives, our family, our friends? How do we talk to loved ones and other white people in ways that don't damage or don't hurt our relationships, that are like, "I have it figured out. I'm better than you."

There can also be a piece in here where, with people of color, were in situations where they might not have the same analysis as well. They might not be as knowledgeable about things that are happening. So how can we disagree with people of color as well - who maybe aren't as focused on racial justice - in a way that isn't either demeaning to them or expecting them to have the right answer.

A big part of this is about how are we willing to recognize our desire for perfection and getting it right and be able to relax a little bit into like trying things out. Into what this process is like, how we can build a deeper analysis of ourselves that's grounded in our reality but that also allows space for people to be in different places as well.

There are also people who might be in this call or people that we know who are in multiracial families. As Beck says, when we're talking about the attacks on young Black men, that can also be impacting people in their lives. So there can be a piece of it being really personal. I think another part of this disconnect between people with different levels of consciousness is that sometimes as white people, we want to get it right so much that we're afraid of making mistakes and of being called out and so we're silent.

Sometimes even in the face of oppression. Sometimes even when people are doing racist things because we want to do it in the right way. That's a really hard thing to do. Part of it is really giving ourselves the space to know that we're going to make mistakes and we have to do it anyway.

That part of this work is that we're going to make mistakes. Because I think one of the ways in which we're going to do this work and dig in is we're at different levels around how we move through this and I sort of think of it - not like a ladder to this process - but more like a double helix. In circles, we're learning things.

Sometimes, it's useful to come back. Even when we have experience with some of this analysis before, how do we come back to it, because we might get deeper knowledge with it. How do we have a conversation that we've maybe had ten times before and maybe we ask some questions that open up something different.

Maybe it's because I watched Groundhog Day last night with Bill Murray - it's all about repeating something over and over - but I feel like there are things that we learn when we go back over the same places again. It applies to this work as well and not just to a movie from 15 years ago.

Okay. Pausing there.

Sandra: I love bringing in movie references in there. It comes from real life and informs our life.

One thing I want to add onto Dara's description of this experience is that people are different. People are in different places. When we start thinking that one is superior or inferior to another, that's when we start to get into oppression. That's when things start getting problematic.

Just because it's "in service of" racial justice, it doesn't justify us feeling better than other people simply because we're more racially conscious. We're all in different places in this journey and you may have a knowledge about one thing but not another. But there's also, in terms of all the different forms of systemic oppression, we all carry lots of privileges that

we're not aware of. I mean, the fact that I'm in the United States, the fact that I'm a Native English speaker, college-educated; that has a lot of privileges.

I'm very much "normal". So how do we navigate that? There are always things that, there are all these areas that we are going to be not mindful or thoughtful about. The point is not to feel superior or inferior but let's be vigilant. Let's be present to what is happening so that we can make sure we don't perpetuate.

This pain that we're experiencing when we're disconnecting from people of different levels of consciousness: it's more coming from the fact that we have to be in the same place and the fact that they're less conscious make us superior, makes them inferior. These are the things that create the disconnection.

We could just have people be in different places and that be okay.

It just means there's a conversation to be had about, "Oh, where are you coming from? What's going on? Why does that feel good for you or right for you? Does it?"

Coming from a place of curiosity, which is one of the practices of Compassionate Activism.

We're going to, once again, take some reflection time to consider how this shows up in our lives. How are we relating to this pain? Once again, thinking about: do we run away from it? Do we make somebody wrong for it? Do we embrace it? Do we work with it?

We could be doing all of it, none of it, something entirely different. It's just noticing what's coming up for you.

I'm going to copy and paste this into the chat box. And then move everybody into breakout rooms.

Josette: Before you do that, I wanted to jump in really quick. Some folks were saying that they couldn't talk with their partner; they could only hear them. That's about a 99% chance that you didn't hit unmute. Everyone is muted when you come in because, as you know, we heard a lot of noise in the background, interference, etc so everyone is muted automatically.

When you enter the breakout room, you are still muted, probably. Most people are. What you need to do is unmute yourself. So if you're on the phone, that is \*6. And if you're on the computer, you go to the bottom left-hand corner where it says mute/unmute; there's a little microphone and you click on that.

Sandra: Okay. Excellent. Thank you so much for that.

If you don't get with somebody, that's fine, too. Just do it on your own. It is 3:30 now so we're going to take... I'm going to give you seven minutes again. So you have until :37. It's going to be with other people so I'm going to open all the rooms now...

Hello? You're very much breaking up? What is your name in here? Can you type? Can you type it up? Your audio.

I see your name now.

I can't find you.

Speaker: I haven't gotten any of the invites. I don't know if I'm just not seeing it.

Sandra: Trying to find out which room you may be in. See if you've been added to them. Normally, you should've just seen the invitation.

No. I'm not seeing you but let me try something else.

I can't add you from there.

I'm sorry. It's just not working this time but maybe you can try, if it's not uploading, try downloading Zoom again and see if it's that. Because if this happened before then that's the only reason we've been offered so far.

Speaker: Okay. This is so wonderful. I'm really enjoying it.

Sandra: I'm glad.

Speaker: I'm just like, "I really want to connect with people, though!"

Sandra: I know. I know.

Speaker: A friend of mine in Nome is in here.

Sandra: Oh, that's cool.

Speaker: [Indecipherable] yeah, so...

Sandra: I'm actually getting...

Speaker: [Indecipherable]

Sandra: I'm being asked to help out in another breakout room so sorry, that's a pop-up.

Speaker: Gotcha...

Sandra: Alright, folks, we're starting to come back to the main room, ending the breakout session. As I wait for folks to come, I'm going to get the white board ready...

Just wait a couple more -

Ah, we're all back now.

Josette: Make me a cohost.

Sandra: All right.

All this logistical stuff.

So we are back and per usual, here's the white board for you to write: how was it to talk about these things and connect with yourself around how this pain is filling up?

Josette: And for folks who were asking before about how to use the white board, I guess for most people this is how it goes - I think some older Zooms might be different but - you full-screen the screen. At the top there will be a green button. Or a green box that says "You are viewing Sandra Kim's screen". To the right of that is "options". You click on that and, hopefully, an "annotate" button. If not, you likely have an older version. You can update it on the website, [Zoom.us/download](https://zoom.us/download).

I'm going to go ahead and read some of this before it gets unwieldy.

We have: loneliness. Actionable. Stinging. Important. Defensive. Really helpful. Squiggly. If folks can not squiggle, that would be great.

Sandra: That was me by accident. My mouse.

Josette: Okay. Sandra, can you not squiggle on the screen?

Sandra: I cannot figure out what's going on with it. I am not touching it and it is squiggling on its own!

Josette: That's creepy.

Sandra: I don't know what's going on.

Josette: Zoom monsters afoot.

Kinship. Validating.

How to keep the conversation going.

Connection. I'm hungry for it.

Let me check out the chat, too, so folks can -

Sandra: My mouse is scaring me now. Sorry.

Josette: Is it still going? Is that you?

Sandra: I think I'm done.

Josette: Okay. Gee, Sandra. Trying to disrupt the connection, I see.

It's so much harder with my family than others. Great to discuss relationships with POC - people of color - who don't share my power analysis. Realizing things already happening. Undoing the gaslighting.

Hard, hard, hard with family.

I love these breakouts. Which is awesome because they're a little challenging basically sometimes but we love that as well.

I got a person this time, yes!

That's exciting.

We are in a time in the US where these discussions are very necessary.

Staying curious. How do we ask questions without being too nosey? Lots of different things coming up for folks. A lot of family stuff is coming up.

Sandra: One of the things I want to repeat is that constant theme throughout it: there is no right or wrong to where you are in this place in terms of your feelings.

Because our feelings just arise. It's like the weather. It rains when it rains. It's sunny when it's sunny. Things arise. In the current moment, the question is really how are we going to relate to those feelings. Are we going to ignore them, repress them, deny them, blame somebody other than ourselves? Or are we going to sit with it and take care of it and see where they're coming from?



The way that this connects to our ability to be with folks, particularly other white folks who are less racially conscious than us, it's about if we can hold the space for ourselves wherever we are in the process from a place of wholeness or care. Then our ability to hold the space for somebody else and be curious about where they're coming from - not that we're in agreement; a lot of times we're not.

Coming from a place of curiosity and understanding that people think the way they do for a reason. People think that something is right for a reason. What is that reason? Are they actually in agreement with it or have they just not thought about it before like so many folks, like so many of us?

Once they actually become conscious of it they go, "Oh, wait. That's not... ugh!"

Or maybe feelings come up and they also want to run away and deny that racism is happening. because you've been able to do that with yourself - hold that space for yourself; that pain, that fear, that anxiety and being with it and taking care of it and not letting it drive you - your ability to do that with somebody else is that much greater.

We're also going to take a second. It's 3:42. I know we don't have any question about the content of it; it feels like it really resonates for folks. I'm going to skip to the next exercise because we only have under 20 minutes left. But if you have a question about the point, or any actual content then put it in the chat box; we'll see if we can circle back to it later.

Josette: As we're moving on to the next activity, I just want to stress to folks that we will be sending out the email next week for the Facebook group information. We made that announcement earlier, but not everybody was here. I just wanted to make sure I made that announcement again.

We'll be emailing you with the PowerPoints, we'll be sending you the Facebook information, and once we get going and get the videos uploaded and that. You'll definitely get it soon, next week, Tuesday-ish.

Sandra: We're aiming for Tuesday.

Editing and transcriptions all take a little bit of time. And it's the weekend holiday so bear with us. But you'll have access to it for the rest of your lives, as long as the internet and our website exists. No rush.

Let me share the screen for you.

This is an exercise and we're going to delve much more deeply into this next time. Keep practicing, because obviously this is something we struggle to do because we've been taught to do the opposite. But I want to just give you a small quick tool to use as you're navigating these feelings that are arising. And moving from a place of resistance to really acknowledging what is happening.

Oftentimes, when we're in a place of resistance, it's like, "Well, I want to do this, but I can't do that so aahhh!" We get really emotionally charged.

It's like, "I can't believe that they think this? What is wrong with them? But like aaahh, but I love them!"

There's all this resistance.

I would propose that the emotional charge in these situations actually comes from our resistance and not as much from the thing that's actually happening. Because the thing that's actually happening, particularly when it's around racism or other problematic harmful things, is obviously we have a preference for it to not happen.

We have a preference for it to not happen, understandably. It did happen, though. So there's nothing that we can do about the past. It happened. There is something we can do about right now that will shape and have an influence on the future, though.

If we can't even acknowledge the past happened as it happened, it was what it was, then we can't do anything about the present even, because we're stuck in this make-believe world. If we're stuck in this make-believe world - because we have a desire or racism and other harmful forms to not exist - but we've turned that preference into a coercive demand onto the past.

It shows up in: You should've known better. Well, they did.

Or, I can't believe you did that. Or how can I think this? Well, you did think this.

I can't believe I feel this way. I just have to get over it. I've just got to do x, y, z. I can't pay attention to it. just squash it.

Well, it's there. It's there, though.

Moving away from resisting what is coming up within us and what is happening between us and other people, or that we're seeing happening in the world, really is a shift to just acknowledging that it is what it is. What happened, happened.

These are just some quick little of sentences that we can say to acknowledge it. What I want you to do, for the audio folks, is say: I feel x and that's okay/that matters.

I know that there will be folks who find it very difficult. "I feel ashamed and that's okay." There are folks who still feel like feeling shame is bad so we can't do this. You can say "it's possible to feel shame and not be okay."

For folks who feel like that's really hard: it's possible. "That's possible to feel x and not be okay."

Choose the one that you feel works for you. It's a little bit, not fully comfortable, you want to move there, you can adjust it to whatever feels right for you at this current moment.

Then, "I see your pain and I care."

"I did/didn't do x and that happened."

These are different ways of acknowledging what is going on. I'm going to have you go through a guided exercise right now, which is always an invitation. Choose to just listen and observe if you want to. I highly suggest that you try this out; that's the whole point of learning something new, is experimenting with it. And to know that you can still pull out whenever you want to and you choose how deep you go into it.

If you just want to dip your toe into it, I highly recommend that and then see if you can dip a foot into it. Then maybe you're whole body. Who knows? But at the same time, if you want to just sit and observe, that's okay, too. That happens. Maybe next time you'll participate.

I want to have people get comfortable. Get comfortable in your seat and, like I said, please don't try to have anything specifically in mind for you or anything. We're just noticing. We're simply noticing what's coming up. That's it. There's no right or wrong.

I want people to get comfortable. Close your eyes. Take a deep breath. Just feel your breath come into your body. Out of your body. Feel it come in, and breathe out. Breathe in. Breathe out. Breathe in. Breathe out.

Then I just want you to do a body scan, starting with your feet. Notice how they feel. Any tenseness? Are they relaxed? Just noticing, not trying to change. Then move up to your legs. Just notice: is it sore anywhere? Is it feeling strong? Not trying to change.

Keep breathing in and out. Moving up to your torso. Just noticing: is your stomach a little upset? Is it tight? Is everything really calm and relaxed? Not trying to change anything. Just notice.

Move to your shoulders and your arms. Just noticing how it's feeling; what sensations are there. Move to your head, your face.

Noticing sensations. I want you to think about one of the situations you were thinking about in your breakout rooms that had you worked up. Remember the situation.

Presumably, there are some feelings arising in your body. That's why it's emotionally charged for you; it's showing up somewhere. I want you to put your hand wherever you feel it strongest in your body.

Put your hand there. I want you to notice as you breathe in and out, what are the sensations there. Just explore: how big is it? Is it moving? It is dense? Or spacious? Does it have a shape?

Is there a particular image that's appearing for you?

Just keep noticing.

Whatever's coming up for you. Nothing's right or wrong. Maybe there's numbness. How does numbness feel?

Sit with it. Breathe into it. Breathe out. I see you. Breathe in. Breathe out. I see you. Breathe in. I see you. Breathe out. I see you.

Just notice what's coming up for you now. Maybe something shifted; maybe nothing has. Move along with whatever's coming up for you.

Keeping your hand at wherever you feel it strongest. Same place, different place.

Breathe in. I see you. Breathe out. I see you.

Breathe in. I see you. Breathe out. You matter.

Breathe in. I see you. Breathe out. You matter.

Breathe in. I see you. Breathe out. You matter.

Notice what else is coming up for you. Maybe something, maybe nothing.

Maybe saying you care, saying you matter is too hard for you right now.

Go ahead and just say, I see you.

Then breathe in. I see you. Breathe out. I care.

Breathe in. I see you. Breathe out. I care.

Breathe in. I see your pain. Breathe out. I care about you.

Breathe in. I see your pain. Breathe out. I care about you.

Notice what's coming up for you. Maybe saying you care is too hard for you.

That's okay. Just say, I see you.

Maybe something shifted. Just notice.

Then ask it: What is it that you need? What can I give you?

And then listen.

Maybe it tells you something; maybe it doesn't.

That's okay. Just noticing.

I want you to thank it. Thank it for sharing with you. Thank it for being with you.

I want you to breathe in. Breathe out.

Breathe in. Breathe out. Feel the breaths going in and out of your body.

Start to open your eyes and move your feet and move around. Get back to here. We've been on a little journey. Let's get settled again.

That was a little group journey, which means that people are in different places. People have different experiences. There's no right or wrong to anybody's experience. I would love for folks to share. Bring it back to the white board and people can share in the white board what came up for them as well as in the chat box.

As I said, there's no right or wrong about what came up for you. Just noticing what came up. Where was it easy, where was it hard?

Josette: We have some folks saying: deep-hearted that needs release. Tears. Hard to hear, you matter. Released. Feeling very lonely. Painful. Grief. Relaxing. I'm okay and something else. Healing and tears when I said, I see you. Deep. Unclear.

What trust would feel like to do this work. Anxiety. Tense. Twitchy. Exhaustion from gaslighting. Tears from the entire exercise. Headache. Lonely. Create time to engage. I realized I felt two opposite feelings: hopelessness and hopeful.

Sadness and compassion towards myself. Moved to, I'm sorry. It was hard to say, You matter.

Allow myself to feel. Vulnerability. Tenderness. I need to be patient. Understanding. Tired.

There's a lot of good range.

Sandra: The last one is, "There may be tools to do this work."

I think that's what we're talking about here, is that, if we believe the only way out is through and we need to sit in the emotional reality of racism and its impact on us, then this pain, this

tightness, this grief, this heartache that people are feeling is part of the work. That's actually a pivotal point in this work.

When we can acknowledge and take care of the pain of racism, we get called forth to really do something to end it.

So this is just an opening and I really hope some folks... Sometimes it makes folks go deeper into it, accessing things they hadn't been with before so it can be really unsettling. For the folks who are there, keep acknowledging. Keep acknowledging. Don't try to change it or make it go away. Don't resist it or make yourself wrong for having it.

Somebody mentioned feeling shame for feeling pain when having white privilege and not feeling the harm that people of color experience.

So the pain is there. It's just there. It's the shame. Just sit with the pain. Acknowledge the shame. I see you. I see you. And in terms of the needs that I asked for folks: some of you may have heard something, some of you may have not. Just keep asking when you are doing this work, this practice, to check.

Always remember to check in. This is going to be one of those practices of self-accountability. We cannot do something to take care of our pain unless we actually know what to do. It's always important to ask. It's always important to ask. I only used one of the tools that we have: I see your pain and I care.

There are other ones that I mentioned: I feel x and that's ok/that matters. And "That's okay that it happened. Not that it's preferable or acceptable but that it happened. it happened"

"I did or didn't do x and it happened."

Just more acknowledging sentences; feel free to adapt it any way that showed up for you as being resonating.

Are we sharing? Am I sharing the screen, still?

Josette: Um, no. It's your face.

Sandra: Okay. It's 4:01 right now so I want to do a quick takeaway. At the end of every session I ask: is there anything that you will remember or want to make sure that you remember? Because hopefully you'll remember a lot of what happened. But if there's just one thing you want to remember that you want to tell other folks about, too, what is that one thing?

I'm going to recreate the white board. I can also put it there, because everybody loves the white board. Well, not everybody but most people do.

And obviously share in the chat box.

Share in the chat box: what came up for you? What do you want to remember?

Josette: Some folks have said, That matters. This is huge for me. Vulnerability as anti-racist work. Vulnerability seconded. Three forms of disconnection. I see you and I care. Messiness is okay. Trauma-informed perspective of anti-racism. You matter. Calling in. Compassionate self-accountability. Run towards the pain. What I feel is okay. Listen.

It's okay if this is hard. Seeing my own pain. It's okay to feel pain. Imperfection is okay. Call in. There are many of us all over the world and we are going to work together to end white supremacy. Amen!

The only way out is through. Perfection is white supremacist. Racism is based in fear. There is a group - this one - that wants to reflect and heal. Tools to effectively deal with current dictation to racism. Perfectionism keeps oppression alive. We must move through disconnection to connection.

Empathy. Mindfulness as a tool in anti-racism work.

That's very powerful stuff.

Sandra: Thank you for everybody for 1) showing up for this work and really engaging with it. And if folks feel like they're more just observing and they're not ready to delve into it, just notice where that's coming from, too. Your feelings are what they are. There's no right or wrong to it. It's just, how are we going to relate to our feelings? What are we going to do with them?

Keep practicing this. We'll keep noticing. Keep noticing throughout the week because I'm sure there will be some stuff coming up for you. It doesn't have to be about racism. Really any emotionally charged situation that we want to resist, this is relevant for.

I want to say: just keep noticing.

If you just did that, I swear things will start to shift. Especially next week.

Dara: Can I jump in for one second, Sandra?

Sandra: Mm hm.

Dara: There may be a little bit of backwash. You may have some embarrassment about something that you said or feeling you made a mistake in it. It's just important to keep noticing that, like Sandra is saying. Also to have some compassion for yourself and recognize that this is hard work. Sometimes those feelings come up and your work is just noticing it right now and being. Loving yourself the way you'd love someone else in it.

Sandra: This is a journey. This is a practice and this is just the first step with the noticing. It's hard; we forget. Just keep noticing. When you remember you forgot to notice. That's all.

We will see you next Saturday, same time. Whatever time zone that is for you. We'll then be going through the model of Compassionate Activism and then the Five Practices. Please make sure to either join or watch the video later. You'll get a lot of the good stuff that's going to help you understand how does noticing feed into this larger model of doing social justice work.

Thank you, everybody. Take care.

Dara: Thanks, everyone.

Josette: Thank you very much, everybody. It was great!

