

compassionate activism

Healing from Toxic Whiteness Transcript for Practice Session 2 – November 3, 2016

- 19:52:55 From Jody Lynn : im from british columbia victoria canada
- 19:52:55 From Josette Souza : Hi all, Josette in Colorado here
- 19:53:07 From Steffi xxx : hi, i'm steffi, it's the first session i can attend to live...really happy about that ... I am talking to you from hamburg, germany...
- 19:53:08 From J Zirbel : J with Rainbow Community Cares in Raleigh NC
- 19:53:24 From Kathi Scott : Hi Josette!
- 19:53:38 From Josette Souza : Hi Kathi!
- 19:54:19 From J Zirbel : I am getting stuck with call my white friends on racist statements in mixed race groups - I let it go when I should say something
- 19:55:28 From Sarah : hi all, sarah from glossop in the UK here (originally from southeastern WI though)
- 19:57:01 From Sandy Robinson : Sandy from Waupaca, Wisconsin. Getting stuck with calling out instead of calling in.
- 19:57:08 From amyhollings : hi, my name is amy. I am in western canada.
- 19:57:30 From janetgray1 : Hi everybody! I'm in New Jersey and I'll be eating my dinner for the first little bit of the conference—so please don't look at me. :) I think my ongoing issues are getting past being a rescuer and sometimes a bit of a whitesplainer. Feeling generally very good about the practices introduced here—they fit well with my prior practices.
- 19:59:12 From Kimberly : Hi everybody! I am Kimberly in Maine :) Thank you all! I am getting stuck in anger. I feel so sick and sad, I cannot wait for the election to stop bringing out the worst. I see people in pain, and I want people to stop blaming others and finding reasons not to act. I feel desperate sometimes.

19:59:54 From Mathew Green : Matt from Atlanta (though I'm in a hotel in NYC tonight) (and eating dinner too Janet) I get stuck in connecting to my feelings and being open about them.

20:00:01 From Joshua, he, Victoria-Lekwungen Territory : Hi everyone. Joshua from Lekwungen Territory (colonial name= Victoria, BC, Canada). I've noticed I'm getting stuck in anger when other white people do or say racist things, I immediately want to make them "wrong" instead of sticking with them and being curious about how they got there.

20:00:10 From J Zirbel : Instead of staying calm and calling my white colleagues on racists statements I get angry - am working on accepting "that happens" and engaging in a meaningful discussion, listening to them to understand where they are coming from

20:00:53 From Joe Gilbert : Hello! Joe from NH. I also get stuck in anger, and tend to revert to wanting to win an argument and be right, rather than understand where they're coming from

20:01:48 From EBJorkman : Greetings All - I get stuck in finding patience to listen to certain people in my work.

20:01:49 From Gabriela : hi everyone, gabriela from connecticut, usa. still getting stuck in engaging in compassionate yet meaningful conversations with other whites when they do something racist rather than labeling them as wrong and dismissing / berating them

20:02:04 From Lili Trenkova : Hi all! Lili here from New York. I too get stuck in anger and frustration, but I've definitely been better at pausing, re-centering and resuming from a calmer, better place.

20:02:16 From Dawna : Hi there! Dawna from San Francisco. I have been getting stuck on a strange kind of internal reverse racism lately. Not sure exactly how to formulate these thoughts, but I find myself wanting to apologize to African Americans that I see during my day, like I want to say, I'm sorry for all of the racism you may have been having to endure in your lifetime and especially lately. But I don't feel the same urge to apologize to white people. And maybe African Americans would prefer that I treat them like everyone else = leave them alone.

20:02:56 From kgb : Hi, Katherine from Durango, CO. I can get stuck in sadness.

20:03:30 From Kari van Delden : Kari from Nome, stuck on how to say something to family.

20:03:31 From clairemortifee : Calling out family

20:03:33 From emilyalter : Hi All, Emily in Maryland. I am getting stuck in my intentional disconnection from others that comes from my fear of offending or hurting unintentionally. Last practice session really made it clear that I have disconnected to the degree of avoiding engagement with POC because I'm so afraid of "getting it wrong", causing harm, or silencing

20:03:36 From Hannah : i'm hannah in montréal, and i sometimes get stuck sorting out when/where/how to set boundaries within relationships with skewed race/class power dynamics where i hold more power.

20:03:38 From katmi : coaching white staff about how to address racism so that the people of color don't have to

20:03:50 From clairemortifee : I feel you Hannah!

20:04:18 From Terry : How to respond to "I don't see color"

20:04:31 From Cynthia : I'm in the Pacific Northwest of the United States. It can be very difficult to decide what is the most strategic thing to do/say to try to be the most effective.

20:04:37 From MelissaW : Motivation. I feel like I don't have the time/desire to engage in these conversations at the moment.

20:05:06 From janetgray1 : And yes to those who mentioned the election! Such ongoing anxiety...

20:05:15 From Terry : Before this I didn't think of how my black friends see my whiteness. It was always how I see blackness

20:05:16 From MelissaW : Also feeling like I just don't want to deal with the energy drain of these conversations.

20:05:53 From Cynthia : Knowing how to address issues when the intersection of systems of oppression is involved. Someone who is a target of oppression in one system might be an agent of oppression in another system. Knowing how to respond is very difficult.

20:19:07 From Steffi xxx : currently i am getting stuck in understanding my own biography in terms of race and (anti-)racism...I grew up being often the only white or at least white-german person in my groups of friends, and at some point it even made me wanting "to be black/poc"...this was many many years ago and i was very aware of my whiteness and the privileges it meant...

20:19:10 From Steffi xxx : but I am getting stuck right now in trying to understand what it meant that I "did not want to be white" or that in the micro-context "to be white" was not "the cool thing", but of course in the macro-context it was a huge privilege that has always hurt me, because the racist actions of police/teachers/random people in the streets were so close to me, even if they did not hit me in person...for a long time I was able to hate and try to fight against racism, but I did not realize that it hurt me so much and how my own whiteness is actually part of my traumatic experiences in several ways...

20:23:35 From Sandra Kim : What do you notice coming up for you as you consider that you have both an individual identity and collective identities?

Where do you get stuck in acknowledging this?

20:32:17 From Josette Souza : zoom.us/download

20:32:43 From janetgray1 : I didn't get an invitation, so I downloaded. Hoping that's a fix.

20:33:04 From sea : 6 min wasn't enough time to get very far...

20:33:25 From Kari van Delden : 6 min too short.

20:33:32 From Gabriela : simultaneous fear and relief — fear that “i'm like other whites” and relief that “it's not just me” when i do something racist

20:34:09 From Kari van Delden : Stuck feeling like problems are so big we may not be able to really make a difference.

20:34:26 From Laura Ve : wanting to speak up and use my privilege and also wonder if I am unconsciously oppressing people at the same time

20:34:37 From arobin : Agree with Gabriela

20:34:56 From Joshua, he, Victoria-Lekwungen Territory : Wanting to hide in the places where I am oppressed (e.g., trans, queer, Jew) so I don't have to take responsibility for my whiteness

20:34:57 From Emily Donaldson : frustrated that so many other white folks don't realize that we have a collective white and problematic identity

20:35:19 From Kari van Delden : I could relate to the fact my partner was not able to get friends to join this workshop and happy to see that there are so many people on line in this workshop.

20:35:26 From MelissaW : the vast majority of men I've dated have at some point told a blatantly racist joke. Or sexist joke. So, I've often ignored these things. Pretended they didn't really say that (or just wished they hadn't). This is when I have difficulty acknowledging a thing is happening.

20:35:33 From Lili Trenkova : Disconnected

20:35:36 From Bethany : scared of all the harm I've caused in the past and am probably still causing

20:35:47 From sea : trying to understand how to integrate my conscious personal commitment to integrity and the unconscious oppressiveness of my whiteness

20:36:10 From scottferreter : oscillating between the poles: “I am the worst—just another privileged racist white male” to “I am the best—I “get it” and can “fix” this”

20:36:45 From clairemortifee : Taking time to acknowledge my colonial, entitled, white habits

20:43:16 From Sandra Kim : What do you notice coming up for you as you consider that grieving is a critical part of the healing process?

Where do you get stuck in when trying to acknowledge that?

20:51:11 From Gabriela : yea, it's happened to my groups

20:51:52 From Terry : Yes it's hard but it's movement to being more open to changes and healing.

20:52:03 From Bernie Smith : preparing to lose people close to you, hopefully temporarily

20:52:13 From amylyn : isolation.

20:52:16 From Mathew Green : I'm a little scared that I won't ever stop if I start grieving. If I touch that it might break me – maybe I need to let that happen, maybe I need to be broken to be healed. I guess I know that I am already broken. The only way out is through, right?

20:52:17 From Lili Trenkova : The hardest part about any type of grieving is dealing with those who are not. Except in this case, because it's not an apparent grieving (like say for a diseased loved one), those who aren't going through the same thing aren't offering you sympathy because your grief isn't visible to them. And then that makes it even harder because this is such an important thing and you feel everyone should be going through it!

20:52:18 From Gabriela : resisting my grief because i worry that it's egocentric and a reinforcement of my white privilege (i.e. white tears)

20:52:31 From Josh Van Vliet : I noticed how frustrated I get when I'm feeling sad or upset, when i really don't want to feel that way. It doesn't feel "productive."

20:52:45 From Emily Donaldson : I actually am excited/relieved because I've been trying to THINK my way through the ways I've engaged in oppression—and that has been keeping me stuck...

20:52:59 From scottferreter : I know that it takes time...that it moves slowly...and that it's primarily a passive process (taking the time to feel it when it comes). So, I've got to give up on there being a turbo-track!

20:53:01 From Michelle : +1 @Mathew

20:53:04 From Gabriela : figuring out the boundaries / container for the grief — white supremacy is so vast so it's sometimes hard to contain the grief in a healing way

20:53:05 From Josh Van Vliet : I worry that if I really be with how I'm feeling, I'll just curl up in a ball and never do anything

20:53:06 From scottferreter : Well said, Emily Donaldson! Me too

20:53:19 From Jeremy Blanchard : I notice that it's hard for me to get in touch with my grief. My outrage and pain feels very intellectual and I see people around me having a deeply emotional experience when they see injustice. I compare my experience to their experience.

20:53:35 From sea : concern that letting all the grief out whenever it arises will stop me from being functional in the rest of my life

20:53:36 From lindleymease : I'm scared of the pain, but I'm more scared of losing the parts of myself I might lose in the process. The parts of myself I must let go of, but I have become attached to. But grief is something I know well, and I know it's a direct path to healing.

20:54:10 From janetgray1 : Yes also to Emily—sitting with sadness, being relieved to recognize what I'm feeling. An Aha moment.

20:54:18 From EBjorkman : feeling that white culture in america has no idea how to deal with people, and hoping that these will be enough

20:54:24 From ALicia : I do a lot of work around grief and what came up for me is that I have fatigue around being told how to grieve when I got comfortable with that kind of discomfort. I feel easily pushed out of my own center and I have a hard time staying with it when someone is trying to "help" me grieve, they get on my nerves - so I isolate myself, I want things to be still, perhaps a bit too much so I'll explore how I try to control it in that way

20:54:30 From amylyn : my grief feels and looks like anger, sometimes. that is confusing for me and my loved ones.

20:54:32 From Kari van Delden : I have had opportunities to grieve parts of my journey. It has made such a difference in being able to participate more fully in these conversations.

20:54:36 From Joe Gilbert : Connected with what partner said about doing activism before doing work on yourself - I'm finding I'm inclined to skip the step to grieve and confront my own pain

20:54:48 From Michelle : @scott – yes! Well said.

20:56:47 From janetgray1 : Working through other griefs (loss of parents, sister) gave me lots of practice—so I feel like I know something about grieving...and it's good to practice that with moments when I recognize toxic whiteness. Part of it is recognizing that I can't really gain control over the external situation (a white supremacy expectation?).

20:58:32 From Bernie Smith : the voice of White supremacy is quite manipulative. It sucks realizing one has been manipulated.

20:59:42 From Bernie Smith : that's a great analogy. I hope i remember it. :D

20:59:58 From Josette Souza : That's why we have the recordings and transcripts! :) Technology remembers for us, haha.

21:00:01 From JanetGray1 : Aha—yes: this goes to my big question: Where do white tears go to dry?

21:00:09 From Bernie Smith : LOL good point!

21:01:07 From Bernie Smith : referring to the transcripts..

21:05:48 From Laura Ve : what are ways that this grief shows up that is different from another form of grief, such as when a person we love passes away?

21:06:06 From ALicia : so I don't know if that's related to today's session but what's coming up for me right now is that I have very little space for my own grief/process and mostly I know that setting my boundaries at the moment might be just another white person's rejection to someone else and I am not sure how to handle that.

21:07:58 From Cynthia : I experience grief in layers like I experience learning about oppression in layers. New understandings create new need for grieving. So, I expect to be grieving always given how many systems of privilege/oppression make up the human context.

21:08:18 From Bethany : how do I know if I'm grieving in a way that is healing? Is there a difference between grieving systemic racism itself and the harmful things I do to perpetuate it?

21:24:10 From ScottFerreter : It told me. "it happened. it's dead. we need you to be with the living. it's not your fault" and plenty of tears to wash it away.

21:24:11 From Jeremy Blanchard : I appreciate this practice and meditation as a way to get in touch with the feelings/sadness/grieving.

21:24:15 From EmilyAlter : The emotions I thought I couldn't feel because I'd numbed them for too long came welling up. I was relieved to feel them,

21:24:33 From Kari van Delden : I often feel I can not share what is going on for me because I am so lucky and have so much I have no right to grieve.

21:24:35 From Lynette : finally feeling

21:24:37 From Gabriela : i felt less threatened by the feelings / fears

21:24:42 From Sarah : difficulty letting go of expecting myself to feel a certain way

21:25:26 From Bethany : lots of tears, guilt at 'this is hard for me', relief to feel, struggled to say 'and thats okay'

21:25:29 From Lynette : becoming human

21:25:34 From Arielle Spence : I think I just felt compassion for myself for the first time in a long, long time.

21:25:48 From janetgray1 : The structure of the feeling was like this cross between an Elizabethan collar and an amusement park ride...it was difficult to wear, but also really beautiful and intriguing...the challenge of collaborating with black colleagues whom I adore and admire when I know I will/do screw up...

21:25:49 From Roberta Gillin : how can i be a good ally when I'm so self-centered

21:26:43 From kgb : making friends with needing people to like me and beginning to release

21:29:16 From Alavida : Question: is it ever okay to reveal white grief to people of color?

21:29:33 From Jeremy Blanchard : Takeaway: White supremacy is something that happened to you. It's not who you are.

21:29:36 From Gabriela : "there's no global me, only me in this place and moment"

21:30:10 From Bernie Smith : good way of putting it Jeremy.

21:30:26 From horowitzpaula@gmail.com : Look within for the reality we can truly deal with

21:30:28 From Lili Trenkova : it's ok to be vulnerable and imperfect, and that we only truly exist in the present

21:30:40 From scottferreter : To let go of that resistance/pain/suffering does not mean I don't care. it's there because I care, and I feel it and let go because I care.

21:30:50 From Bernie Smith : Alavida: Yes...if they're open to it.

21:30:59 From Joshua, he, Victoria-Lekwungen Territory : There's no way out but through

21:31:20 From amylyn : judging my experience/feelings/process is like interference. letting it happen is a skill I want to develop.

21:32:24 From janetgray1 : "All stones are broken stones."

21:32:52 From Josette Souza : Love the bandaid@

21:32:53 From Josette Souza : !

21:33:03 From Kari van Delden : thank you everyone

21:33:03 From Lynette : thank you.

21:33:05 From Joshua, he, Victoria-Lekwungen Territory : Thanks very much Sandra and Josette!

21:33:08 From Jeremy Blanchard : Thanks!

21:33:09 From Alavida : thank you <3

21:33:09 From Sandy Robinson : Thank you!

21:33:10 From sea : trust that there is not breakability or unbreakability

21:33:11 From Lili Trenkova : Thank you!

21:33:11 From amylyn : thank you all.

21:33:12 From scottferreter : Encore!

21:33:13 From Emily Donaldson : Thank you!

21:33:13 From Josh Van Vliet : Thanks!

21:33:14 From Sarah : thank you thank you!!!

21:33:17 From elliotssweet : thank you!!

21:33:37 From Olivia : Thank you!