

Come As You Are

An 8-Week Guided Racial Justice Journal
for Allies of BIPOC

Week One – Identifying Vision

Nobody is free until everybody is free. – Fannie Lou Hamer

- Why is racial justice important to you?
- What are your racial justice values?
- What is your racial justice vision?
- What strategies, resources and support do you need to achieve your vision?
- What role does education and accountability play in your racial justice vision?
- What role does "palatability" play in your decision to choose a racial justice mentor or educator?

Do Now: Share with a trusted friend or family member your vision and the items listed under strategies and support. Reflect on what that experience is like. Over the next week, pay attention to how your actions align with your racial justice vision and values. Notice how your physical body reacts. What feels hard? What gives you pause? Consider finding a racial justice mentor or accountability partner and scheduling check-ins.

Week Two – Racial Awareness Assessment

If you are disgusted by what you see, and if you feel the fire coursing through your veins, then it's up to you. You don't have to be the leader of a global movement or a household name. It can be as small scale as chipping away at the warped power relations in your workplace. It can be passing on knowledge and skills to those who wouldn't access them otherwise. It can be creative. It can be informal. It can be your job. It doesn't matter what it is, as long as you're doing something. -Reni Eddo-Lodge

- What are your identities?
- What facets of your identity allow you to experience privilege? How does that privilege function?
- What are ways that you experience marginalization? How has that made you feel and what support did you wish you had?
- What was your first awareness of race? What was that experience like?
- How, if at all, has that experience shaped your commitment to racial justice?
- What ideas did you grow up with regarding race relations? Were the ideas explicit or more nuanced?

Do Now: Over this next week, consider how your identity and racial constructs have shaped your racial justice journey. Consider how these constructs have shaped your geographic location and impacted your relationships. Jot down your reflections below and on the next page.

Week Three – Fear

I will tell you what freedom means to me: no fear. -Nina Simone

- What role does fear play in your commitment to racial justice?
- What has fear looked like in your journey of racial justice?
- What are things you wish you were not fearful about in your racial justice practice?
- What would your racial justice practice look like free from free?
- What would it look like to let go of one fearful idea today?
- What would you like to risk? What could you gain? How could you be surprised?

Do Now: Over this next week, consider how fear has shown up in your racial justice practices. What do you notice about your body as you pay attention to how fear shows up? Jot down your reflections below and on the next page.

Week Four – Love

Love takes off the masks we fear we cannot live without and know we cannot live within.

-James Baldwin

- How do you define love in your racial justice practice?
- What does love look like in your racial justice practice?
- Write about a time you practiced love in racial justice.
- Write about a time you did not practice love.
- When responding to racism, how do you usually ground yourself? What tools and support do you need to practice operating from a place of love and connectedness?
- After responding to racism, how do you practice self-love and self-care? What do you do to decompress? What has worked? What has not? What do you wish would happen?

Do Now: Over this next week, consider how love has shown up in your racial justice practice. What has that looked like? What support or resources did you need to engage with love? Jot down your reflections below and on the next page

Week Five – Hopes & Dreams

Once social change begins, it cannot be reversed. You cannot un-educate the person who has learned to read. You cannot humiliate the person who feels pride. You cannot oppress the people who are not afraid anymore.- Cesar Chávez

- What are you learning about yourself as you commit to the practice of racial justice?
- What are ways in which you have changed as you commit to the practice of racial justice? How do you feel about these changes?
- In what ways do you experience disparity between your racial justice vision and values and your daily life practices? What feelings come up as you name that disparity? What do you intend to do about that disparity?
- What do you hope to change as you continue the practice of racial justice?
- What do you hope your relationships will look like as you commit to anti-racism work?

Do Now: This next week, consider how your actions align with your racial justice vision. What actions are you practicing? What are you doing to sustain your practice? What do you need to re-evaluate? Jot down your reflections below and on the next page.

Week Six – Silence

Until the lions have their own historians, the history of the hunt will always glorify the hunter.
-Chinua Achebe

The next few journal prompts will include prompts around silence, decolonization, whiteness, and white fragility. While definitions are provided on the next page, it is also critical to consider your own understandings of and experiences with decolonization, whiteness, and white fragility.

Definitions:

Decolonization: “The long-term process involving the bureaucratic, cultural, linguistic and psychological divesting of colonial power. Decolonization restores culture and traditional ways, replaces western interpretations of history with Indigenous perspectives of history and restores Indigenous world views.” (Definition provided by Indigenous Corporate Training Incorporated).

White Fragility: The tendency among some members of the dominant white cultural group to have a dismissive, defensive, wounded, or angry response to evidence of racism, inequality, or injustice. Often this fragility leads to inaction and a missed opportunity to unpack harmful beliefs and actions. (Definition provided by theEbenezerProject).

Whiteness: "a constantly shifting boundary separating those who are entitled to have certain privileges from those whose exploitation and vulnerability to violence is justified by their not being white." (Definition provided by Alberta Civil Liberties Research Centre).

- What role has silence played in your racial justice practice?
- What are you learning to notice about how silence impacts racial justice work?
- What role has fragility played in your racial justice work?
- What role does decolonization play in your racial justice practice?
- How has your understanding of whiteness impacted your racial justice practice? What actions has that prompted you to take?

Do Now: Over this next week, consider how silence, whiteness, and white fragility show up in your racial justice work. What makes you uncomfortable? How do you wish to change? What makes you scared? What can you hope for? Jot down your reflections below and on the next page.

Week Seven – Allyship

Violence as a way of achieving racial justice is both impractical and immoral. It is impractical because it is a descending spiral ending in destruction for all. It is immoral because it seeks to humiliate the opponent rather than win his understanding; it seeks to annihilate rather than convert. Violence is immoral because it thrives on hatred rather than love

. -Martin Luther King

- Write down a way that you have tried to practice racial justice. Be specific. What did it feel like? What worked? What did not?
- Write down a new way that you could practice racial justice. What is stopping you from trying?
- Write down a way in which you wish you were able to practice racial justice but do not feel ready yet. What skills or resources do you need?
- Call in accountability. Share this weeks journal entries with your racial justice mentor or a trusted friend. Ask them to support you. How was that experience?

Do Now: Over this next week, notice how and when your allyship shows up. What feels organic? What feels hard? What feels tricky or scary? Pay attention to how your body is reacting. If you are a leader, consider reviewing your organizations policies. How do those policies align with your personal racial justice vision? Jot down your reflections below and on the next page.

Week Eight - Activating

Once you start to speak, people will yell at you. They will interrupt you, put you down and suggest it's personal. And the world won't end. And the speaking will get easier and easier. And you will find you have fallen in love with your own vision, which you may never have realized you had. -Audre Lorde

While this journal of reflections is almost done, your work will continue. Take a moment to consider what questions stretched you? What made you feel uncomfortable? What reflections felt healing? What questions, reflections, or conversations inspired an aha moment? This last week's reflection questions offer space for you to reflect on your earlier journal entries and develop a plan of actionable steps by assessing your current racial justice work with your daily habits. Look back at the questions from week one. What disparities do you notice in your answers and your original racial justice vision, values, and strategy? What support, tools, and resources do you need to do your work well and with accountability? What has been working well? What hasn't been working well? What role if any does grace play in your racial justice work? What about self-care?

Take a moment to reconsider these questions from Week One.

- Why is racial justice important to you?
- What is your racial justice vision?
- What support, resources, or assistance do you need moving forward in your racial justice practice? Be specific.
- How has your commitment to anti-racism changed or impacted your relationships? What has been hard? What has been surprising? What feels unresolved?
- What questions about racial justice do you have that you are afraid to ask?
- Write down local organizations you can join to help support racial justice. How do you feel about joining a group? What excites you? What are your hesitations?

Do Now: Share with a trusted friend or family member about your experience with this journal. What new insights have you learned about yourself? Over this next week, consider having conversations within your community. What could those conversations look like? What would you risk? What could you gain? What are new ways you can activate? Jot down your reflections and your plans below and on the next page. Ask a trusted friend or mentor to help you remain accountable to your growth.