

Chapter 1

Transcendence and Race Consciousness

Dear Facilitator(s),

This workshop series was crafted, reviewed by a multiracial team, and revised with several important issues in mind.

1. The series design allows facilitators to use one or more activity sections as standalone events or in various combinations. There are approximately 5 hours of content available for each chapter. It is unlikely that any group will have enough time to work through all sections. Therefore, facilitators should select from the various options, perhaps following one or two thematic strands. (See the Workshop Series Overview for more details about thematic strands.)
2. Moving through these workshops without reading the corresponding *Living in the Tension* book chapter will markedly reduce workshop effectiveness. It will make the process more challenging and is not recommended.
3. A primary purpose of this series is to support groups in enhancing the leadership capacity within their community. Detailed facilitator notes are provided for each activity so that one or more group members can practice facilitation while leading the series. A few notes of caution: a) the same facilitation team should run the entire series, b) the team should read the entire book prior to leading workshop sections, and c) sufficient debrief opportunities should be created to discuss how each workshop went so that facilitators' skills can be developed.
4. The intended audience includes white people who recognize the need to support racial justice efforts and want to improve and solidify their anti-racism practice. The series has also been constructed with the understanding that some people of color might resonate with the tensions described in the book and find value in the exploration. For this reason, questions within the majority of sections are crafted to allow people of any racial background to participate. Sections designed specifically for white people's development are also noted. This series can be used in a racially caucused (affinity group) or mixed-race format. (See Facilitation Guide for more information.)
5. First-time facilitators are encouraged to use the language scripts provided in the openings, directions, and wrap-up portions of each agenda. Deviating from the language and tone may create confusion and undercut the purpose of the section.
6. Facilitators are encouraged to create a welcoming, inviting space where participants feel free to speak the truth of their experience without fear of shaming or reprisal. It is essential for facilitators to understand that a hallmark of both the book and the series is the need to validate some element of people's perspectives while seeking to add to their understanding.

Best wishes,
Shelly Tochluk

Living in the Tension: A Workshop Series – Chapter 1, Shelly Tochluk - stochluk@msmu.edu – shellytochluk.com

Chapter 1

Transcendence and Race Consciousness

1.0 – Introductions and Discussion Guidelines – (20 minutes)

Materials needed: Workshop goals, discussion guidelines, gender pronouns handout, butcher paper, and markers

Purpose of piece: To discuss communication guidelines, explain the practice of naming gender pronouns for those who are unfamiliar with the practice, review the goals for the workshop, and allow participants to begin to get to know one another.

Instructions: Facilitators introduce themselves, ask participants to say their name, gender pronouns, and one sentence to describe why they decided to come to the workshop. (As needed, distribute the gender pronoun handout 1.0 and discuss.) Review the goals for the workshop series, selecting those that make most sense for your group from the list in the introductory material. Ask participants to read the discussion guidelines posted on the wall aloud. (Handout 1.0b is available as a sample set of guidelines. Feel free to create your own.) Ask participants what questions they have. Invite participants to add to the list any additional discussion guidelines they think would be helpful. Write them on the piece of butcher paper. Retain the butcher paper and use this modified list for all future workshops.

1.1 --- Developing our Community - Exploring the Tensions Together (30 minutes)

Materials needed: None

Purpose of piece: To explore and share participants' personal experiences with the various tensions described in Chapter 1 in order to create a shared understanding among group members.

Say to group: This exercise is called a human barometer. It is a way for us to explore and share our beliefs about a set of ideas. There are no wrong answers and no wrong place to be. And just like any thought or feeling, it can change at any time. As we go through this exercise, please remember that you can move your position at any point. You might hear another person's idea that shifts your own thinking.

Facilitator's Note: *Distribute the Tension Pairs handout so participants can read along, if desired. This might reduce the need to orally read the statements multiple times.*

To get started, I am going to read two statements (*Set 1*). Consider what degree you feel pulled to one statement or the other. This is something that may change for you. But, at this moment in time,

if you resonate most with the first statement, place yourself on the right side of the room. If you resonate most with the second statement, place yourself on the left side of the room. If you resonate with both statements equally, place yourself in the center. This is a continuum, so you may stand in any position that illustrates how you feel about the two statements. (Pause for participants to place themselves on the continuum.)

Facilitator’s Note: Once the participants locate themselves along the continuum, share in some discussion regarding why they chose that place to stand. Then, proceed to Set 2, and so on. (For discussion, you may elect to do this as a sequence of pair shares or small group discussions with share outs of a few minutes each). Extend the conversation as long as desired to allow the group to learn about each other’s personal experiences, thoughts, and feelings.

Set 1	Our mindset influences how much we experience suffering.	And	Systemic injustice creates suffering in the U.S. regardless of an individual’s mindset.
Set 2	Focusing on the transcendent involves looking beyond racial categories.	And	Being race conscious allows us to recognize that although race is not real, it has real impacts.
Set 3	Focusing on our deepest humanity allows us to see beyond race.	And	Focusing on race allows us to recognize the depth of humanity’s challenges
Set 4	Every human deserves care, love, and positive regard while seeking to raise awareness.	And	Developing race consciousness can be painful; it’s our job to “comfort the afflicted and afflict the comforted.”
Set 5 Optional	<i>Add something specific to your community, as desired.</i>	And	<i>Add something specific to your community, as desired.</i>

Ask large group follow up questions, as desired or relevant:

1. How does your position on the continuum affect how you approach actions and activities intended to further racial justice and healing?
2. To what degree do differences in orientation contribute to challenges for a group when making decisions?

Facilitator’s Note: *If there is a lot of energy around these topics, this activity could take double the time allotted. If used as a main activity and you’d like to spend a full hour in exploration, use the following plan: Provide about 5 minutes per set for small group discussion, 5 minutes per set of share outs, and then another 15 minutes of whole group follow up discussion when people are back at their seats. This could amount to approximately one hour of time.*

If you prefer to maintain the 30 minute schedule, alert the participants early in the process that this is a warm up discussion and that later exercises are intended to delve more deeply into the various ideas.

Wrap-up: The purpose of this activity is to learn more about one another. The hope is that the more we know about each other's thought process and personal history, the more we will understand each other's responses to future challenges and be able to work together to find resolution.

1.2 - Developing our Community - Exploring a Dilemma (55 minutes)

Materials needed: Copies of Scenario Response Worksheet (1.2a or 1.2b), pencils or pens.

Purpose of piece: To use a scenario to reveal participants' thoughts about how various tensions manifest, provide an opportunity to create a common understanding of the issues, and strategize future responses.

Facilitator's Note: *Two scenarios are provided so that you might select the one that is most appropriate for your group. Each has its own handout version. Skilled facilitators who are aware of a particularly relevant issue that the community is facing may want to write out an alternative scenario and use that in place of those printed below. Keep in mind the degree to which it aligns with the specific tensions highlighted in this chapter, and modify the exercise accordingly.*

Facilitator's Note: *To prepare for implementation of this section, reflect on the first question yourself and develop possible answers regarding what tensions exist in this scenario that relate to the book content. Share these with the participants as prompts as you begin the exercise.*

Say to group: Read this scenario silently to yourself. Then answer the first set of prompts on the worksheet: 1) what are the tensions in this scenario, 2) to what degree do the themes in this scenario play out in communities of which you are a part, 3) how would you feel if you were in this situation, and 4) what would you say in response? (*Silent reading/reflection – 10 minutes*)

Scenario 1 (handout 1.2a):

A social justice action group recently sponsored a speaker to deliver a presentation to their predominantly white community that included a strong message against colorblindness along within a discussion of racial identity development. The majority of participants readily acknowledged the problems associated with the colorblindness stance after the presentation, but did not agree that replacing it with race consciousness was a good alternative. During a small group conversation in which you were participating, several participants, one after the other, offered comments suggesting that 1) class is a much bigger issue than race, 2) we're really all just human and need to begin focusing on our similarities to work against injustice, and 3) race is socially constructed and needs to be deconstructed, not strengthened by people identifying as white. Each of these statements seemed intended to distance themselves from taking their racial position seriously.

Scenario 2 (handout 1.2b):

At a local sangha, a predominantly white group meets for a meditation sit. The group mills about the room before the "sit" is to begin. A small group of regulars is chatting, and one of

the white women, Sarah, shares about a workshop she recently attended on unconscious bias. She reports feeling convinced that white people need to take responsibility for racism. Another white woman, Gina, responds by saying, “when you focus on race you racialize me, essentially ‘othering’ me, and that does less for the movement than looking at how we’re the same.” A woman of color standing nearby overhears the comment. Sarah responds to Gina, saying she believes all of us need to recognize how race affects us. Gina responds saying, “You’re focusing on the negative, the dark, while I’m focused on the positive, the light. I just love people for who they are.” The woman of color gives Sarah a knowing look, turns, and walks away.

Say to group: Now that we’ve finished with the silent reflection, let’s get into groups of 4 or 5 to share our responses, each person taking two minutes to share what they wrote down. (*Small group sharing - 10 minutes*)

Staying in the same small group, discuss the next set of questions on the back side of the worksheet: 5) How would you hope people would respond to this situation, and 6) How could the use of “both/and” thinking inform the response? (*Small group discussion - 15 minutes*)

Facilitator’s Note: *The ability to answer question #6 may be compromised if participants have not read the Introduction and Chapter 1 of Living in the Tension, where the idea of “both/and” thinking is introduced. Exercise 1.5 is designed to more fully explore this skill, so if your group is unlikely to complete reading, you might consider the value of placing exercise 1.5 earlier in your program.*

Facilitator’s Note: *Prior to beginning this workshop, try to answer the large group discussion question #3 for yourself. Be prepared to offer an example for the group.*

Say to group: Let’s come back together and talk as a whole group about this scenario and what we can take from it. (*Large group discussion – 20 minutes*)

1. In what ways do the communities you are a part of deal with the issues raised in this scenario?
2. How do people tend to respond? Where do we learn these ideas?
3. How would a “both/and” approach be helpful, and what might that look like?
4. For faith-based and spiritual communities: Where in the principles, scriptures, philosophy, and/or theology is support for these ways of thinking found?

Wrap up: The purpose of this activity was to use the discussion of this dilemma to learn more about each other and our tendencies so that we can be more prepared to respond to future issues that arise in our community.

1.3 – Developing our Analysis - Navigating Deflection (40 minutes)

Materials needed: Emotion posters

Purpose of piece: To explore our readiness to engage in conversations with people who purport to care about racial justice, and yet continue to deflect conversations about race.

Facilitator’s Note: *Post the emotion posters before the workshop begins. 1) Anxious, 2) Confident, 3) Embarrassed, 4) Confused, 5) Frustrated, 6) Angry, 7) Unprepared. (Feel free to create larger more colorful versions for yourselves as desired. The handout provides large font words on 8x11 paper for printing.)*

You can create additional emotion posters as you wish. Depending upon the space available and size of the group, it may be equally effective to put the emotion posters on the floor or at different tables throughout the room

With this exercise it is common for people to resist making a discrete choice. Some people may stand in the center, refusing to choose. Others might stand in between two choices. Allowing this can work out just fine. However, if someone consistently stands apart, the risk is that facilitators might feel obligated to ask that person to speak about each and every scenario. This would allow that person to take up more sharing space and time than is useful for the group. Therefore, you may need to skip that individual standing apart sometimes, stating that you need to hear from those who haven’t yet had a chance to participate vocally.

Say to group: There are many people who have learned that the idea of being colorblind or post-racial is not valuable, or valid. These individuals often talk about how much they care about social justice, including racial justice. And yet, there are multiple ways that they continue to deflect challenging race conversations.

In order to prepare ourselves to engage conversations with people who deflect targeted race conversations, we are going to do an activity that asks us to think about the emotion we feel in different situations. To do this, as a scenario is read, consider what emotion you would feel if you were in the following situations and were expected to respond. Go to the space in the room with the emotion poster that most closely matches how you would feel at this moment. Keep in mind that emotions can be complicated, mixed, or shifting. We invite you to identify one for the sake of the activity today, knowing that it might not fully resonate.

1. A community member approaches you and says, “I just really don’t understand the push to use terms like white supremacy and privilege. They’re so divisive! I mean, the language is just really harsh, and it just makes people feel bad. That’s really no way to encourage people to pay attention to race, and I do think it’s an important thing for us to be talking about.”
2. Over lunch, a group is talking about a recent talk that was given to their community which highlighted the value of transcending the troubles of the social world. It was clear that

transcendence was considered a virtue, and the speaker holds a place of high esteem in the community. Some within the group began to build off of this lecture to lament that the community's gatherings appear focused on the social/political world too much these days. They suggest that a return to more uplifting and inspirational presentations are needed.

3. The news of the day is focused on a systemic issue negatively affecting people of color. Activist groups led by people of color are calling for change, and your community is gathering to talk about what to do, if anything. A particularly vocal community member chides the group for considering becoming supportive partners to one of the people of color-led groups, saying that they are focused too much on identity politics, and that they are mistakenly highlighting race, when they should be inviting people to participate on the basis of us all being human, that this is the only race that matters.
4. You are talking with two community members about a recent controversy over hiring because, once again, a qualified person of color was passed over in favor of a white male. You mention how white norms (*also referred to as white supremacist culture*) might have played a role in the decision making. A white woman responds, saying that it probably isn't really a "white" thing as much as it is a question of culture. At first it seems that she is drawing on class stereotypes to make her point. She then finishes by saying, "You know, some people are just louder, more in-your-face, and challenging. That can be off-putting, and it makes sense that a hiring committee would need to think about whether a person's style would match the group." Another person immediately says, "We really can't second guess people on a hiring committee since we don't have all the information."

Discussion questions: (10 minutes per scenario)

1. Why are you standing where you are?
2. What questions could you ask to learn more about why these individuals feel as they do?
3. What aspect of the person's view can you validate and uplift?
4. How could you create a "both/and" approach to further the dialogue?
5. For faith and/or spiritual-based communities: What faith/spiritual principles guide or support you in these situations?

Facilitator's Note: *A significant challenge we face is the "either/or" mindset. We might struggle in that the individuals we encounter may exemplify an "either/or" perspective. It's just as possible that our own commitment to our point of view is experienced as an "either/or" position. This activity is intended, in part, to help people recognize that their first inclination may be to argue, persuade, or convince instead of listening to create a shared understanding. The point of this activity is to highlight an alternative, asking questions, locating something in the person's position that has some merit, and speaking from a "both/and" position.*

Wrap up: It can be frustrating to talk with people who deflect conversations away from race. Approaching the situation from a "both/and" perspective can help. Instead of immediately discounting what the person has to say, try to uplift the merit of the person's suggestion while also offering another idea. Although this may feel like a stretch and somewhat inauthentic at first, leaning into the discomfort and trying to find a way to connect your view with someone else's may result in a new insight.

1.4 – Developing our Emotional Capacity - Valuing and Tolerating Discomfort (50 minutes)

Materials needed: Ice cubes, towels, White Supremacy Culture by Tema Okun handout, half sheets of paper, markers or pens, tape, butcher paper with “Discomfort is good because...” written on it

Purpose of piece: To experience mild discomfort in order to reflect on how we can value and tolerate the discomfort that comes with engaging in race and racial justice work.

Facilitator’s Note: *Be aware that this activity may be difficult for someone with sensory sensitivity or other physical reactions. Consider checking in with the group before proceeding to give participants a chance to opt out, as needed.*

Say to group: This activity invites us to sit with some mild discomfort. For the next few minutes, you are going to hold a single ice cube in your hand. During the activity, keep the ice cube in the same hand. This is a silent activity, and you are asked to stay seated, and remain silent until the time is up. While we each sit with our ice cube, just focus on the experience, how it feels, and what thoughts arise for you. (5 minutes)

Facilitator’s Note: *Participants will likely begin doing things to relieve their discomfort, like moving the ice around in their hand, looking for something to catch the water drops, etc. Gently remind them to stay seated, try not to adjust themselves too much, and just notice their experience.*

After 5 minutes, let participants drop the rest of the ice cube into a cup. Provide paper or cloth towels to dry hands and floor.

Large group debrief: (10 minutes)

1. How did it feel to hold the ice? What thoughts came up?
2. How did the experience shift as the minutes passed?
3. How can this experience be like engaging with conversations and actions around race and racial justice?

Facilitator’s Note: *Some ideas to draw out include:*

1. *Initially it might have felt really cold and uncomfortable, yet after a while the hand becomes numb and it’s easier to hold the ice (we get used to it).*
2. *There might have been some discomfort allowing the water to drip and get things wet (it is messy).*
3. *What does spirituality say about discomfort? Are there any lessons in our spirituality that teach us how to tolerate discomfort? How can these lessons be turned toward racial justice?*

The big ideas for the large group debrief are:

1. *The more we engage with the discomfort, the better able we’ll be to tolerate it.*
2. *The more we let go of control and investment in avoiding making a mess, the better we’ll tolerate it as well.*

Say to group: What we're going to do now is take this experience and use it to consider the various ways our own reactions to situations are shaped by cultural norms that taught us specific ways of being, many of which do not help us tolerate race conversations.

Distribute the White Supremacist Culture handout. Invite participants to first scan the headings of the white cultural norms listed. Ask participants to select three or four of them that stand out to them. Specifically ask them to select those that might relate to our ability to value discomfort. Give participants about 5 minutes to review the handout. (5 minutes)

Invite a quick pair share to discuss initial reactions to the handout and how it relates to our ability to tolerate discomfort. (5 minutes)

Large group discussion: (15 minutes)

1. How are these cultural norms related to our ability (or inability) to tolerate discomfort?
2. What might be required to create new cultural norms that allow for human imperfection, value the growth that comes from discomfort, and tolerate conflict?

Facilitator's Note: *Some primary issues to draw out are the way perfectionism and racial innocence play a role. When we sense that we won't measure up, fear gets in the way. We don't want to be rejected, don't want to make a mistake. We want to be seen as good, decent people (for white people, racially innocent). We also often value individualism, don't want to feel forced to do something we don't want to do, and resist being identified with a larger group.*

Say to group: The final step in this exploration is considering how our orientation toward spirituality or personal growth might support our ability to tolerate discomfort. If we can begin to articulate the value of engaging with the discomfort, and better tolerate it ourselves, then we might be able to help encourage others to tolerate the discomfort along with us.

Distribute half sheets of colored paper and markers or pens. Ask participants to write down a statement on each sheet that makes a connection between personal growth/spiritual development, tolerating discomfort, and a racial justice issue. For example, why is it important? What benefits come of it? What in our practice supports tolerating discomfort? *For faith-based groups:* What spiritual or theological resources support it? (Each participant can have as many sheets as desired.) (5 minutes)

Facilitator's Note: *If some participants struggle with this activity, a few ideas for connections include the following:*

1. *If we run away from the discomfort, then it stops us from learning other people's stories, which keeps us racially disconnected.*
2. *Moving into uncomfortable situations helps us take risks to engage with others, which helps us build relationships across difference.*
3. *Leaning into the discomfort is what allows us to reduce ego defensiveness and pay attention to each other's experiences.*
4. *This is what allows us to expand our understanding, and live into heart-centered spiritual principles.*

5. *The discomfort pushes us to create an intimacy with ourselves, which in turn is what allows us to experience intimacy with another.*
6. *Staying in the discomfort is akin to pushing back against white supremacy culture (perfectionism) into the soul work that takes us deeper into the mud (ground) of the world.*

Each participant can be asked to read the statements aloud and tape them to a wall under a butcher paper sign that says, “Discomfort is valuable because...” (5 minutes)

Wrap Up: Our ability to articulate the value of discomfort (and tolerate it ourselves) is essential if we are going to encourage others to engage in racial justice efforts with us. Important to recognize is that doing so requires pushing against a culture that conditions us to reject the value of discomfort. Deciding to value it may require some personal, spiritual growth.

1.5 – Developing our “Both/And” Skill Set – Both/And Thinking as a Tool (1 hour 10 minutes)

Materials needed: Paper, pens and pencils, Table with “But” and “And” handout, Conversations using “Both/And” handout

Point of piece: To begin noticing our use of “but,” “yet,” and “however,” and to shift toward the use of “and.”

Say to group: This activity is intended to help us generate a deeper understanding of “both/and” thinking and prepare to use it when interacting with others.

To do this, we’ll begin with an exercise inspired by something done by Sandra Kim, founder of Everyday Feminism. This is a short guided meditation that can help us get a sense of what happens in the body when we shift from “either/or” to “both/and” thinking.

To get started, I’m going to invite you to get comfortable. I invite you to notice your breath. Are you breathing deeply? If you’re comfortable, you can close your eyes. Or, you can let your eyes lose focus and shift your gaze downward. I invite you to notice how your body is feeling: your arms, legs, back, and chest.

I’m now going to ask you to think of something you want to do that involves very little anxiety. I’ll start with an example. I want to have a bar-b-q. So, that’s my something I want to do. I want to have a bar-b-q. Now, I’m going to think about something that might stop that from happening. It might rain today. I’m going to put these two ideas together, and it becomes...”I want to have a bar-b-q, but it might rain today.”

I now invite you to think of something for yourself, something that you’d like to do. And then if you’re willing, think of something that could likely disrupt that plan. It helps if you repeat that sentence to yourself a few times. I’ll ask you to take a moment to notice what it feels like in your body when you say that sentence.

The next part of the exercise then invites you to rephrase that sentence. Instead of connecting the phrases with but, yet, or however... can you connect the two ideas using the word “and”? What does it feel like in your body to say the new sentence? It’s possible that you might feel the need to rephrase the second sentence, and that’s okay.

Give participants a bit of time to process, let them know that they are invited to open their eyes and return to the group, and invite some share outs:

1. How did it feel?
2. In what ways was it different when you were asked to use the word “and”?

(15 minutes)

Facilitator’s Note: *It is common for people to notice a sense of freedom, or less constriction, when using the word “and.” It can be surprising for those who aren’t used to checking in with their body sensations. Also, it’s common for people to find that they need to alter the second sentence in order make the “and” work, and often this rephrasing provides more of a positive, open, or solution-focused sensibility. This is okay. One thing you might want to highlight if this becomes part of the discussion is that it is useful to sit in the discomfort of holding two truths simultaneously. When we shift the language toward something that is solution-focused, that is also great (as it may derive from an increase sense of openness and possibility). And, at the same time, it can be useful to simply sit in the discomfort of the dissonance.*

Say to group: Let’s try a few more. Let’s see if you can write down a few tensions you’ve experienced personally. First write them using the word “but” as the conjunction between the two ideas. Then, try rephrasing as needed in order to allow you to use the word “and” in a way that feels authentic to you. Try this on your own at first. After a few minutes, feel free to share with a partner and work together. (Distribute table with but/and columns). (10 minutes).

But	And	Body Sensations What do I notice?
I want to go have a bar-b-q, but it might rain today.	I want to have a bar-b-q, and it might rain today.	
I promised to spend this Sunday with my friend, but I’m exhausted and need time to rest.	I promised to spend this Sunday with my friend, and I’m exhausted and need time to rest.	
There is an event I really want to attend, but I have family or work commitments.	There’s an event I really want to attend, and I have family or work commitments.	

Large group discussion: (10 minutes)

1. What did you find when you created and recreated your sentences?
2. What body sensations did you experience when you shifted from “but” to “and?”
3. How would replacing “but” with “and” make a difference when dealing with issues of race?

Say to group: So far we've been working with our own internal process. Now, we're going to shift to imagine how we might use a "both/and" mindset in an external way, in conversations with other people. Let's start by working with some sample statements. (Distribute the Conversations using Both/And handout.) The left column provides some statements we might hear around us. The center column includes statements that are common replies by people seeking to disrupt privilege and promote a racial justice analysis that reflects "either/or" thinking. The right column reflects "both/and" thinking.

One thing to note as we get started is that although we're focusing right now on using "both/and" statements, that doesn't mean that there is no room for "either/or" responses when dealing with racist speech. It can be argued that this approach we're working on today is too gentle and allows racist thinking or speech to continue. This is an important critique, and it's essential to be clear that this is one strategy that might be appropriate sometimes when interacting with people who otherwise will not hear what we have to say.

With a partner, read and discuss the two completed examples on the handout, and then work together to finish the two partially completed rows. If you have time, see if you can create your own. Important to acknowledge is that figuring out how to use a both/and reply for some of these takes a level of knowledge and skill that we might still be working to acquire. That's why we're working together today, to begin to cultivate this practice. In other words, this is just a start, and becoming good at this is likely going to take a lot of practice and effort. (15 minutes)

Prompt	Either/Or Reply	Both/And Reply
The only race that matters is the human race.	But the human race is divided, and we won't get anywhere without dealing with race.	Exactly, and that's why it's so important that we all join together to help rectify the damage racism has caused and continues to cause.
It's not helpful to criticize someone when they're new to issues of race. It just makes them feel bad and not want to keep participating.	It might be feel hard, but people of color have had to deal with violence for centuries, and so it's not okay to privilege white people's feelings when talking about racial justice.	I see that. And that's why it's so essential that we support each other to learn as much as we can as quickly as we can. A supportive community can help us locate the points of wisdom in those critiques.
The reason we have impoverished neighborhoods is because of crime.	That's not true. The reason for the poverty is because of a systemic lack of education and failure to invest in communities of color.	
If they would just stop focusing on race all the time, they'd see how many opportunities there are for them.	There's been a 400-year project in the U.S. to strip people of color of opportunity and it's ongoing. The opportunities you're talking about might help	

	a few individuals, but they do nothing to change the system.	
I think what you're doing is so important. Keep it up. So sorry I can't join you. Things are just so busy right now.	I'm glad you think it's important. I know you're busy, and I'm busy too. But, it's really important that we each step up to do our part, at least something, since it's our privilege that allows us to prioritize other things.	

Large group discussion: (20 minutes)

1. What insights or concerns arose as you discussed the samples?
2. What did you notice when comparing the “either/or” and the “both/and” oriented replies?
3. Are there some circumstances where you would select one type of response over the other? What are the pros and cons of each?

Facilitator’s Note: *Facilitators should consider their own answers to the discussion questions before leading the group. Specifically, participants may ask for an example of when it is appropriate to use both/and or not, and you would want to be prepared to offer an example that is well-suited for your context and community. For example, in my context, I might offer that using more direct statements that do not use the softer “both/and” approach may be preferred when interrupting a harmful situation and the injured party needs to witness a strong statement of support.*

Also, It is likely that some people will ask if the replies in the center column labeled “either/or” are considered problematic, especially since the exercise is intended to help us craft responses that incorporate the “both/and”. What you can highlight is that the “either/or” orientation can sometimes provide essential push back messages. They may provide new information, and sometimes those “wake up” moments can penetrate resistance and be useful. In other words, there are times when responding in an “either/or” frame might be absolutely useful. At the same time, many people experience “either/or” statements as shaming and judgmental, and it can shut down the conversation. While some might rightly argue that white fragility is the ultimate cause of that shut down, we also want to find ways to pull people experiencing fragility into the conversation. Using a both/and approach might work, and it’s worth us developing that skill so we can use it as a tool when we feel it is useful.

Potential “both/and” reply for row 3: *Crime is certainly part of the problem. And, from what I’ve been learning, a historic and ongoing lack of investment in communities of color got the cycle started and keeps it in place.*

Potential “both/and” reply for row 4: You’re right that there are opportunities out there, and I think at least some people are accessing them. And, from what I understand, part of the reason many of the opportunities currently exist is due to just the kind of focused activism we see today. So, we may be seeing the next layer of advocacy for new opportunities.

Potential “both/and” reply for row 5: Oh boy, I hear you! It seems that all of us are so busy these days. I have to admit, one of the reasons I’m excited about taking such an active part is that I feel rejuvenated after our meetings and events. It’s amazing how time seems to expand when I’m doing something with a community I enjoy. If you’d like to join me anytime, let me know. You’re always welcome. We really could use your skills.

Wrap Up: When trying to engage people who tend to deflect conversations about race or who do not want to be part of racial justice initiatives, it may be helpful to use a “both/and” approach. While it is not expected that this will quickly bring them into the fold, it is more likely to lead to future engagement and more mutual understanding. And that might be an important first step.

1.6 – Closing Ritual/Checkout – (10 minutes)

Closing question: Is there a “both/and” statement that feels true for you as we leave this space? Some tension that is true for you emotionally about this topic and the conversations moving forward in this community?

(Pause to give people time to think. This is useful so that people aren’t still thinking about what they’re going to say while other people are already sharing.)

Go around in the circle with each person sharing their statement to close out.

Offer a poem to take home. Read and distribute as desired.

Option 1.

A poem by Joseph M. Cherry, from the book *Voices from the Margins*

Prayer for Living in the Tension

*If we have any hope of transforming the world and changing ourselves,
we must be*

*bold enough to step into our discomfort,
brave enough to be clumsy there,
loving enough to forgive ourselves and others,*

*May we, as a people of faith, be granted the strength to be
so bold,
so brave,
and so loving.*

Book Reference:

Jacqui James and Mark D. Morrison-Reed (2012). *Voices from the Margins*. Skinner House.

Option 2.

A quote from Samuel Johnson, from the book *The Rag and Bone Shop of the Heart*

It is our first duty to serve society, and after we have done that, we may attend wholly to the salvation of our own souls.

Book reference:

Robert Bly, James Hillman, and Michael Meade (Eds) (1992). *The Rag and Bone Shop of the Heart*. Harper Collins.