

Introduction

At the heart of Unitarian Universalist spirituality is the call to justice, equity and compassion in human relations. The power structure of racism is a spiritual affront that we work to overcome.

There is a sense of real urgency to this work. We would like to be as effective as possible, given the climate of hate and oppression in the US at present. However despite all the best intentions, many UU congregations have struggled to become multi-cultural and engage people of color in their communities. This struggle can be an unspoken source of shame, guilt or even self-hatred for liberal white people of faith. It holds us back and lessens the impact we would like to have in the world.

By understanding how racism works in the individual, in institutions and systems, and how it perpetuates itself, we can begin to see how to dismantle it, starting with ourselves. By its very nature, white supremacy culture is difficult to see without having it directly pointed out. It is an act of universal compassion for us to witness the suffering that whiteness causes both in the white person and in people of color.

This eight session program is intended to help uproot racism. The study sessions outlined in the “Curriculum” menu item were created primarily for white people of faith, teachers and leaders.

How the Course is Structured

We suggest creating groups of 3 – 4 people who will move through the curriculum together at their own pace, choosing their own meeting times and places. These groups may be formed

at an organizing meeting or may form on their own. Everyone should commit to completing all 8 sessions at the outset.

There will be a list of suggested readings and/or videos to read or watch before each meeting and a suggested agenda and set of discussion questions. Each group should meet for about 2 hours per session. The group should meet at least monthly or more frequently if desired.

It is suggested that there be no group leader. For each session a facilitator should be chosen. The facilitator's job is to maintain focus and keep time. If they choose, they may also add relevant discussion topics.

Daily Compassion Practice

Study of this curriculum is not comfortable. In order to process the feelings that arise we strongly recommend that you practice compassion both for yourself and others on a daily basis. The practice we recommend is called "tonglen" or "giving and receiving". It is a practice taken from Tibetan Buddhism, perfected over centuries of use. It has been adapted for Westerners by the well known Buddhist teacher, Pema Chodron.

If you have another compassion practice you prefer to use, please feel free to use it. The point is to get used to looking inward for a source of compassion, and to nurture this source.
