Showing Up in Black Lives Matter

Check-in:

- neighborhood organizing, regular vigils
- often interacting with people who come up and say “why not all lives matter” – how to engage this
- direct action, community building
- needing regular spaces to talk about racial equity and pushing against white supremacy
- complicated histories around race in feminist anti-violence movements
- process of bridging ideas around power, privilege and oppression in academic spaces with organizing, action, coalition-building
- drawn to dialogue beyond safe spaces
- been feeling isolated
- in social services, learning history and depth of the welfare state, feeling overwhelmed by racism in ways I have not looked at
- grew up in white suburb, lived outside the US for most of life, now just moved back and re-discovering identity in the US, frightened of this country
- community
- when moved to west Oakland, was only white person on block – the other day talking with neighbors they were like you had better be doing some amazing shit
- involved in direct action in different contexts
- when am I doing enough?
- Have felt ragged lately
- How to engage these issues as a parent with kids, hard time answering amazing questions they bring up
- Most energy online, tough place for these discussions
- What is possible in my life, and how can it be family-friendly? How can we be engaged in kid-inclusive way?
- Local and national conversations
- Transformational time: from convincing there is a problem to what can we do about the problem?
- Feeling isolated in family and friends with BLM, especially in Rockridge the growing intolerance & discrimination
- Needing ideas and support
- Curious about work related to social justice
- How can my work abroad be informed by racial justice work here, not being a colonizing force
- Consulting with social justice groups, needing work on myself to be effective in those spaces, reflecting on role as a facilitator
- Feeling like not pushing myself enough in direct action spaces
- Questioning role/position as white person in Oakland
- Constant feeling of there is not a way to show up that feels ok, everything feels problematic – why in itself feel a need to feel ok, it’s both/and
- Sick of “12 things white people can do” type resources online
• Feeling like a direct action tourist, locking down at different sites/campaigns
• Acknowledging complex realities of being from & moving to Oakland, as organizers
• How few of us trained to organize have real relationships with the people we are standing with around different issues
• Wanting to move into next stage of organizers, leaders and visionary strategy – stuck in place of inability to vision around complexity
• How does direct action intervene, what is a blunt tool?
• Questioning ableism and “prodctivism” in activist spaces

Local organizing
• Where is the organizing happening?
• Neighborhood organization hatched
  o Longtime resident, racial profiling has been on the rise in neighborhood
  o Security patrols
  o Many of us didn't know each other beforehand
  o Gone through major evolution
  o Stimulating conversation, presentations at crime prevention councils
  o Making changes in concrete ways
  o Screenings of Cracking the Codes
  o Working internally with restorative justice circles
  o Painful conversations with bi-racial families, opening my eyes to what they are experiencing
• Breaking down/breakdown conversations about safety on listserves
• Potential for neighborhood networks
• Next Door platform – what is it doing?
  o City broken down into districts, with commanding police officer, who interfaces with neighborhood (NCPC Neighborhood Crime Prevention Council), deep crime reporting as well as neighbor sharing about all kind of stuff, events, the platform was developed with police
• Controversy in neighborhood about homeowners wanting to hire private security
• Hearing strong reinforcement of dominant individualistic narrative – not collective and historic responsibility, how crime is defined, isolating of “who is criminal”
• How to bring up what stand to lose, conversations are often defensive, blaming
• Emotional blocks to acknowledging truths
• How to name shame that comes up
• Question about hearts/minds and structures – where to put my energy?
• Where the influence is? Power mapping
• There’s finding like-minded people, and speaking to non-like-minded white people (easier and harder work)
• Can build critical mass with folks to show up for easier-entry actions, to feel less isolated and be willing to take more action
What is spinning wheels
Door-knocking to get people to take signs to put up, and find like-minded people
There’s something people can do that’s visible
Accountability to neighbors
Takes a sustained relationship with someone to move them
Spectrum of allies, can work to shift people a little, doesn’t have to be changing whole position
Example of how I live my life, so that that speaks when I do converse with people
As anti-zionist jew, working with people in my family and community, how to support their process, and while you are in your process Palestinians are being killed
  o Patience and urgency/immediacy
What coping skills do I use to sit in that discomfort?
Big challenge and necessity of community
No way in hell I would sustain through politicization process without communities in different spaces
How communicate that yes this is painful, and how you are out of alignment your identity and values, reality of agency that you have in larger context that you are now seeing in a broader way
More comfortable I am with the pain of this, the more I can take someone’s hand to welcome them into their second adulthood
SURJ has great resources
Have been in process of trying to re-sensitize myself, intellectual, somatic, alone and in community
Naming and feeling discomfort, not trying to get out of it
Have a hard time balancing where “enough” is, time for self-care and urgency and privilege
Vision, what are you really working for?
Capitalism is designed to confuse us – your disorientation is an act of rebellion, everything we are doing is against and within this system
What is “just enough”?
Listening project, setting up table at farmer’s market engaging with All Lives Matter discourse
Curious about current demands – how are we being asked as white people to step up?
Movement for Black Lives emerging from Cleveland, Campaign Zero – goes into policy prescriptions on police abuse, ways to analyze with decades-long conversations and currently
Reducing number of incarcerated people
Solutions become more mainstream and acceptable to say, such as “state violence” – finding narrative breakthroughs and harnessing those with momentum, getting rid of taboos in political sphere, white supremacy is being named
It’s not just radicals who feel crazy in this society
• An opening to not take so personally – in good company
• Ta-Nehisi Coates, naming The Dream, how to survive it in a black body, what it is to wake people up from it
• Re-forging of a new identity, to wake up from the Dream, talking on a national scale how our identity is fraught
• Baldwin on the forging of whiteness in relation to blackness
• Coates’ writing on reparations and on mass incarceration – taking it seriously, what is it to struggle with these histories in current world?
• Looking at example of Germany’s struggle with atonement, restoration of soul, reparations – what other examples of reparations exist, how could it get pushed?
• Restorative justice in elementary schools, how can lessons that work be applied to nation?