



bethaney  
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# the diversity gap

where good intentions  
meet true cultural  
change

A PDF COMPANION TO THE AUDIOBOOK

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# 1

## RACISM IS THE PROBLEM

### Take Inventory

Read the list below and check off the values of white supremacy culture you have observed in yourself, as well as the ones you've observed in your organization.

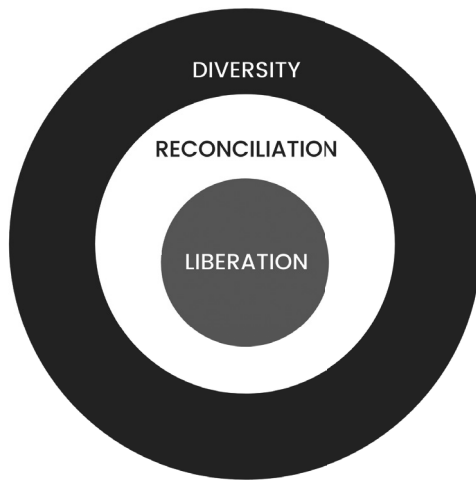
Value	Within Myself	Within My Organization
Perfectionism		
Sense of Urgency		
Defensiveness		
Quantity over Quality		
Worship of the Written Word		
Paternalism		
Either/Or Thinking		
Power Hoarding		
Fear of Open Conflict		
Individualism		
Progress Is Bigger, More		
Objectivity		
Right to Comfort		

# Bethaney's Example

Value	Within Myself	Within My Organization
Perfectionism	x	
Sense of Urgency	x	x
Defensiveness	x	x
Quantity over Quality	x	x
Worship of the Written Word	x	
Paternalism	x	x
Either/Or Thinking		x
Power Hoarding		x
Fear of Open Conflict	x	
Individualism	x	x
Progress Is Bigger, More		x
Objectivity		x
Right to Comfort		x

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## CHOOSE YOUR FRAMEWORK



*Figure 1*

# The Diversity to Liberation Framework

	Diversity	Reconciliation	Liberation
Questions	<p>How do we diversify our team?</p> <p>How do we diversify our networks to help with recruiting non-White team members?</p> <p>What makes people from nonwhite backgrounds feel integral to what we are creating?</p>	<p>How do we build meaningful cross-racial connections and relationships?</p> <p>How do we talk about race and diversity in a sustainable way?</p> <p>Where is racial conflict present on our team and how do we address it?</p>	<p>Where is racism at work in our organization?</p> <p>What role have oppressive systems played in creating the problems our organization is trying to solve?</p> <p>Are our actions racist or proactively anti-racist?</p>
Focus	<p>Hiring and retention of non-White candidates</p> <p>Tracking various metrics related to diversity</p> <p>Ensuring diverse representation in marketing materials</p> <p>Strategic positioning for public relations</p>	<p>Cultivating cross-racial and cross-cultural relationships</p> <p>Strengthening internal communications</p> <p>Learning and understanding histories of different racial and ethnic groups</p> <p>Building community across lines of racial and ethnic difference</p>	<p>Practicing social and cultural activism</p> <p>Redistributing and rebalancing power</p> <p>Centering the marginalized</p> <p>Paying and practicing reparations</p>

<b>Vehicles</b>	Hosting implicit bias or unconscious bias trainings  Hiring diversity consultants  Launching employee resource groups  Creating diversity task forces	Dialogue  Facilitation  Conflict mediation  Storytelling  Building cultural competency	Education  Reflection  Therapy  Accountability  Imagination
<b>Success</b>	Representation	Authentic connection	Personal growth and organizational change

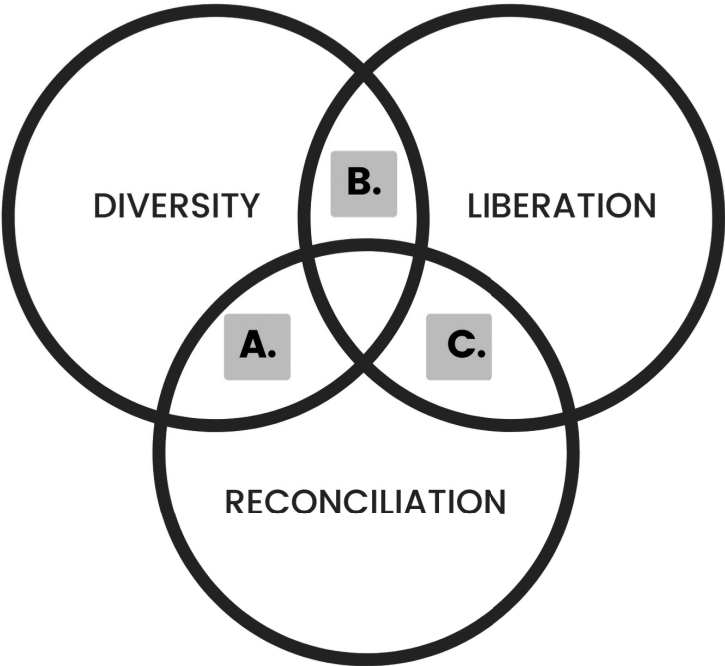
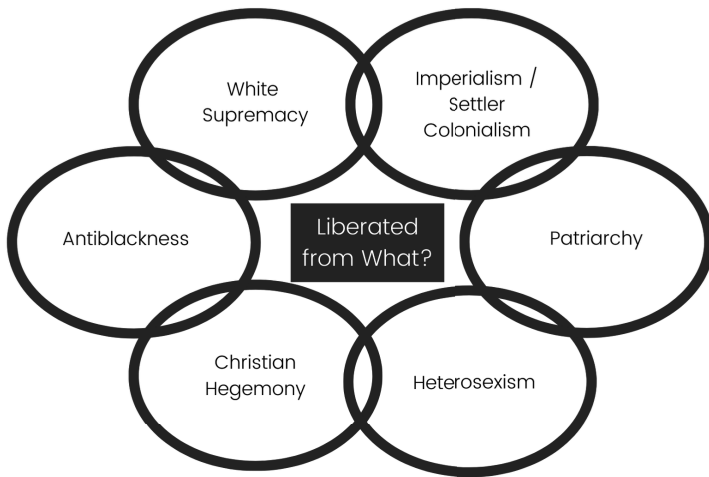


Figure 2

# 5

## EMBRACE CULTURAL CHANGE



*Figure 3*



# Take Inventory

Take a moment to assess which of these values you already see at work in your leadership and organization.

Fill out the checkboxes below.

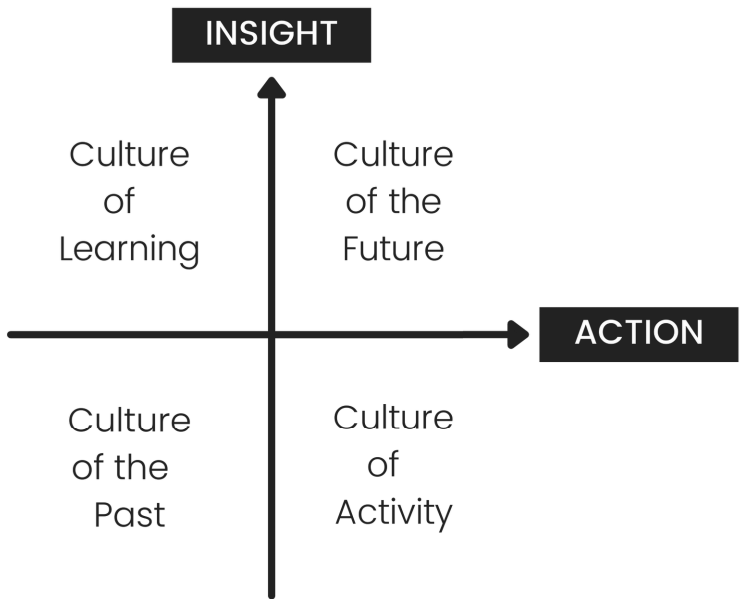
Value	Within Me	Within My Organization
Embodiment		
Sharing Power		
Practice over Perfection		
Accountability		
Emotional Authenticity		
Release Expert Status		
Grief and Lament		
Centering Marginalized People		
Reparations		
Imagination		

## Bethaney's Example

Value	Within Me	Within My Organization
Embodiment	X	x
Sharing Power		
Practice over Perfection	X	x
Accountability		
Emotional Authenticity	X	
Release Expert Status		
Grief and Lament	X	
Centering Marginalized People	X	x
Reparations		
Imagination		x

# 8

## NEW LEADERS, NEW FUTURES



*Figure 4*

# Appendix A

## DIVERSITY TO LIBERATION FRAMEWORK

### AN ASSESSMENT

To complete the assessment, read through each of the fifteen statements, one at a time, and circle the response that resonates with you the most. After you have circled one response to complete each statement, you will go through each column and tally the number of circles in that column.

		Column A	Column B	Column C
1	When the topic of diversity comes up at work, my priority is . . .	Articulating how our efforts will directly address racism and white supremacy	Making space for people to talk honestly about their hopes and fears	Identifying a specific outcome and building a strategy to reach it

		Column A	Column B	Column C
2	The problem(s) that keep(s) me up at night is/are . . .	White supremacy, the patriarchy, Christian hegemony, settler colonialism, etc.	Wondering how to make sure everyone feels safe, equipped, and prepared to have the tough conversations	Not knowing which intervention will have the greatest return on investment
3	My go-to solution for diversity challenges is . . .	Activism and holding leadership accountable to make a difference	Learning more about one another's histories and cultural backgrounds	Recruiting and hiring people from varied backgrounds to diversify our team
4	It's difficult for me to understand the importance of . . .	Making sure our marketing materials reflect diversity	Creating a dashboard to measure and track progress	Talking about racism and white supremacy all the time
5	I get frustrated with others when they focus on . . .	Talking about the issues instead of doing something about them	The tactical interventions instead of the relational dynamics	Systemic issues and relational dynamics instead of measurable change
6	The guides I trust to lead us toward progress are . . .	Activists and Black women!	Facilitators, historians, and teachers	Consultants and organizational change strategists

		Column A	Column B	Column C
7	My biggest fear in pursuing this work is . . .	The possibility that we can't reform the old; we can only build the new	We'll break trust with each other and no longer be able to work together	We'll spend a lot of money on new solutions, but our organization will stay the same
8	Success looks like . . .	Aligning our activity to serve the most marginalized	Talking about identity and culture with confidence and respect	Improving the racial/ethnic makeup of our team by x percent
9	I wish my team members would focus on . . .	Addressing their internalized white supremacy	Listening to one another and really understanding where every person is coming from	Expanding their networks to recruit more diverse candidates
10	I feel stuck when we disregard . . .	The voices of those most impacted by the problems	The impact race-related conversations are having on everyone	The importance of measuring progress
11	I celebrate . . .	Policy change and representation at the highest levels of leadership	Effective conversation across race, especially when there's been conflict	Public-facing communications (social media, web-sites, events, etc.) representing the diversity we're working toward

		Column A	Column B	Column C
12	Our organization will be stronger when . . .	We align with movements for radical change	Our cross-racial relationships are authentic, safe, and full of respect	Our team internally reflects the face of diversity we share externally
13	I want to help my team to . . .	Create systems of accountability	Create spaces for hard conversations	Stay focused on the task of diversifying our leadership and staff
14	My responsibility in leading this work is . . .	Sustaining pressure on those leading to confront systemic issues	Ensuring every person has a voice	Finding the external consulting and coaches to keep us on track
15	I want our team to be known for . . .	Creating spaces where all people are truly free	Incredible community and a truly inclusive culture	Truly diverse representation at every level of leadership and engagement
	Tally:	_____	_____	_____

Tally your results.

If your highest tally is in Column A, you are mostly inclined toward the liberation frame.

If your highest tally is in Column B, you are mostly inclined toward the reconciliation frame.

If your highest tally is in Column C, you are mostly inclined toward the diversity frame.

Now that you know where your home base is, here are a few questions to consider:

- What encourages you about identifying your frame?  
What surprises you?
- Does your frame align with the frame of your team or organization? If so, how? If not, how do you know?
- Which frame would feel the riskiest for you to pursue? What is one vehicle from that frame you can engage in the near future?

## Appendix B

# **QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION**

### **Chapter One: Racism Is the Problem**

- What is your origin story? Who are you and what stories from your life help you to know who you are?
- In this chapter, racism is defined as “a system of advantage and disadvantage based on race.” How does this definition differ from what you were taught? How is this definition similar to what you were taught?
- Have you made plans to address and disrupt racism as part of your organizational diversity strategy? Why or why not?

### **Chapter Two: Impact over Intentions**

- When are you most tempted to protect the origin story of your organization? What can you do to change this?



- Which story from this chapter surprised or challenged you the most? Why and what does that mean for the way(s) you lead?
- What would it take for you to create environments where BIPOC can do their best work without the ongoing distraction and burden of racism and white supremacy culture?

### **Chapter Three: Motivation Matters**

- What if pursuing work in a dignifying and equitable way required you to step back from your current position? What if pursuing this work required you to step forward into a new position? How does the thought of making these shifts impact you?
- Which “case for diversity” has been most prominent in your organization’s diversity work?
- Do you see any patterns of harmful diversity in your organization? What are they?

### **Chapter Four: Choose Your Framework**

- Have you ever experienced burnout related to racial justice work? Why did it happen? How did you recover?
- What is your experience of the word “liberation”? In your own words, how does liberation differ from diversity, equity, and inclusion?
- Which frame—diversity, reconciliation, or liberation—is most comfortable for you? Which is least comfortable?

## **Chapter Five: Embrace Cultural Change**

- Does navigating the dominant culture in the United States come easily to you, or is it difficult for you? If it's easy, how so? If it's difficult, how so?
- Which systems of oppression have you observed in your leadership context?
- Which values of a liberating culture come most naturally to you? Which seem most daunting?

## **Chapter Six: Diversify Your Life**

- Have you ever experienced a great leader? What made that person stand out to you?
- Which of the five areas of intentionality are you going to focus on first?
- In this chapter, we discuss the importance of integrating new stories into our understanding of race, diversity, and liberation. What is one new story you've encountered recently that has shifted your thinking? Why did it impact you?

## **Chapter Seven: Lead with Courage**

- Have you ever experienced true community and belonging? If so, what made it possible?
- Which of the four threats to belonging is most likely to undermine your organizational practice of liberation? Why? How can you address it?

- We each carry unique leadership skills and abilities. What is one superpower you bring to this work that equips you to create a liberating culture? (Share confidently! No half-brags allowed!)

## **Chapter Eight: New Leaders, New Futures**

- Are you a seasoned leader in need of immersion into new communities or an emerging leader in search of your voice? How do you know, and what does that mean for you?
- Is your organizational culture a culture of the past, a culture of learning, a culture of activity, or a culture of the future? How do you know?
- Do you know any leaders of the future? What are they like? How has their leadership impacted you?

## Appendix C

# **EXPERIMENTS AND STRATEGIES**

**C**reating a diverse organization—and one equipped to proactively resist racism and white supremacy—is not a one-size-fits-all endeavor. You will have to discover a plan that works in your context.

This appendix will help you use your insights and actions from the book to find that plan.

This is a collection of experiments and strategies gathered from leaders, peers, and entrepreneurs pursuing organizational diversity in a variety of ways. They are categorized into the topical buckets and are listed in no particular order:

- Recruitment and Hiring
- Creating Learning Programs for Your Team
- Facilitating Dialogues and Conversations
- Personal Development
- Centering Marginalized People and Perspectives

- Strategic Planning
- Diversifying Your Board of Directors
- Advocacy and Justice

A couple disclaimers:

1. Even though many ideas are listed, I cannot definitively say which strategies would work best for you. I would have to know more about you, your story, and your context to create a comprehensive strategic plan.

2. Many of the ideas below are not fully fleshed out. They are *ideas*. The work of contextualizing, designing, and thoughtfully executing these ideas is on you and your team.

If you're interested in hands-on coaching, strategic planning, or facilitation, visit [www.thediversitygapacademy.com](http://www.thediversitygapacademy.com).

## **RECRUITMENT AND HIRING**

**Give diversity a head start.**

When there is a position to fill on a team, it's common practice to create a job description and shop it around to familiar networks in search of your next hire. This creates a challenge

for creating diversity if your networks are racially, ethnically, and socioeconomically homogenous.

When you have an opening, go out of your way to push your job description into new networks. You can do this via social media, intentional outreach to new partners, and by listing your job descriptions on new job boards. Give this outreach a two- or three-week lead time before you share the description with your usual network. It takes time for applicants who are unfamiliar with your work and organization to get to know you and generate interest in applying. By giving diversity a head start, you're creating conditions where increasing racial, ethnic, and cultural diversity are possible. You're also setting yourself up to find excellent new candidates.

### **Emphasize credentials less and experience more.**

Do your job descriptions list requirements that aren't truly integral to getting the job done? Do you require a four-year degree or a master's degree, even though the job could be done by a person with basic computer and communication skills? Unless you are looking to hire a doctor, teacher, lawyer, or a role requiring highly specific training, get creative.

Ask yourself: "Do I truly need a college graduate for this job? Or do I need someone who has multiple years' experience in the service industry? Do I need someone with X number of years in this industry, or could someone from an unexpected industry add value to my team?"

Lived experience is what prepares people to get the job done.

### **Pay your interns.**

Offering unpaid internships, even if legal for nonprofit organizations, makes interning with your organization inaccessible for economically under-resourced people. In the context of the United States, those who are most likely to be economically under-resourced are people of color, specifically Black people, Indigenous people, and Latino/a people.

On a systemic level, offering unpaid internships advantages those who are financially resourced enough to work for free. They go on to list your organization on their résumé, while those who could not afford to work for free miss out on the professional development opportunity you've created. Offer paid internships, and see if and how it impacts the racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic diversity of your applicant pool.

## **CREATING LEARNING PROGRAMS FOR YOUR TEAM**

### **Start with hopes and fears.**

Once you've decided to engage the work of racial diversity and liberation from oppressive systems, create an opportunity for your team members to share their hopes and fears. This data

can inform many aspects of your emerging program, including topics to focus on, groups to include, training that is needed, and the best pace of change for your organization. Depending on your organizational culture and how comfortable people are with self-disclosing, you can capture this information via an online survey, in a group meeting, in a one-on-one conversation, or written anonymously.

### **Listen to new stories, together, part one.**

Driven by a desire to not only diversify their company, but also to create a culture where different kinds of people can thrive, the founders of Imagine Media Consulting created a three-month event series called “Perspectives.” For this series, they invited (and paid!) a diverse set of entrepreneurs (in terms of race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, etc.) to share their stories of life, leadership, and identity with the entire consulting firm. This weekly lunchtime series was a low-stakes way for this team to begin having conversations about diversity and identity.

To make this work in your context, select four to six dates in your organization’s calendar (these can happen, for example, weekly, every other week, or once a month). Curate a list of four to six speakers or storytellers. Determine how much you can pay them. Extend invitations, assign dates, send out calendar invites, and order lunch for the team.

### **Listen to new stories, together, part two.**

Set aside a consistent meeting time (weekly, every other week, or monthly) and, for each meeting, assign one person



in the group (or have people volunteer) to be the storyteller. Whoever is the storyteller for that session will tell his or her origin story, sharing about key people, ideas, and events. This is a very personal activity and should only happen where significant trust has been established. This should also be entirely voluntary; group members must opt in to this type of experience and commit to attending all the meetings. The ideal size for this group is four to six people.

**Find another organization who cares about this work and join it.**

You don't have to reinvent the wheel when it comes to hosting events and creating experiences for your team to engage topics of diversity, liberation, and justice. In many communities, there are multiple organizations who are exploring these exact topics. If you are out of your depth in creating new programming, find people hosting events nearby or online. Sign up, participate, and host a casual mealtime session to debrief what you learned.

**Host trainings or workshops your team members can attend if they want to.**

There are countless organizational trainings on diversity, anti-racism, implicit bias, and more. Some are incredible; others are not. Either way, it's important to make these training opportunities voluntary. When people are forced to attend trainings related to diversity and inclusion, it can create resentment. This resentment often turns into resistance to

the diversity and liberation efforts at work within the organization. When people attend these trainings out of a desire to do so, it fuels the work. They take ownership in exciting ways. So, yes: hire the trainer and host the workshop. But don't force it or it's likely to backfire.

Another way to make trainings and workshops accessible is to encourage your team members to find trainings they want to experience and then pay for them to attend.

### **Hold a book club, movie-watching club, or podcast-listening club.**

Informal, but consistent, media learning opportunities are a great way to encourage new kinds of conversations related to practicing liberation. You may run into hiccups if you mandate this (similar to the challenges of hosting mandatory training), but initiating a learning club or community can go a long way. It doesn't need to be an official workplace activity.

If reading a book is too much of an undertaking, consider curating a series of TEDx videos to watch, or gather a few podcasts to listen to. You've got options.

## **FACILITATING DIALOGUES AND CONVERSATIONS**

### **Set ground rules or group agreements.**

Meaningful conversations are integral to practicing liberation, both personally and organizationally. One of the best ways to

make difficult discussions constructive is to establish ground rules, group norms, or group agreements at the beginning of the conversation.

Examples include:

- Use “I” statements, as in, “I think . . .,” “I feel . . .,” “I observed . . .”
- What is said in this room stays in this room.
- Acknowledge intent, attend to impact.
- Say “Oops” when you’ve made a mistake, and say “Ouch” when someone’s comments cause you harm.

It’s helpful to post your agreed-upon norms in the room where everyone can see them. This equips the group to self-monitor when people step outside of the norms and rules.

### **Use a quotation or poem to anchor the conversations.**

There are times when people don’t know how to start the conversation. As the group leader or facilitator, find a poem or quotation to anchor the conversation. Have the group read the poem or quotation aloud and ask people to share their thoughts or feelings about the piece. This takes the pressure off of you to have to bring all the content to the conversation. It’s also refreshing to hear from a voice or perspective not present in the room.

This is a great exercise if you’re in a homogenous group. Read a poem or quotation from someone who is unlike you and let it spark new thinking.

### **Use a timer.**

A simple practice is to give each person the same amount of time to respond to a prompt or question. Some people will fill the time; others will not. Either way, it builds trust when the group knows time is being well managed.

### **Let silence linger.**

Every moment in a dialogue need not be filled with noise. As you're facilitating groups, if it takes time for people to start speaking up and sharing their ideas, let the silence linger. Do not rush to fill every empty moment with more talking. People are often thinking or listening and need space to decide what to share.

### **Break up the discussion time.**

When a prompt or question is given to the group, allot two minutes for quiet self-reflection and five minutes for sharing one-to-one with a partner. This gives people time to reflect personally, and to share in a lower-stakes scenario (for example, one-to-one) before opening the floor for large group sharing. Giving people multiple and varied ways to reflect and share honors the various personality types and communication styles of people in the room.



### **Hire a mediator.**

Some conversations are best handled by an objective third party. When there are important, yet challenging, conversations on the table and you want to preserve the relationship, bringing in a third party will create psychological safety. It will also keep you and other involved parties focused on the task at hand.

## **PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT**

### **Establish rhythms for focusing on diversity and liberation work.**

Look at your calendar and choose a daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly, or annual rhythm to focus on a specific area of your organization. You can use this time to reflect, to learn something new, or to address a recurring challenge. Setting aside small, consistent blocks of time to focus on your personal liberation practice will make a difference in your leadership. Note: It can take twelve to eighteen months to see progress in one area of your organization. Set a rhythm to focus on one thing for twelve to eighteen months.

### **Meditate.**

Diversity and liberation work can be challenging. Meditation is one way to decompress, to practice mindfulness, and to

integrate self-compassion. Cultivating a meditation practice can help you stay grounded and equip you to lead from a place of purpose and ease. Three helpful meditation resources are the Headspace app, the Calm app, and the Liberate Meditation app.

## **Journal.**

Journaling helps you increase self-awareness, work through challenging relationship dynamics, and gain new perspective on your experiences. Here are a few questions to guide your journaling practice:

1. When did you feel closest to others today?
2. When did you feel furthest away from others today?
3. When did you feel connected to something greater than yourself today?
4. When did you feel disconnected from something greater than yourself today?
5. When did you feel closest to yourself today?
6. When did you feel furthest away from yourself today?

By responding to these six questions on a consistent basis, you will discover patterns. You will find what drains you and what encourages you. You will see clearly what brings you joy and what fills you with dread. This exercise, and others like it, keep you on track toward increased self-awareness and emotional health.

## **Give your platform away, part one.**

If your privilege has afforded you the resources, time, or opportunity to amass a large platform, especially digitally, give your platform to underrepresented, marginalized people or communities. Invite content creators from various backgrounds to “take over” your feed. This is not only a practice in decentering yourself, it also amplifies historically marginalized perspectives.

## **Give your platform away, part two.**

When people invite you to speak at events, if their lineup doesn’t reflect the racial, ethnic, and cultural diversity you claim to value, say *no* to the opportunity and make specific recommendations to the committee that invited you of historically underrepresented voices they could add instead.

## **Choose to move on from your position.**

Depending on your social location, the time may come where you can’t take the organization where it needs to go as it relates to diversity and liberation. If you are unable to remedy this by adding new people to the team you lead, it may be time to move on and make room for someone new. If moving on from your position permanently is not an option, consider stepping away for an extended season. This will create space for new leadership to emerge.



## **CENTERING MARGINALIZED PEOPLE AND PERSPECTIVES**

**Create or support affinity groups or employee resource groups.**

Affinity groups are intentional spaces created to support groups of people who have minority experiences within a majority culture. They exist to create room for encouragement, support, and professional development for people experiencing marginalization within an organization. Affinity groups can be based on race, gender, sexual orientation, parental status, and more. They vary in programming, size, and design. These groups can also support the larger organization in its cultural change efforts by recruiting from their personal networks or offering solutions to diversity-related challenges. There are many resources online related to launching these affinity spaces, also known as “employee resource groups.”

If your team or organization isn’t large enough to have affinity groups on its own, research if regional affinity groups exist for the communities you want to center and support.

**Set aside additional funds for professional development.**

When creating your budget for the upcoming year, double the professional development funds designated for people of color in your organization. Not only is this an acknowledgment of the harmful impact racist organizational cultures



have on people of color, but it is also an act of care and respect. Additional resources can fund therapy, additional training, or other POC-initiated professional development opportunities.

### **Pay people of color if they are doing extra labor related to workplace diversity.**

In an ideal world, employee work related to diversity and liberation would be demonstrated evenly among all team members involved. However, the work of diversifying the organization often rests on the shoulders of those it most impacts: the people of color. This is not inherently wrong if the people of color want to be leading this work. Even if they are fully opting in, it's extra work on top of their normal job description. If paying people who lead this work isn't a possibility, discuss this dynamic openly. What would it look like to offer tangible expressions of appreciation to those who are leading you on this journey?

### **Find a mentor who is unlike you.**

You can begin centering marginalized perspectives in your own life by seeking out mentorship from people who are unlike you. Mentors get to weigh in on your leadership but don't have to navigate the power dynamics of working for you. You can be honest about your curiosities, and they can be honest in their feedback.

Do you need to pay this person to mentor you? Depends on what would be dignifying to the specific person you have in

mind. If you want a relationship that is more structured and outcomes-driven, you might explore hiring a coach.

## **STRATEGIC PLANNING**

### **Set one goal and create metrics around the goal.**

Select one area to focus on over the next twelve to twenty-four months. Create metrics around that one goal and go for it.

An example: I was recently working with a nonprofit leadership team. They realized their donor community had less than 5 percent representation of people of color. Their team decided to focus the next twelve months on racially and ethnically diversifying their donor community, believing this would shape their racial diversity and liberation pursuits at every other organizational level.

What could your one-year goal be?

### **Hire a director of diversity.**

Hiring a director of diversity can be a catalytic experience. Having a designated person who shows up to your office every day with an explicit focus on your organization's racial diversity work and liberation practice can be a game changer. This is especially helpful for larger organizations with complex and multilayered systems to consider. You will likely need someone to hold it all together.

If you're a smaller team, test this idea out by hiring a fractional diversity director or consultant. This person would have

a smaller scope of work, and it would be a contracted position, which gives you flexibility.

**Choose your words and decide what they mean for your organization.**

*Diversity? Equity? Inclusion? Belonging?*

*Equality? Justice? Reconciliation?*

*Multicultural? Multiethnic? Multiracial?*

*Anti-racist? Anti-oppressive?*

What are your words? Why are those your words?

Choose words that move you to action. Choose words your team can support. Choose words you can define and embody. One way to find these words is to ask the people on your team which words resonate with them.

Language matters, but you don't need a PhD in critical race theory and organizational change to create a liberating culture. Don't let perfectionism and fears about language get in the way of doing the work.

**Create a diversity dashboard.**

A dashboard is a spreadsheet that clearly defines your goals and your progress toward those goals.

Here's what this could look like: Imagine you are the executive director of a large organization. This organization has twenty people on staff, four executive leaders, and nearly a thousand community participants. You have multiple content streams, team leaders, and communication pipelines, as well

as a variety of operational focus areas. Here are the steps to take to create the dashboard:

**Step One:** Connect with each supervisor or team lead.

**Step Two:** Identify one diversity-related goal to focus on for one year.

**Step Three:** Answer the questions, “What does success look like in relation to this goal? How will we know we’ve reached it?”

**Step Four:** Write it down.

**Step Five:** Establish a rhythm to check in, ideally monthly.

**Step Six:** At each check-in, celebrate progress toward the goal and/or course correct.

**Step Seven:** Track this data in the spreadsheet.

**Step Eight:** Once the goal is met, celebrate.

**Step Nine:** Repeat the process, beginning with step one.

At the end of the year, look back to see where each team made progress and where each team struggled. Use this data to build future iterations of your strategy.

### **Create a cross-functional task force.**

Gather a group of stakeholders from across the organization and empower them to lead your organization’s racial

diversity and liberation practice. This cross-functional team needs to have representation from every group of stakeholders involved in your operations. For a traditional nonprofit, this would include board members, staff or team members, donors, and clients or community members. For a for-profit entity, you may include investors or customers. By creating a cross-functional taskforce, you increase the likelihood of designing a diversity program that is integrated into your core functions and has buy-in from multiple stakeholders.

### **Map out your internal liberation team.**

Build an internal team that is committed to prioritizing your organizational liberation efforts. This is different from the cross-functional taskforce, as this internal team is focused on the organization's internal culture and employee experience. This team needs to comprise the following roles and perspectives:

- The Diplomat—a person who can hold multiple interests and perspectives at one time
- The Critic—a person who can identify harmful systemic dynamics and is willing to explain these dynamics to the group
- The Guide—the person who knows where you're going and how to get there
- The Advocate—the person who is always looking for those who are not represented but should be
- The Champion—the person who challenges the group to keep going when it wants to quit

- The Timekeeper—the person who sets the rhythm, manages the calendar, and makes sure the meetings and events actually happen

Choosing who fills which roles is a group endeavor, and ought to consider personality (how are people wired) and giftedness (what are people good at).

### **Create a culture book.**

A culture book is a physical or digital document for employees. It tells them who you are as an organization, the key stories defining your work, and the core values shaping organizational behavior. These documents are meant to be creative and thoughtful. Creating a culture book streamlines your vision for each person who joins your organization.

## **DIVERSIFYING YOUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

### **Invite long-standing board members to retire their service.**

One way to make room for new people, and new kinds of people, on your board is to invite long-standing board members to step down. How? Sit down with the individual, cast the vision for the future of the organization, and invite that person to step back and make room for new leaders. The beginning of this script could sound like this:

[Insert name here],

We are so thankful for your many years of service to this organization. You have helped us accomplish [x, y, and z]. As you know, we have been on a journey to racially diversify our organization and be more intentional about justice and liberation. One expression of this is diversifying our board. Would you consider supporting this vision by rolling off the board for this next term? In doing so, you will be creating space for new voices and leadership, both of which are critical to the long-term sustainability of our work.

This would need to be customized and the conversation may require multiple exchanges. No longer serving on the board doesn't mean that person can no longer support the organization's work. There are ongoing ways to serve as donors, volunteers, advisors, and more.

### **Educate and train your current board of directors.**

Before a board can lead the organization in a more liberated direction, education and training are required. Educating your board in the work of diversity and liberation will give you a shared foundation on which to build. One way to do this is to attend a training together and/or hire a racial justice educator to facilitate a learning experience for your team.

## **Expand your network to find new people.**

Research ten or twenty organizations, businesses, or communities with which you can begin building relationships. Look for organizations who serve communities unlike your own and yet have a degree of missional or industry alignment with you.

For example, if you lead a nonprofit serving people experiencing homelessness and you want to diversify your board, build relationships with local shelters, food pantries, churches, foundations, and other service providers. By building relationships with the executive directors and communities supporting these other organizations, you're expanding your network. When the time comes for you to recruit new board members, you will have a broader network of relationships to pull from.

Track these potential partners in a spreadsheet. Find them online, determine the best person to connect with, dig for their email address, and reach out to begin building a relationship. Relationships take time, but they are among the most valuable investments we can make.

## **ADVOCACY AND JUSTICE**

### **Set aside specific donations for reparations, part one.**

In an interview with Tom Lin,<sup>1</sup> president and CEO of a national faith-based organization, he shared about how his team was working to take reparations seriously.



The staff members who work for this organization across the United States fundraise for their salaries. Due to systemic factors, the staff of color (i.e., the Black, Indigenous, and people of color who work for this organization) often struggle to raise enough money to cover their salaries. This has been a long-term challenge for the staff of color and the organization as a whole.

In an effort to remedy this, Tom and his team are exploring what it looks like to earmark large donations specifically to help close this fundraising gap for the staff who face systemic barriers to fundraising. This is an act of repair—utilizing funds generated in part by access and privilege and redirecting those funds to the people who need it most.

### **Set aside specific donations for reparations, part two.**

If your organization doesn't raise money but, rather, makes money by selling services, building a reparations fund is still an option for you. If you are person of privilege, especially racial or gender privilege, then some aspect of your ability to make money is tied to the ways systems create an advantage for you while creating barriers for others. One way to demonstrate your understanding of this, and your desire to make it right, is to earmark a portion of the money you bring in and redistribute it to external communities that have not had access to the same advantages as you. The best way to facilitate this is through partnerships with organizations that serve historically marginalized communities.

I learned this from author and racial justice thought leader Jenny B. Potter. She says, “Do not list it as *donations* but *reparations* but with the honest acknowledgment that what you have monetarily has been built over time in a way that BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, people of color) have been excluded from.”<sup>2</sup>

### **Learn the history of your industry.**

Interrogate the history and origin stories of your industry. Has your industry routinely advantaged some while creating barriers for others? Was your industry once closed off to women and people of color? Is your industry currently closed off to women and people of color? This research will give your diversity and liberation more context. This might also be a point of interest to members of your team.

### **Give paid time off for civic duties, like voting or protesting.**

Practicing liberation often includes civic engagements, such as protesting or voting. These are basic rights afforded to those of us who live in the United States of America. One of the best ways you can encourage your team members to be civically engaged, if they so choose, is by making these opportunities accessible in the form of paid leave.