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Speaking Out While Speaking In: Transforming Intergroup Dialogues With Mindfulness-Based Anti-Racist Practices

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As a co-facilitator for the Intergroup Dialogue Program's (IGD) course, Dialogue on Race and Ethnicity, at a private, East Coast, predominantly and historically white institution, my role is to help undergraduate students grapple with the complex emotions that King (2018) describes as a manifestation of participating in conversations on race, oppression, and identity. Within the IGD classroom, we implement a research-based curriculum designed to promote "consciousness raising, build relationships across differences and conflicts, and strengthen individual and collective capacities to promote social justice" (Zúñiga, Nagda, Chesler, & Cytron-Walker, 2007, p. 9). Understanding one's situatedness within powerful historical systems and recognizing one's peers' contributions to upholding and/or dismantling institutional forces is foundational to the coalition-building necessary for collective societal liberation. Through an integration of IGD with intentionally crafted mindful dialogic scaffolds that further extend such transformative external dialogues into the personal realm, it becomes possible to guide participants into dialogues with their own selves. By infusing the Intergroup Dialogue model with an anti-racist, mindfulness-based framework rooted in a problematizing and anti-oppression reimagining of Kramer's (2003) Insight Dialogue guidelines, I hope we can meet the objectives of critical dialogic pedagogy and simultaneously seek a coalition-based liberation that acknowledges that, for many, the "way out" has always been "in" (Hanh, 2001).

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Something alarming happens when we think or hear the word *racism*. Something deep within us is awakened into fear. . . . Regardless of how we look on the outside, we turn into frightened combatants and suit up for war. The heart quakes, and the mind narrows to its smallest, tightest place—survival. Whether or not we’re conscious of it, we all tend to go to our weapons of choice—aggression, distraction, denial, doubt, worry, . . . or indifference. By virtue of a number of intersecting factors, including race, we carry with us varying levels of power to execute our desired outcome or to disguise our discomfort. Tension heightens, and the stress can feel intolerable—even life threatening. And for too many of us, such fear is not unfounded.

Some of us do not acknowledge that we are racial beings within the human race, nor do we recognize how or understand why our instinct as members of racial groups is to fear, hurt, or harm other races, including our own. And we don’t know how to face into and own what we have co-created as humans. . . . Racism is a heart disease. . . . The best tool I know of to transform our relationship to racial suffering is mindfulness meditation. For more than twenty years, that practice has supported me in experiencing racial distress without warring against it. (King, 2018, p. 1-5)

As King (2018) states in this quotation, individual and collective engagement in racial dialogues, especially in the socio-political landscape of the United States and its history of violent injustice, understandably invokes an array of interconnected, conflicting, and compounding emotions within the bodies and minds, or *bodyminds* (Price, 2014, p. 240), of dialogue participants. As a co-facilitator for the Intergroup Dialogue Program’s (IGD) course, Dialogue on Race and Ethnicity, at a private, East Coast, predominantly and historically white institution (Brown & Dancy, 2010, p. 523), I help undergraduate students grapple with the emotions

and triggers that King describes as being manifestations of courageously and willingly participating in conversations on race, oppression, and identity.

Within the IGD classroom, two co-facilitators, each speaking from various privileged and oppressed social locations,² guide students through an artfully constructed, research-based curriculum which promotes “consciousness raising, building relationships across differences and conflicts, and strengthening individual and collective capacities to promote social justice” (Zúñiga, Nagda, Chesler, & Cytron-Walker, 2007, p. 9). This relational dynamic offers students an understanding of the systemic and institutional causes of oppression and supports them in uncovering how they, due to their intersecting agent and target social locations (Harro, 2018), are complicit in perpetuating or are targeted by these systems (Zúñiga et al., 2007, p. 9). This duality between understanding one’s own situatedness and recognizing one’s peers’ contributions to and targeting by institutional forces forms the basis for the intergroup collaboration and coalition-building necessary for collective societal liberation.

Given how IGD pedagogy develops students’ personal, structural, and relational awareness of systems of privilege and oppression, IGD inherently contains a strong foundation for cultivating students’ mindful, present-moment awareness. By intentionally infusing IGD with mindful dialogic scaffolds that extend such transformative external dialogues into the personal realm, participants can engage in fully situated (Haraway, 1988) dialogues not only with others but also with themselves. As King (2018) states in the quotation that began this essay, racism is pernicious and it is impossible to separate our connections to white supremacist, normative systems from the ways in which such violence has shaped us and our capacities to react to the realities of covert and overt oppressions. Fortunately, King (2018) offers a tool that has revolutionized her ability to be with and understand racism on societal, psychological, and embodied levels. That tool is mindfulness:

2 As I will speak to later in more detail in order to situate my own positionality, my salient social locations are that I am white, trans, non-binary, queer, and Mad and my co-facilitator’s salient social locations are that he is Black, heterosexual, able-bodied, and identifies as a cisgender man.

When introduced to mindfulness meditation... , I learned how to interrupt the mental war I was inflicting on others and myself. I learned how to relate to distress with more compassion and I opened to a deeper understanding of my racial conditioning. I discovered that how I thought was core not only to my level of distress but also to my ability to break habits of harm. (p. 5)

Seeing as consciousness-raising and “foster[ing] self and collective awareness” (Zúñiga et al., 2007, p. 7) are key to the IGD model and its invitations to engage in “emotionally difficult” (Zúñiga et al., 2007, p. 4) yet transformative communications, it becomes imperative to further extend the cultivation of such critical awareness to not only how people harm others through participation in systems of injustice but also to how each person perpetuates harm within ourselves through attachments to socially constructed beliefs and ideologies. As King (2018) describes, mindfulness

supports us in dismantling the construction of racial ignorance and suffering in our mind, body, and heart. We do this not by focusing on our stories about what’s happening but rather by noticing the impact these stories have on us and how this impact leads to distress or freedom. (p. 124)

Engaging with internal awareness is, thus, fundamental to the consciousness-raising that IGD facilitates.

Understanding oppression’s nuances and impacts on the self and relationships with others is a fraught but necessary journey (Berila, 2014, p. 56), especially in dialogues at institutions of higher education, which “represent a kind of academic elitism that is also an expression of traditional white supremacy” (Williams, Owens, & Syedullah, 2016, p. 111). As IGD provides participants with research-based tools to embark on this path collectively, it can also provide scaffolds to aid each participant’s travel within, for “[h]ow we think and respond [to racism] is at the core of racial suffering and racial healing. If we cannot think clearly and respond wisely, we will continue to damage the world’s heart” (King, 2018, p. 4).

This perpetuation of external harm and internal suffering strengthens the same destructive systems we strive to dismantle. By infusing IGD with an anti-racist, anti-oppression, mindfulness-based framework, we can meet the objectives of critical dialogic pedagogy and simultaneously seek a coalition-based collective liberation that includes the possibility that, for many, the “way out” has always been “in” (Hanh, 2001).

An Overview of the Two Key Dialogic Models of this Analysis: Intergroup Dialogue and Insight Dialogue

A Brief Introduction to the Intergroup Dialogue Model

Zúñiga (2003) describes the mission of Intergroup Dialogue (IGD) as the following:

Making diversity work requires a deeper understanding of the meaning and consequences of group differences. Intergroup dialogue ... is a promising approach to helping us understand one another, explore social and cultural differences, identify common ground, and communicate honestly. (p. 8)

Typically offered as an interdisciplinary elective course for undergraduates, but also implemented in community spaces and high schools, IGD is a “face-to-face facilitated conversation between members” of various intersecting “social identity groups that strives to create new levels of understanding, relating, and action” (Zúñiga, 2003, p. 9).

Utilizing a form of “democratic engagement” (Zúñiga et al., 2012, p. 1) rooted in the theories of bell hooks and Paulo Freire, IGD helps students uncover overt and covert manifestations of social inequality and challenge the roles we each play in upholding systems of privilege and oppression. Through “sustained communication, critical social awareness, and bridge building” (Zúñiga, 2003, p. 10), IGD provides structured, facilitated spaces to grapple with “contentious issues, especially those associated with issues of social identity and social stratification ... that shape relationships between social groups in our society” (Zúñiga, 2003, p. 9). The dialogues offer students tools and skills to move from theory and personal experience to collective action through

projects that promote intergroup collaboration and the identification of the historical and institutional factors contributing to the need for intersectional societal change. Moving through the world as more informed, conscientious dialogic practitioners grounded in empathy and understanding of shared struggles, students often leave the course dedicated to sustained action (Zúñiga et al., 2012, p. 2).

As they challenge realities they may have once considered stable and permanent, students “explor[e] new ways of being, relating, and taking action with people across race and other group boundaries” (Zúñiga, 2003, p. 11). This insight into their social conditioning has reverberating effects on students’ interpersonal interactions; the ability to “transcend barriers” and “recognize how our differing experiences with social oppression can compromise our relationships” (Zúñiga, 2003, p. 11) lays the groundwork for “develop[ing] empathy and accountability for the experiences of individuals and groups different from our own . . .” (Zúñiga, 2003, p. 11).

Engaging in a curriculum including primary sources, scholarly literature, media excerpts, experiential learning, arts-based activism, intragroup dialogues,³ critical reflective writing, personal narrative sharing, and more, students “cultivat[e] a sense of co-responsibility and solidarity across and within lines of difference” (Zúñiga, 2003, p. 12). This emphasis on “empower[ing] participants to improve intergroup relations on the college campus and for participants to take more responsibility for promoting equity and social-justice in society” (Zúñiga, 2003, p. 12) allows students to move through the four phases of IGD in fluid, non-linear ways. The phases include:

1. Group Beginnings: Forming and Building Relationships
2. Exploring Differences and Commonalities of Experience
3. Exploring and Dialoguing About Hot Topics
4. Action Planning and Alliance Building (Zúñiga et al., 2007, pp. 26-30)

3 Intragroup dialogues are dialogues among individuals with shared social locations and identities (Ford, 2012; Ford & Malaney, 2012).

IGD is also pedagogically dedicated to evolving alongside its students and facilitators. One particular area of expansion I have explored is extending dialogic engagement and alliance-building into the internal realm, bringing dialogue participants into a compassionate, sustained, mindful relationship with their own internal landscapes—key sites for challenging socialization by systems of injustice.

As Rothberg (2006) describes, without internal transformation facilitated through mindfulness, our “well-meaning attempts to change the world will probably unconsciously replicate the very problems that we believe we are solving” (p. 5). By infusing IGD with contemplative, embodied (Davis, 2021) and Insight Dialogue practices interpreted through anti-racist, anti-oppression frameworks, we can further deepen the insights that IGD illuminates. Addressing these insights with tools to transform harmful reactive patterns rooted in implicit bias, normative expectations, and white supremacist, ableist, cisheteropatriarchal, settler colonial ideologies, we can offer students a pathway through the IGD phases that includes coalition-building with the inner workings of their own selves. This means of engaging with sustained change will accompany them far beyond the classroom.

A Brief Introduction to the Insight Dialogue Model

Kramer (2003), one of the creators of Insight Dialogue, defines this practice as the following:

Insight Dialogue is an interpersonal meditation practice that encompasses verbal communication. Like many other practices, it . . . provid[es] an effective means with which [individuals] can free themselves from grasping, aversion, and confusion. To do this, we pay attention to what is going on inside and outside ourselves. We remain present to pleasant and unpleasant experiences alike. We let go of reactive habits, usually a little bit at a time. Unlike most meditation practices, Insight Dialogue is practiced with two or more people and, rather than being practiced in silence, we listen, pause, and speak. (p. 25)

Through awareness cultivated in meditation, based on the principles of *vipassana* (Insight) meditation (Kramer, 2007, p. 10) and practiced in Insight Dialogue sessions with others, individuals bring attention to the emotions that arise during interpersonal communication and investigate the habits surrounding them (Kramer, 2003, p. 27). This mindful awareness helps to “release root conditions ... rather than suppress or ignore them” (Kramer, 2003, p. 27). Realizing that each person seeks groundedness and freedom from suffering, and that “much of our suffering is with other people” (Kramer, 2007, p. 3), Insight Dialogue participants use the dialogue guidelines to settle into a more intimate, non-judgmental relationship with their emotions and embodied sensations, releasing habitual reactivity. This requires compassion, for much of this reactivity has been developed to navigate systems of oppression (Berila, 2014, p. 62).

Furthermore, by following Insight Dialogue’s six guidelines, which are Pause, Relax, Open, Trust Emergence, Listen Deeply, and Speak the Truth (Kramer, 2003, p. 35), individuals start to “spea[k] when moved and liste[n] deeply ... consciously keep[ing] the guidelines in mind until they are internalized” (p. 30). Grounding dialogue in the pause, Insight Dialogue practitioners bring mindful awareness to moments when “[w]e are carried away by habits of speech [and] we find ourselves grasping at the emotions aroused by this encounter” (Kramer, 2007, p. 5). “Coming home to mindfulness” (Kramer, 2007, p. 5) in the comfort of the pause, individuals start to listen to what is said⁴ internally and externally and be-

4 We often ask students to pause and note how their internal dialogue communicates, whether that be through words, sensations, images, sounds, memories, ancestral communications, spiritual reflections, etc. Engaging in this practice using a disability justice framework (Sins Invalid, 2019), we also welcome neurodivergence and the ways dialogic experiences may arise that challenge normative, sanist, and linguistic-based communication and knowledge production. Furthermore, our IGD Program offered a workshop to our students entitled “Dialogue with the Land, Dialogue with Each Other,” developed and facilitated by Ionah Scully (Cree-Métis, Michel First Nation), doctoral candidate in Cultural Foundations of Education at Syracuse University, and based on a semester-long co-curricular dialogue. This workshop helped students deepen their awareness of their dialogic relationship with the earth, land, air, water, other than humans, and cosmos, inviting students to listen to the ways in which the land speaks to and through them in the midst of the violence of capitalism, white settler colonialism, and Indigenous erasure. To explore Scully’s (2021) scholarship and pedagogical frameworks further, please see their article, *Shapeshifting power: Trickster consciousness for navigating challenges in communities of care* (in press), and their website: <https://ionahmescully.weebly.com/>.

come aware of their reactions without identifying with what emerges. Over time, the pause becomes instinctive (Kramer, 2007, p. 5), allowing participants to intentionally retreat into the solace of the present moment as needed. The pause, which lays the foundation for the subsequent guidelines, is intended to help participants become better able to “not identif[y] with the proliferations of our hearts[,] ... find[ing] ourselves pausing spontaneously, meeting experience with acceptance and including others in our field of mindfulness” (Kramer, 2007, p. 5).

Practicing Insight Dialogue and the guidelines (Kramer, 2007), participants receive “essential support for awakening amid the rich challenges of interpersonal encounter” (p. 107). Each instruction “calls forth different qualities, and all of them are complementary” (Kramer, 2007, p. 107) and the elements become part of mindful habits. The guidelines help us loosen our grasp on the notion of a static, unchanging self. With time, we begin to interact with ourselves and others in ways that are grounded in “tranquility, wisdom, and mutuality” (Kramer, 2007, p. 106), better able to remain grounded in our ever-changing present-moment experiences.

Integrating these Dialogic Models in the Classroom: A 3-Part Praxis

Part 1: Identifying Pre-existing Pedagogical Overlaps Between Insight Dialogue and Intergroup Dialogue

Both Insight Dialogue and Intergroup Dialogue (IGD) recognize the consequences of an inequitable society built on “constructions that define the personal and social life” (Kramer, 2007, p. 260). Both attempt, through dialogue, to achieve personal and communal liberation from the suffering that these cause. Insight Dialogue brings awareness to the desires that manifest when privileged aspects of our identities receive recognition and when oppressed parts remain “invisible in a society” and the “basic longing for acknowledgment [remains] unmet” (Kramer, 2007, p. 261). With the “social layers of invisibility ... laid bare,” available to us to access and tend to with care, we can “discard habitual categorizations when they are unhelpful or even harmful” and “transform our views of other people and cultures” (Kramer, 2007, p. 261) in ways that lay the groundwork for liberatory futures and sustained social action.

Similarly, IGD promotes consciousness-raising in which participants grapple with the historical and socio-political factors that contribute(d) to the harmful privileging of certain identities and bodyminds over others. Through dialogues that center the wisdom of lived experience as a vital form of knowledge production (Collins, 2002; Kovach, 2010; Thom, 2019), participants build awareness and compassion for the ways that, depending on our social locations, we are each impacted by a web of oppression.⁵ While Insight Dialogue provides participants with mindfulness practices to identify, send compassion to, and heal the “prior hurt that has been stored as a knot in the heart of those who have been marginalized” (Kramer, 2007, p. 260), IGD helps participants utilize embodied wisdom for coalition-building and social transformation, illuminating powerful entry points for interweaving these two dialogic models.

Part 2: Building on the Dialogic Models’ Overlaps to Facilitate their Integration

A Theoretical and Practice-Based Beginning

While co-facilitating each IGD session, I worked to use the Insight Dialogue guidelines to achieve greater awareness of myself and others. Despite only introducing Insight Dialogue to my co-facilitator and never explicitly training our students in this approach, after each mindful grounding that we offered students at the beginning of class⁶ and by

5 By centering lived experiences and personal narratives within our intergroup dialogues, students are provided with opportunities to become intimately engaged with their embodied wisdom and knowledge production. In dialogues on race and ethnicity offered within a predominantly white institution, “the relationship between language and race” (Baker-Bell, 2020, p. 15), power, and privilege cannot be ignored when guiding students into mindful, embodied relationships with their internal dialogic landscape that challenge academia’s harmful privileging of objective rationality (Price, 2014; Haraway, 1988) and the discursive expectations of “White Mainstream English” that, when left unchallenged, further become “the invisible—or better, inaudible—norm” (Baker-Bell, 2020, p. 3).

6 Before each class, my co-facilitator and I would discuss who would offer students this introductory mindful grounding (which was always done as an invitation to which students could choose to consent or not), situating this offering within the context of our various social locations and the power that we individually held within the dialogic space. By this I mean that my co-facilitator and I were incredibly intentional in regards to who should be inviting students into their bodyminds and how this offering always operates within larger systems of privilege and oppression and is never neutral.

inviting students to check in with their embodied, internal dialogue throughout the session, I witnessed, remarkably, an organic manifestation of the Insight Dialogue guidelines occur. Pausing before speaking, for instance, became a student-generated community agreement, and speaking truthfully became the topic of a passionate dialogue.

Most importantly, it became clear that each Insight Dialogue guideline was enacted in highly politicized ways. Pausing within a dialogue, which I will expand upon shortly, often leads to silence, a form of communication that can become damaging when performed by individuals with privileged social locations, such as white people who do not speak against white supremacy, refrain from taking accountability for the harm they have caused by perpetuating systemic injustice, or refuse to engage in dialogues on racism that do not center white comfort (Brown, 2018; Ricketts, 2021; Saad, 2020). Therefore, although the Insight Dialogue guidelines can create mindful dialogic scaffolds when infused into IGD, there are critical considerations that must be addressed throughout this integration process. Insight Dialogue guidelines must be introduced with an anti-racist, anti-oppression, and trauma-informed framework *and* become a subject of the dialogues themselves. Without this reframing, a mindfulness practice intended to heal can instead catalyze harm.

This essay introduces possible pathways for this integration process that require continued critical reflection and engagement; they are not meant to be exhaustive but rather a beginning intended to be generative and dialogically committed to a co-created evolution.⁷ The subsequent sections serve as a critical foundation for an IGD approach that incorporates specific mindfulness practices that can be researched to ensure efficacy in various IGD environments, including dialogues fo-

7 The analysis that follows, although interwoven with specific classroom examples, is not intended to be a succinct curriculum that can be implemented immediately after reading this piece. Instead, this analysis is praxis, a meeting of theory and practice that requires commitment to learning, unlearning, and relearning our own situatedness within, complicity in perpetuating, and active engagement in dismantling systems of power, privilege, and oppression. This work comes from an embodied place and is powerfully rooted within the theories produced by multiply-marginalized bodyminds that center criticality, joy, love, resistance, and liberation for all.

cused on themes beyond this paper's concentration on dialogues on race and ethnicity.⁸

Situating Myself Within this Work

My analyses and reflections have been crafted through my specific lived experiences and intersecting social locations, which include being white, trans, non-binary, queer, and Mad with white, class, academic, linguistic, and citizenship privilege, to name a few of my most salient identities (Steinfeld & Jean, 2019, p. 96). In the context of a dialogue on race and ethnicity, as a white person and perpetrator of settler colonialism, I hold privileged racialized identities and my co-facilitator, who is Black, heterosexual, able-bodied, and identifies as a cisgender man, holds oppressed racialized identities. I am undertaking this analysis as a reflective practitioner and practicing Buddhist committed to becoming ever more aware of my positionality and situatedness within the realm of mindful contemplative practices, Insight Dialogue, and IGD studies and the ways in which, regardless of my attempts to disrupt and dismantle systems of oppression, I am also always in a position to potentially cause harm.⁹

Part 3: Facilitating these Dialogic Models' Integration in the Classroom

On Pausing and the Silence that Follows (Insight Dialogue Guideline #1)

Beginning with pausing, we "step out of the habitual rush forward," allowing for "reflection, reconsideration, rest," and "nonclinging," moving away from "our reactions and identification with our own and others' sto-

8 While our course focuses on race and ethnicity, IGD is committed to an intersectional dialogic approach that recognizes all aspects of self as powerfully interwoven identities formed within a broader socio-political landscape. IGD can be offered on an array of topics such as class, disability, gender identity and expression, sexuality and sexual orientation, etc., all of which are intersectional, while using these topics as frameworks through which other social locations can be unpacked and interrogated within larger systems of power.

9 For a detailed unpacking of my situatedness within this work at the intersections of my mindfulness and spiritual practices and my privileged and oppressed identities, and how this work contributes to my conceptualizations of Mad, trans, mindful dialogic pedagogies, please see "The possibilities of an anti-oppression mindful dialogic pedagogy in the intergroup dialogue classroom: An autoethnographic exploration" (Cosantino, 2021, *Western Journal of Communication*).

ries" (Kramer, 2007, p. 109). The pause is a "pivot point to freedom," a "choice, a way out" of the habit mind and into awareness of the body where the reality and wisdom of the present moment occurs (Kramer, 2007, p. 110-111). Settling into bodily awareness, we "avoid identifying with every emotion" and "we notice that we are not, in fact, these phenomena that come and go" (Kramer, 2007, p. 111). We become observers of our emotions, finding space to choose when and how we react based on our body's wisdom.

For King (2018), pausing is a powerful foundation for returning to the present moment and finding stillness within the mental, physical, spiritual, and emotional labor of leading mindful dialogues and trainings on race and oppression:

[Mindfulness meditation] helps us put a crucial *pause* between our instinctive and often overwhelming feelings of being wronged or harmed or in danger and our response to those feelings. In that *pause*, we gain perspective—we find our breath, our heartbeat, and the ground beneath our feet. This, in time, supports us in seeing our choices more clearly and responding more wisely. . . . I was learning to sit with difficult feelings without coming apart, all the while growing in my capacity to look at what was happening within me as it was happening. (p. 6, emphasis mine)

This pause often organically arose within IGD, typically after facilitators posed questions asking students to look within to investigate the socialization, internalized supremacy, or internalized oppression underlying their responses. Although pause and silence are inevitable aspects of dialogue, students expressed that they often found it frightening, aberrant, and indicative of failure to engage. As facilitators, we reminded students that there is growth in the discomfort of challenging normative systems and ideologies constructed to center whiteness, and that silence is an opportunity that we should not avoid by forced chatter but rather embrace.

This reminder to pause and allow accompanying internal and collective silence to speak, be heard, and felt represented Kramer's (2007)

notion that the pause is the foundation for mindful action and present-moment awareness. However, since silence is never neutral or apolitical within dialogues on race and ethnicity, we facilitators led dialogues on the politics of the pause and the “politics of silence” (Morgan, 2019, p. 83), discussing why such moments might cause us each, depending on our experiences, traumas, and social locations, to feel different emotions, from calm and peaceful to anxious and frustrated. Students and facilitators discussed the complexities of pausing and how silence is not just a noun or an awkward lull. Instead, silence is also a verb and often a weapon wielded by those with power and privilege *to silence, to stifle, to subdue* those with marginalized identities. Although the silence resulting from mindful pause can be an opportunity for personal liberation (Kramer, 2007), this is only possible when it is critically discussed within the dialogue itself. If presented as only a conduit for peace, the pause will exclude those who experience it from a place of trauma and oppression.

As Lorde (1984) reflects in *The Transformation of Silence in Language and Action*, which students read mid-semester, in the midst of facing her own mortality, the concept of silence takes center stage:

... what I most regretted were my silences. Of what had I ever been afraid? To question or to speak as I believed could have meant pain, or death. But we all hurt in so many different ways, all the time, and pain will either change or end. Death, on the other hand, is the final silence. . . . I was going to die, if not sooner then later, whether or not I had ever spoken myself. My silences had not protected me. Your silences will not protect you. (p. 41)

Many Students of Color referenced Lorde’s speech, sharing similar sentiments during debriefs following intragroup dialogues, which were small-group conversations among peers with similar racial identities, in this case, self-identified Students of Color and white students (Ford, 2012; Ford & Malaney, 2012). Some of the more vocal Students of Color expressed frustration and sadness that quieter Students of Color had not shared their experiences in the small groups. The former described sharing their experiences as a refusal of silence, “reclaiming an oppressed

voice" (Lorde, 1984, p. 43) as a liberatory tool of countering violent institutional hegemony. Their words were a strategic "transformation of silence into language and action" (Lorde, 1984, p. 43), centering the voice in activism and social change especially to counteract academic linguistic hegemony and oppressive discourses such as "Anti-Black Linguistic Racism that is used to diminish Black language and Black students in schools [that] is not separate from the rampant and deliberate anti-Black racism and violence inflicted upon Black people in society" (Baker-Bell, 2020, p. 3).

When Students of Color who had remained quieter were pressed by their intragroup peers, a few responded that their voices would never change systemic racism and injustice. Their peers challenged them, articulating connections between silence and internalized oppression (while also making space for possibilities of refusal [Tuck & Yang, 2014] and the protection and resistance that "deliberate silence" [Haddix, 2016, p. 115] can hold). They reminded them that everyone embodies the roles of educator and facilitator within co-created dialogic spaces, and our experiences and visceral knowledge production have the power, as the goals of IGD state, to bridge differences and elicit change. Grappling with silence, in this context, became a powerful space of introspection, collective systemic disruption, and vulnerable dialogic engagement.

It is critical to IGD's mission to introduce the mindful pause and silence in conjunction with sincere reflections on how such expressions operate within histories of power and oppression. As my co-facilitator stated after experiencing Insight Dialogue and the mindful pause for the first time:

I felt like I wanted to stay in the pause because my desire to get free aligns with my ethical and political interests in this work. In the silence, I felt happiness, despair, and sadness because the very thing that I value, which is my voice, was separated from myself. In the role outside of self, speaking is attached to the role of facilitator and to performativity. But through silence, stepping outside that role, I am questioning if I'm truly free. (E. Davis, personal communication, October 3, 2019)

It is crucial to complicate Kramer's assumption that liberation is inherent in the pause and reveal the complexities of what the pause embodies for each person. The array of emotions, memories, and truths that may surface can illuminate our internalized socialization to systems of oppression and also, simultaneously, can (re)trigger the violence and harm that marginalized bodyminds experience by living within these systems. Each time we, as facilitators, invited our students to pause and check in with their internal dialogues, we made space for them to process what came up, encouraging them to engage in this practice from a contextualized and politicized place.

Additionally, for facilitators and students with privileged identities and internalized supremacy, choosing silence becomes especially harmful when this silence is a manifestation of white emotionality (Matias, 2016), white rage (Love, 2019, p. 144), and refusal to discuss race. Dr. Bettina Love (2019) defines this as manifesting when "White people are confronted with minimum amounts of racial stress, which could be a conversation about race and racism in America, [and] their initial reactions are to become angry, fearful, or guilty" (p. 144). This emotionality, rage, and defensiveness continues to center whiteness and is used as a tool to maintain white comfort in challenging dialogues and enacts violence on Black, Indigenous, and People of Color as a result.

Silence or *silencing*, when used as a tool of white emotionality and rage and a means of maintaining white supremacy, is not always quiet or the absence of speech. White rage appeared in dialogues when white students raised their voices, spoke rapidly, occupied disproportionate space in the discussion, and exhibited body language indicating a dissonance from the dialogue, sometimes leaving the room. Furthermore, a white person silencing a discussion on racism can reinforce the problematic correlation of whiteness with innocence and fragility, furthering whiteness as something that must be protected, centered, and assuaged at all costs. As Cooper (2018) describes, this is particularly destructive given that "there's a whole political infrastructure designed to protect the sanctity of white women's fears and tears" (p. 177). When white emotionality pauses a dialogue, especially when enacted at the intersections of race and gender, the absence of words and possible silence that fol-

lows is a discursive extension of white supremacy. White emotionality is never neutral and is always embedded within the systems that support and perpetuate state-sanctioned violence against Black, Brown, Indigenous, and People of Color's bodyminds, especially those who are trans, gender nonconforming, poor, underdocumented, and/or disabled.

These examples show the need to incorporate mindfulness practices into the dialogue with a commitment to engaging with them as part of the dialogue itself. This allows for a multitude of meanings to surface and for students to bring awareness to what arises as a further investigation into their own socialization. The Insight Dialogue guidelines, approached through an anti-oppression framework, illuminate an internal landscape crafted and influenced by the very systems that IGD seeks to highlight and dismantle.

On Relaxing, Opening, and Trusting Emergence (Insight Dialogue Guidelines #2, #3, and #4)

After the pause, the second guideline, Relax, invites us to meet experience with "acceptance" (Kramer, 2003, p. 40). Acceptance cannot be presented as an acquiescence to injustice but rather as a "willingness to accept (*at least for now!*) what arises" (Magee, 2019, p. 17, emphasis mine) in order to challenge, confront, and dismantle our internalization of oppressive power structures. Relax is a time of "no judgment," wherein our reactive patterns, when met with mindful "compassion and kindness," "lose their power... [I]n Relax love meets suffering. When this occurs, healing happens" (Kramer, 2007, p. 125-127). This concept of settling into the moment exactly as it is and meeting what arises with compassion is critical, for suffering can only beget suffering if one responds to painful interactions and injustice with self-hate.

The guidelines to Relax, Open, and Trust Emergence are tangible practices that facilitators can introduce to guide students through awareness of the uncomfortable and complex emotions that may arise within dialogues on race and ethnicity. King (2018) describes relaxing and opening oneself to all that the pause reveals as an opportunity for mindful self-reflection:

When a can of seltzer is shaken up, it is not the time to pop the top—unless you like to see eruptions. We must first set the can down and let the insides settle. The same is true for us. When we are shaken by racial ignorance and distress, we need to stop, get still, and allow the body and mind to settle, even to relax. How do we do that? ... It begins with body and breath awareness. Cultivating calm is fundamentally a practice of presence in which we focus on the breath and body and disregard everything else, at least for now. (p. 83)

When class discussions became heated, my co-facilitator and I would lead students in a grounding exercise. We would invite students to close their eyes, locate their breath,¹⁰ and bring awareness to sensations and tensions (Davis, 2021) that were making themselves known and speaking to them in the midst of the collective dialogue. We invited awareness without judgment, inviting students to send compassion to parts of themselves that were demanding to be heard, making space to cultivate the internal stillness (King, 2018, p. 83) necessary to investigate the social conditioning that must be unlearned and transformed. After several breaths and scans of the tensions in their bodies, we would ask students to release these tensions, settle into the breath, and relax into the present moment, embracing whatever wisdom, criticality, and even discomfort their internal dialogue communicated.

As Dr. Willoughby Britton's work shows, some students may experience "meditation-induced affliction" (Rocha, 2014, para. 6) and should be advised to enter mindfulness practices with caution and through a trauma-informed approach.¹¹ Thus, when guiding students into the prac-

10 When asking students to engage with the breath, it is crucial that we also contextualize the breath as a deeply politicized space and action, especially within a national climate of pervasive anti-Blackness and state-sanctioned racialized violence that creates "archives of breathlessness" (Sharpe, 2016, p. 109) and where the question remains, "Who can breathe free?" (Sharpe, 2016, p. 112).

11 Please see the Meditation Safety Toolbox (<https://www.brown.edu/research/labs/britton/resources/meditation-safety-toolbox>) created by Dr. Willoughby Britton which offers practical trauma-informed resources to use in the

tice, we would follow each prompt with alternatives such as keeping eyes open or fixing attention on a sensory object such as sound, taste, or physical feeling. Reminding students that the body and the breath are not always safe spaces to which everyone seeks to retreat, and offering alternatives such as mindful movement, drawing, journaling, yoga, and the ability to opt out entirely, was key.¹²

Although the Relax guideline must be introduced with an understanding of its potential to harm, helping students recognize that “relax heals what the pause reveals” can indeed “enable profound wholesome shifts in one’s internal landscape” (Kramer, 2007, pp. 125-126) that can create a foundation of peace and stillness, facilitating grounding in the midst of distress and dis-ease. As King (2018) describes, however, “[t]his is not always a simple request,” for:

[i]n such moments, many of us have been swept up by a trauma vortex or a flood of fear, and we might feel baffled, vulnerable, and at risk. We may be convinced that we know what’s wrong and who’s wrong. Something old, something borrowed, and something bruised is often activated. The more we resist fully allowing agitating thoughts and feelings to arise, the more we suffer. (p. 114)

This moment of allowing, King (2018) describes, “is not to condone what is happening or what has happened; rather it is to accept what is happening in this very moment. . . . To allow is to soften” (p. 115). Softening into the present moment prepares us to engage in social action, laying the foundation for our embodied wisdom to be heard, helping us connect prior and present harm and our reactive patterns to social conditioning

classroom. Exploring the work of David Treleaven and his Trauma-Sensitive Mindfulness Trainings may also be helpful (<https://davidtreleaven.com/>). Additionally, Kai Cheng Thom’s work on healing justice provides powerful frameworks and skills for exploring embodied contemplative practices through a fully situated, anti-oppression, care-based pedagogy (<https://kaichengthom.com/>).

12 We also offered students hand-held fidget toys and the use of chairs that allow for movement and rocking. Providing students with opportunities to remain in dialogue and also engage with the expansive emotions that might be swirling inside was both a disability justice access point and also an extension of an embodied mindful praxis.

and the systemic injustices that we perpetuate and/or are targeted by. This difference between complicity and acceptance is crucial, for, like the other guidelines, *relax* is politicized and wields the power to harm or heal depending on the power dynamics at play.

Regarding white emotionality in intergroup dialogues on race and ethnicity, the strategic use of the Insight Dialogue guideline of *Relax* invites students to confront what may be surfacing for them as a result of the pause, especially that which is difficult. As Love (2019) expresses, the range of emotions exhibited by white individuals engaging with topics of race can be harmful if not directly interrogated and situated within larger power structures:

White emotionality goes a step further than White fragility by arguing that when race and racism raise up emotions of guilt, shame, anger, denial, sadness, dissonance, and disconcert, those feelings need to be deeply investigated to understand how racialized emotions perpetuate racism. . . . Before we try to teach White people how to work to undo their privilege, we must start with the emotions of that process—understanding that the emotional process is step one. (p. 144)

Making space in dialogues for white students to engage internally with their emotions as they are surfacing, while ensuring that this does not consume the dialogue, helps students bring awareness to how these uninvestigated emotions have tangible ramifications on the world and bodyminds around them, especially their peers in the IGD classroom. Guiding students to understand that harmful reactivity resulting from uninvestigated emotions actually perpetuates white supremacist, ableist, cisheteropatriarchal, settler colonial systems is essential to dispelling the idea that the *Relax* guideline innately connotes peace (for this work will not be easy), thus requiring students to *relax* and lean directly into an internal and external landscape that disrupts the centering of whiteness, white needs, and white comfort.

Importantly, a guideline such as *Relax* that facilitates students' engagement with their conditioned reactivity cannot be an excuse for

tone policing wherein the righteous anger (Pierce, 2018) of marginalized bodyminds is targeted and suppressed by privileged bodyminds seeking to center white comfort and invalidate the embodied manifestations and lived realities of systemic oppression. Despite its benefits, the Relax guideline should not imply that reactive emotions must be denied and excluded (King, 2018, p. 115). As discussed, emotions are highly politicized tools and while white people express rage and emotionality with impunity, Black, Indigenous, and People of Color are often policed for their emotions, emotions that, as Lorde (1981) describes, are “a powerful source of energy serving progress and change” (p. 121). Feelings such as anger are “an appropriate reaction to racist attitudes, as is fury when the actions arising from those attitudes do not change” (Lorde, 1981, p. 124) and are critical tools of resistance that must have space to be expressed honestly and openly within the dialogue:

Respectability politics are at their core a rage-management project. Learning to manage one’s rage by daily tamping down that rage is a response to routine assaults on one’s dignity in a world where rage might get you killed or cause you to lose your job. . . . Rage is a fundamentally more reasonable response to America’s cultural investment in the disrespect of Black women than being respectable. . . . Rage is a kind of refusal. To be made a fool of, to be silenced, to be shamed, or to stand for anybody’s bullshit. It is a refusal of the lie that Black women’s anger in the face of routine, everyday injustice is not legitimate. (Cooper, 2018, p. 151)

When discussing emotions within dialogue, Students of Color who identified as women¹³ expressed similar reflections on the power of rage and the emotional and bodily risks they take calling out racism in their daily lives while refusing to be silenced. There seemed to be an unspoken rule within our dialogue that inhibited certain manifestations of anger and silenced Students of Color who identified as men for fear of how their rage would be read, especially at a predominantly and historically white uni-

13 We refer to our students based on how they self-identify.

versity. Meanwhile, white students who identified as men became visibly heated without worrying that their voices and body language would elicit fear, seemingly unaware of the harm that white masculine rage causes. As facilitators, our role was to pause the dialogue, name what was occurring, and situate various forms of emotionality in the context of individual social locations and systemic structures, using dialogic pedagogy to unpack the complex ways that mindful embodied awareness revealed itself within the classroom.

With the first two guidelines of Pause and Relax, students and facilitators are provided access points to be with their emotions and cultivate acceptance and self-compassion for all that arises. King (2018) describes the power of acceptance:

We allow what's here because it is what's here. It's like fine-tuning a radio station to rid the static of resistance or fear so that clarity pierces through. When we allow what's here, our energy is freed. It's not about fixing a problem. Allowing supports us in touching and letting go of the resistance to what's here—the good, the bad, and the ugly. It supports intimacy with presence. (p. 115)

Engaging directly with emotions helps students see their misperceptions, implicit biases, and internalized privilege and oppression as something not to deny but rather to engage if they are to create the personal change needed for societal transformation.

Once we have paused, relaxed, and met the present moment with acceptance without condoning systems of oppression, we approach the third guideline, which is to Open our “awareness ... to the world around us” (Kramer, 2007, p. 129), moving into a place of “mutuality” (p. 129) where we “let go of this isolated and heavily bounded sense of self” (p. 135). Although for some this guideline may be overwhelming, particularly considering that resistance to opening “is part of the defense system the self established to survive in family and society” (Kramer, 2007, p. 136), it invites us to open our heartminds to the world around us and seek connection in the toughest moments, moments that certainly arise within IGD. Open, along with the first two guidelines, gives us critical hope

and strategic practices to meet each moment, no matter how triggering or challenging, and each other with greater confidence, vulnerability, and compassionate acceptance.

The fourth Insight Dialogue guideline to Trust Emergence¹⁴ manifests as a result of participants' ability to first pause, relax, and open (Kramer, 2007, p. 139). With Trust Emergence, "we are invited into the numinous but observable impermanence of all experience" (Kramer, 2007, p. 139), "not knowing what's coming next and ... releasing ... control" (Kramer, 2019, para. 1). This guideline supports our acceptance of the "instability" (Kramer, 2019, para. 4) of the present moment and provides "guidance for how we relate to each other and to the totality of experience" (Kramer, 2007, p. 139). Not only does this guideline help reveal the "underlying contributing factors" (Kramer, 2007, p. 139) from which much of our internal experience arises; it also allows us to observe interpersonal conversations as social interactions "emerg[ing] from the complex conditioned personalities of the participants and the societies they inhabit" (p. 139).

Trusting emergence within the IGD classroom is an opportunity to find grounding in an ever-changing world and self, helping students embrace the ways dialogue pushes us towards our learning edges and challenges the permanence of socialization (Harro, 2018). By illuminating the culturally constructed norms that permeate our internal and relational worlds, we can (re)engage with these norms knowing that their perceived stability is, in fact, a fallacy and an intentional part of their design by larger systems of power to ensure that these norms remain intact and unchallenged. Trusting emergence brings this instability to

14 Recently, Kramer (2019) updated the name of this guideline to Attune to Emergence (para 1). Although the essence, meaning, and practice of this guideline has remained the same, Kramer felt that a revision of the name would help practitioners focus on cultivating awareness of the rising and falling of all that surfaces for us in each changing moment as opposed to centering the notion of "trust" as integral to this experience. This revision supports the ways in which this guideline manifests in the IGD classroom. Developing trust as an active, non-linear progression within the dialogue (which allows for trust to grow, change, dissolve, be tested, and evolve in various fluid, dynamic ways) invites students to attune to the instability of the present-moment and the uncertain trajectory that dialogue can take.

light, allowing us to see ourselves and each other as evolving beings in a society that desperately requires transformation for justice and liberation to occur. Engaging in this guideline in the midst of co-created dialogue, students become better able to dissolve the blame they place on themselves for their socialization and internalized oppression and begin to replace it with compassion, facilitating movement towards coalition-building and action.

Recognizing that Open, Relax, and Trust Emergence encourage us to “reestablish a naturally fluid way of being” and disrupt the “intricate sense of self... and social norms that separate us from what we do best—move through the world with sensitivity, closely attuned to our environment” (Kramer, 2007, p. 141), these guidelines are critical pathways that students can practice and follow in their journeys of investigating emotions and their connections to systems of socialization. Students, given space to reflect on their conditioning and reactive thoughts and actions, can begin to disrupt and (re)construct their personal and internal landscapes, which looks very different for each student depending on their identities and social locations. This reframing of the IGD pedagogy through the frameworks of mindfulness and the Insight Dialogue guidelines uncovers complicity in perpetuating harmful systems, helping us bring compassionate awareness to the internal changes necessary to facilitate true, sustained external action (Magee, 2019, p. 50).

On Listening Deeply (Insight Dialogue Guideline #5)

A common community guideline proposed by students is to listen first before reacting. Interestingly, during the most heated dialogues, my co-facilitator had to pause the dialogue frequently and ask students to take a mindful breath, settle into their bodily sensations, and remember to listen to others while listening to their own internal dialogues. As facilitators, we observed this lack of relational listening when students moved towards debate rather than dialogue, trying to prove points instead of co-creating new knowledge.

The guideline of Listening Deeply relies on the previous guidelines, as my co-facilitator showed through his instructions. It also serves as a conduit for the mindfulness qualities of “deep self-awareness” and

non-judgmental understanding that “challeng[e] people to plumb the depths of their hearts to identify and uproot the false assumptions, distorted perceptions, and prejudices that were learned and reinforced by influential patterns” (Keator et al., 2017, p. 28) of socialization. By asking students to listen as a foundation of participation, IGD already helps participants foster the mindful dialogic practices of this guideline (Dwyer, Gigliotti, & Lee, 2014). The “practice of deep listening in IGD is the practice of mindfulness, enabling students to develop an understanding of and compassion for their peers and themselves” (Dwyer, Gigliotti, & Lee, 2014, p. 1). Given its structure in which active listening and reflective responses are infused into every aspect of the curriculum, IGD lays the groundwork for further developing mindfulness skills. Using anti-oppression mindful practices and the Listen Deeply guideline, students can extend the skill of listening, usually exercised externally, into their internal landscapes.

For example, as described previously, my co-facilitator often paused students, asking them to notice their embodied experience of the dialogue, locating tensions within the body and naming how the dialogue topics, responses, and connections to traumas were taking shape within themselves. This moment of awareness is an act of internal listening, an opportunity to pull the external dialogue into students’ personal experiences, showing how making space for their inner worlds to speak is a critical component of IGD pedagogy. For Students and Facilitators of Color, this was also an opportunity to notice connections between arising emotions and Racial Battle Fatigue (RBF),¹⁵ which is often defined as “the exhaustion a person of color endures from constantly being positioned to interpret and negotiate microaggressions encountered daily through interactions with peers, authority, or community members (Smith, Yosso, & Solóranzo, 2006)” (as cited in Wozolek, 2015, p. 17).

If a primary goal of IGD is to address the “complex dynamics of connection and disconnection that result from estranged or oppressive

15 For a reflective analysis on the specific ways that Racial Battle Fatigue manifests within IGD and is experienced by Facilitators of Color, please see *Reclaiming the body: Racial embodiment and emotions as a pedagogical practice in intergroup dialogue* (Davis, 2021).

relationships between members of social groups in the larger society” and begin to “build bridges across differences” (Zúñiga, 2003, p. 11), the social constructs underlying these differences must be highlighted and accessed on an internal dialogic level. Considering that every listener “mold[s] and taint[s] what others share by projecting our own stories onto those of our speakers,” it is possible to, unknowingly, “take our conditioned interpretations to be the other’s truth” (Kramer, 2007, p. 152). Infusing the Listening Deeply Insight Dialogue guideline into IGD’s justice-based framework, while calibrating the introduction of this guideline based on social location given the varying tendencies for space-taking and silencing by privileged bodyminds as previously described, can allow for the “boundless receptive listening” (Kramer, 2007, p. 162) that many classrooms seek.

On Speaking Truthfully (Insight Dialogue Guideline #6)

In our course, one of the most contested student-generated community agreements pertained to having authentic conversations and speaking truthfully. During the class debrief following one race-focused intragroup dialogue, white students expressed feeling as if they spoke honestly for the first time while in their intragroup, sharing that they often felt compelled to filter their thoughts around Students of Color. This led to a lengthy dialogue in which Students of Color voiced frustration that their classmates had not been engaging in authentic dialogue for the first half of the semester. The students collectively tried to navigate how to ensure that everyone spoke honestly moving forward.

Due to time constraints, students had to pause this discussion until a later meeting. During this period, a Hot Topic dialogue regarding the death penalty—a student-generated topic—occurred. The energy in the room was palpable. It felt as if everyone was leaning into the dialogue with their whole selves for the first time, fully engaged for the entire session. Reflecting afterwards, multiple students concluded that this dialogue was an honest one wherein passionate, unfiltered statements were finally freely shared, felt, and heard.

When introducing this final guideline, *Speaking Truthfully*, facilitators must, thus, provide students with skills to build upon the self-reflexivity the previous five guidelines promote and continue to encourage students

to speak out while also speaking in. With this, students can continue to unlock personal truths often clouded by emotions and internalized socialization. From this awareness, students can speak from honesty as opposed to aversion, recognizing that with discernment exists the choice to speak words that empower instead of harm. Kramer (2007) states, “To speak the truth we must know the truth” (p. 165) and by ignoring critical consciousness-raising in the midst of the cultivation of mindfulness practices, we only perpetuate personal and collective suffering *and* systemic injustice.

Fostering the ability to break free from deep-rooted harmful patterns can allow students to both build acceptance of the present moment that King (2018) and Magee (2019) note as essential to race-based dialogues and also work to dismantle oppressive systems. This internal shift as a catalyst for societal change is at the root of Bohm’s philosophy of dialogue which Kramer (2007) studied and practiced before creating Insight Dialogue (p. 10). To address society’s greatest challenges, Bohm (1996) believes that one must first recognize that “*thought is the problem*” (p. 12), emphasizing Kramer’s (2007) instructions for humans to speak from truth and silence or, as Bohm calls it, “tacit ground” (p. 16). This “*tacit level*” is “the level for which we have only a vague feeling,” a level that is often “unspoken, which cannot be described—like the knowledge required to ride a bicycle” (Bohm, 1996, p. 16).

Bohm (1996) believes that “*actual knowledge*” (p. 16) exists deep inside us, and if we relearn how to speak from this place, we can transform interpersonal communications from rooted in “aggression and violence . . . toward mutual understanding and trust” (1996, p. 2). Engaging in dialogues where each participant has learned to access, trust, and speak from tacit ground, it becomes possible to “make something *in common*” and “creat[e] something new together” (Bohm, 1996, p. 3). Many of our students with marginalized bodyminds explicitly named how they already speak from this place, moving through the world actively naming and confronting systemic oppression and violence. Qualities of authentic communication must, thus, always be discussed in connection to systems of structural power to center the ways in which these qualities are informed by each participant’s intersecting social locations and fight for liberation.

Infusing Speak Truthfully into the IGD framework invites participants to bring together the entire Insight Dialogue practice, helping them

break free from their conditioning to “hear the other through the screen of [one’s] own thoughts, which [one] tends to maintain and defend, regardless of whether or not they are true or coherent” (Bohm, 1996, p. 3). Participants can then work towards fully seeing, hearing, and knowing the person before them. Therefore, an integrated Insight Dialogue and IGD model through an anti-oppression mindfulness framework creates a space wherein participants’ thoughts emerge from a tacit level of awareness and compassion, generating a dialogic praxis with the capacity to lay the foundation for “bringing to an end the at present insoluble problems of the individual and of society” (Bohm, 1996, p. 5).

Concluding Remarks

This essay seeks to demonstrate how a distinct opportunity exists to intertwine the structures of Insight Dialogue, Intergroup Dialogue, and anti-oppression mindfulness practices. Utilizing dialogue as a catalyst for simultaneous external change and internal self-discovery allows for this “messy” (King, 2018, p. 253) yet crucial task of addressing racial distress and our contributions to each other’s suffering to carve inroads for personal, interpersonal, and societal transformation. We cannot do this work alone and, fortunately, through mindful, justice-based dialogue, we have the tools to embark on the path to liberation together.

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