

Liberatory Accountability

Study Guide One:
Embodied Trauma and Collective Resiliency

September 2019



Tepeyac
Consulting



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ABOUT US



Tepeyac Consulting is a North Carolina-based consulting practice that catalyzes strategic equity efforts in collaboration with grassroots leaders, nonprofit organizations, and foundations. We believe in the power of connecting communities that are most often marginalized from decision-making tables with opportunities to amplify their voices and meaningfully lead social justice efforts. We offer the resources, tools, and frameworks to develop and deepen organizations' and communities' capacity with an explicit and intentional structural analysis of power that informs our work every step of the way.

For over 20 years, our team has worked in multiple capacities to advance equity through state and national policy advocacy, grassroots leadership development, community organizing, facilitation and training, and participatory research. Our engagements incorporate popular education, language justice, inclusive logistics, and accessible content as standards of practice. Our team has an established record of holding spaces and guiding processes that support meaningful dialogue across lines of difference, move groups from analysis to action, and engage in deep self-reflection. It is our strong belief that this work is most impactful when it is intersectional, proactive, collaborative, and radically hopeful.





WELCOME

Hi Everyone,

I am so excited to be in learning community with all of you over the next couple months as we talk about Liberatory Accountability. I am so ready to be in conversation about how we can build practices around **trauma-informed conflict** that are not only healing for ourselves but are also integral on the path to collective liberation. Over the course of our three sessions, we will explore:

- ◇ **Embodied Trauma and Collective Resiliency:** Trauma - whether it is ancestral, personal, and/or collective – is a physiological response to threat and harm. It is your body's activation of all its resources to ensure your survival. Deep human connection gives way to the drive to fight, freeze, run from or please the source of harm. And, these responses that have allowed us to survive for *this* long get wired into our brains and nervous systems. But it is possible to reclaim more space for conscious intent by tapping into our wise minds, brilliant bodies, and divine spirits. We can heal. And, we can heal in community.
- ◇ **Shame and Shadows:** One of the most challenging emotions that can get hardwired into our brains is shame – the sense that our most true self is unlovable, unworthy, and unwanted. We learn as children (and adults) to marginalize and invisibilize the parts of ourselves that would ever expose us to shame. We relegate those flaws and strengths to our shadows and present our ideal selves to the world. That is until our trauma and shame are activated, and all those wounded parts take over the show. Or, until we are deeply witnessed in community and have those shadows pointed out to us. These moments often trigger our deepest threat scanning behaviors and survivor's drive to defend against any danger to our safety, belonging, and worthiness. We deny, deflect, defend, and destroy. Undoubtedly these responses can keep us safe, but they can also create great harm and disconnection. On a collective scale, these responses are the cement that holds together dehumanizing structures of oppression.
- ◇ **Liberatory Accountability:** When we are able to get in front of our automatic trauma responses and lead with our wise minds, we still have all of the feelings! But we can get better with being in our feelings and making more intentional choices. We can experience conflict, mistakes, and losses with all the pain they deserve AND we can

There is always a moment in any kind of struggle when one feels in full bloom. Vivid. Alive. One might be blown to bits in such a moment and still be at peace. To be such a person or to witness anyone at this moment of transcendent presence is to know that what is human is linked, by a daring compassion, to what is divine.

During my years of being close to people engaged in changing the world I have seen fear turn into courage. Sorrow into joy. Funerals into celebrations. Because whatever the consequences, people, standing side by side, have expressed who they really are, and that ultimately, they believe in the love of the world and each other enough *to be that* - which is the foundation of activism.

- Alice Walker,
Anything You

access new resources to meet those moments with choices of compassion, courage, and integrity. We can refuse to cede any of the power that we still hold in our hands and offer more revolutionary responses as builders and defenders and dreamers of light and liberation. We can banish from within us and amongst us the punishing perfectionism, dehumanization, and destruction of the structures we fight against every day.

I am pleased to share with you the first in a series of **study guides** that you will receive over the course of our sessions. These include journal prompts, tools and resources to deepen your learning and reflection. All of our sessions will be recorded and made available to you – so if you can't join us live, you can still listen in before we get together again!

Welcome to Liberatory Accountability!
Paz,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Paz', written in a cursive style.



JOURNAL PROMPTS

Find a comfortable and quiet place to sit or lay down. Close your eyes and place one hand on your heart and one over your belly button. Take three deep breaths. In your mind's eye, remember or imagine a place or a time that created a sense of belonging and safety. Spend some time there and notice the details. What do you see, hear, feel, smell and/or taste? What is it about this place, space, and time that calls you in?

Draw or write about a specific situation when you know that your traumas were being reactivated. Remind yourself that for the moment you are in a comfortable and quiet space. And, as Adrienne Maree Brown says: "move at the speed of trust" – only explore the places that feel safe to trust in this moment, in this process, and with your current support systems.

Take a moment of pause and be your own compassionate observer. Ground your feet to the floor, take some breaths, and scan your body. Offer some curiosity and gentleness to what is happening inside. Scan your body and notice where this trauma becomes embodied. Are you clenching your jaw, furrowing your eyebrows, pulling your shoulders up to your ears? Can you pinpoint the sensations in your body that are serving as your alarms?

When you don't listen to your trauma, how does your body turn up the volume and make you pay attention? How do you experience the physical effects of cumulative trauma?

Return to closing your eyes, placing one hand over your heart and the other over your belly button, and breathe. Go back to the place and space where you remember belonging and safety... and breathe.

Offer some gratitude to your body for how it has held both your experiences of belonging and survival for and with you:





RESOURCES

Embodied Trauma

VIDEO: Peter Levine Demonstrates How Trauma Sticks in the Body

By PESI Inc

<https://youtu.be/fiq0sILHiJs>

What if the traumatic event wasn't the cause of trauma? It's time to rethink trauma by looking to the body's memory of the event, not the mind's interpretation of the story. In this short video, Peter Levine explains how the body holds the energy of trauma and why we can't begin to process the emotional suffering until we first resolve trauma on the physiological level.

VIDEO: How Childhood Trauma Affects Health Across a Lifetime - TEDx

By Nadine Burke Harris

<https://youtu.be/95ovlJ3dsNk>

Childhood trauma isn't something you just get over as you grow up. Pediatrician Nadine Burke Harris explains that the repeated stress of abuse, neglect, and parents struggle with mental health or substance abuse issues has real, tangible effects on the development of the brain. This unfolds across a lifetime, to the point where those who've experienced high levels of trauma are at triple risk for heart disease and lung cancer. An impassioned plea for pediatric medicine to confront the prevention and treatment of trauma, head-on.

Collective Trauma

Research Shows Entire Black Communities Suffer Trauma After Police Shooting

By Tasha Williams

<https://www.yesmagazine.org/mental-health/research-shows-entire-black-communities-suffer-trauma-after-police-shootings-20180803>

The mental health sector is only now researching the impact of police brutality, a concern that has affected African Americans for decades. "Clinicians can go through medical school without [gaining] any experience in treating the effects of racism," Bor says. Studies like his, he adds, can help to create long overdue critical mainstream discussions about the effects of racism on mental health, such as, "How do we in public health, society, and among the

clinical and mental health services support people when these incidents occur?" and "Can a profession dominated by White providers effectively treat the emotional struggles of 'living while Black' in this country?"

VIDEO: Study finds PTSD effects may linger in body chemistry of next generation

By *PBS NewsHour*

<https://youtu.be/zV9sya4F5KQ>

New research on survivors of the Holocaust shows how catastrophic events can alter our body chemistry, and how these changes can transmit to the next generation. The result? Our children may suffer the effects of a traumatic event they never witnessed.

Resilience

We Need You to Show Up to the Riot, Well Rested

By *Keno Evol*

https://buttonpoetry.com/riot-well-rested-keno-evol/?fbclid=IwAR1biiCeDBC_LVROkwwup7h1NEyHgTj_HQbvJXdgTf9NtLpEoq6NGM0WLD8

"Within this work we are constantly digging, getting deeper within ourselves. Self-examination, while living under supremacy trying to shift/transform/transport our societies to other worlds, is an exhausting assignment. We must participate in self-care and give ourselves permission to do so. In the age of the 24-hour news cycles with journalism that goes for the extravaganza of conflicts, especially with social media, it is easy to get wrapped in the chasm of catastrophe. We must unwind and unwrap. This work creates both exhausting memories and exhausted muscles, and it's no joke. Especially for those of us who carry black bodies and identify as activists and organizers."

Why Somatics for Social Justice and a Transformative Movement?

By *general somatics*

<http://www.generativesomatics.org/sites/default/files/Why%2BSomatics%2Bfor%2BSJ.pdf>

"While we work to change the external conditions that create the systemic trauma experienced by oppressed communities, competency in recognizing and addressing trauma is critical if we are to sustain ourselves, as we deal with the trauma in our own lives. This does not mean that social justice organizers need to become healers, but rather that an understanding of trauma and healing can inform programming, change strategies and potentially address staff and constituency needs. While we see that politicized healers need a place in the movement in order to provide support and deeper healing, we also see that

social justice organizational staff and members could benefit from foundational distinctions, practices and processes regarding trauma, its short- and long-term impact, and holistic healing processes. Somatics offers this. And, through somatics trainings for politicized healers we are helping to build the folks and skill base that the movement needs for its own individual and collective healing and transformation.”

WORKBOOK: Community Resiliency Model Workbook

By Elaine Miller-Karas, LCSW

https://pacificaidnetwork.org/files/2013/12/Community-Resiliency-Model-Workbook-Sept.-2013.doc1_.pdf

This workbook will help you understand the key concepts of the Community Resiliency Model as a biological intervention that can help you learn to stabilize your nervous system and feel more whole in mind, body, and spirit. Once a person learns CRM skills they can also be passed on to friends, family, and the wider community.



your life. love it.
from the hurt to the wonder.
from the bone to the flower.
love it.
with everything you've got.
it's yours.

there
are
feelings.
you haven't felt yet.
give them time.
they are almost here.

- nayirrah waheed



MEET YOUR FACILITATOR



Marisol Jiménez is the founder and lead consultant for Tepeyac Consulting and brings over twenty years of community engagement, training/facilitation, and policy advocacy experience to her practice. She earned her bachelor's degree in Psychology from Loyola University Chicago and her Master in Social Work (MSW) from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill School of Social Work. She served as adjunct faculty at both NC State University's and UNC Chapel Hill's social work

graduate programs offering courses in social policy analysis and advocacy, community engagement, and racial equity. She was also invited to offer the commencement address at both universities in 2006 and 2010.

Marisol served as the Advocacy Director and Chief Lobbyist for El Pueblo, a NC statewide advocacy organization working on public policy issues at the local, state, and national levels. She analyzed and researched the impacts of public policies affecting the immigrant community and lobbied members of the NC General Assembly and the U.S. Congress for progressive changes in the sectors of health, farmworker rights, education, housing, civil rights, public safety, and immigration. She co-wrote and lobbied for a NC in-state tuition bill that garnered statewide and national attention, led efforts to defend access to drivers' licenses for undocumented immigrants, and mobilized communities across North Carolina around comprehensive immigration reform. She was a steering committee member of the Coalition for Comprehensive Immigration Reform National Strategy Council (2007); and led statewide efforts to organize mass demonstrations for immigrant justice in 2006 and 2007. In 2007, Marisol was recognized for her efforts and given the ACLU Award for Advocacy

Through this work, it became clear that dynamics of power, privilege, and oppression were often replicated within social justice movements and even contributed to her own professional advancement. Marisol made a decision to lean into a growing analysis of her own privilege and shift her position within social justice efforts towards racial equity organizational development and leadership coaching. Marisol joined the consulting firm of OpenSource Leadership Strategies, a national consulting firm committed to amplifying the work of social justice organizations and served as the Racial Equity Training Director. She co-developed a framework for a structural analysis of inequities and tools for equity action planning that are now used with hundreds of nonprofit organizations and foundations nationally. Marisol, herself, has trained hundreds of community leaders, nonprofit staff and board, and government leaders across the country on how to build an analysis of structural inequities and develop equity strategies to address them.

In 2015, she transitioned out of her work with OpenSource Leadership Strategies in order to invest more deeply in her local community as an activist and organizer while also building an independent consulting practice – Tepeyac Consulting. **Tepeyac Consulting** is a North Carolina-based consulting practice that catalyzes strategic equity efforts in collaboration with grassroots leaders, nonprofit

organizations, and foundations. She believes in the power of connecting communities that are most often marginalized from decision-making tables with opportunities to amplify their voices and meaningfully lead social justice efforts. Tepeyac offers the resources, tools, and frameworks to develop and deepen organizations' and communities' capacity with an explicit and intentional structural analysis of power that informs the work every step of the way.

For the past 10 years, Marisol has worked in multiple capacities to advance equity through facilitation and training, participatory research, transformational community engagement, and frontline activism. Her consulting incorporates popular education, language justice, inclusive logistics, and accessible content as standards of practice. Marisol has worked with leaders in the areas of education, immigrant justice, workers' rights, youth leadership development, health, and the environment.

Through Tepeyac Consulting, Marisol has been able to work on a number of exciting projects, including: building the infrastructure of a sanctuary movement with Compañeros Inmigrantes de las Montañas en Acción (CIMA) and Nuestro Centro; partnering with the Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation to strengthen the statewide infrastructure of the NC Latino immigrant justice movement; and offering racial equity trainings and coaching for community leaders and organizations across the country. Marisol has an established record of holding spaces and guiding processes that support meaningful dialogue across lines of difference, move groups from analysis to action, and hold space for courageous conversations and deep self-reflection. It is our strong belief that this work is most impactful when it is intersectional, proactive, collaborative, and radically hopeful.



Tepeyac Consulting

www.tepeyacconsulting.org

919-824.7910

"This is what we are about. We plant seeds that one day will grow. We water seeds already planted, knowing that they hold the future promise. We lay foundations that will need further development. We provide yeast that produces effects far beyond our capabilities. We cannot do everything and there is a sense of liberation in realizing that. This enables us to do something and to do it very well. It may be incomplete, but it is a beginning, a step along the way."

-- Archbishop Oscar Romero