

Tools for White Guys who are Working for Social Change

(and other people socialized in a society based on domination)

<http://www.tao.ca/~colours/whiteguys.html>

1. Practice noticing who's in the room at meetings - how many men, how many women, how many white people, how many people of color, is it majority heterosexual, are there out queers, what are people's class backgrounds. Don't assume to know people, but also work at being more aware.
- 2a. Count how many times you speak and keep track of how long you speak.
- 2b. Count how many times other people speak and keep track of how long they speak.
3. Be conscious of how often you are actively listening to what other people are saying as opposed to just waiting your turn and/or thinking about what you'll say next.
4. Practice going to meetings focused on listening and learning; go to some meetings and do not speak at all.
- 5a. Count how many times you put ideas out to the group.
- 5b. Count how many times you support other people's ideas for the group.
6. Practice supporting people by asking them to expand on ideas and get more in-depth, before you decide to support the idea or not.
- 7a. Think about whose work and contribution to the group gets recognized.
- 7b. Practice recognizing more people for the work they do and try to do it more often.
8. Practice asking more people what they think about meetings, ideas, actions, strategy and vision. White guys tend to talk amongst themselves and develop strong bonds that manifest in organizing. This creates an internal organizing culture that is alienating for most people. Developing respect and solidarity across race, class, gender and sexuality is complex and difficult, but absolutely critical - and liberating.
9. Be aware of how often you ask people to do something as opposed to asking other people "what needs to be done".
10. Think about and struggle with the saying, "you will be needed in the movement when you realize that you are not needed in the movement".
11. Struggle with and work with the model of group leadership that says that the responsibility of leaders is to help develop more leaders, and think about what this means to you.
12. Remember that social change is a process, and that our individual transformation and individual liberation is intimately interconnected with social transformation and social liberation. Life is profoundly complex and there are many contradictions. Remember that the path we travel is guided by love, dignity and respect - even when it is bumpy and difficult to navigate.
13. This list is not limited to white guys, nor is it intended to reduce all white guys into one category. This list is intended to disrupt patterns of domination which hurt our movement and hurt each other. White guys have a lot of work to do, but it is the kind of work that makes life worth living.
14. Day-to-day patterns of domination are the glue that maintain systems of domination. The struggle against capitalism, white supremacy, patriarchy, heterosexism and the state, is also the struggle towards collective liberation.
15. No one is free until all of us are free.