

Opening to Freedom: Embodied Practice for White Folks in Racial Justice Movements

A Year-Long Embodiment Intensive- [Application available here](#)

Why this program now?

The call to co-create an intimate program emerges from almost five years of bringing somatics to white racial justice organizers. The focus thus far has been on practicing together and building a community around our shared commitments to end white supremacy in our lifetimes and to actually practice a positive white anti-racist community. **We want to go deeper together. Deeper in practice, in relationship, and in our capacity to hold the complexity and urgency of this political moment as accountable, relaxed, and dignified white people—with love and rigor.** We know that more is possible when we practice together because we've seen it already. What more might be possible if we commit to this intensive container, for a year of deepening together?

This political moment is what practice is for. Practice helps us deepen our roots, widen into community, feel our depth of experience, and move towards our longings and visions for the future. When we gather for practice and political commitment, we resource and ready ourselves to continue the work for liberation, building strong Black, Brown, and working-class-led movements and ending white supremacy.

Who is creating this program?

Embodying Racial Justice (ERJ) facilitates online and in-person programs to support social movement practitioners interested in learning more about their bodies, their responses under pressure, and their capacity to work with other white people and people of color toward racial justice.

[Dara Silverman](#) is the lead teacher, as part of a skilled team of teachers including - [Cari Caldwell](#), [Michael Strom](#), [Becca Meredith](#), [Rachel Plattus](#), and [Lu Nephew](#) (song-leader). Each teacher will be a mentor to a small group of participants. Lu will lead us in songs, perhaps like [this one](#).

The program overall has an advisory group of BIPOC and white embodiment practitioners and racial justice organizers.

Who is the program for?

The program is for white people who are currently doing political work. This is broadly defined and can include organizing, base-building, education, crisis work, mutual aid, healing and more. Previous cohorts included bodyworkers, educators, therapists, organizers, artists and more. Deepa Iyer's [social change ecosystem map](#) identifies many roles political and movement folks may occupy. (Future offerings may include multi-racial courses, stay tuned for more details.)

What is the shape of the program?

This course combines neuroscience, physical movement, song, connection to nature as well as practical and theoretical grounding materials into a unique curriculum specialized for organizers, coaches, facilitators, trainers, and others focused on change-making.

The yearlong is focused on building individual and group embodiment and applying somatic practice and principles to yourself, your work and the framework you bring to the world. The curriculum is not focused on

learning to teach somatics, but rather on bringing the principles of somatics into yourself, your life, and your anti-racist work.

The course includes:

- Four in-person retreats spread across the year, for 16 days of practice time “on the mat”
- Optional weekly virtual practice sessions
- Monthly practice & methodology calls in between retreats to stay in practice together and go deeper in relationship and on political analysis
- Monthly mentorship circles with members of the teaching team
- Up to two individual sessions per participant with one of the teachers
- A practitioner track for advanced students (those with 16+ days on the mat in this lineage)

Prerequisites: Prior somatic experience is not a prerequisite, but it is recommended. We welcome participants who are new to somatics and who have more experience with these practices and this lineage.

- While it is not required, we recommend folks attend a four-day somatic intensive prior to joining the year long program. This supports you and the group to have shared practice. You can see the full calendar [here](#).
- For those who are more advanced, we are offering a practitioner track to deepen your learning in this methodology. (see below for more details) The practitioner track is for advanced students who have more than 16 days of in-person training with Embodying Racial Justice or other courses in the methodology before joining Opening to Freedom (Strozzi Institute, generative somatics, the Embodiment Institute, etc.)
- For those who are new to this somatic methodology, the practitioner track would be open to you after completing one year in the program.

What will participants get from this program?

Participants will leave with a community of practitioners who have shared political commitments and who are familiar with your individual visions for the future. Deeper embodiment in this lineage of somatics, in how you show up as a white person in movement, and in political analysis. A set of frameworks, principles, practices, and tools to support and deepen your work in the world. The opportunity to learn with and from experienced social change and somatic teachers.

All participants will develop & receive:

- A community of practice and long-term relationships with peers who are in a shared political commitment with you
- Building a positive white anti-racist community and culture
- Practice that deepens your somatic awareness and ability to be present, open, and connected

At the level of personal embodiment and transformation, we promise that this course will support you to develop the following:

- Transformation: Movement from old shape to new shape in current political conditions
- Congruence: aligning embodiment, words, and actions with your longings in the world as well as the ability to bring those into the rooms you're in

- Community: relationships and peers who are in it with you.
- Practice: Deepening in your somatic practice.

Participants on the practitioner track will develop and receive:

At the level of somatic work with groups and individuals, we promise that this course will give participants in the practitioner track the opportunity to build and be assessed in the following competencies:

- Understanding and applying embodied anti-racist frameworks in individual and group work (including frameworks like under, over, and centered accountability; blend; sites of shaping; contradictions and conditioned tendencies through the lens of white supremacy)
- Capacity to assess the shape of groups, what they need, and how to blend and move them towards their next steps
- Making grounded assessments of individual and collective shapes
- Supporting individuals and groups to begin to understand their shaping, build their somatic awareness, and begin to make new, more aligned choices in response

Location: All the retreats will be held in the Pacific Northwest. Location is forthcoming.

Dates

- Retreat 1: April 3-6, 2025
- Retreat 2: May 29-June 1, 2025
- Retreat 3: August 7-10, 2025
- Retreat 4: Nov 13-Nov 16, 2025

Size: We plan for a group of 28 participants and 5 teachers.

Cost:

Offering a sliding scale registration system allows the widest range of participants to pay at the level that is meaningful to them and at the level they can afford. Some embodiment work is inaccessible to people at different income levels and from different class backgrounds. At ERJ our commitment is to making somatics as accessible as possible for the sake of growing our movements for justice.

All of this only works if each person registers at the level they are able - not at a level lower than what they can pay. Together we can create financial balance when we each pay in alignment with our abilities.

This course is offered on a sliding scale. The true cost of this program is \$10,000 per participant. All prices include room and meals for each course. We support participants to car-pool to the training site.

Organizational: \$8,000-\$20,000: for participants who have organization sponsorship, the registration tier is based on each organization's annual budget.

\$20,000 per registrant if the budget is above \$30 million
 \$16,000 per registrant if the budget is between \$20-\$30 million
 \$12,000 per registrant if the budget is between \$10 - \$20 million
 \$10,000 per registrant if the budget is between \$5 - \$10 million
 \$8,000 per registrant if the budget is below \$5 million

\$6,000 per registrant if the budget is below \$1 million

Individual: for participants who are registering as an individual, the registration is based on personal capacity.

Builder \$16,000-\$20,000+- for those who have generational or inherited wealth and want to off-set the costs of the program for other participants

Sustainer \$12,001-\$16,000: for those who have generational or inherited wealth

Supporter \$10,000-\$12,000: for those who have a regular income and additional support, either from other employment or alternative sources, and have funds to support other projects beyond paying their rent or mortgage (\$10,000 is the true cost to cover the costs of running a course)

Capacity \$8,000-\$9,999: for those who have a regular income and are comfortably paying their rent or mortgage

Grounded \$6,000-\$7,999: for those who are paying their mortgage or rent

Equity \$3,000-\$5,999: for those who are challenged to make ends meet

Please note we allocate a specific number of registrations at each tier for each course. That way Embodying Racial Justice can cover the costs associated with running the course. The specifics vary for each course, and one sample breakdown of the slots available at each tier is:

1- Builder- \$16,000-\$20,000+

2 - Sustainer \$12,001-\$16,000

4 - Organizational \$6,000-\$16,000

8 - Supporter (this is the true cost to ERJ per course participant) \$10,000-\$12,000

5 - Capacity \$8,000-\$9,999

4 - Grounded \$6,000-\$7,999

3 - Equity \$3,000-\$5,999

This [infographic](#) includes more about the sliding scale tiers for consideration.

All of this only works if everyone pays at the level they are able - not at a level lower than what they can pay. Together we can create financial balance when we each pay in alignment with our abilities.

The registration fee pays facilitators a living wage, supports the redistribution of a minimum of 20% of funds to local Black and Indigenous groups as well as [Black Organizing for Leadership and Dignity](#), and includes the organizing and administrative support associated with the course. This also includes all meals, snacks and drinks during the course.

We want to make this work financially for as many people as possible and we want to be in dialogue with you about what will support you to participate. [Please contact us](#) if you would like to discuss your application.

More Information

- For more information [visit our website](#).
- [A list of frequently asked questions \(FAQ\) is here.](#)

Testimonials & Messages from Participants

- [Testimonials](#) from previous participants are available.
- Messages from current and previous participants are viewable:

- [Ren Rhodes](#)
- [Ty Marshall](#)

Have more Questions? We'd love to answer them.

If you'd like to set up a one-on-one to talk about the program, please contact [Embodying Racial Justice](#) or [book a time to talk with Dara](#) directly.

Application - The application [is now available here](#)