

Guidelines #20 Wrap up

We did it! We got through all of the guidelines. This is my wrap-up for all... I think there are 19, maybe even 20 guidelines. A lot of times, people are going around asking, [mimicking] "Why do we even need guidelines?" "Why do we need guidelines? Guidelines are just another way of saying rules. You have so many rules."

And then they call me a cult leader. Let me tell you why we have the guidelines, why they're in place. For a long time, we didn't. For the first year, year and a half, we didn't have guidelines at all. We assumed-- incorrectly, as it happens-- that most people, most of the time, would be able to stay at a certain level to be able to engage at... at a certain level, and be able to hold their own hands, and mind their slosh. At the beginning of this journey of mine almost three years ago, this space was going to be a lot about very strictly racial justice praxis, to a smaller extent the ethics that surround it. What we found, though, is that before people could get to that work, they needed the relational piece.

They needed to be able to find ways of doing things that they had never done before. No one had ever talked to them about holding their own hand. No one had ever talked to them about how you are able to be in communion with someone without blowing up, shutting down, or running away. No one had ever talked to them about losing strategies and winning strategies... and so we decided that it was worthwhile to be able to inculcate these things in our praxis as well, not just so that people have an easier time navigating the space, but also so that we learn how to do relationship well.

We talk about relational ethics a lot because for me, I am convinced that it is the relationship... both in aggregate, in terms of groups of people, and also the personal dyadic and triadic and smaller group relationships... that make or break a racial justice praxis. But in order to be able to have the relationships that people yearn for and not just hearts and flowers but the Hesed relationship that we talk about, too. No nonsense, uncompromising, unflinching, eye to eye kind of love. We have to learn to do that. I know for a fact that I did not learn these things... they came with hard practice and hard experience, but they do work. When you are dedicated to relational ethics, and the person that you are meeting is also invested in relational ethics, good things happen.

Making that practice part of our lives of justice is imperative. We're convinced that doing the internal work that drives external praxis is the way to go, not least because it's been done the other way for so long and it hasn't been as effective as it could be. We believe that these guidelines are just that-- in alignment with what I just said-- and they are not rules. Rules are something that you-- I wish I was wearing a jacket-- that you take on and off like a jacket.

These guidelines are in service to our North Star. They literally are guides. Guides that get you to where you say you want to be, not just in a racial justice praxis, but definitely in a racial justice praxis, but in all other areas of your life if you allow it to be. We believe that these guidelines buttress our ethos and shared commitment to this work. It makes it easier for you to

come here and do hard things and listen to hard things and watch hard things and stay strong so that you can learn in this laboratory and then take it outside.

We are absolutely dedicated to each and every one of these guidelines. They are subject to change; it's a living document; yada yada... things have changed, and since the nine months when I first wrote this in March of 2020, and they'll change again so just like not even scripture is scripture. This isn't scripture. It can change; it can grow. If you have any questions about any of the guidelines, talk to one of us. Talk to me; talk to my staff; talk to leadership team; take it on the boards, because there is wisdom... there is great wisdom and knowledge and graciousness in this community that we have forged together. These guidelines are to keep us together and cohesive for the long haul, not just so that we can be a happy community, but so that we can further our North Star to lessen and mitigate the harm endured by Black and Brown people, perpetuated by white people and white supremacy. If you look at each and every one of the guidelines, you will see that it is an answer, a response... dare I say, a rebuke... to what we see out in the world, which is white supremacist. We see eye to eye as opposed to hierarchy top down.

We invite everyone to have skin in the game. We invite everyone to be mask on to keep themselves as safe as possible for their fellow walkers in service to the North Star. Every single one of the guidelines that we have done has been done with thoughtfulness and intention, and we are confident that if people choose to not only live out their commitment here by adhering to these guidelines, that it will be that much easier to take it outside and live and come in in community and commitment there we feel that what we're doing here is scalable and replicable... and one of the ways it's replicable is through these guidelines. I look forward to seeing you mixing it up with your kind candor, shared ethos, winning strategies, so that by this time next year when we're talking about the guidelines again we'll all be that much further along. Wow, I love this space, and I love all of you.