

Entitlement--An orientation towards what I am *getting* rather than what I am *contributing*. Expecting to stay emotionally and physically comfortable at all times, with others doing the labor to make that possible. Can also be subtle ways of acting out internalized messages around class that translate to an expectation of getting more (time, support, etc) than others or expecting to not have to do the same things as other people.

Individualism--Intertwined with entitlement, individualism teaches all of us to orient towards ourselves rather than towards the collective. Bootstraps myths perpetuate this idea of individual advancement rather than all things being a group effort. Prioritizing one's own needs over that of the whole, again asking what can I get rather what do we need?

Flakiness and unreliability--Because class privilege can both lead to a plethora of options to choose from and not having to rely on community for survival, people with class privilege sometimes come to activist spaces from an unreliable or inconsistent place. Rooting in building strong relationships and leaning towards interdependence helps to counter this.

Perfectionism--Schools, especially elite schools sometimes encourage an orientation towards perfectionism and reward people for being the best at tearing everything apart which carries over in a destructive way to organizing culture. Perfectionism can both be a block that prevents action or a wedge that leads to a culture of critique. Aim for *integrity* not *perfection*.

Paternalism--Rooted in a belief that there's one right way to do things and that you can know what that is for someone else. Paternalism shows up as talking down to people, making decisions for others, judgment and a generalized distrust of poor people.

Controlling/Micromanaging--Related to paternalism and others listed above. People with class privilege can become used to a dynamic of paying to have things how they want them done. This can become normalized and carry over to a desire to control or micromanage how others behave, speak or otherwise act individually or institutionally.

Loss of Perspective--Disconnection from the reality most people face in terms of money, safety and wellbeing, leading to a distortion of what is enough, what individuals "deserve" and have a right to have.

Positive shifts/intention class privileged people can make:

Humility. Humility in some ways is the opposite of entitlement. It roots us in an awareness of how much we have to learn and an honest assessment of what we have to offer. Humility grounds us in a desire to know and share, not an entitlement to know or be right.

Show up! Cutting a check is so sooo important and it doesn't buy you a seat at the table. It helps make sure there is a table! Showing up to that table with consistency and a desire to build authentic relationships is what builds trust and trust helps build the type of power we need for big wins.

Show up with your humanity. As long as you are showing up, might as well bring your humanity with you! By humanity I mean your ability to authentically connect with yourself and others. Privilege serves to distance us from ourselves and one another, reconnecting with our own humanity helps us to reconnect with the humanity of those around us. Sometimes for people with class privilege there is a fear of connecting because of being scared that someone will ask for something from you, or that interacting with poor people will surface shame around having more than you need. Learning to take responsibility for your actions and to be proactive in addressing power dynamics related to class can help confront that shame.

Cultivate resilience. Class privilege, especially when compounded with race or other privileges can lead to a certain level of fragility, this can mean that if you're feeling hurt or something doesn't go the way you want you bounce. Poor and working class communities have long histories of resiliency which serve long term organizing very well, these include working with conflict. Folks with class privilege who intend to do long term activism can benefit from cultivating more of a sense of perspective, introspection and resiliency to offset some of the fragility that comes with class privilege.

Orient towards the good of the whole. Be willing to put aside your own personal interests and desires for what is best for a collective. Try to pay attention to what other individuals are going through, and zoom out to what the greater community needs. Do not let self-care interfere with community care- strive to do both.

Educate yourself about racial capitalism and find role models. Calculate what % you are in the US to bring in perspective when you feel scarcity. Learn more about how your wealth is connected to anti-Black racism, theft of Indigenous land, and other exploitation while also learning about examples of social justice activists who are using their class privilege to support poor, working class and/or POC led organizing.

Take risks. Making mistakes is a natural part of being alive and is how we learn. Part of being authentic means making mistakes and having positive repair. Strive to show up for yourself, others and social change work in real ways, even if it means making mistakes.

*All systems of oppression carry some of the same markers, therefore there is a lot of overlap with this list and the list of patterns associated with white supremacist culture as noted by Tema Okun. Classism is deeply rooted in ourselves, in our culture and in our institutions. Cultivating more authentic cross-class, cross-race activism requires us all showing up to the work with self-reflection, a guiding understanding of history and a willingness to be transformed. This document was originally written by Jes Kelley, to give feedback email Sahana at sahana@resourcegeneration.org.