

When we struggle personally and collectively with conflict and injustice, where do we turn? When liberatory projects, campaigns, and larger movements burn and fizzle out, how can we build resilience across individuals and communities to keep up the work? How do we develop real solidarity, and commit to a struggle for liberation? Perhaps, like me, these questions nag at you as you navigate the intricacies of community.

In April and May this year, I, along with other local community members and organizers, attended a four-week workshop series called Wayfinding Towards Solidarity and Struggle (WTSS), created and facilitated by Eugene-based organizer and educator Eva. The workshop series was offered as an educational space where participants could explore how to better align actions with liberatory intentions, in part by strengthening practices around personal and collective care.

These practices were grounded by discussions of the ways psychological warfare and counter-insurgency tactics permeate both movements and individuals through corporate media, government, and nonprofit institutions. Eva's stated goals for the series were for participants to: increase our awareness of how we engage in movement work, to perceive our feelings and the conditions they arise from with greater clarity, to sharpen our discernment when committing to sustainable care and principled action, and to strengthen our resistance against various forms of state-sponsored manipulation we encounter every day.

Over the four weeks, participants explored the ways in which identities, feelings, and actions become nefariously co-opted by institutions with vested interest in neutralizing movements for change before they have the power to alter the settler-colonial, capitalist status quo. As seen with the George Floyd Uprising of 2020, and Occupy, the Gay Rights movement before then, and even before then, the Black, Indigenous, Chicano, and Borriqueño Power movements of the Civil Rights era, State interests successfully folded those movements back into the

capitalist mainstream; defanging them before the full potential of those movements could be realized.

This counter-insurgent strategy is why you'll see a George Floyd memorial mural on a building in Eugene, but in the same city killer-cops such as Sergeant Samuel Tykol walk around free and employed. This kind of liberal doublethink is disconcerting to Eva, who saw a need for a course that carefully parses out these forces at play here in Eugene.

Eva, raised in Kalapuya Ilihi, recalls growing up with a strong sense of justice due to her diasporic background and critical thinking her father ingrained in her at an early age. It wasn't until Eva left Eugene to study marine science in the kingdom of Hawai'i where she encountered mentors and communities that she would begin to more concretely unlearn settler-colonialism and transform her worldview.

After decades of learning from mentors like Pelika Andrade, Hanif Fazal, and Anjali Nath Upadhyay, Eva decided to share her learning with her community in Eugene after becoming frustrated with the way white folks dominated organizing spaces.

Eager to unpack the ways we relate to each other in movement work, her principle motivation in developing WTSS was her love of education,

*"I love education, period. And I don't mean academia, I mean learning and unlearning, and also bringing knowledge in a consensual and very community-oriented way. I learned recently from bell hooks, and some other rad folks, like Leanne Betasamosake Simpson, about how **a core part of education is relationships**. I'm still trying to develop my own approach that's centered around that and clarify that, so we could call that pedagogy. A liberatory pedagogy is what I would like to continuously develop and try to integrate and*

embody. I'm newer to teaching, so I wouldn't claim that I have a liberatory pedagogy, but that's my orientation."

Further, Eva developed this course out of her experiences trying to get involved in a predominantly white organizing community— stating that,

"Some of this is a response to what I was experiencing and witnessing and hearing from other folks of color and being like, can we please do better? It is not coming out as a slap back or something, but let's actually be about what we say we're about and figure out what that really means and looks like. And then provide a space where we can actually start being honest about what's happening and getting ourselves more in alignment. It doesn't mean that we expect perfection and everyone gets it right away. But can we get in a space where we can have some humility and work harder? Because if we really say we're about the shit, we need to understand what that means in our personal relationships, how we're showing up in community."

Each week's sessions began with a grounding activity and share-outs about participant's evolving care practices, with the goal of becoming more attuned with our mental and physical wellness, and in extension, our community's as well. This work was an important part of the process, serving the objective of learning how to better embody liberatory principles.

This attention to the ways our feelings impact community engagement fostered an atmosphere of openness that allowed participants to dive deep into how our emotions intersect with our work in movement spaces. Eva shared that,

"For most of us who grew up in the settler-colonial U.S., a lot of our feelings are deeply conditioned, and so we have a lot of unlearning to do around our feelings and our notions of certain things. [In the course] We talked about notions of

safety, and how propagandized white people are around their notions of safety or unsafety, that it's disproportionate to the actual threats happening. And then not only what we do with those feelings, but, who's entitled to feeling safe?"

WTSS offered a space to explore emotional safety and unsafety: an experimental place to fall apart, look at the pieces, and put ourselves back together anew. In the words of Anjali Nath Upadhyay, Eva quotes that **we need to pull the weeds before we plant the seeds**. This work was something many in the community were evidently eager to do, as Eva garnered enough interest in the workshop to run three different cohorts over a couple months. □For many, this workshop offering was a small remedy for the deep wounds that undercut movement work, a much needed opportunity for analytical renewal.

Eva emphasizes the importance of openness to the process, sharing,

"Something I've learned from some of my past mentors, particularly Hanif Fazal and Anjali [Nath Upadhyay], is that in learning spaces you have to be open to learning, which also means you have to be open to messing up on some level. And because you know that you might mess up, there has to be a lot of responsibility...And the thing that I really love that Anjali always brings in is humility. Nobody's expected to know everything, and if you think you do, that arrogance is going to keep you from actually learning or unlearning. And so, keeping it humble is one of the most essential parts of learning in my experience."

In many popular rebellions and resistance movements across the globe, education played instrumental roles in helping to bring about change. Taking the time to sit down together and study the world around us, the systems that shape us, helps us better understand what is not working and what can be done to make it better. WTSS was designed from decades of Eva's own

studies to help cut through the bullshit, and crafted with popular education initiatives in places outside of the US imperial core in mind.

Nothing comes from nowhere, and Eva reminds us that western education is not neutral. We have a responsibility, especially in the imperial core, to understand the world around us holistically, and to share our accumulated knowledge and wisdom with our broader community. To gatekeep knowledge in institutions such as academia serves only the elite. To unquestioningly accept history as it was taught in public school systems serves only the state. Eva asks: What revolution didn't have education as part of it?

Workshops such as Wayfinding Towards Solidarity and Struggle are part of how we work towards building a comprehensive resistance movement to challenge and defeat American imperialism. Heartened by the enthusiasm around this first workshop, Eva will host another course in the coming weeks called Outdoor WReck— where participants will explore their relationships with outdoor recreation and the industry's colonial projects.

Register at <https://bit.ly/outdoorwreck>.