



## GUIDE FOR FACILITATING ANTI-RACISM CONVERSATIONS



Art by Maggie Stephenson

*“It is not your responsibility to finish the work [of perfecting the world], but you are not free to desist from it either.” - Pirkei Avot 2:16*

The Jewish tradition of Rosh Chodesh (monthly gathering to celebrate the new moon) and chevruta (pairs and small groups) create sacred and brave environments for learning and wrestling with challenging concepts in order to find a way forward.

This is an opportunity to really see, listen, and understand each other. We invite you and your Well Circle or chevruta to dive in together.

### 3 Tips for Navigating Difficult Conversations:

1. **Check-in with Your Body:** This is a great Opening Ritual to kick off your Well Circle. Invite each person to close their eyes and check-in with the bodies, then go around and share how you feel in your mind, body and heart. Take time to be with your body and listen inwardly. What emotions are appearing, and where are they showing up in your body? Whether grief, rage, shock, numbness -- Invite them in, care for yourself. Know that understanding where you are in this moment in time is key to your healing journey and that it is important to process and give space to whatever is coming up for you.
2. **Notice and Name your Feelings:** Notice what feelings come up. Allow yourself to sit with all feelings that arise. This moment is about Black people building power and making our country aware of the racial oppression it has been enacting for centuries. No matter what comes up for you or what your race is, this is the time to show up for Black people in your local communities as well as Black Jews and center them with *Hesed* - love, compassion and empathy. If you are a POC looking for support (check out this [healing circle](#)) [Black Jews Are Grieving, and We Need You to Help Us Mourn](#)



[‘Believe us’: Black Jews respond to the George Floyd protests, in their own words](#)

*\*Optional Well Circle Activity - Read these articles, then draw a map of your body. Where do you feel anger? Then draw it. Where do you feel sadness? Then mark it down. You can play with colors and emotions. This exercise will show you where you hold these feelings. It's important for your health to be aware of where you hold emotions and how they affect you ([Psychology Today](#)).*



3. **Create or Find a Prayer:** A [study](#) by Koenig and colleagues found that six weekly prayer sessions with patients at a primary care office lowered their depression and anxiety symptoms and increased their optimism. What prayers are coming up for you at this moment? Whether you are on the streets or contributing to social change in other ways, how is prayer and connection to a Higher Source/ G-d/ the Divine supporting you during this time? It is important to find ways to ground yourself during this time - whether through prayer, meditation, therapy - find ways in your life to nourish yourself so that you can be in this work for the long term. Here is a prayer and ways to create your own!

- a. Check out this [Protest Prayer by April Baskin](#)
- b. Journal what comes to mind and write a prayer that comes to your mind first, just let the words flow.
- c. Try experimenting with an acrostic (a poem in which you write a meaningful word vertically, and then each line of the poem opens with a word whose first letter is determined by the word you wrote vertically; in mine, I used “gratitude” as the key word.) Here’s an [example](#) below.

God, I never  
Realized how important it is for  
A person like myself  
To grapple with the Torah  
In search of meaning  
Thank you for  
Understanding and  
Doing all you do, which  
Enables me to stretch and grow

**Additional tools to help you have hard conversations :**

- [Conversation roadblocks and how to surmount them](#) via Catalyst
- [Race and ethnicity conversation guide](#) via Living Room Conversations
- [Be brave enough to start a conversation that matters](#) via Daring Discussions

Toolkit

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## Chevruta and Well Circle Activities:

### Text Study and discussions:

Take turns reading the below texts out loud and discuss:

1. How is the text related to what's happening in the world?
2. Does it make you want to take action? If so, in what way and how?

1. Talmud Shabbat 54b

*"Anyone who had the capability to effectively protest the sinful conduct of the members of his household and did not protest, he himself is apprehended for the sins of the members of his household and punished. If he is in a position to protest the sinful conduct of the people of his town, and he fails to do so, he is apprehended for the sins of the people of his town. If he is in a position to protest the sinful conduct of the whole world, and he fails to do so, he is apprehended for the sins of the whole world."*

2. Exodus 23:9

*"You shall not oppress a stranger, for you know the feelings of the stranger, having yourselves been strangers in the land of Egypt."*

3. Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel

*"Prayer is meaningless unless it is subversive, unless it seeks to overthrow and to ruin the pyramids of callousness, hatred, opportunism, falsehoods."*

### Reading and discussions:

Read these together or in chevruta pairs. Then pose the questions below and let every woman in your Circle react, process and listen.



### [Mapping Our Roles in Social Change Ecosystems](#) by [Building Movement](#)

- Where do you feel excited to invest energy in social change?
- What are your gifts and how can you contribute to the collective right now? There are so many types of contributions needed and they all look differently! If you are [praying with your feet](#) that is great! If you are donating and helping support financially, this is one of the things that Jews are commanded to do in giving *Tzedakah* - investing your money in the change and support you want to see! If you are healing yourself and

others that is essential! Find your own way of showing up and don't feel guilty that you can't show up in every way. Together we make change.

[My Grandmother's Hands: Racialized Trauma and the Pathway to Mending Our Hearts and Bodies](#) If you do not have a copy of the book, read the description or listen to the podcast. \*There is a podcast and free online E-course too. [On Being with Krista Tippett with Resmaa Menakem 'Notice the Rage; Notice the Silence](#) and [Free E-Course](#)

- What is your own relationship to race, identity, history and culture?
- Share a story of your ancestors. What do you wish to carry on? Share the story of Jews, how does it impact you?
- How has this affected the unfolding of your life?
- What kind of healing can you do at this moment?

### **Closing Ritual**

Close your Well Circle/Chevruta study with a prayer, song, or art.

1. [Protest Prayer by April Baskin](#)
2. [Be With Me song by Koach Baruch Frazier](#)
3. [Say Their Names: Kaddish for Black Lives and Terror Victims](#)
4. Art and poem by Rabbi Bluth (@blu.th, [www.rbluth.com](http://www.rbluth.com)) in collaboration with Tom Haviv ([www.ayinpress.org](http://www.ayinpress.org)), on behalf of [Jews for Racial and Economic Justice \[JFREJ\]](#)



### **Solidarity**

Let the pursuit of justice be our prayer!

In this moment of moral urgency, our commitment to anti-racism is THE act of Sacred Service. Justice is the embodiment of our Jewish and spiritual values. To demand dignity is to honour the holiness of humanity, and active solidarity is to sanctify human life and G-dliness.

In the words of the prophet Amos (5:24): “Let justice flow like waters, and righteousness like a mighty stream”

“וַיְגַל כְּמַיִם מְשֻׁפָּט וּצְדִיקָה כְּנַחַל אֵיתָן.”

Let's listen deeply, and boldly express our moral imagination - our belief that another way is possible - through action, solidarity.

Let us humbly and sincerely strive for goodness, love, justice and grace.

With blessing בברכה

***Guide compiled by ATW Team (Hadar Cohen, Sarah Waxman, Lily Chen, and Hannah Lindenbaum).***

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**Here are more Anti-Racism Resources to explore:**

Feel free to continue this work. We invite you to take action. This document is intended to serve as a resource to deepen our anti-racism work. Together, we stand in solidarity with the Black community, Jews of Color, and all communities of color. Feel free to share this document with your friends, family, and colleagues.

Here is a shorter link: <https://bit.ly/2U2pShy>

We will continue to update this list as we receive more resources from our community. It is our responsibility to continue to learn and connect together. Please let us know of other additional resources you suggest sharing [hello@atthewellproject.com](mailto:hello@atthewellproject.com)

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