Attending to the Discomfort of Implicit Bias:

A Role for the Contemplative Chaplain in Social Justice

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Contents

Abstract

As human beings, we are all subject to the cultural conditioning of dominant paradigms, which leads to prejudiced implicit biases about groups, identities, and embodiments that do not align with the dominant "ideal." The knowledge that we carry implicit biases is not enough to change them (Banaji & Greenwald, 2013) and can often become a point of discomfort for those who believe themselves to be egalitarian. My own experience of cultivating awareness of negative implicit biases has been aided by a contemplative spiritual practice, informed and supported by an understanding of the relationship between the Ultimate and Relative Truth and the view of "multiplicity in oneness" (Manuel, 2015).

This paper is an exploration of how I could use my contemplative practice to come alongside others willing to be present with implicit biases specific to disability, gender, and race. I worked with nine individuals for six weeks each, helping them to pull on their resources so they could sit with the discomfort of discriminatory implicit biases, see systems of oppression more clearly, and feel enabled to engage in meaningful work to dismantle these systems, regardless of whether they unlearned the biases or not. The Background lays out an understanding of Interdependence as it relates to Implicit Bias and the ground of my practice. The Project section is an outline of the methodology I developed for working with project participants as a chaplain for social justice. With the Results & Reflections, I explore the participant's experiences and reflection after six-weeks of intentional practice with implicit biases. The Conclusion is a summary of learnings as a chaplain, and how discomfort with prejudiced implicit biases can stop being a barrier and instead become a source of motivation for effectively engaging in the work of social justice and collective liberation.

Keywords: Contemplative care, Implicit Bias, Mayahana Buddhism, Social Justice

INTRODUCTION

"I do believe that we have changed over the course of our evolutionary history into becoming better and better people who have higher and higher standards for how we treat others. So we are good. We must recognize that, and yet, ask people the question, 'Are you the good person you yourself want to be?' And the answer to that is 'no, you're not.' That's just a fact. And we need to deal with that if we want to be on the path of self-improvement."

- Mahzarin Banaji, *OnBeing: The Mind is a Difference Seeking Machine* (2016)

My whole body lit up at hearing these words from Professor Banaji, co-founder of Project Implicit[1]. She went straight to the heart of my understanding of what is meant by "Buddha nature" on the Mahayana path; we are not inherently bad or inherently good, but as capable of cultivating ignorance as we are of waking up and cultivating the limitless qualities of equanimity, compassion, and love.

When I first heard this episode, I'd been on the path of Buddhism for eight years, meditating daily for the past three. Buddhism appealed to me for many reasons, which can be distilled into the following:

1. It is based on logic. The framework for Buddhism acknowledges the complexity of living in an interconnected, interdependent, interrelated universe. I find it to be demonstrably scientific.

2. It accounts for personal agency. While we cannot control suffering—birth, old age, sickness and death are inevitable—we can work with our minds to remain stable in the face of uncertainty. We are also accountable to those around us because nothing we say, think, or do happens within a vacuum. Our choices matter.

3. We all have Buddha nature. We are all capable of cultivating stability of mind and holding the complexity of our interconnected, interdependent, interrelated universe. Every single one of us has the capacity to 'wake up' and learn to discern how our choices matter because of the boundless nature of the universe.

At the time I heard this podcast in 2016, I had begun to move into what Fowler (1981) describes as one aspect of the sixth stage of faith, the transcendence of a particular belief system into a greater sense of connection. I was moving beyond a Buddhist identity into an identity as a Dharma practitioner, where Dharma is as Dr. Charles Johnson defines it in his introduction for *The Way of Tenderness* (2015), *"…wisdom on which no philosophy or religion has a monopoly."*

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1 https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/iatdetails.html

It is a teaching on interdependence when Professor Banaji says:

"I understand that I'm a product of a culture where the culture has now gotten into my head enough that I am the culture. I cannot say, 'There is a culture out there. It's biased, not me'."

This episode of OnBeing was a catalyst for my practice. I was immersed in Mahayana teachings, both traditional and contemporary. I had been studying Nāgārjuna's Middle Way (1995) teachings and had recently discovered Zenju Earthlyn Manuel's (2015) precise, clear wisdom. Unlike white teachers, Manuel does not use emptiness to negate or dismiss identity as a form of ego-clinging. She presents the both/and of race, gender, and sexuality as social constructs and identities with lived impacts due to our interconnectedness.

Nāgārjuna provided guidance on how to see that nothing and no one is inherently one way. Manuel's teachings gave me language around the intractable relationship of the Ultimate and Relative Truth. Professor Banaji gave me language for perceiving how messages about identities are planted in our brains. I wanted to take these teachings further, to understand how to interrupt these messages and shift my implicit biases.

Like many people on this path, I came to Buddhism seeking relief from my own suffering, but in 2013, my view shifted from "I am suffering" to "*there is* suffering". Shamatha practice had taught me how to stay present with anxiety when I was living with Panic Disorder. Now, in 2016, I wanted to use it to sit with the discomfort of how my brain categorizes my fellow humans according to arbitrary lines of worth based on social roles and membership.

My approach at the beginning was rooted in the idea that our biases could be changed, even eradicated, if we brought mindful attention to them. In incorporating Zenju Earthlyn Manuel's (2015) teaching *"There is multiplicity in oneness,"* I focused on the poison of ignorance, specifically the false idea that humanity has a "normal" and everything else is "deviant." Developing an antidote to ignorance became my practice, and I quickly realized that, just as accepting suffering helped me let go of clinging to feeling good all the time, accepting that there is ignorance helped me let go of the idea that I had to "be good." I could be good and also become a better person, just as Mahzarin Banaji (2016) said. As long as I held onto an idea that I was "good" in a fixed, dualistic way, I would be unwilling to acknowledge how the culture, as Banaji put it, had gotten into my head. I would also be incapable of seeing, as much as culture influenced me, I could influence culture; when any of us becomes better, all of us become better.

I soon learned that my prejudiced implicit biases, just like uncomfortable emotions, were not something to "get rid of" but something I could get curious about. I took refuge as a Buddhist not to get away from my problems, but so I could cultivate what I needed to face them head on, with an open heart and clear mind. Just as I'd learned to pause and connect with spaciousness during an anxiety attack, I could pause long enough to watch the way my brain filed terms like "disabled", "Black", or "male." Just as I'd learned to see the habits that led to developing an anxiety disorder, I could see the habitual cultural messaging that led to implicit biases. I could see the complex causes and conditions, and parse out which ones I was responsible for and could address. I can feel defensiveness in my body when someone points out how something I just said is rooted in the biases I hold and let that inform what I will do next. Defensiveness points to where I have the choice to seed karma towards my personal comfort, or to seed karma towards our collective liberation.

But what good is inner work if it does not move us to engage outwardly? Having developed practices to cut through my own ignorance, I wanted to find ways to support others to do the same. When I embarked on Upaya's Chaplaincy Training, I knew I wanted to explore Buddhist Chaplaincy within social justice. I did not know how that would unfold, and to be entirely honest, it is still unfolding. This is a taste of what I learned about transferring my own practice into something others could connect with. Even this paper is an extension of my practice, as writing it has challenged me to consider how academia perpetuates messages that inform implicit biases.

I present no definitive conclusions nor scathing critiques. I invite you, as the reader, to join me in exploring the complexity of our interconnectedness, and understanding a paradox not as a conflict but as the possibility of multiple realities existing simultaneously. Including you, there are eleven realities in this paper, alongside mine and those of my nine project participants. Every relative view contributes to the Ultimate, and the glimpses we each have of the Ultimate contribute to shifting the paradigms of our relative views.

May it be of benefit.

In Love and Liberation,

Kaitlyn S. C. Hatch

BACKGROUND

Offering Clarity to Emptiness

From an early age, I have been fascinated with how things work. My parents encouraged curiosity, raising me to ask questions and see learning as a lifelong process. My upbringing was also influenced by Métis[2] culture, thanks to guidance and teachings passed from my great-grandmother to my mother. As a child, long before coming to Buddhism and dharma practice, I learned of the world as an interconnected web—from food chains to ecosystems—and I had a view of myself within the network of all things. I knew that every living thing has a place, that predators could also be prey, and that everything in the food chain relies on something for its survival. In physics, I learned that every particle in the universe effects every other particle.

Yet, at twenty-three, when I first encountered teachings on emptiness in my Buddhist practice, I found them to be dense and mystifying. Mis-interpretations through translation and the term itself contributed to this confusion.

My understanding of emptiness shifted from muddled to incredible clarity thanks to Thích Nhất Hạnh (1988). In his commentary on the Heart Sutra, when the Bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara states that all things are empty, Thích Nhất Hạnh invites us to ask: *"Empty of what?"*

The Heart Sutra is pointing out that the existence of anything is reliant on the existence of everything. Or, in the words of astrophysicist and astronomer Carl Sagan (1980), *"If you wish to make an apple pie from scratch, you must first invent the universe."*

Demystifying a term like "emptiness" can easily be done by looking beyond the word to what this verse from the Heart Sutra is pointing at:

Form is emptiness, and emptiness is form.

Form is not other than emptiness, and emptiness is not other than form.

In short, my answer to *empty of what?* is *empty of inherent qualities.*

No form has an inherent existence that can be permanently found. If we were to grind the entire Universe down into particles, there would be no particle that is a chair, or a plant, or you as an individual. Emptiness is not nihilism or noth-

2   In brief, Métis people are the children of Indigenous people and French colonizers in what is now known as Canada, although it can also refer more generally to a person of any mixed-Indigenous and colonizer ancestry.

ingness, an esoteric concept, or a philosophical thought experiment. Emptiness is interdependence, interconnectedness, and interrelationship—what Thích Nhất Hạnh (1997) calls "Interbeing." This is a term he created to speak to how all things are dependent on the existence of something; all things have connection to other things, and that nothing is existent outside of it's relationship to the Universe. This is at the core of the Mahayana or "middle way" path of Buddhism. The Universe is dynamic and constantly changing because all things are interdependent.

From Matter to Systems

Interdependence is not just the coming together of quarks and atoms in the building blocks of physical objects and living creatures. Interdependence is also present in belief systems, political systems, and social systems. Systems Theory is the interdisciplinary study of systems and how they are interrelated. Put another way, systems theory is emptiness in different packaging. It is a way of viewing, examining, and engaging with the complexity of the interdependence of our social and political systems.

While Systems Theory may not have been developed academically until the 20th century, it was not a new idea. Indigenous Nations in colonized countries across the planet continuously work to uphold the practices of their ancestors that were based upon an understanding of their relationship to the land, other animals, and other Indigenous Nations[3].

From Systems Theory to Intersectionality

A common instruction in Buddhism is for the practitioner to seek "the self" during meditation. The guidance on this varies, but the practice itself is pointing out emptiness—a lack of inherent, static existence. We look at all our parts—skin, blood vessels, bones, marrow, muscle, nerves, endocrine system, and brain. No one thing individually makes us the person we are. Nor do our thoughts, experiences, memories, accomplishments, or failures. We are not our families, religious upbringing, spiritual beliefs, community, country, or culture. A single, solid, inherent "self" cannot be found in any of these things.

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3   I do not state this to romanticize Indigenous peoples and practices, as no culture is without flaws, but as an acknowledgement that giving credit to white men for "discovering" a concept many cultures lived by for thousands of years would be short-sighted and contradictory to the very purpose of this paper.

It is, unfortunately, common for Buddhist teachers of considerable privilege to use this reasoning to dismiss the validity of marginalized identities[4]. The messaging is that race, gender, ability, and so on, "can't be found," and, therefore, do not exist. This is a misunderstanding of emptiness teachings, focusing on "form is emptiness" and disregarding that "emptiness also is form." We are as much the physical collection of our parts as we are the intangible collection of our experiences and our social conditioning.

Intersectionality, a term coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw (1989), is a way to speak to the complexity of both our embodied experience and social conditioning within the broader relational context of society. Although it was specifically created to address inequity in the judicial system, an intersectional lens provides a framework for understanding the impact of different systems on one person due to multiple identities.

Pat Parker (1978) put it brilliantly when she wrote:

"The first thing you do is to forget that I'm black.

Second, you must never forget that I'm black."

Parker is pointing to the possibility of holding a paradox without seeing it as a conflict. She is declaring that she wants to be seen not just as Black, but as a human being. And she is declaring that as a human being, being Black, particularly in the United States, is a reality she cannot ignore and neither should you. Taking it further, that she is Black and a woman living in a country founded on white supremacist colonialism and patriarchy cannot be dismissed as unimportant.

In this way, intersectionality aligns with Mahayana teachings on emptiness. As Elizabeth Mattis-Namgyel (2013) teaches, no one and nothing is just one way. We do not get to switch off any part of our identity, nor is any one part of our identity more or less human than any other part.

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4   Zenju Earthlyn Manuel (2015), Grace Schireson (2009), Caitriona Reed (2020), and Reverend angel Kyodo williams (2000, 2019) are just a few teachers who share their experiences and observations of this kind of dismissal of the Relative view in favour of the Ultimate. I can offer many of my own anecdotes, but no official study is available on this. Culturally, we are taught to think of the data of a study as indisputable proof—I was asked to do so for this paper despite including this footnote for the purpose of backing up the above statement. Often, when someone shares something anecdotally, it is dismissed unless there is some study to back it up, despite ample evidence that studies can be misinterpreted, misrepresented, and outright fabricated (Last Week Tonight, 2016). When we are instructed to believe the lived experiences of marginalized people, we are being asked to listen to anecdotes and trust in their validity.

"There is Multiplicity in Oneness"

The above heading is a direct quote from Zenju Earthlyn Manuel (2015). Her teachings have been some of the most significant and influential in my practice and ability to hold the complexity of our interconnected universe. Manuel brings the Mahayana teachings on interdependence into a contemporary context.

As a lesbian, a woman, and the descendent of enslaved Africans in what is currently known[5] as the United States, Manuel names the intersectional impact of systemic oppression in her life. She states that it is impossible to awaken without the body. We cannot ignore that we are in relationship with all aspects of our identities, as well as a society that devalues some identities in order to uphold other identities as superior. This imposed hierarchical way of measuring human worth can only exist because of our interconnectedness.

Manuel refers to seeing this interconnectedness of our many embodiments as a recognition of *"...intimacy within and between all of us that is not sentimental or romantic."* She explains this further when she goes on to discuss that "oneness," a term often used in Zen Buddhism when discussing our interconnectedness, does not mean "sameness." Saying that there is multiplicity in oneness is another way of saying form is emptiness, emptiness is not other than form. There is not one, not two. No one has just one identity, and no identity is itself singular. Queerness is not a monolith; Disability is not a monolith; Indigenous is not a monolith, and so on.

The "oneness" of humanity is not about conformity or homogeneity. Humanity has multiple valid embodiments. It is counter to the ultimate subjectivity of living in an interconnected universe to think there is a norm by which all humans can be measured. The Ultimate Truth is not the eradication or dismissal of the Relative, but the capacity to account for all relative truths and hold their complexity without slipping into dualism. To embrace multiplicity in oneness is to embrace the fullness of human identity; it is to embrace the Ultimate as inclusive of all that is Relative. It is recognizing that humanity is complex and multi-faceted, and all humans are worthy of love and respect. It is also about acknowledging our brain's propensity to sort others into "in groups" and "out groups" and rank others according to human-made hierarchies.

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5   In ongoing efforts to retain their culture, Indigenous scholars and activists use the qualifier "currently known as" as a reminder that neither the USA or Canada were always called by these names. There was a time when many Indigenous Nations thrived throughout the continents known as North and South America. These many Nations had their own names for lakes, rivers, and mountains that have since been named after European colonizers. I am honouring the descedents of those who have always resisted colonization by using this phrasing.

Examining the Cultural Body

The Heart Sutra states that there is no inherent eye, ear, nose, or tongue. This is not to say we don't have a physical body, but that the physical body is not just one thing. Human cultures are the same. Just as our physical body is a collection of parts, we as individuals come together to create societies or cultural bodies.

To illustrate how cultural bodies are created and function, let's revisit systems theory. When systems theory was a growing body of study in the early and mid-20th century, it was informed by a colonialist, predominantly white, and male-dominated academic culture because this was the ruling class of the time (and still is in North America). Historically, this is a group with a propensity for perpetuating the false understanding that social hierarchies are based in biology[6]. The perpetuation of such biological myths has helped white men maintain power and control over other genders and races for centuries.

Cordelia Fine (2010) does a brilliant job of pointing out and debunking multiple examples of biological myths about gender. She also shows how, despite debunking every study that suggests there are significant differences between the male and female brain, the myths persist and continue to influence society[7].

In his groundbreaking book, *My Grandmother's Hands*, Resmaa Menakem (2017) explains how trauma impacts us as individuals and intergenerationally, all framed through an understanding of systemic racism. Tada Hozumi (2020) frames social change through the language of cultural somatics, looking at how the cultural body is impacted by things like the #MeToo movement, police brutality, and climate catastrophe. In a talk they gave at the Shambhala Centre in New York, Reverend angel Kyodo williams (2018) speaks about the "collective mind". All of these teachers are pointing out the cultural body.

Our mind is influenced by and inseparable from our social conditioning. In the above referenced talk, Reverend angel speaks about this paradox of not getting to have your own mind, and yet only being responsible for your own mind. People create culture and culture informs people's thoughts, behaviours, and actions, just as people's thoughts, behaviours and actions inform the culture. Personal responsibility matters, but cannot be divorced from cultural conditioning. Cultural conditioning does not give us an escape route from personal responsibility.

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6   Prior to Darwin, the European ruling class would have used religion to justify social hierarchies.

7   Fine herself also presents gender narrowly—as synonymous with sex—despite the existence of Intersex, transgender and nonbinary people, showing us a growing edge in social change.

Those who have the most power within the cultural body see themselves as the norm for that society and everything else as deviant from it. The identity of those in power then becomes the "dominant paradigm," a term used in sociology for the collected standards and values of a society at a given time.

Unpacking Social Memberships & the Complexity of Identity

Identity is based on a multitude of factors, as philosopher Kwame Anthony Appiah (2018) explains. With his work, Appiah provides a beautiful example of how to hold the complexity of our interconnectedness when examining identity and belonging. Appiah unpacks identity across religion, location, class, race and gender, looking at the personal, inter-personal, and collective ways identity is created. There is how we see ourselves, how we are seen by others, and how society sees the social groups we belong to. Identity also changes over time as a result of these different lenses, and in this regard Appiah is clear to point out that identity is a mutable and impermanent concept. This does not mean identity doesn't matter, but that it doesn't need to matter quite so much. Identity itself is not such a big deal, as long as we are not overly attached to one particular identity to such a degree that we become inflexible. Attachment to a single identity and view diminishes our capacity to connect with our own humanity, as none of us are fixed, static beings.

We each have a collection of what Adams et al. (1997) coined as "Agent" and "Target" identities. An Agent identity is any identity we have that gives us social membership in the dominant paradigm. A Target identity is any identity we have that gives us social membership in a group that is marginalised or oppressed for not aligning with the dominant paradigm. Advantages and disadvantages we experience within the cultural body vary because our complex human identities give us social membership in more than one group, whether or not we personally choose membership in those groups.

The complexity of all these categories overwhelms our human brains. It is a function of the brain to create short-hand labels (Banaji & Greenwald, 2013) to sort everything and everyone we encounter, as the sheer volume of information our brain receives is more than it can process. When it comes to sorting, our brain attaches a positive value to identities we hold, known as an in-group bias. As Robert Sapolsky (2019) points out, in-group bias is part of our neurobiology: *"That our group identities—national or otherwise—are random makes them no less consequential in practice, for better and for worse."*

"For better and for worse" is key here. In-group/out-group explanations are often framed through the lens of an Agent identity, which is to say from a perspective of social safety. This presents tribalism as a throw-back function of the brain to prehistoric times with no place in our modern, egalitarian-leaning society. Even the use of the term "tribalism" is suspect, given the colonial context of most of society. Indigenous Nations were labelled tribes by colonial powers, and Indigenous humans were considered "savage" for practicing their own religions and speaking their own languages. This negative framing of in-group thinking is key to Sapolsky's paper, as he is specifically looking at how this in-group bias fuels white Nationalism. However, I want to ensure that the reader does not cling to the idea that in-group bias is inherently bad. In-group bias, as I am about to outline, is also about finding community as a form of sanctuary and protection in the face of systemic oppression created within the cultural body.

The Making of an Implicit Bias

Imagine you have just entered a room full of a hundred people. You are at the top of a set of stairs and a ramp, so you can easily see everyone. You are also wearing a particularly lovely red hat, of which you are quite fond. In an instant, you notice that one other person is wearing a red hat too. It's a slightly different style, and a darker shade than your hat, but you notice it nonetheless.

For years this was how I explained "gaydar" when asked by a straight person if "gaydar" is real. This is one example of our capacity to implicitly recognize someone with whom we share social membership. As someone who came out at the age of fourteen, I have spent years honing the skill of recognizing social signals from others that indicate if they too are queer. My brain categorizes these signals without me explicitly noting these details.

I share this so we do not see the short hand our brain creates about people as something inherently bad or even problematic. An implicit bias is not, as Banaji and Greenwald (2013) emphasize, the same as a prejudice. An implicit bias is the combination of involuntary stereotyping and attitudes based on information our brain has received in the past. This stereotyping can be beneficial, neutral, or harmful.

My implicit bias for queer and gender non-conforming folks is an example of a beneficial bias. It gives me a sense of safety and validation in a cultural body that is systematically violent towards queer and gender non-conforming individuals. Issues arise when the short-hand our brain creates is inevitably informed by the prejudices, negative assumptions, and narrow views the cultural body has of Target identities, even when we belong to them. Media depic-

tions of queer-coded villains, inspirational disabled characters, the magical negro trope, trans people as repulsive and vomit inducing, and white women as objects to be rescued are all examples of bias in the cultural body. In this way we learn the prejudiced implicit biases of our culture, regardless of what Agent and Target identities we have.

Implicit versus Unconscious

Banaji (2013, 2016) is particular about preferring the term "implicit" rather than "unconscious." While I can only speculate on her reasoning, it is worth stating that when we are made aware of our implicit biases—when they are brought into our conscious awareness—they do not cease to exist. Nieto et al. (2010) explains that the Agent and Target roles we play are largely experienced on an implicit level as well.

The choice of the term "implicit" rather than "unconscious" connects with the latency of how our brain categorizes information. The idea is that this is functioning in the background, and even if we bring it to the foreground, the functionality does not cease. Just as, if we use the breath as the object of meditation, it does not mean we were unconscious of breathing before that.

It can be very tempting to use a lack of consciousness as an excuse for inaction, but as Reverend williams (Meditation in the City Podcast, 2018) points out, ignorance has as much momentum as attachment and aggression. *"...The Poison of ignorance is about wrong-knowing. It's not just, 'I don't know. I had no idea.' It is wilful wrong-knowing, if you hadn't figured that out. There's a reason that we have anger, which has a momentum, a direction, a wilfulness to it. We have greed, which has a momentum and a wilfulness to it. Why would ignorance be neutral?"*

Now, more than ever, claiming ignorance is a wilful act, as we have access to more information and perspectives than any other time in human history. That being said, we may know enough to know we are ignorant, but not enough to know of what we are ignorant.

Banaji and Greenwald (2013) developed the Implicit Association Tests specifically because it was clear from past studies that human beings are unreliable when it comes to reporting the latent associations of our brains, especially when it comes to prejudiced implicit biases. They make a point of stating that the reflexive aspect of an implicit bias is not a reflection of what is consciously endorsed. Banaji (2016) explicitly states that she finds those who are consciously prejudiced to be "less interesting."

The purpose of developing the Implicit Association Tests was to provide a way for people with egalitarian beliefs to see the dissonance of their endorsed beliefs of equality against the unendorsed implicit associations informed by living within an inequitable cultural body. I share Banaji's interest in understanding how those of us oriented towards justice and liberation can use awareness of our prejudiced implicit biases to become better people.

What We Owe One Another

Buddhism provides embodied practices for working with the complexity of being interconnected. As a dharma practitioner, Mahayana teachings, as well as commentaries and reflections on the Heart Sutra, have given me the most tools for navigating the complexity of the relationship between the Relative and Ultimate Truth, enabling me to understand how I am influenced by and am capable of influencing the cultural body.

Regardless of how you come to understand it, the message is that the only objective truth is that all things are subjective. Because of this subjectivity, whether we acknowledge it or not, we have a responsibility to one another.

The 17th Karmapa (2017), explores this responsibility at length. While his writing is predominantly focused on environmentalism, he acknowledges the importance of community connections in any context. A lack of empathy, he points out, is a social illness. Empathy helps us to see our relationship through shared human experience. Compassion is what happens when we understand our relational responsibility to others.

Pema Chödrön (2012) speaks to this social responsibility in a talk, repeatedly asked the audience to consider if what we think, say, and do matters. When we pause long enough to ask if what we are about to do matters—knowing that ultimately all things are interconnected—we give ourselves the opportunity to see that yes, it does matter. It matters when we notice an implicit bias and it matters when we choose to look at where the bias came from. It matters when we test the accuracy of the bias, or question who or what it serves for it to go unexamined.

As someone in a contemplative tradition, this framing has been immensely beneficial as I explore liberation and what it means to wake up. In social justice circles the term "woke" refers to seeing the truth behind systems of oppression. From a Buddhist lens, to wake up is to see the truth in all things, to see the interconnectedness of all things. Therefore, Buddhist practices can aid us in social justice.

Part of this is also understanding that we must be in process, and so it is not about being "woke" so much as it is about *continuously waking*. Because the cultural body is constantly reasserting itself, we must consistently learn to watch the way an implicit bias arises. As Mark J. Royse (2020) put it in his interpretation/translation poem of the Heart Sutra: "*Ignorance is not solid or permanent, and thus the end of ignorance is not solid or permanent.*"

The cultural body is constantly reasserting ideas of separateness and hierarchical power structures. The cultural body is also constantly challenging this separation. This is because the cultural body is made up of individuals, each of us with our own combinations of Agent and Target identities, each of us making choices every day that uphold and/or challenge the dominant paradigm. Challenging the prejudiced biases within is work we needn't do alone, which is where the role of a Buddhist Chaplain offering contemplative care[8] comes into play.

In Buddhism we begin by accepting what is. This is the instruction of the first noble truth: There is suffering. This is not to be taken as an instruction to be complacent, to shrug and look at what is around us and say that this is just the way things are. Nor is it an instruction for nihilism or pessimism. This is an instruction to get curious, to look at how things are, truly, in order to address them effectively. In the words of James Baldwin, *"Not everything that is faced can be changed. But nothing can be changed without being faced."*

Change is not just constant but inevitable, and different outcomes are always possible, particularly when we learn to pause and face an implicit bias rooted in systemic prejudice.

What does it mean to be a chaplain in social justice?

I first encountered the terms "Agent" and "Target" in the form of a worksheet handed out during a workshop with Freedom Project[9] in Washington. The worksheet looked at how, from the perspective of a Target identity, it's much easier to see systemic oppression, while from an Agent identity, there are more barriers to awareness. Fleur Larson (2020) speaks to this in her interview with Rachelle Pierce, talking about your "personal norm" being the "social norm." If your identity is aligned with the dominant culture, then you are not as capable of seeing how the system was built to benefit that identity.

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8   Cheryl A. Giles and Willa B. Miller (2012) define contemplative care as: "The art of providing spiritual, emotional, and pastoral support, in a way that is informed by a personal consistent contemplative or meditation practice."

9   https://freedomprojectwa.org/

Learning to see whiteness is a much greater challenge for me than being able to see heteronormativity or patriarchy because whiteness was built to confirm me while the other systems were built to keep me out. I enthusiastically took on the challenge of seeing whiteness, confident that my capacity to see how I have been "othered" could give me some insight into seeing the workings of white supremacy. I pulled on all my practices for this work, knowing that it was going to be hard. I continue to commit to doing the work daily, setting intentions to keep me focused, using Shamatha to help me stay present with the discomfort of looking at all the little ways I buy into and perpetuate white supremacy. Compassion practices and a lens of interconnectedness help me remember not to take any of it too personally, to get out of my own way and remain open to the potential to be better.

My understanding of emptiness and a consistent devotion to waking up are at the core of my longing to be of service to others. Like a Bodhisattva, I carry the intention to awaken for the benefit of all beings so that we may experience collective liberation. In the words of reformed demon Michael on "The Good Place" (2019): *"What matters isn't if people are good or bad. What matters is, if they're trying to be better today than they were yesterday. You asked me where my hope comes from? That's my answer."*

The false idea that we are separate leaves a spiritual wound. Could I, as a Buddhist chaplain, come alongside others to work with their Agent identities in a way that would help them tend to this wound?

Was it possible to use my Mahayana practice and understanding of interconnectedness to support others in developing their own similar contemplative practice?

Would contemplative spiritual practices help participants stay with the discomfort of prejudiced biases that benefit the Agent identities they hold?

Would participants break the silence of their Agent membership to challenge the patterns and messaging of the dominant paradigm?

With these questions to fuel my inquiry, I sought out people who believed in their potential to be better, who wanted to bear witness to implicit biases in their lives. I endeavoured to collaborate with them using an experimental framework informed by my practice and guided by their intention and longing to wake up.

THE PROJECT

This section shows the details of participants and the methodology I developed to come alongside each of them on an individual basis to explore prejudiced implicit biases specific to disability, gender or race. My role was to meet them right where they were, without judgement or expectation. This was not a formal research project, but an experimental approach to tracking the process of chaplaincy support in a social justice context.

Finding Participants

Participants were invited to opt-in through word of mouth via my personal network. Compensation was not offered for participation. The invitation read as follows:

Thesis Case-Study Participants needed:

Seeking 8 to 10 people interested in actively working on unlearning implicit biases around race, gender, or ability. The commitment is roughly 2 to 4 hours per month for a period of three months, starting in May 2020.

All data gathered during this process will be kept entirely confidential, with no names attached to any specific details. Participants will be assigned a colour, which will act as their 'name' throughout the project. Individuals from all backgrounds, working in any industry, or of retirement age, who have a significant amount of privilege due to race, class, ability, gender, sexual orientation, and/or education are encouraged to apply.

In addition to the above invitation, the methodology was also outlined in brief, to give participants a sense of the time commitment and process.

Criteria for Participation

The screening criteria was for applicants to demonstrate a significant amount of privilege in their lives, alongside wanting to work with Implicit Biases. "Significant privilege" was determined by the Agent aspects of their identity, giving them unearned systemic and social advantages in what are currently known as Canada and the United States.[10]

The specific criteria chosen for this screening was the following:

- Racialized white

- Cisgender (identifying with the gender they were assigned at birth, particularly male)

- Heterosexual

- Abled

- College-educated

- Middle, upper-middle class or higher household income[11]

Meeting the criteria for demonstrating significant privilege was not as straightforward as applicants aligning with at least half of these Agent identities. When assessing privilege, an Intersectional lens was applied, accounting for how being racialized white, in particular, gives significant systemic advantages to those living in both Canada and the United States of America.

Being a cisgender woman falls into a grey area as women in general face systemic oppression, but being a white and/or heterosexual cisgender woman has systemic advantages. For example, studies on the wage gap (payscale.com, 2020) between men and women show that the gap differs greatly according to race as well as gender, and transgender women of colour in particular face some of the greatest barriers in all areas of society. We could also look at the appointment of wholly unqualified (Mencimer, 2020) Supreme Court Justice Amy Coney Barrett as an example of

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10   While there are differences in the specifics of the cultural bodies of what are currently known as Canada and the United States, the dominant paradigms of both countries are capitalist, colonialist, white supremacist, patriarchal, gender-binaried, ableist, and heteronormative. This means that the systems in place favours anyone who own the means of production, and/or are white, male, cis-gender, non-disabled and heterosexual. Each of these are examples of Agent identities within the cultural body of North America. When a term like "American" or "Canadian" is used, the presumption is that it is white, abled, cisgender Americans and Canadians being referred to, despite the existence of Americans and Canadians of all different embodiments.

11   Class was determined based on household income alone, according to ranges determined by Stephen Rose (2016).

how whiteness, heterosexuality, and cisgender identities can give a woman unfair advantages[12] over women with more Target than Agent identities.

It is also worth noting that applicants based in Canada have greater access to medical care and other socialized services than those in what is currently known as the United States, affecting how class differences are experienced. This is not to dismiss or minimize the reality of those who are working poor (an income of $29,999 or less in either currency) or lower-middle class (an income between $30,000 and $49,999) but to illuminate that socialized services can ensure access to needed care regardless of one's income.
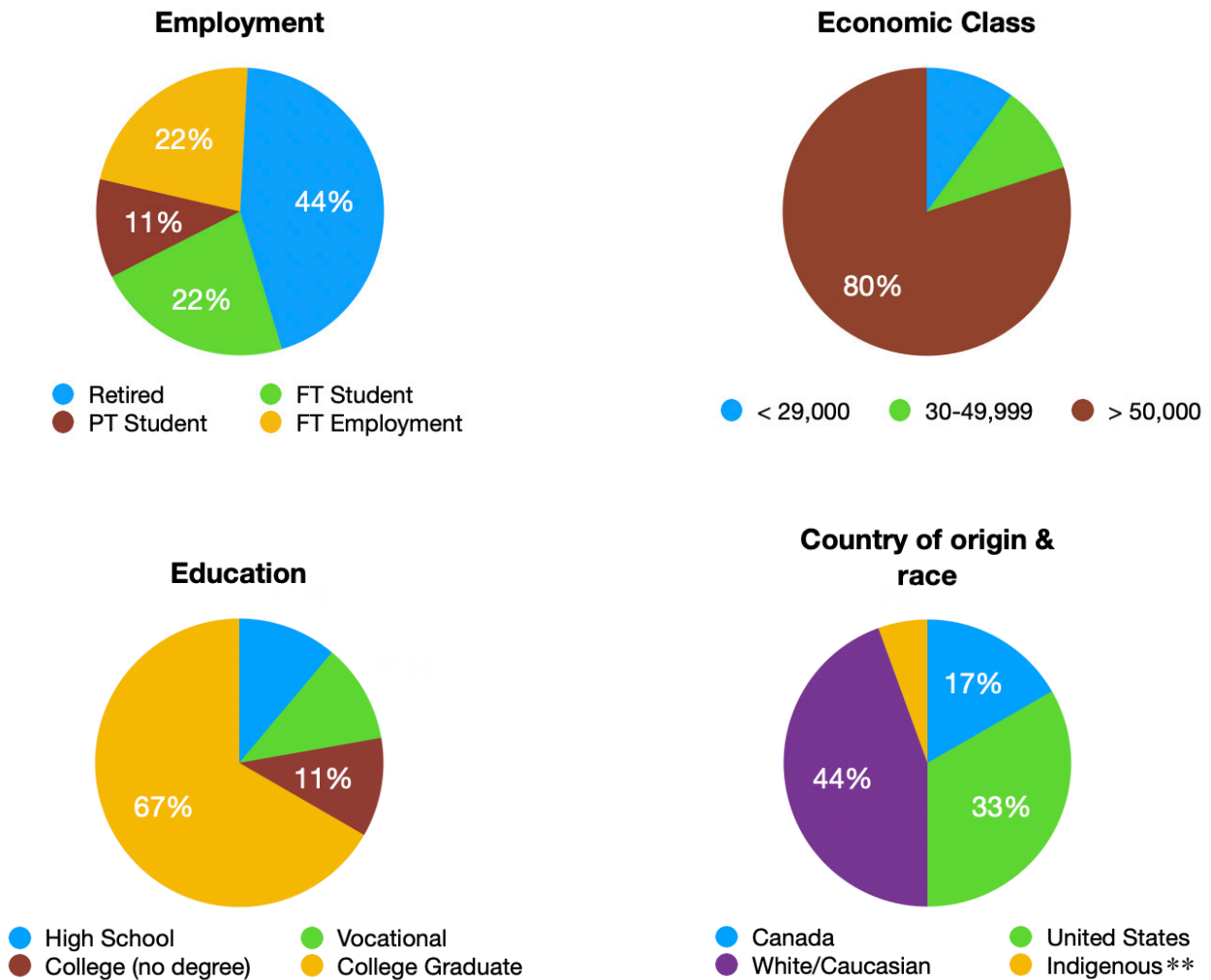
The opt-in aspect of the project was given significant weight. It was essential that participants not only wanted to look at their Implicit Biases but were at least abstractly aware that they held them. All applicants demonstrated moderate to significant privilege with their overlapping Agent identities and a strong willingness to look at their implicit biases.

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12   This is not to understate the fact that a white, heterosexual cisgender woman who is fully qualified for a job will still not get it when the opposition is an objectively unqualified white, heterosexual cisgender man. It just means that a white heterosexual cisgender woman faces far fewer barriers than Black, Indigenous, Asian or Latinx women or non-binary people of any sexual orientation.
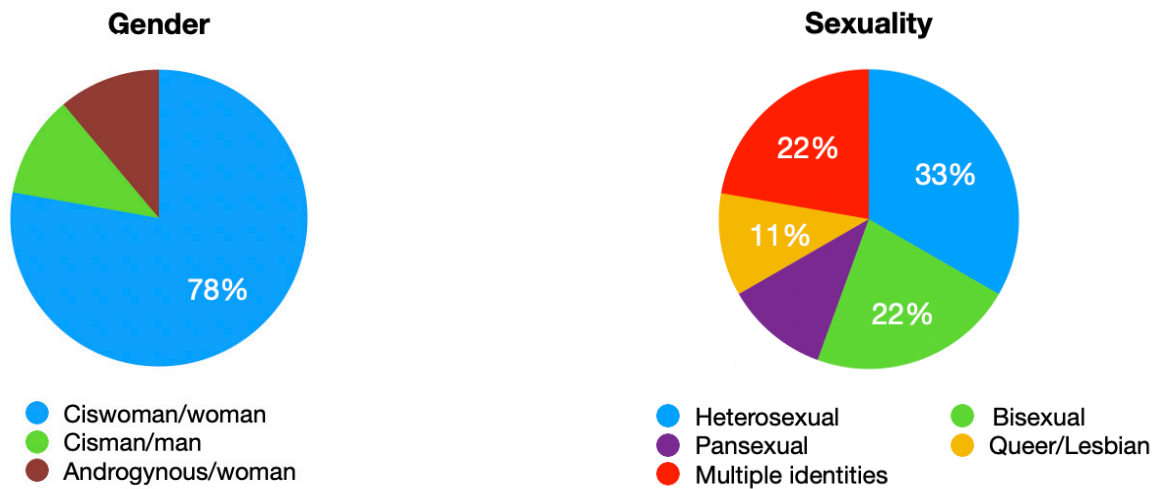
Participant Overview

This project began with ten participants, nine of whom completed the entire process. The individual who did not complete the project has been eliminated from the data.

The nine individuals to complete the entire project ranged in age from 31 to 70 years.

Employment

22% 44% 11% 22%

● Retired   ● FT Student
● PT Student   ● FT Employment

Economic Class

80%

● < 29,000   ● 30-49,999   ● > 50,000

Education

67% 11%

● High School   ● Vocational
● College (no degree)   ● College Graduate

Country of origin & race

17% 44% 33%

● Canada   ● United States
● White/Caucasian   ● Indigenous **

** This participant shared their frustration with supposedly anonymous surveys that ask for race or ethnicity to be disclosed when they are the only Indigenous person completing said survey. This is an example of a blindspot when trying to get anonymous feedback from a group of individuals who are all known to each other. It highlights one way the limited relative view of whiteness prevent folks of other racialized identities from fully expressing themselves. This is a good illustration of why Adams et al (1997) chose the term "Target" for marginalized identities. This participant said that they never can be honest on such supposedly anonymous surveys as it wouldn't be safe.

The participant gave me permission to share this observation.

Gender

Sexuality

Ciswoman/woman
Cisman/man
Androgynous/woman

Heterosexual
Pansexual
Multiple identities
Bisexual
Queer/Lesbian

Five participants identified as able-bodied[13] (55.5%). One participant identified as able-bodied and ageing (11.1%), qualifying this as "Less reliable hips and legs." Two participants selected able-bodied (22.2%), but also listed mental illness, PTSD, and ADD in the same category. One participant identified as neurodiverse, immunocompromised and living with mental illness (11.1%).

All but one participant (11.1%) had a spiritual identity of some form, eight of whom had established spiritual practices (88.8%) including various meditation and body practices. Four participants had a spiritual teacher (44.4%) and five did not (55.5%).

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13   When this project was set-up I was using the term "able-bodied," but in the process of the project, I began to adjust my language to use the terms "non-disabled" or "abled" instead. I now understand the limitations of the term able-bodied, which reinforces the idea that Disability is something physically observable only, rather than about societal assumptions and beliefs. It also ignores invisible disabilities such as mental illness, chronic illness, neurodivergence (Autism, ADD/ADHD), and neurological conditions (eg. Fibromyalgia).

THE PROCEDURE

Intake Meeting

After confirming participation, I met with each person individually via a video call for an initial 30 to 40 minute, one-to-one meeting. During these meetings, participants were asked to choose from one of three implicit biases to focus on for a period of six weeks: Race, Gender, or Ability. These biases were based on available tests from the Harvard Implicit Association Test (IAT) survey website[14] as of the 4th of May 2020 (Appendix A). Six participants (66.6%) chose to focus on racial bias. One participant who chose racial bias also chose ability bias for personal reasons. One person chose ability bias (11.1%). Two participants chose gender bias (22.2%), one of whom specifically framed it around their prejudiced biases against cis-gender men.

During this intake meeting, participants were assigned a colour to use when completing forms, rather than their[15] name, to ensure confidentiality and anonymity. The participants were not made known to one another, although some were known to each other socially.

Intake Survey

Following the initial intake meetings, each participant was sent an email with a link to an online intake survey and given one week to complete it. The intake survey included a breadth of questions to get the participants thinking about identity and to give me a stronger idea of each person, their practice background (if any), and how they spent their leisure time.

Resource Generation Meeting

After a participant completed the intake form, I met with them again for 45 to 70 minutes. Each meeting began with establishing grounding and heart practices they could use prior to taking their chosen Implicit Association Test(s), and as needed over the next six weeks. Next, the participant was given the assignment to think of an intention specific to unlearning implicit biases; Something that would act as a reminder of their aspiration, that they could write down and put where they would see it every day for the next six weeks. The remainder of our time together was spent discussing the various ways they engage with media so I could generate a list of resources for them.

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14   https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/

15   I have chosen to refer to all participants with the gender neutral pronoun "they." This helps with confidentiality, and is a way to prevent implicit biases due to gender from arising or being enforced while reading.

Implicit Association Test(s) & Accompanying Survey

Immediately following the above meeting, participants were emailed links to surveys they would need to complete alongside the IATs of their choice. The survey included instruction on grounding practices to do prior to starting and in between tests if more than one was being completed. The accompanying survey captured which IATs the participant took, the result of each test they did, and what sensations came up for them when they saw the results.

Resource Collection & Distribution

In the days I gave each participant to complete the IATs and accompanying survey, I compiled a customized list of resources based on what the participant and I had discussed. The resources were broadly broken down into things to watch, things to read, and things to listen to. If someone indicated that they spent time on social media platforms, I also included recommendations of people to follow. For two participants who write, I included a writing prompt. Each resource had a brief description of why I thought it would be helpful, or why I thought it would be relevant to that individual.

The initial email with enclosed resources was sent within a week of meeting with a participant, along with a reminder that I would be available over the following six weeks for support should they want it. Participants were told there was no expectation for them to get through every resource. Additional resources were emailed to certain participants after this initial resource email. An example of one resource emails per bias is included in Appendix B.

Participant Exit Interviews

Between six to eight weeks after participants completed the IATs of their choice and were sent resource emails, I met with each of them individually for an exit interview. During these interviews we reviewed which resources they used and what their overall experience had been since the start of the project.

Implicit Association Test Retake & Closing Survey

After the exit interview meeting, participants retook the IATs they had at the start of the project, using the accompanying survey to record their results and any sensations that arose. They were given the same instruction for grounding and recording the IAT results and their experience. They were also sent a closing survey (Appendix C) to complete.

RESULTS & REFLECTIONS

Laying the Ground

From the start of the project I wanted participants to get a glimpse of the interconnected complexity of identity, whether this was something they had considered before or not. As Lama Rod (2020) says, *"I must make a home in the complexity, because there is nowhere else to live if I am interested in decreasing violence against myself and others."* When putting together the intake survey, I set it up to not only capture the demographics of each participant but also to get them thinking about their own intersectional identities, as well as identities they may not be familiar with. They were asked how they identify according to gender, sexual orientation, ability, and race as well as how they are identified by others according to these categories.

I attempted to be as exhaustive as possible with the terms included, knowing full well that within one category, an individual may find several terms that reflect their identity. What was most interesting to me about the results of this section was not just that participants would choose two or more labels within one category when it came to self-identification, but that this was almost always the case with Target identities.

Years ago I made the observation that dominant culture sees the "othered" as monoliths, and yet the "othered" realise their otherness precisely because they don't fit the monolith of the dominant culture. The results seem to bear this out. Participants didn't offer a lot of variation when it came to Agent identities; they chose one identity that aligned with them and that was that. They also rarely chose more than one identity per category when selecting for how they are identified by others—indicating an awareness of the limited perceptions others may have about us versus the rich and multi-faceted understanding we have of ourselves. Participants were asked to reflect on "…thoughts, observations, and/or feelings that arose" when responding to this section.

Six out of the nine respondents shared specific thoughts about gender and sexual orientation. Their responses[16] noted the limitations of labels, while also expressing appreciation for finding ways to self-identify, regardless of social norms or expectations. As with Appiah's (2018) deconstruction and analysis of identity, there was also acknowledgement of how it shifts over time for any number of reasons:

"We are complex beings whose very nature is fluid (even if people don't always see that). Society tends to define us

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16   All quoted text in this section contains the original spelling and grammar of each participant's responses. In some cases, punctuation has been modified for the sake of readability.

in the most simplistic way possible, 'woman, straight' instead of 'female perceived non-binary pansexual as too much description tends to get lost. While I don't identify as non-binary, I do feel that my femininity tends towards a neutral version, more sedate and less performative. My femininity lies most heavily in my motherhood, not in acting 'like a lady'."

"I took a long time with the sexual orientation, I struggle to use queer, bisexual, questioning."

"I have gone through the questioning process with both my gender and sexuality. I identify as Pansexual, but stay safely in the closet with only my partner and a few close friends knowing the truth. As for my sexuality[17], I am very masculine brained in my thoughts and actions, therefore questioned if I was transgender. Upon questioning realized I am a woman who does traditionally masculine things. I rather repair the house vs clean it."

"I realize that I can pass as a heterosexual woman, so I am clear about identifying as a lesbian. The terms seem a bit constrictive, but on the spectrum I am most definitely female loving and queer."

"I have been learning about gender identity over the last year and trying to sort out how I feel about myself. Spent a lot of my early life wishing I was a boy - because I was skilled and interested in things that were attributed to males - math, physics, sports, how things work and desire to be a RC priest. Over adult life came to identify as androgynous - which was my presentation preference. I do not wish to have a male body and do wish I didn't have breasts. What does that make me?? Me. It doesn't bother me when someone calls me sir. I think I would be comfortable with any pronoun. She/ her is habit for me. Am I genderqueer?"

"In the past i have had more fluid sexual orientation and partner choices-- but am currently married in a heterosexual relationship. So just noticed my answers now are very much in the heteronormative dominant groups."

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17   Many responses showed the general confusion society has about sexual orientation (who we are attracted to or not with regards to intimate partnerships) and gender (how we identify ourselves within femininity, masculinity, and androgyny across a broad spectrum that may or may not be related to our sexual organs). For example, one participant added "Lesbian" to the question about their gender identity in the Intake Survey, before getting to the section about sexual orientation. This speaks to the complexity of interconnectedness, as no identity can be completely compartmentalized and cut off from another. Sexuality, sex, and gender are all different, yet deeply entwined, aspects of identity.

One participant shared reflections on disability, despite selecting able-bodied as part of their self-identification.

"In my past, I have had significantly more challenges with mental illness and chronic pain — along with terrible depression and low functioning and I have had multiple mental health hospitalizations."

This response was interesting to me as someone who has only recently realized I am disabled. This example points to the limited and limiting view of a dominant paradigm. Ableism presents such a narrow idea of disability, that we may not realise we ourselves are disabled. As with any dominant paradigm, it strips the complexity from human experience.

Limiting ideas of who belongs to any one category, or that there is a way to categorize the fullness of a human being at all, was expressed by two participants:

"It is frustrating when the options offered do not fully encompass who you are. This is certainly how people of various minorities must feel when confronted with having to fit into a world that only caters to the 'normal' majority. I also find that at times it is very hard to define yourself regarding how you feel about yourself."

"... sometimes the broad term of Indigenous verses mixed race has me staring for a while. I will always pick Indigenous though."

As I had hoped, the options I included presented most participants with terminology they had never heard before. One participant shared that *"Disability identity was thought provoking,"* while another stated, *"I learned about Allistic and Spoonie."* This second statement was made by the participant who chose Disability bias as their focus. On their own initiative they looked up both terms and shared what they had learned when we met for the resource generation conversation.

This method of presenting so many identities and framing them from both an inner and outer-perspective proved immensely effective for exposing and highlighting the impact of the cultural body.

Stabilizing the Mind to Stay with the Discomfort

From an Agent identity perspective, defensiveness, guilt, and shame are common response to being confronted as benefactors of an unjust system. I may want to ignore my whiteness because it's uncomfortable knowing that to be white is to be racist, but ignoring whiteness to avoid discomfort renders me incapable of action that is anti-racist. If I'm

going to challenged white supremacy, I must learn to face it. To face it, I must learn to be in my body, with the discomfort of my complicity. As Manuel (2015) asks: *"When recognition and awareness always occur within bodies, how can we ignore race, sexuality and gender?"*

To support participants in staying with the discomfort, I ensured they all had a stabilizing practice they could use as they took their chosen IATs and throughout the six weeks of the project. When taking the tests, participants were asked to reflect on how it felt to see their results. In a majority of cases their results showed a moderate to significant preference for an Agent identity over a Target identity—an unsurprising but nevertheless uncomfortable result. Almost all the participants reported tension, fatigue, and anxiety when taking the tests:

"My breathing became shallow and I had an unsettling feeling in my belly."

"Brain fog, with the front of my forehead becoming kinda numb, my eyes were kinda stingy, and I was finding myself breathing slower or pausing my breath. I was feeling uncertain of my answers. I also became frustrated and wanted to believe my answers where because of my fingers but not my thoughts. I wanted so badly to be right!"

"Sadness, a bit of self disgust."

"A chilling feeling in my stomach; slight headache."

"Resignation, annoyance that I am so influenced by society to think this way."

In a few cases, Participants showed no automatic preference, or a slight preference for a Target identity, garnering a sense of indifference (*"Meh,"* wrote one respondent) or relief: *"What? Smile; feel open"*

In addition to reporting on their physical responses to their IAT results in their own words, participants were asked to share their level of resistance to the results, if any. While the physical feelings were generally a reflection of dis-ease with the results, only two participants said they felt any resistance to seeing their results. A majority, regardless of the bias, said that no, they didn't have resistance even if the results did make them uncomfortable.

When it came to the end of the project and repeating the IATs, I was not looking at whether or not participants' IAT results had changed, but if their physical responses to the results were different. Did six weeks of intentionally cultivating awareness of prejudiced implicit biases change how they felt about the bias if their results didn't change?

In analyzing the results, I couldn't help noticing a marked difference between those focused on racial bias versus those focused on gender and disability bias. I didn't expect there to be a change to their IAT results, but every participant who chose either disability or gender had at least one result indicating a reduction in negative biases. It is little wonder that almost all of them indicated less resistance to these results, and felt less physical stress in response to them:

"My shoulder relaxed."

"Happiness. I was very disappointed with the previous result of preference for cisgender over transgender as I do not want to have implicit biases against anyone on the LGBTQ+ spectrum."

When it came to participants focused on race, however, even if there was a shift in their bias from moderate to slight, that it remained negative did not sit well with most of them. There now was resistance where there hadn't been, alongside disappointment. Their personal reflections continued to point to feelings of stress in the body, including fatigue. Two participants used the phrase "tired mind," in describing how seeing the results felt.

This shift in resistance from the start and the finish of the project was a valuable lesson on holding the role of contemplative chaplain. It seems I inadvertently set up participants to have an expectation of their biases changing after six weeks. I'm also wary of how the COVID pandemic was impacting people at this point, and that the tests themselves require a kind of dexterity that can could account for tension described in participants' hands, wrists, and arms. Regardless, I would be more cautious about how I use the IATs in the future. While I have personally found taking them immensely helpful, I realise that in not explicitly sharing that I was measuring resistance and discomfort around implicit biases, many felt they had somehow "failed" the project for not having different results after six weeks. Despite this, during the exit interviews, not one participant indicated that they felt held back from social change work by the discomfort of having a bias. In response to continuing to wake up to whiteness in particular, one participant even said: *"Bring it on! Bring it on even more so."*

The Discomfort of Anger

Anger was a common emotion among all the participants. One participant (U.S.-based) chose to look deeply at the treatment of Indigenous Nations throughout North America. They did this knowing they carried a sense of shame for not being better educated on the history of genocide and the ongoing impact of colonialism. They shared how this project gave them a drive to learn even more, and they voiced their fear that Indigenous people will continuously be sidelined and forgotten. This tension gave them a sense of urgency and brought up a lot of anger about what they hadn't been taught in school. This same participant found heart-opening practices deeply supportive, particularly when it came to addressing their anger towards other white individuals invested in white supremacy. They could see how the anger that erupts in some white people when white supremacy is challenged makes sense if those people don't have any other sense of community or belonging. *"It's sad, but it's the only thing they have."* In this way, they were able to find compassion and prevent their anger from tipping over into hatred.

One participant, focusing on gender, shared how angry they felt about a textbook in a course they were taking at the time of the project. The heteronormativity of it frustrated them, and they struggled to know the best way to challenge it. In many cases, participants shared a general frustration directly linked to doing this work and seeing how the system pushes back again and again. In the case of the other participant looking at gender, it is the health care system that frustrates them the most. The bias of white cis-men (Fine, 2010) is something they are almost always aware of in their work as a nurse. They spoke about wanting to honour the personal importance of the identity of a transgender patient, while facing the constraints of the medical model that meant the patient was both dead-named[18] and misgendered in their files, saying, *"The overlap between social justice and medical training can get very uncomfortable."*

This participant found Kwame Anthony Appiah to be a particularly valuable resource. They appreciated his presentation that identity isn't innate, but it is important. While this didn't resolve their anger, it gave them language to express their frustration and find some relief in having their own thoughts on the subject mirrored in his book.

Several participants shared how they turned anger towards themselves. One said they were "pissed off" with themselves for the results of the IAT: that they were a "white woman who prefers white people." Another said they should be on a different side than they were. Yet another participant shared memories from their childhood—how their little kid self was so frustrated because they could not challenge the prejudiced views of the adults who raised them. I didn't

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18   "Dead-name" is the term used for the name a transgender or nonbinary person had prior to coming out and/or transitioning. Dead-naming is when a person uses the previous name of a trans or nonbinary person without explicit permission.

offer any particular advice, but instead, shared my own experiences of anger at being duped into participating in systems of oppression. At the time I was immersed in reading Love and Rage (2020), and making space for anger so I could get in touch with the hurt and tenderness beneath it. I shared with them the work I was doing in healing my ancestors' mistakes. This lit them up, as they realized that they were also healing their ancestors' mistakes by participating in this project and in an anti-racist white caucus.

Regardless of the type of discomfort, be it anger, disappointment, shame or something else, every participant to complete the project found a way to work with it.

Exposure to the "Other": Reflections on the Resource

The idea to recommend resources was not to create assignments or additional 'tasks' for participants, but to provide content suggestions from media sources they already engaged with. I wanted to invite participants to use platforms they were already on to expose themselves to media created by and for people with Target identities that aligned with the implicit bias they were focused on. Although there was some overlap for those looking at the same bias, each participant's resources were generally customized.

During the closing interview, participants reflected upon the impact of the resources they had managed to engage with. These closing interviews were perhaps the most revealing aspect of the entire project. Participants spoke clearly about becoming aware of things they hadn't been aware of previously. Two of the Canadian participants noticed how colour-blindness[19] is baked into their culture, and the influence this has on their sense of comfort in talking about race at all. They were suddenly aware of how acculturated they were to not talk about the reality of racialized identity. One of these participants shared that when they referred to someone in their social circle as brown, they were accused of racism. In checking in with their brown friend—who confirmed that calling them brown was accurate and no harm was done—they realised they had other Black and brown friends whom they had not thought of as Black or brown before. This same participant also shared how, as a child, they had not thought of movies they watched as racist, but now could perceive both the blatant and subtle racism in these old favourites when they re-watched them. It highlighted for them how much our cultural sense of what is acceptable can change in just a few decades.

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19   This term refers to the statement "I do not see colour." While the statement is meant to imply that character matters more than skin colour, this statement is often used to silence non-white people and ignores the reality of living in a racialised society. To revisit Pat Parker (1978), we must never forget that having dark skin in a white supremacist culture—or being transgender in a cisgender one, or being disabled in an ableist one—have an impact on how someone is treated.

Noticing the cultural bias in media was something common amongst the participants. When watching the Netflix series, *Dear White People*, one participant shared that they caught themselves thinking of how the few white characters on the show were depicted like caricatures—stereotyped and flat. They started questioning this thought as it was forming, realising they would probably not have noticed this kind of stereotyping at all in the depiction of non-white characters. They were happy that they saw the thought as it arose, and that they questioned it so quickly. They also found the experience humbling.

Another participant, when reading a book by Louise Erdrich, featuring an extensive cast of mostly Ojibwe characters, said they realised, *"I wanted all the Indians to be good."* Being confronted with complex, rich characters in a book made them see clearly, in the wake of George Floyd's murder, that whether he was "good" or "bad" shouldn't matter and distracts from the fact that his death was unjust.

The FX show, *Pose*, was a resource sent out to most participants for its representation of both race and transgender and queer cultures. It garnered particular praise and appreciation for the richness of the characters as well as its historical context. Of it, one participant said, *"Loved it so much. Loved the characters. Loved the performers."* As someone who retired from nursing in the 80s, right around the time the show is set, it reminded them of how difficult the AIDS crisis in America was. It also gave them a much richer idea of life for the trans and gay community by exposing them to an entire culture they weren't aware of as a straight, white cis-woman.

The participant who focused only on disability biases became aware that whenever they were watching a disabled character, they found themselves "ranking" the level of disability. They hadn't expected a character with Cerebral Palsy to be so "high functioning," and this made them reflect more generally on other ways disability is ranked. They noted that military veterans, for example, get to be "hero-disabled," and someone like John F. Kennedy, though disabled, seems less so *"…because he slept with Marilyn Monroe."* These various reflections and insights gave this participant a lot to consider regarding the many aspects of disability they don't notice or might not think of as relevant as someone who is abled.

I suggested to several participants that they also notice, as they followed different people on social media or expanded what they were watching on a streaming platform, how their algorithms might change. Were they getting the same suggestions they had before? This was based directly on my own experience of actively seeking out content created by Black, Indigenous, & People of Colour. When I log into Netflix now, for example, even if a show has a 90%

white cast, the image I'll see promoting it will be of the one or two non-white characters. I also regularly get recommendations for movies and shows with predominantly Black and brown casts. On social media I make an effort to follow Indigenous activists, and leaders in the Black Lives Matter and the disability justice movements, between which there is a lot of overlap. Again, this gets me recommendations and targeted ads[20] that align with more of the same, exposing me to a broader range of voices and increasing my understanding of the impact of systemic oppression and the work that needs to be done to challenge it. This is away we can use media as a mirror to see cultural bias and our growing edge of awareness as we expose ourselves to media made by and for people outside the dominant paradigm.

Several participants remarked in the closing interview that this was the case for them. They were able to find content aside from what I had suggested and get a greater sense of ways they could support movements for social change and de-centre ideas of what is "normal". Seven of the nine participants sought out additional resources and content beyond what I had provided for them, and all of them said they would continue to look for more after the project was concluded. Following completion of this project, two participants even went so far as to send me a list of the additional resources they had sought out or discovered during and after the six weeks we worked together.

From Exposure to Action

In each exit interview, participants demonstrated how learning to sit with the discomfort of their prejudiced implicit biases enabled them to engage in meaningful work. One participant was moved to learn more about pastoral care for transgender people. Another, though focused on gender bias, shared how they saw it was impossible to work on any one bias without noticing all the others.

One participant said outright in the closing interview that they entered the project begrudgingly, but could now see how they are, as a white person, racist. *"We have no clue what it's like to not be complacent."* This same participant shared that this project was directly responsible for their participation in a round table discussion with other white people following George Floyd's murder. This was a spontaneous conversation and an excellent example of people with a white Agent identity exposing the system of white supremacy and breaking the silence of the system. They and their friends unpacked colour-blindness as a cultural expression of racism in Canada, and shared resources with each

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20   I love trying to guess what demographic the algorithms are slotting me into. At the time of this writing, Instagram seems convinced that I am a Black man, as I get ads for men's clothing and haircare products featuring Black male models or specific to Black culture in the United States.

other. The participant acknowledged that this was something they would probably have avoided before participating in this project, but they now understood that it was necessary for them to address personally and interpersonally.

Another participant who focused on racial bias noticed how the narrative that social workers be sent in to do crisis management instead of police officers presumes that racism isn't equally present within social work. They agreed that in many cases when police are called, a social worker would be a better fit, but that they are aware of having a list of colleagues they consider "safe" social workers for clients of colour. Because of participation in this project, they felt comfortable raising this with a social worker group they belong to as a first step to addressing the issue of systemic racism in social work.

Regardless of whether participants unlearned the biases or not, feelings of discomfort were not a barrier but a motivation and a sign-post for where the work they needed to be doing could be found. 100% of participants said they intended to continue with a practice of cultivating awareness of implicit biases.

CONCLUSION

"Instead of being a good person, I try to be a person practicing goodness in the moment."

- Lama Rod Owens, *Upaya Election Series: Love, Fear, and Resilience*

When I started this project we were in the early days of the quarantine. Many of us were operating with the idea that in a few weeks, a couple of months at most, we would return to life as we were used to. At the time of this writing, the reality of our interdependence is in a heightened state as a result of this new "normal." We are in the midst of a global pandemic, the result of which has amplified the inequality created by white supremacy (APM, 2020), ableism, and sexism (Fortune, 2020). Disabled people are treated as insignificant, less important than abled people, and expendable (BBC, 2020). The working class are 'essential' but remain underpaid and under-resourced, while the richest humans on the planet continue to amass wealth even as the economy is in shambles (Sardana, 2020). Black, Indigenous, and Latinx people, especially women (transgender women are women) are being hit hardest by the economic crisis (Frye, 2020) (James, 2020) (Salas, 2020). Indigenous land defenders are fighting to protect their treaty rights (Bailey, 2020) and keep pipelines from the land they steward[21]. It is a wilful act to ignore that police can and do kill civilians with impunity[22], and that the targets of this violence are likely to be mentally ill, people of colour, and/or poor and unhoused (Fuller et.al, 2015) (Adhopia, 2020).

It's easy to see how we might numb out in the face of so much suffering, particularly when the systems responsible are so massive and entangled. Now more than ever we are called to resist systemic oppression, to see clearly how it makes separate that which never was separate, and the spiritual wounding we all experience as a result.

Truly, every participant in this project had a longing to practice goodness. In this time of global crisis, they all found ways to do whatever work was asked of them to make a difference, particularly as white people, abled people, and/or cisgender people. They amplified the voices of the Black Lives Matter movement, contributed funds to organizations providing mutual aid, and called in friends and family.

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21   https://unistoten.camp/no-pipelines/background-of-the-campaign/

22   https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/investigations/police-shootings-database/

I carried many questions with me during this entire project, not with the expectation of finding definitive answers, but as a source of motivation. The questions varied, but they all pointed to my commitment to the Bodhisattva vow; I want to use my practice as a means to awaken, for myself and for others. With this project I wanted to explore how facing our conditioning enables us to take personal responsibility without falling into the trap of ignorance. The discomfort of seeing an implicit bias rooted in prejudice can prevent someone from addressing it, particularly if we hold a dualistic idea of people being inherently good or inherently bad. Because we are part of the cultural body, when we shift a paradigm within ourselves, we are contributing to the understanding of the collective mind. When enough people shift a paradigm, there is a cultural shift.

Regardless of their spiritual practices, or lack thereof, every participant embraced this work and expressed enthusiasm in continuing with it when our time together was finished. I don't doubt that most of them would have taken this path regardless, but they all expressed an ease with diving in that wasn't quite so strong when we started this project together. It was not that they didn't want to do the work, but that the weight of it often feels like too much for any one person to carry. This is because it is too much. There is a reason division is a feature of systems created to benefit the few at the expense of the many; they make separate that which is not separate knowing that we are stronger and more likely to resist inequitable systems when we collaborate. One individual on their own risks burn-out, emotional fatigue, and moral injury. A collective of individuals united on the path of liberation, regardless of identity, is the greatest threat to systems of injustice and oppression.

With each participant, I offered up my own practice as a reminder that they are not alone, using my Mahayana path to guide me in holding the complexity and coming alongside them. I didn't always do so skilfully, as noted by the expectations participants had about their IAT results. More often than not, though, I was able to be a support and a guide. In addition, even though most of them were unknown to one another, simply knowing they were participating in a project that others had signed up for was another source of connection, belonging, and community.

Every one of them shared with at least one other person in their own social circle that they were part of this project, thus expanding the circle further, and building community support for their ongoing commitment to this practice. Whatever discomfort they had was either transformed or a became source of motivation to go deeper, to call in more people in their community, and speak out against oppression with clarity and conviction.

My own practice has been transformed. I've shifted my language, found new pockets of energy, and more ways of cultivating resiliency. I am reminded that this work really matters, even if we have a small platform. How we meet one another in this work matters, and my trust in the Buddha nature of everyone I meet aids me in coming alongside them.

Overall participants showed greater ease in naming the systems that we are all living under and seeing how naming them is the first important step to dismantling. A contemplative approach of study, reflection, and meditation was used by every participant, created in their own way, according to what they understood would help. From heart practices to curiosity, conversations with friends to journaling, participants found ways to sit with the complexity and go deeper. I provided sign-posts with multiple direction, and they found the path that worked best for them to examine and understand their unendorsed prejudiced biases.

As a chaplain, regardless of the field we enter or the population we engage with, the reality of the cultural body is present. Implicit biases will always be present as well, even as cultural norms change. It is a little thing to learn to accept this aspect of the Ultimate, as a way to see what is Relative. It is the accumulation of little things that ensure the arc towards justice and liberation continues, bent by the work of millions across generations. We need each other on this path toward liberation because liberation is a collective project.

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Appendix A: Implicit Association Tests

The following is a list of the relevant Implicit Association Tests available at the time of this project, including the description of each as they appeared on the Harvard Implicit Association Test website:

Race IATs

- Race IAT — This IAT requires the ability to distinguish faces of European and African origin.

- Weapons IAT — This IAT requires the ability to recognize White and Black faces, and images of weapons or harmless objects.

- Arab-Muslim IAT — This IAT requires the ability to distinguish names that are likely to belong to Arab-Muslims versus people of other nationalities or religions.

- Asian-American IAT — This IAT requires the ability to recognize White and Asian-American faces, and images of places that are either American or Foreign in origin.

- Native-American IAT — This IAT requires the ability to recognize White and Native American faces in either classic or modern dress, and the names of places that are either American or Foreign in origin.

- Skin-tone IAT — This IAT requires the ability to recognize light and dark-skinned faces.

Gender IATs

- Transgender IAT — This IAT requires the ability to distinguish photos of transgender celebrity faces from photos of cisgender celebrity faces.

- Gender-Science IAT — This IAT often reveals a relative link between liberal arts and females and between science and males.

- Gender-Career IAT — This IAT often reveals a relative link between family and females and between career and males.

Disability IAT

- Disability IAT — This IAT requires the ability to recognize symbols representing abled and disabled individuals.

Appendix B: Resource emails

These are the resources emails sent to three of the nine participants who completed the entire study: one for gender, one for race, and the one for disability. Emails were customized for each participant according to their interests and how they already spend their time, but also in accordance with the conversation we had during the Resource Generation Meeting.

Any comments specific to the individual or indicative of our relationship that may result in their being identified have been blacked out.

Resource email sent to a participant focusing on Racial Bias

Participant Colour: Self-Luminous Red   **Intake: 11 May, 2020**

To Listen to:

OnBeing episode: [The Mind is a Difference-Seeking Machine](#) with **Mahzarin Banaji:** This is the episode that inspired me to do my own work on Implicit Biases. I love how Mahzarin speaks to our capacity to be better people while acknowledging that this does not mean we are bad people. This would be a close listen or background, and a good episode to have a notebook handy for writing down anything that jumps out at you.

[This American Life](#) is a wonderful resource for getting beneath statistics and generalizations to the human stories at the root of what are complex issues. The ones I've chosen here are the ones that have really touched me and increased my capacity to connect with experiences and perspectives I will never personally have.
1. [The Out Crowd](#) - This won the Pulitzer, which Ira explains at the beginning has never happened with a broadcast radio programme before. Warning on this one—it's a bit enraging and heartbreaking. Good to listen to while taking a walk or doing a puzzle or something grounding for you.
2. [Little War on the Prairie](#) - This is a flip-the-script episode that takes a closer look at the Dakota War of 1862.
3. [The Problem We All Live With](#), 2 parts - This is one of the strongest episodes This American Life has ever produced. It's two parts, and it can be a difficult thing to listen to, but it does so much to explain race in America and the ongoing impact of the legacy of slavery.

To Read:

Fiction:
The Broken Earth Trilogy and ***The Dreamblood Duology*** by [N.K.Jemisin](#) — Although, honestly, everything N.K. Jemisin writes is amazing. If you love Octavia Butler, you will love N.K. Jemisin. Personally, I think she is one of the greatest living writers. We are blessed to have her. She explores gender, race, and the entanglement of religion and politics, and her characters are well-fleshed out and compelling.

[**The Last Report on the Miracle of Little No Horse**](#) by **Louise Erdrich** is absolutely delightful to read. It's charming, poetic, and looks at the impact of colonialism, poverty, class and religion with a bit of gender-analysis thrown in. Louise Erdrich is one of my favourite authors. I'm making my way through her books and have yet to find one I don't enjoy. Also, she owns a bookshop, Birchbark Books, in Minneapolis. If you order her books from her bookshop, you get signed copies! And you're supporting an indie bookshop!

On Earth We Are Briefly Gorgeous by [**Ocean Vuong**](#) - This is fiction that reads like memoir, and is likely based on the author's life in many ways. It's so beautifully written and has some lines in it that I had to write down and have been quoting because they are so powerful and capture so much.

Memoir:
[**Heart Berries**](#) by **Terese Marie Mailhot** is a stunning memoir. It is one of the most powerful books I have ever read. Even though it's slim, it's not a quick read. The content is so rich that I found myself sitting with just a paragraph for a day or two before reading on.

[**When They Call You A Terrorist**](#) by **Patrisse Cullors** is powerful and painful. For me, this book highlighted not just the impact of police violence on the Black community in the US, but how mental illness is treated as criminal in Black men.

Non-Fiction:
[**The Way of Tenderness: Awakening through race, sexuality & gender**](#) by **Zenju Earthlyn Manuel** is one of my favourite books ever and the most profoundly impactful dharma book I've ever read. I think this is a really good one for exploring how we live at the intersections of our identity in particular.

An Indigenous Peoples' History of the United States and [**All The Real Indians Died Off**](#) are two excellent resources. The former is definitely more of a textbook, so if you want something a bit quicker to digest, the latter gives a good overview.

[**Women, Race & Class**](#) by **Angela Davis —** This book blew my mind. In particular, it really made me rethink the 1st wave/2nd wave/3rd wave Feminism narrative, which centres movements for genre equity led by white women, while ignoring the years of social action and resistance by Indigenous and Black women.

Blogs:
These are just a few blogs that I go to as resources and shared regularly because they get right to the heart of a lot of things—laying it all out clearly and offering a great roadmap for awareness:
- [**How to Survive in Intersectional Feminist Spaces 101**](#)
- [**I Need to Talk to Spiritual White Women About White Supremacy**](#) (**2 parts**) by **Layla F. Saad**
- [**I Am Drowning in Whiteness**](#) by **Ojeoma Oluo <<<** Author of [**So You Want to Talk About Race**](#), which is another fantastic resource.

To Watch:
[**Reel Injun**](#) - This documentary is a great look at how media has influenced our ideas of Indigenous people. A bonus on this one is that the documentary covers films with better representation of Indigenous people, which I invite you to look into if they take your fancy. :)

[**Accidental Courtesy**](#) - This is a documentary that was on Netflix but might not be anymore. I found it on PBS when I did a search for it. You may also be able to find it on Kanopy or Hoopla.

She's Gotta Have It, is on Netflix and it's the show, not the movie I'm pointing to here. In addition to being centred on a Black woman's story, the main character is also polyamorous and pansexual.

BONUS!

This is just an 'extra' I'm throwing in ███████████████████ There is an organization called **Freedom Projects** that was started by an inmate in collaboration with the folks who developed the non-Violent Communication model.

In addition to providing NVC and meditation workshops in prisons, and supporting people in reentry, they offer free workshops to contextualize the Prison Industrial Complex and racism in the US. Obviously, with COVID, these are not being offered in person, but they have been looking into doing them through Zoom. I did go to one, last year, and as an organization I think anything they have to offer is immensely beneficial. Think of them as a 'back pocket' resource and feel free to peruse their website to see if there's a virtual offering you could attend. Also, they just have a lot of great resources in the form of videos, blogs and online articles.

ADDITIONAL EMAIL SENT

There's **a great interview on OnBeing with Resmaa Menakem** (author of *My Grandmother's Hands*) that just got published. The official produced episode is shorter than the unedited one, but the unedited one is REALLY worth listening to as it goes that much deeper. But basically this gets into the epigenetics of racial trauma and the embodied work we all have to do to shift the narrative.

Another great resource and some wonderful wisdom for our times. :)

Resource email sent to a participant focusing on Gender Bias

Participant Colour: Octarine   Intake: 15 May, 2020

To follow/Check-out on Social Media:

Pidgeon Pagonis is an Intersex activist working to protect the bodily autonomy of Intersex babies and children. They post a lot of great stuff to Instagram (https://www.instagram.com/pidgeo_n/) and also have a fun shop of stickers and shirts for non-binary and Intersex folks.

Jack Saddleback (https://www.instagram.com/jacksaddleback) is a Cree two-spirit trans activist who is also a dear friend of mine from back in the day. He shares really great resources on his Instagram and is suuuuuuper wholesome.

Gem AKA @urdoingreat on Instagram and tiktok: https://www.instagram.com/urdoingreat/ is a rising star non-binary Black socialist working to educate folks on police abolishment, mutual aid, and leftist ethos. Their tiktok videos are brilliant.

Shannon Downey AKA @badassCrossStitch (https://www.instagram.com/badasscrossstitch/) has some awesome subversive embroidery and cross stitch patterns and does amazing social change work.

To Watch:

Pose! On Netflix. Season one is eight episodes long. Season 2 is going to be released sometime this month (It's already in its third season on FX, the cable channel that produces it, but sooooo slow to come to Netflix).

Paris is Burning is a documentary that used to be on Netflix but might not be anymore. You could try accessing it through the library—I've discovered that library systems tend to have membership to streaming platforms like Kanopy and Hoopla for cardholders. This is the documentary that inspired the show Pose and is all about ballroom culture in New York in the 80s.

Nannette stand up show by **Hannah Gadsby** on Netflix. While this is a comedy show, she uses her platform to speak some very painful truths. I've watched it three times because it's so powerful, empowering, and moving. You will laugh but you are also likely to cry. Bonus, shortly after this Hannah 'came out' as Autistic and her latest Netflix special, **Douglas**, is about that! (I saw it live and it was an amazing show ████████████████ ████████████████████████████)

On YouTube:

Natalie Winn (AKA Contrapoints) is one of my favourite YouTubers. Her videos are extravagant philosophy lectures with a unique aesthetic. They tend to run long, but are so informative and rich I think they're worth it. Here are two for you to start with:

- **Transtrenders** - in which Natalie unpacks trans-essentialism and non-binary identities.
- **Men** - in which Natalie talks about how men need advocates to help them unlearn the toxic ways they've been taught to express masculinity.

Rantasmo is a YouTube personality who does really short videos. Here are some great ones he's done looking at trans representation in media.

Need More Straight, The Matrix & Trans themes
Sens8 Needs more gay
Tina Fey needs more gay

So much of learning to challenge implicit biases around gender is learning to see how and where we get the messaging. When I learn to see where messages came from, it helps me think critically when consuming any media and prevent the same messages from being reinforced as much as possible. **The Pop-Culture Detective Agency** has been the best resource for me to see the way patriarchal, misogynist, cisnormative messages were taught to me through movies and shows.

To Listen to:

OnBeing episode: The Mind is a Difference-Seeking Machine with **Mahzarin Banaji:** This is the episode that inspired me to do my own work on Implicit Biases. I love how Mahzarin speaks to our capacity to be better people while acknowledging that this does not mean we are bad people.

To Read:

The Way of Tenderness: Awakening through race, sexuality & gender by **Zenju Earthlyn Manuel** is one of my favourite books ever and the most profoundly impactful dharma books I've ever read. What I appreciate about this is

how she speaks to the role compassion plays in our capacity to see the systems in which we are living (and therefore perpetuating) and come to own our own work to be done for our collective liberation through the lens of our embodied experiences.

Women, Race & Class by **Angela Davis —** This book blew my mind. In particular, it really made me rethink the 1st wave/2nd wave/3rd wave Feminism narrative, which centred movements for gender equity led by white women, while ignoring the years of social action and resistance by Indigenous and Black women.

BONUS!

Persona Poem Prompt!
Write from the point of view of a person that is your complete opposite in embodiment/identity
At the airport…
In the line for security…
OR
At the grocery store
OR
On the crowded elevator

10 lines

This prompt came from a class I took led by **Anastacia-Reneé**

Resource email sent to participant focusing on Disability Bias

Participant Colour: Hooloovoo   **Intake: 14 May, 2020**

To Listen to:

I know podcasts aren't really your thing, so I've only included two links. One to an episode and one to a whole podcast series.

OnBeing episode: The Mind is a Difference-Seeking Machine with **Mahzarin Banaji:** This is the episode that inspired me to do my own work on Implicit Biases. I love how Mahzarin speaks to our capacity to be better people while acknowledging that this does not mean we are bad people.

Bonus If you haven't read it, the book ***Blindspot: The Hidden Biases of Good People*** is an easy to digest presentation of the Harvard IAT study.

Irresistible (previously known as '*Healing Justice*') centres Disability and is one of the most intersectional resources out there these days. I don't think you can go wrong listening to any episode.

To Watch:

Movies:
Mad Max: Fury Road - Re-watch! I've included some great over-all analysis of the film below, which I suggest looking at before re-watching it to let some seeds get planted on things to notice in the film.

Margarita With a Straw is a movie made in India about a coming of age story about a young woman with cerebral palsy. You may be able to find it on Kanopy. I believe it's on Hulu and Amazon prime. **This blog from Bitch Media** is a great critique of having non-disabled actors playing disabled characters, that also acknowledges the importance of the representation the film provides of nor only Disability but also bisexuality.

YouTube:
There is so much great stuff on YouTube around Disability Justice and representation, so this is where I'm able to give you the most resources.

*Specific to **Mad Max Fury Road**:
Planting and Payoff by **Lindsay Ellis** - This video essay doesn't have anything specific about disability in it. It goes through the film language of planting and payoff, which this movie has in spades and does brilliantly. This matters though because often a disability (we discussed the villain with the scar) is used as a plant for how evil someone is. Something to bear in mind when watching this movie, and also in other movies. Think James Bond characters who are disfigured and turn out to be the antagonist.

Jessica Kellgren-Fozard is a delightful YouTuber who talks about disability, chronic illness, and interesting disabled and/or queer historical figures! These are some choice ones:
- **I Was Misdiagnosed** - One of the disabilities Jessica has is the same as me! Hypermobility/EDS! This is a good introduction to her personality.
- **The Crippled Suffragette** - All about Rosa May Billinghurst!
- **The Bisexual Anti-Fascist** - All about Marlene Dietrich!

Game Maker's Toolkit has a fantastic six-part series about **designing for disabilities in videogames** that is fascinating to watch and something that really made me think of the many kinds of disability people live with. Like, my biggest TIL moment was that blind people play videogames. How cool!

BONUS Here is an article that lists videogames that have disabled characters.

To Read:
*Specific to Mad Max!:
Ian Danskin of **Innuendo Studios** on YouTube wrote **a great essay on disability and race in films** to accompany his **eight-part video essay** looking at tropes for women in action movies.

But you don't look sick? by **Christine Miserandino** is the blog where the term 'Spoonie' originated from! This explains how she came up with the term. Since this took off in the Disability community, it has been adopted by a lot of people with other conditions that aren't consistent in their impact. Like me being hypermobile! ▬▬▬▬▬▬▬▬▬▬▬

I found **this list of book recommendations** I thought you could choose from, depending on what stands out for you as interesting. Personally, I'm going to get **Mark Richard's** memoir and the collection of essays called **'Resistance and Hope'**.

Here are three articles unpacking language and what terms to avoid and which ones to use instead:
- **I am Disabled: on Identity first versus person-first language** - As well as looking at Disabled verses person with a disability, this article unpacks the social model versus the medical model.
- **4 Disability Euphemisms that need to Bite the Dust** - Pivoting the conversation around language to look at how the words we use perpetuate an ableist view.
- **Different Ability versus Disability** - again, this is one of those straight from the horses mouth opinions of using 'differently-abled' rather than disabled, which happens a lot in progressive activist spaces.

And **this is the piece I wrote and published as a way to 'come out'** about having a disability myself.

Appendix C: Exit Survey results

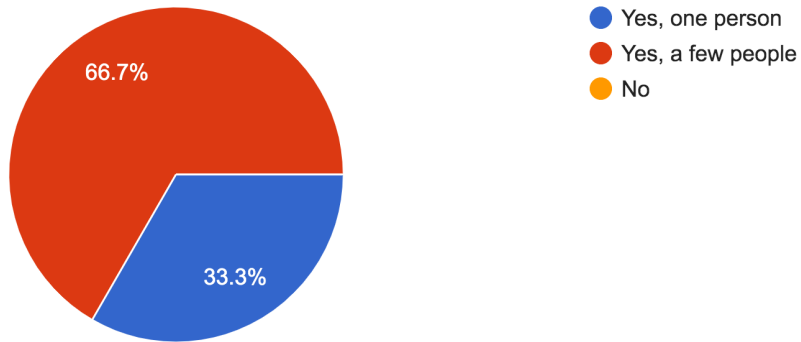Which Implicit Bias(s) did you focus on over the last three months?

9 responses
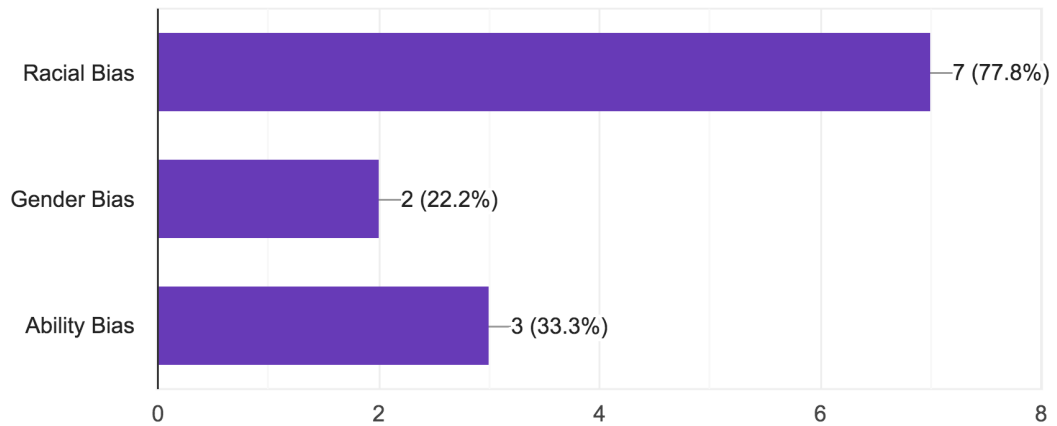
Prior to joining this project, would you say you had a practice of cultivating awareness for your implicit biases?
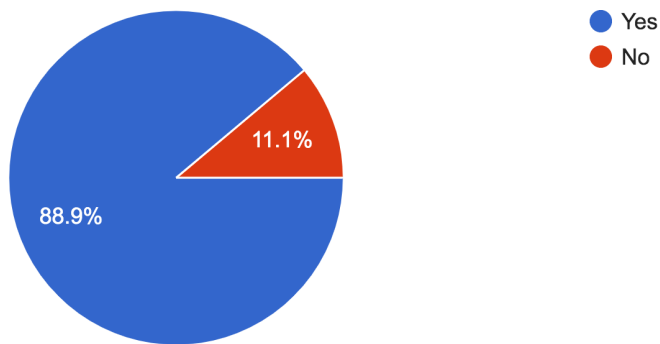
9 responses

- 🔵 Yes, explicitly
- 🔴 Yes, but without a clear framework
- 🟠 No, but I realise I had many tools for this work
- 🟢 No, and this was entirely new for me
- 🟣 Unsure

Did you share with anyone that you were participating in this project?

9 responses

- Yes, one person
- Yes, a few people
- No

66.7%

33.3%

If you answered 'yes' to the above question, did you find it helpful to have someone to talk to about what you were doing?

9 responses

- Yes
- No
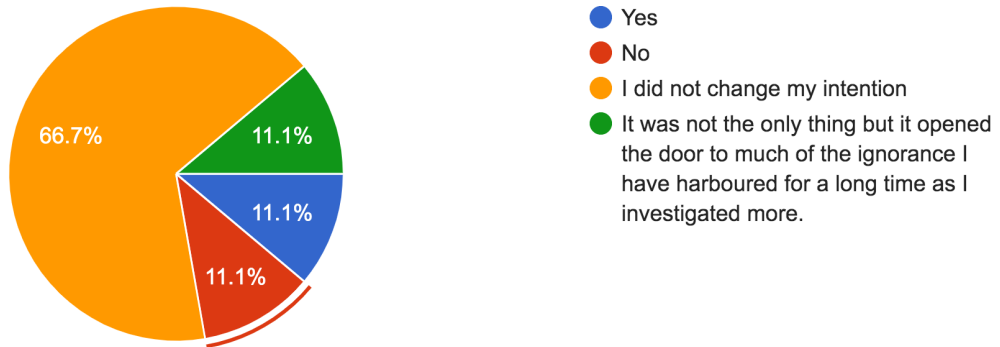
88.9%

11.1%

Did you change your intention at any point?

9 responses

- No
- Yes

77.8%

22.2%
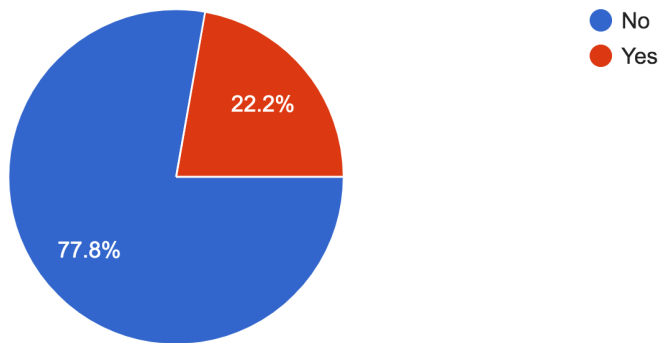
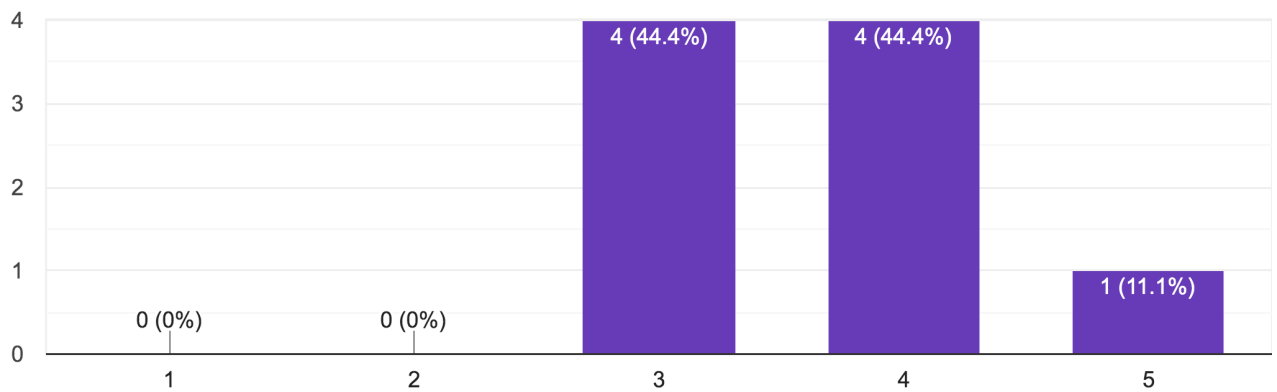## Did Derek Chauvin's murder of George Floyd contribute to your choice to change your intention or write an additional one?

9 responses

- Yes
- No
- I did not change my intention
- It was not the only thing but it opened the door to much of the ignorance I have harboured for a long time as I investigated more.

66.7%
11.1%
11.1%
11.1%

How helpful was it to choose and write down an intention?

9 responses

Value	Count
1	0 (0%)
2	0 (0%)
3	4 (44.4%)
4	4 (44.4%)
5	1 (11.1%)

How often did you read your intention?

9 responses

- Multiple times a day.
- Once a day.
- Once every two or three days
- Weekly.
- Every few weeks.
- I didn't look at it after I wrote it.
- I forgot to write an intention
- I repeated it before meditation.
- I recited it once a day when I woke up - I might think of it at other times especia…

22.2%
11.1%
11.1%
11.1%
33.3%
11.1%

How long did you spend grounding yourself before taking the IATs?

9 responses

- 5 minutes or less
- 6 - 9 minutes
- 10 - 15 minutes
- 16 minutes or more
- I didn't do a grounding practice

88.9%

11.1%
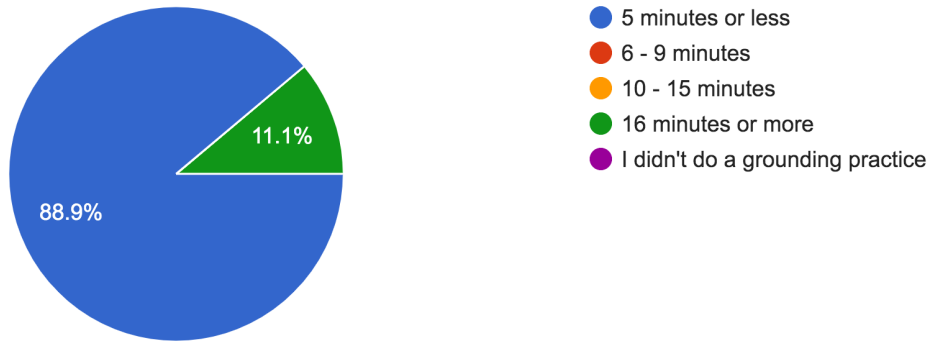
Using a grounding practice was helpful and supportive when taking an IAT

9 responses

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree
- I did not use a grounding practice

55.6%

11.1%

11.1%

22.2%
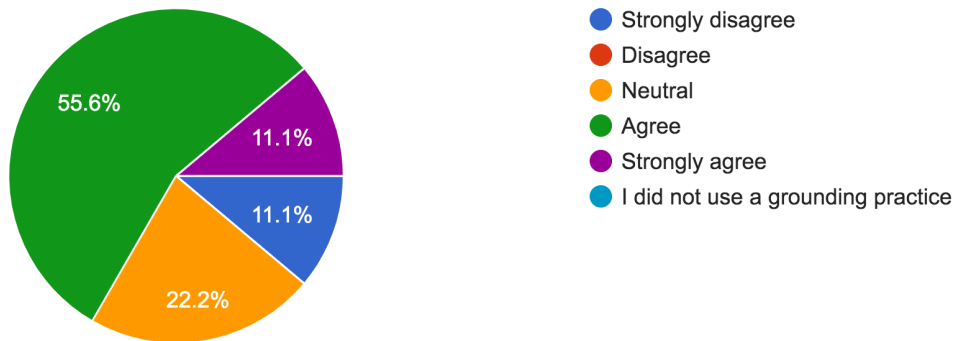
Using a heart-opening practice was helpful and supportive when taking an IAT and in the last six-weeks while connecting with any resources provided by Kaitlyn.

9 responses
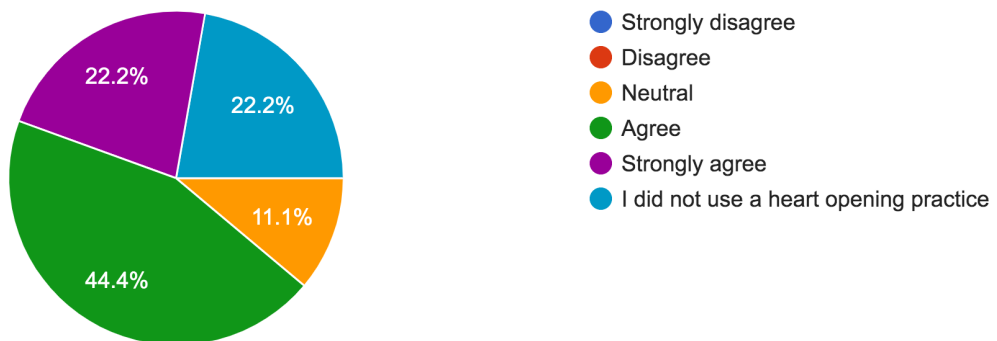
- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree
- I did not use a heart opening practice
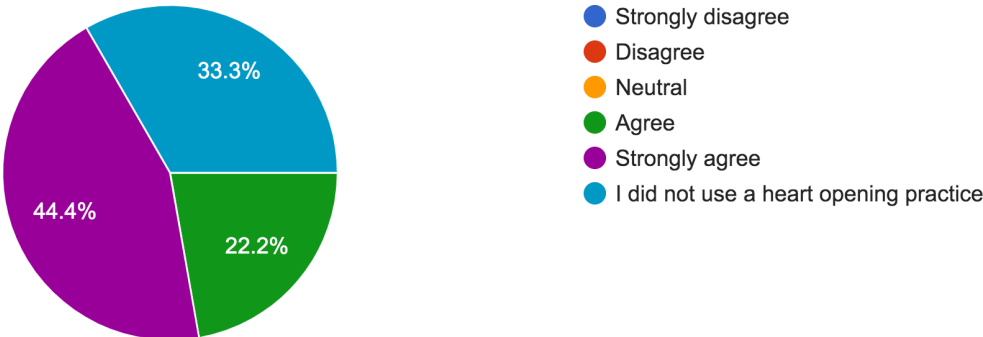
22.2%

22.2%

11.1%

44.4%

Using a grounding practice was helpful and supportive in light of the global anti-racist uprising sparked by the publicly filmed murder of George Floyd in the USA.
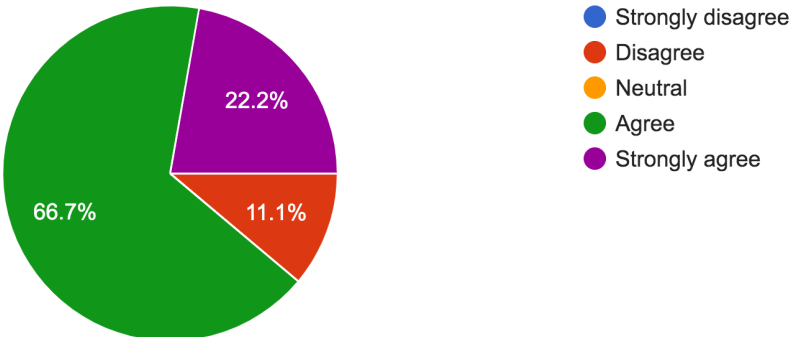
9 responses

- 🔵 Strongly disagree
- 🔴 Disagree
- 🟠 Neutral
- 🟢 Agree
- 🟣 Strongly agree
- 🔵 I did not use a grounding practice

44.4%
44.4%
11.1%

Using a heart-opening practice was helpful and supportive in light of the global anti-racist uprising sparked by the publicly filmed murder of George Floyd in the USA.
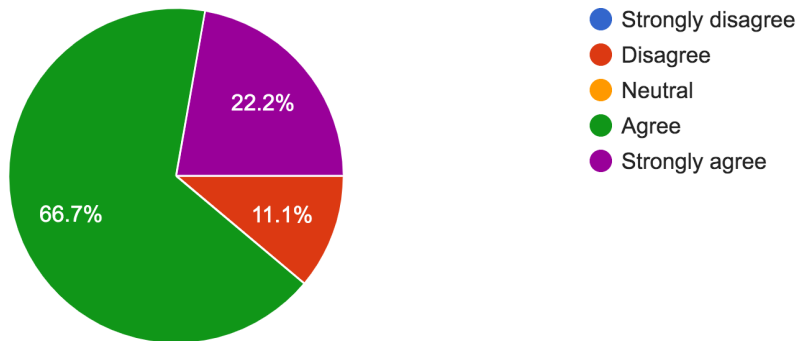
9 responses

- 🔵 Strongly disagree
- 🔴 Disagree
- 🟠 Neutral
- 🟢 Agree
- 🟣 Strongly agree
- 🔵 I did not use a heart opening practice

33.3%
44.4%
22.2%
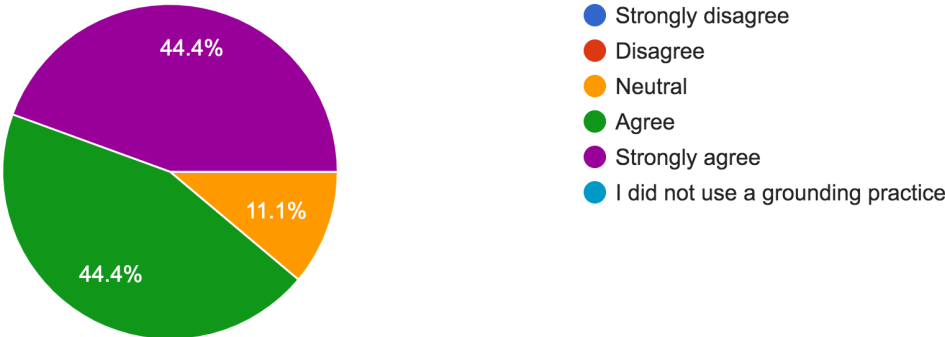
I am more aware of implicit biases I hold around race, gender or disability

9 responses

- 🔵 Strongly disagree
- 🔴 Disagree
- 🟠 Neutral
- 🟢 Agree
- 🟣 Strongly agree

22.2%
66.7%
11.1%

I have a better understanding of how implicit biases I hold around race, gender or disability have been taught and reinforced.

9 responses

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree

22.2%
11.1%
66.7%

I am better equipped to notice implicit biases around race, gender or disability moving forward.

9 responses

- Strongly disgree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree

33.3%
11.1%
55.6%
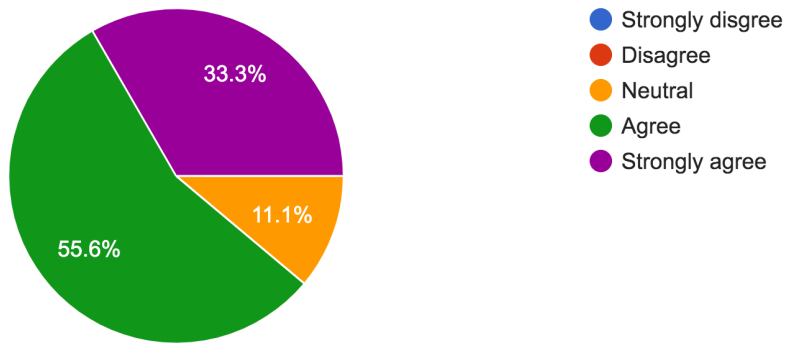
I am better equipped to prevent implicit biases around race, gender or disability from rooting themselves

9 responses

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

33.3%
66.7%
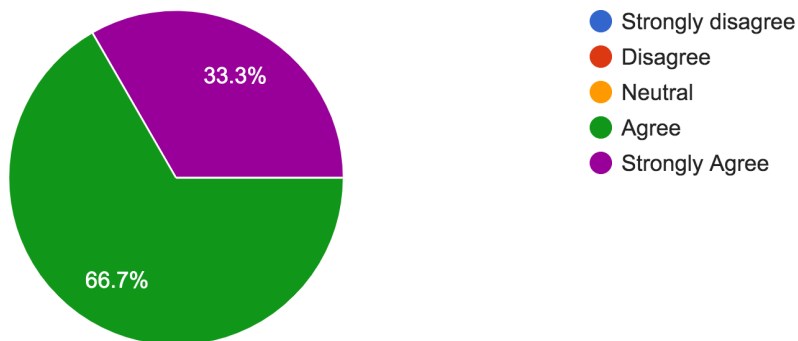
I am more comfortable talking about and naming implicit biases I have around race, gender or disability.

9 responses

- ● Strongly disagree
- ● Disagree
- ● Neutral
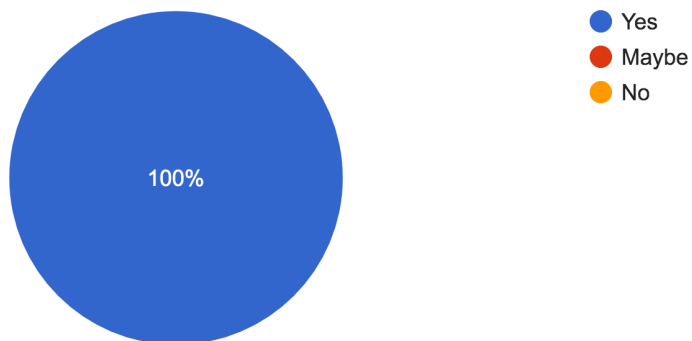- ● Agree
- ● Strongly Agree

33.3%

11.1%

55.6%
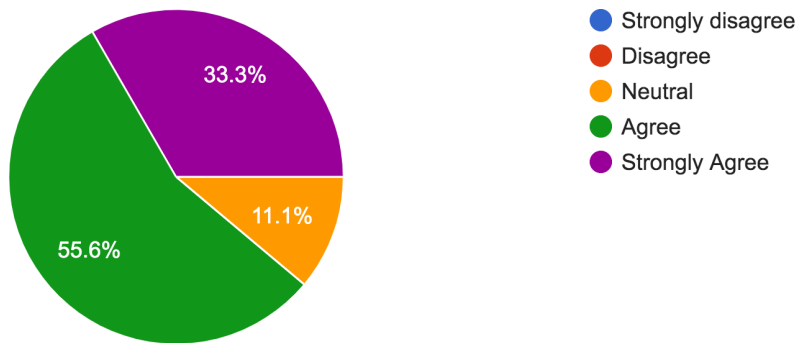
To what degree do you think participating in this thesis project has had an influence on how you have responded to the anti-racist uprising?

9 responses
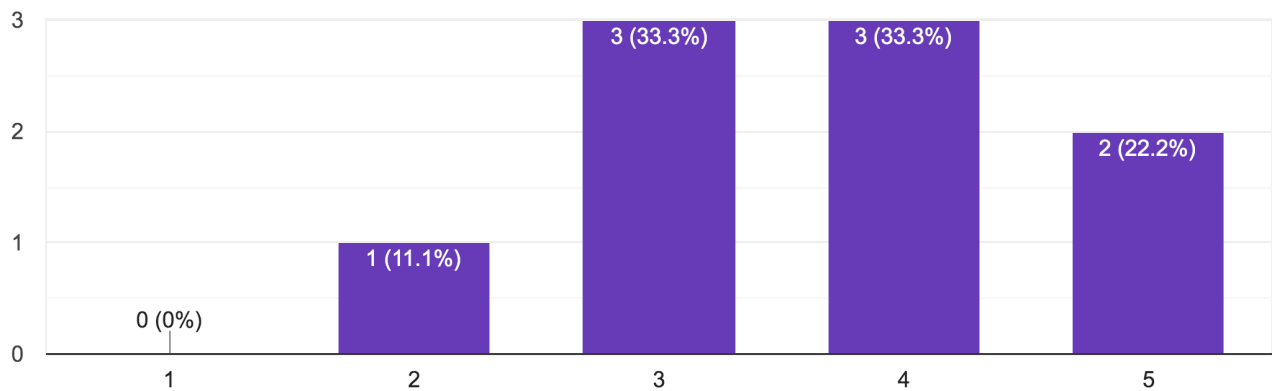
Is the practice of cultivating awareness of implicit biases one that you intend to continue with?

9 responses

- ● Yes
- ● Maybe
- ● No

100%

If you were to continue with it, would you find support from someone with training in a spiritual practice or background valuable?

9 responses

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

66.7%

22.2%

11.1%