

“The Power of We” Initiative: Creating a Multi-Racial Community of Care, Accountability, & Solidarity

ALF Silicon Valley Sr. Fellows who identify as people of color are coming together to:

- Deepen relationships
- Appreciate our different experiences and shared values
- Use our collective power to create a culture that values everyone’s humanity

This initiative provides a space for active practice of a “third culture” for healing and wholeness. Through consistent practice, we can achieve radical transformation at the individual and communal levels to resist dehumanization and build a resilient multi-racial democracy.

Background & Context

The opinion of one group that its culture is superior to others is probably as old as humankind. Modern day white supremacy originates from the belief in the apparent superiority of Western culture, resulting in a pathological “racial narcissism.” Consequently, a history of violence, racism, and exploitation at the hands of Europeans has left a deep wound with traumatic effects on colonized people in the Americas, Africa, and Asia. People of color have suffered intergenerational trauma over several centuries and only recently has the profound impact been even acknowledged. These factors too often lead to a deep and pervasive sense of helplessness and shame. To address these impacts, people of color must actively take the initiative and work in “solidarity” to liberate and heal a culture of shame, a culture that is unhealthy for the oppressed and those considered privileged. People of color can reach within and bring forward indigenous cultures that center wholeness, empathy, spirituality, and community, creatively integrating modern and traditional perspectives, with the objective of establishing a healthy and harmonious culture.

The Power of We is achieved through the solidarity of people of color based on honesty, empathy, open-mindedness, trust, and a commitment to a just society for all. These values can be developed using time-tested techniques used by indigenous people that can support the healing of intergenerational trauma and enable us to imagine new possibilities. These techniques include dialogue, expressive arts, storytelling, movement, meditation, communing with nature, and others. These activities can be the foundation for rediscovering our wisdom traditions and thereby enable a radical transformation of our culture.

Events & Topics/Culture Practices Covered

Date/Location	Discussion Topic/Theme	Cultural & Embodied Practices
November 15, 2024 Japantown, SJ Retreat	Coming Together for Multi-Racial Democracy	Yoga/Breathing Embodied Leadership: Celebrating the Cultural Current of Rhythm, Roots, and Play, led by Rosanna Alvarez
October 4, 2024 Solidarity Practice Zoom	Solidarity in this Election Season	Yoga/Breathing
August 29, 2024 Solidarity Dialogue Zoom	Racial Implications of Issues during Elections (Immigration, Housing, and Public Safety)	Yoga/Breathing
June 19, 2024 Ahmadiyya Mosque, Milpitas Retreat	Understanding Racial Trauma & Collective Healing What does leadership look like in our different cultures?	Yoga/Breathing African Drumming led by Chike Nwoffiah, SV African Film Festival
March 24, 2024 Emmanuel Baptist Church, East San Jose Retreat	Understanding Racial Trauma, Somatics & Collective Healing	Yoga/Breathing Movement Storytelling led by PJ Hirabayashi, Taiko Peace
November 28, 2023 Solidarity Hour Zoom	How can solidarity bring us together to heal and move forward?	Yoga/Breathing
September 29, 2023 Mountain View Buddhist Temple, Mountain View Retreat	Solidarity - How can we actively practice it? What do we need from each other? - Affinity spaces and multiracial whole group -Belonging & Othering - Sharing stories	Yoga/Breathing
June 3, 2023 Bloom House, East Palo Alto Retreat	What is the Power of We? What is Solidarity? - affinity spaces and multiracial whole group Sharing stories	Yoga/Breathing Dancing
March 14, 2023 Gamble Garden, Palo Alto Retreat	Introducing the Power of We What do others assume about us? What do we want others to understand about us? - affinity spaces and multiracial whole group	Mindfulness Dancing

Projects

[Power of We Solidarity Principles](#) - Following the September 2023 Retreat and November 2023 Zoom, a sub-group formed to develop concrete ideas to put the idea of solidarity into action. One strong motivator was to address the problem of communities of color being pitted against each other in political campaigns. Through dialogue, the group recognized that before we could challenge and hold others accountable, we need to be accountable to each other and ourselves first. So the [Solidarity Principles](#) start with our own commitments followed by our expectations of public officials and candidates.

These Principles have been shared and discussed at several Power of We sessions and are available to share with others, including with public officials and the ALF network.

Call to Action/Invitation

- Suggestions for future events or actions based on the series.
- Sr. Fellows who participate in the Power of We are encouraged to share invitations and requests for collaboration and support with the group. Many Sr. Fellows are leading efforts aligned with the Power of We, so there are opportunities for individuals to choose to get involved.
- We continuously remind ourselves that investing in our relationships and engaging in dialogue are ways of taking action to build and model the Power of We. We seek to challenge binary thinking that we either dialogue or take action.
- Likewise, we recognize that honoring and practicing our diverse cultural traditions is essential for our collective healing and building community. We prioritize time together for celebration and joy.
- Similarly, we value embodied learning and healing as well as learning, sharing, and exploring ideas with our minds.

This document will be modified periodically to reflect updated approaches as needed. The last update was November 13, 2024.