

BE MORE SOLIDARY

As people who find ourselves a part of one oppressed group or another, we may sometimes forget to practice solidarity with those outside of our own experience. *Being* more solidary means embodying compassion, which means understanding the struggles of another group, where we fit within them, and acting based on that knowledge.

While being solidary connotes identifying common interests, it also signifies difference.

Systems of oppression feed off of and use difference amongst oppressed groups to encourage hatred, fighting, and divisions between us. This may cause fear, hurt, and a belief that the "other" does not understand us. This is one way systems of oppression are maintained. Practicing solidarity can help us dismantle these systems more effectively. How can we acknowledge difference and be more solidary?

In the interest of being more solidary...

In the place where you live, identify a community outside of your own experience. (I am a hetero Xicana living in Los Angeles. Some examples of communities I work with, live near, or encounter often, who I don't belong to, are Korean, Black, and queer folks, to name a few.)

Take time to learn and be able to recognize the struggles of that community. Talk to people, read books, newspapers, blogs, listen to radio programs, take a class. Ideally, find material spoken and written by this group and about their own struggles.

Identify your role or connection to those struggles. What are the ways you actively disengage from or reproduce the structures that facilitate this oppression? (Example: How do I actively disengage from or reproduce conversations that promote the denigration or criminality of Black people?)

Take the next opportunity to interrupt these situations by gently or assertively sharing the knowledge you have been accumulating.

When you are ready, participate in an organized group or activity fighting against these struggles.

Continue your research and learning. Always.

If you are already active in your own community's struggles, find commonalities. Where do your struggles intersect? How are they different?

It is through this balance between acknowledging the unique nature of our respective struggles, our difference, and seeing where we overlap, that we can find opportunities to fight together.

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#mkthngshppn