

## USG SGM ~ Resistance ~ April 2023

drawn from Soul Matters materials, see the full packet for more of all of these elements

[www.soulmatterssharingcircle.com](http://www.soulmatterssharingcircle.com)



### **Chalice Lighting**

Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter.

- Martin Luther King, Jr.

**Check-in** *Share your highs and lows since we last met focusing on what drains you and what lifts you up. We give each other the gift of listening without asking questions or offering advice to allow people the safety to share what's in their hearts.*

### **Introduction**

Don't just resist cynicism — fight it actively... Like all forms of destruction, cynicism is infinitely easier and lazier than construction. There is nothing more difficult yet more gratifying in our society than living with... faith in the human spirit... This [faith] remains the most potent antidote to cynicism. Today, especially, it is an act of courage and resistance. - Maria Popova

### **Spiritual Exercise Option A: Give Thanks!**

Who made resistance possible for you? We all have someone. Someone who stood beside you as you stood against the status quo. Someone who taught a class or gave a sermon that invited you into a vision of an entirely new way of being in the world. Someone whose countercultural lifestyle gave you the courage to do a bit of the same. Someone who made you feel like a one-of-a-kind rather than a misfit. Someone who helped you resist the pressures to follow the herd. Someone whose sacrifice moved your heart.

So, for your exercise this month, figure out who your "someone" is and THANK THEM! Whether it is with a letter, email, gift or face-to-face words over coffee, find a way to tell them how they made your resistance possible. Let them know how big of a gift their influence or example has been.

### **Spiritual Exercise Option B: Photograph Resistance for a Week**

The instructions for this exercise are simple: For each day of one week, take 3-5 pictures of "resistance." But here's where it gets harder: Don't overthink it. Don't predetermine what counts as "resistance." Just keep your eye out for whatever seems to be announcing itself to you as a form of resistance. So one minute you might find yourself taking a picture of the TV screen as the news reports on a protest against police brutality. But an hour later, it might be a flower pushing itself through a crack in the sidewalk. And then a day later you may find yourself taking a picture of your dog refusing to take a bath or of your wife's tattoo which she got to resist the stereotypes of what Grandmas should and shouldn't do.

And for the final step: At the end of the week, go through all the pictures you took and look for common themes. Let those common threads tell you how your definition of resistance seems to be growing in ways you didn't fully realize!

Come to your group ready to share 2-3 of your favorite pictures and 1-2 of the insights the exercise gave to you.

### **Quotes for Inspiration/Reading**

The only way to deal with an unfree world is to become so absolutely free that your very existence is an act of rebellion. - Albert Camus

Caring for myself is not self-indulgence, it is self-preservation, and that is an act of political warfare. - Audre Lorde

Your uprising against the forces of darkness has got to do more than say "no"; A fierce, primal yes should be at the heart of your crusade. - Rob Brezny

So, friends, every day do something that won't compute... Work for nothing. Take all that you have and be poor. Love someone who does not deserve it. Denounce the government and embrace the flag.... Ask the questions that have no answers... Laugh. Laughter is immeasurable. Be joyful though you have considered all the facts... -Wendell Berry

Be soft.  
Do not let the world  
make you hard.  
Do not let pain  
make you hate.  
Do not let bitterness  
Steal your sweetness.  
- Kurt Vonnegut

Rest is a form of resistance because it disrupts and pushes back against capitalism and white supremacy. Both of these toxic systems refuse to see the inherent divinity of human beings and have used human bodies as a tool for production, evil and violence for centuries. Grind culture has made us into human machines, willing and ready to donate our lives to a capitalist system that thrives by placing profit over people. - Tricia Hersh

## Questions

*Pick the one question that speaks to you most and let it lead you where you need to go. The goal is to figure out what being a part of a people of Resistance means for you and your daily living. A note about self-care: Often these questions take us to a vulnerable space. It is OKAY to ignore the questions that may be triggering – or lean in if that feels safe.*

1. *How did your parents' acts of resistance shape you?*
2. *Has your resistance to change grown or eased as you've gotten older?*
3. *What change in your life do you wish you had not resisted?*
4. *Have you been following the path of least resistance for so long that you no longer notice??*
5. *Is it time to heed the warning that "What you resist, persists"?*

**Sitting in Silence** *Take a few moments to sit quietly and reflect upon your thoughts.*

**Sharing/Deep Listening** *Respond with your thoughts and experiences with the topic. We create a safe space by listening deeply and not responding. When sharing, connect with what is true for you. When listening, give the speaker your full attention rather than thinking about what you will share.*

## Reflection and Gratitude

*This is a time to respond briefly to something another person said or to relate additional thoughts that may have occurred as others shared. Consider lifting up one comment or experience for which you are particularly grateful.*

**Singing** [click here](#) for Sonya Renee Taylor - Bodies of Resistance YouTube  
Click [here](#) for the Spotify playlist on Resistance.

**Extinguishing the Chalice** This will be our reply to violence: to make music more intensely, more beautifully, more devotedly than ever before. - Leonard Bernstein