

Chalice Lighting 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](#)

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.

Welcome to Practicing Resistance

"Our resistance is not predicated on how likely it will be to alter the conscience of the oppressor. We resist to retain our own conscience. And to awaken all others who are still in possession of their own souls." [Cole Arthur Riley](#)

Sometimes resistance involves bravely picking up a picket sign; other times it asks us to courageously put down our masks and allow who we really are to see the light of day. Sometimes it involves defeating the enemy; other times it's a matter of noticing that treating "them" as the enemy defeats us all. Often the path of resistance asks us to stay in it for the long haul, but just as often it's about taking that first tiny step. Most of the time it requires us to fight to the bitter end, and yet there are many moments when we need to stop resisting and let go. Resistance certainly takes the form of speaking the truth to power, but often what the world needs even more is for us to speak the truth in love. Bottom line: practicing resistance is tricky business and takes multiple, even contradictory, forms.

But beyond this complexity lies the simplicity of Marge Piercy's words. In **all** cases, she reminds us, practicing resistance starts when we say "We!" For instance, the power of our picket sign resides in the fact that it hangs alongside those of others. Being who we are usually begins with another person loving us for who we are. Both the long haul and our first courageous step are made possible by reaching out to receive a helping hand. It's all one big reminder that none of us resist alone. Or maybe what really needs to be said this month is that none of us **have to** resist alone. Yes, we certainly need to be pushed and prodded this month. But maybe what we need most is to be reassured. Reassured that when the road gets too treacherous and the forces against us grow too big, others will be by our side. Maybe it's not more courage that is required, but more connection. Maybe what we really need to hear is not simply "Resist!" but "I will resist with you!"

Spiritual Exercises

Option A - Photograph Resistance for a Week

The instructions for this exercise are simple: For each day of one week, take 1-2 pictures of "resistance." 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. 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.

Option B - Resist and Reclaim the Language of Oppressive Literature

Nikesha Breeze is a [multimedia artist](#) who uses her work to explore art as a means of reclamation and healing.

One of her projects is called *Mutiny of Morning*. For it, she took pages from Joseph Conrad's book, Heart of Darkness, and selectively "reclaimed" certain words from the pages to "force them to leave [Conrad's] colonized mind" and create black out poems that illuminates the African voices that were silenced. It is a stunning and healing way to use art as a means of resistance.

Breeze's project here: <https://nikeshabreeze.com/works/mutiny-of-morning>

Listen to her discuss the project here, beginning at minute 19:15:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BTyHDuLH9ml> & for a deeper exploration of Breeze's process follow [this link](#).

With Breeze's work as inspiration, identify a text you have a connection to that has been used to serve an oppressive purpose and then resist and reclaim it by selectively "pulling out" and highlighting certain words that tell a different story or cast a different vision.

Quotes for Inspiration/Readings

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

It can be overwhelming to witness/experience/take in all the injustices of the moment; the good news is that they're all connected. So if your little corner of work involves pulling at one of the threads, you're helping to unravel the whole damn cloth. [Ursula Wolfe-Rocca](#)

You are not required to save the world. But you are required to save your corner of it. [Joan Chittister](#)

Once a reporter asked A.J. Muste, "Do you really think you are going to change the policies of this country by standing out here alone at night in front of the White House with a candle?" Muste replied softly: "Oh I don't do this to change the country. I do this so the country won't change me." [Frederic and Mary Ann Brussat](#)

If you are neutral in situations of injustice, you have chosen the side of the oppressor. [Archbishop Desmond Tutu](#)

Courage doesn't always roar. Sometimes courage is the little voice at the end of the day that says I'll try again tomorrow. [Mary Anne Radmacher](#)

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.*

1. As a kid, did you resist the rules, or did you follow them? How might you see an echo of that earlier self in your life today?
2. Of all the moments of your life where you found the courage to accept change instead of resist it, which one are you most proud of?
3. Is there a time from your past where you wish you would have found a way to resist the fear of failure?
4. Has your resistance to change grown or eased as you've gotten older?
5. How might resistance be calling you to rest?
6. What song, book or movie has inspired or supported your resistance efforts?
7. **What's your question?** Your question may not be listed above. As always, if the above questions don't include what life is asking from you, spend the month listening to your days to find it.

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.*

Extinguishing the Chalice

In the end, we will remember not the words of our enemies, but the silence of our friends. [Martin Luther King Jr](#)