



Roanoke Change Academy Session Notes and Resources



We'll also post these notes and resources so that you can always go back to them:
www.bookcityroanoke.com/change.

Session 5 – Wrap Up

The group broke into breakout groups to discuss a couple of questions. Consider asking these questions within your own communities:

- 1) “If we don’t do the basic work of defining the kind of people we want to be in language that is stable and consistent, we can’t work toward stable, consistent goals.” (17) What kind of people do we want to be? What are our goals?
- 2) “The only remedy to racist discrimination is antiracist discrimination” (19) What sort of antiracist discrimination could lead to real change here in Roanoke?
- 3) “Antiracist strategy fuses desegregation with a form of integration and racial solidarity. Desegregation: eliminating all barriers to racialized spaces...Integration: resources rather than bodies. To be an antiracist is to champion resource equity by challenging the racist policies that produce resource inequity.” (180) How can we adjust the resource inequities in Roanoke?
- 4) “An activist produces power and policy change, not mental change. If a person has no record of power or policy change, then that person is not an activist.” (209) How, using that definition, can we become effective activists?
- 5) Potential Alternative: “Pain is usually essential to healing. When it comes to healing America of racism, we want to heal America without pain, but without pain, there is no progress.” (237) What pain do you think we’ll go through to heal in Roanoke?
- 6) Power and policy change by its nature requires some collective effort. What likely potential coordinating points for this work do you see in our community?
- 7) What is the first step that you, personally, will take in striving to be an antiracist? We’re talking tangibles here—what actions will you take after this series concludes?

Here are some of our responses:

- 1) What kind of community we want to be:
 - Knowledgeable about race issues
 - The kind that does anything we can as individuals
 - Accepting of differences rather than being upset
 - Good citizens
 - Using a lens of equity and inequity, asking such questions as:
 - Who does it advantage?
 - Is everyone's experience the same?
 - We need to be kinder and generous as we do our work
 - The book helps us in doing it in understanding how the system of racism is in all of us
 - Constant, stable : words can change over time,
 - We need to be clear

- We can't use soft language
- We need to say what has to be done so that we can do it
- Antiracism means being actively antiracist. In order to be antiracist, we have to first be honest with ourselves about our own prejudices, and we must recognize how much we don't know or understand.
 - In addition to changing policies, it's also about changing our own habits and communities. Take a typical activity you do and see how you can filter it through the lens of antiracism.

2) Antiracist Discrimination:

- It's easier to think through the antiracist policy after identifying the racist policies. Much of what we're seeing is the long-lasting effects of racist policy.
 - We would love some more information on how to understand the implications of policies, like a layman's guide to policies. Hints would be helpful too—what are the buzzwords or coded phrases?
- We heard the example of PTAs...what's the role of Title I investments, which might be considered anti-racist discrimination (putting resources in schools with higher poverty, thus an equity investment).
- Being antiracist also includes actively resisting all discrimination, including gender, sexuality and religion

Other Thoughts:

- White people aren't trusted, and with good reason—look at our history. If you're white, be a listening presence in Black neighborhoods, at events, etc. Show up, but don't fall into the White Savior complex
- “We don't have to invent the wheel; we just have to put our shoulders into it”—Katherine Devine
- “To question what we were taught does not mean we love the people who taught us any less.”—Tess Anderson