

Practices for Mutual Liberation

Internal/Emotional

When harm occurs, it is not uncommon for both the person who experienced harm and the person who caused harm to experience a visceral, embodied flood of emotions. These emotions can sometimes be overwhelming—and can metaphorically feel like drowning.

Person Who Experienced Harm

- Hurt
- Exhausted (cumulatively)
- Cornered
- Armored / Self-Protective

Needs

- Safety
- Transformation



Person Who Caused Harm

- Discomfort
- Uncertain
- Anxious / Self-Conscious
- Defensive / Self-Protective

Needs

- Comfort / Stasis
- Status Quo

External/Relational

Extension of Grace

When we cause harm, we need to extend grace to ourselves by understanding that everyone causes harm, that shame and self-judgment can get in the way of responding to the harm we have caused, and that living our values happens by showing up for the person we have harmed in a way that centers accountability for our actions and their impact.

In terms of being given grace, grace needs to be understood with an anti-oppression lens. Grace may be extended to us by those who have experienced harm, but it should not be expected, asked for, or demanded by us when we have caused harm. Grace can be a big—and exhausting—act of emotional labor from those who constantly experience systemic patterns of marginalization and harm. Grace is easier to give by the unimpacted (bystanders) who can hold space to facilitate unlearning.

Humility

Practicing humility involves decentering our own feelings / needs and leaning into being responsive to the feelings / needs of the person we have harmed.

Accountability

Practicing accountability involves acknowledging that we have caused harm and apologizing for the impact of our actions. Living our values occurs when we understand that we often cause harm without intending to (or even recognizing that we have done so), embodying humility by focusing on the impact of our actions on the other person, and reflecting care by owning and apologizing for that impact.

Mutual Liberation

When we cause harm and respond with humility, we can recognize the ways our behaviors impact other people and thereby “unlearn” those behaviors, uprooting

the oppressive frameworks we have internalized through socialization. By embracing the opportunity to respond with humility and care, we can not only change our behavior moving forward but also disrupt the cycle by which harm continues to perpetuate. By taking accountability for the impact of our behavior, we can affirm the other person's experience, acknowledge the harm we have caused, and center their experience, feelings, and needs.

Person Who Experienced Harm

- Affirmation of Experience
- Acknowledgment of Harm
- Ownership of Impact Caused
- Shift of Centering of Needs
- Communication of Care



Person Who Caused Harm

- De-Centering of Self / Willingness to Sit in Discomfort
- Taking Authentic Accountability for the Harm Caused
- Unlearning Socialized Language, Assumptions, and Stereotypes
- Uprooting Oppressive Cultural / Ideological Frameworks
- Behavior Changing / Cycle Disrupting