



Bridging & Bonding
Women's Social Trust Retreat

Learning Summary



Bridging & Bonding Women's Social Trust Retreat

Community Norms

- Transparency/Feedback/Honesty
- Grace to be Human
- Acknowledge Racism
- Take risks/forgiveness
- Demonstrate empathy—Use “I” statements
- Respect our values
- Time and freedom to express our truth and process how we need to
- Holding space for multiple realities
- Move the conversation
- Communicate understanding as a goal
- Path to next steps



Racial Group Introductions

BLACK WOMEN:

WE ARE NOT...

- “better” than one another based on our skin tone (colorism)
- ONLY exceptional in athletics
- pretty for a Black girl
- welfare queens
- to be contained, seen not heard
- too strong
- intimidating
- complacent
- baby makers
- do not be surprised by our successes
- weak or lazy
- invisible
- fast/promiscuous
- well-spoken and articulate (for a Black person)

WE ARE...

- Strong, dignified, graceful
- A rich, creative people
- Love expressively
- “Sing, swing, and soul”
- a sisterhood
- have a diverse pallet of melanin and it doesn't crack
- the keepers of our culture
- the “mothers” in the spaces we find ourselves in and we are OK with that
- beautiful and interesting
- innovative, resourceful
- we ARE sensitive
- Superwomen
- Fearless
- fantastic-ness
- people want to emulate us
- sense of community and recognition amongst one another
- strategic (get sh*t done)
- swagger, bad*ss
- funny
- find joy in many things
- “if your Black on a Saturday night, you'll never want to be White again”



Racial Group Introductions

WHITE WOMEN:

WHAT IS GOOD AND WONDERFUL ABOUT BEING A WHITE WOMAN?

- We have untapped potential and influence (Boomers)
- I receive the benefit of the doubt (Gen X)
- Family heritage and the ability to know and trace it
- Privilege = easy, safe, access, opportunity → guilt (millennials)
- Access and influence
- Opportunity to make change, advocate and be subversive
- Permission to rock the boat
- People listen to us
- Opportunity to be in relationship with people like and unlike us
- We're not White men

WHAT DON'T WE EVER WANT TO HEAR AGAIN ABOUT BEING WHITE WOMEN?

- White is the norm, superior, dominant (Boomers)
- Clueless and selfish (instead: a lot to learn) (Millennials)
- Only doing this work to make yourself look good, performative, virtue-signaling, doing this transactionally (i.e., do get something in return) (Gen X)
- Can't be trusted
- We don't care
- "We have the power to make change," with no follow up.
- Blonde jokes and good hair comments
- Decouple the name "Karen" from the stereotype
- Bossy, controlling, emotional, bitchy, incapable or closed-minded, catty



What Would Social Trust Look Like Between Black and White Women?

Social trust between black and white women is a relationship in which we hold each other accountable, give each other grace and expect we have each other's best interest at heart.

Beginning to see positive traits, skills in people we don't know well. Being supportive of others.

Figuring out together what contributes to mistrust between us and discussing what steps we can take to lessen that and dissolve it.

Social trust is the concept of feeling supported and free to be your true self in the presence of others. - Sarah Rust

Social trust is that you are safe and seen in a room. Social trust between Black and White women is an evolving opportunity for friendship and elevation leading the transformation of society and our lives.

Attempt to understand perspectives, listening, empathy.

Social trust is a connection and commitment between Black & White women furthering respect, recognizing differences and requires ongoing work to nurture and maintain a bond of friendship. - Donna Skurzak and Rachel Elahee

Ability to feel comfortable and protected with who you are and what you believe in a public space with one or more persons. - Sadie Temple

Social Trust—Will you speak to me in any environment? Will be you be the same person to me in any setting and group? - Mary Jane Meadows

Where policies reflect the whole and not the minority. Where the majority listens, acknowledges and makes changes in support of elevating the minority voice.

Able to be your authentic self.





Insights about Racial Identity and Using Social Privilege for Mutual Benefit



Meme about fences vs liberation and removing the fence—instead of trying to get more checks on the Diversity Petal

Focus on “responsibility for shared humanity” unwrapped multicultural living (page 31 of workbook)

Security & Abundance—Why are we fighting over petals? Due to the scarcity vs making room/fluidity to allow abundance of space for all

The mindset starts here...today... (head fist gesture)

The M & M's Game followed unwritten rules

During Covid—it was individualism vs collectivism—there is no WE

It's difficult to translate this into shared humanities

Some people's authentic self doesn't have space for shared humanity—what do we mean by authenticity? (Our response: GTW's definition of authenticity is being fully trustworthy as a human striving to be a better human for other humans.)

Added Notes on Using Privilege for Mutual Benefit and Diversity Petal Exercise

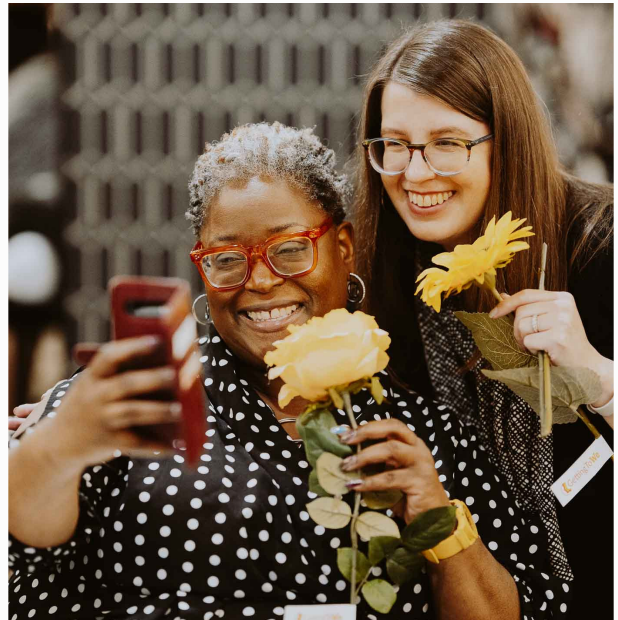


We experience ourselves in our multiple and intersecting identities and therefore we cannot act solely out of one aspect of our identity and its associated social privilege.

We own and define how these identities are expressed; no one has the right to “identity pull” without our permission.

We define authenticity as being fully trustworthy as a human being that is striving to be a better human for other humans.

Instead of it being about getting more checks (privilege), we should realize that we all have a check simply because we are human. Privilege comes from our shared humanity.



We have the right to be our full and authentic selves but with that comes the responsibility in our shared humanity.

Humanity is the overarching reality. If we take out the toxins, then that (humanity) is all we will see. Melodie Yates













Action Planning Matrix

GEMS

- Put yourself and your family in proximity
- Be proactive—Black and White friendships
- Activate multiple strategies for education: one is enough
- Speak up! And disrupt in real time
- Support progressive Black candidates
- White women educate other White women
- Educate through trusted sources
- Utilize a diversity trainer to increase innovative thinking and promote diverse hiring
- Training in 21st Century leadership/decision making and a set of expectations that now applies
- Using systems that exist/library of “books that look like me”
- Learn facts about American history to teach children (home stories)
- Expose children to cross-cultural, multiracial opportunities
- Increase exposure for yourself and children to different cultures and backgrounds
- Show up daily with grace and compassion
- White women give each other more grace
- All parents should have anti-racist training
- Letters to the editor and opinion pieces—engage people of influence to do this
- Speak up when you see racial injustice
- The onus is on each of us to do the work of knowing how sisters of other colors live and what they face. Read everything—White women to be the amoeba now
- See yourself in the person's shoes who is the subject of discrimination
- Applaud corporations that are combatting the negative stereotypes—letters, calls, from Black and White women
- Individual communication to speak out
- Share our experiences with the next generation allow them to use their social media acumen
- Respond to not-so-great campaigns in a way (volume) that demands a response
- Use my personal social media platform to combat national media images of racism
- Write letters to editors, organizations articulating thoughts about biased presentations
- Sharing power/pulling up a seat at the table for someone advocating for others to be seen or feel heard or valued

QUICK HITS

- Be intentional about integrating your daily activities

EXTRA EFFORT

- Eliminate barriers—education, pedigree
- More specified diversity and anti-bias training that is tailored to demonstrate inequity and social mistrust specifically. So for instance, have anchors, can learn how this is exemplified in their partisan roles
- Diverse representation in rooms with people making decisions
- Achieving buy-in from large scale companies with power/money/input to share positive messages/narratives
- Identifying the priority of the people in power structure and speaking in terms they can relate to—tying the issue/concern to something they care about (i.e., money/buying or spending power).
- Champion the focus on “add” versus “fit” in hiring and resisting the inertia that drags even those people into White expectation.
- Be willing to be uncomfortable. Understand intersectionality. Seek out opportunities (Women’s March).
- Identify common goals so you can create disruption. Create circles in all venues: churches, neighborhoods, school, governance, etc. Be comfortable with disruption.
- Stand up to the negative messaging to re-educate the populace being influenced by negative politics
- Economic inclusion
- Address multiple systems. Eliminate barriers and discriminatory practices thru organizing like-minded people, demonstrating, getting media coverage
- Revisit and update policies that may have once been progressive
- Address White guilt (White women having conversations with White men)
- Decoupling identity from history
- Federal curriculum for full American history
- Influencing practice and policy
- Proactively look for hiring/supporting Black folks
- Voting rights—getting out the vote
- Learn from Germany and South Africa—truth and reconciliation
- Step into brave spaces with courage and forge alliances between Black and White women. A rainbow sisterhood is powerful (takes personal honesty and commitment)
- Visual storytelling campaign that amplifies counter narratives regarding the gender dynamics
- Give financial support discriminately support Black owned media outlets or outlets exemplifying true diversity
- Voting in the right people at all levels from school site councils to local, state, national levels
- Intentionality in bringing children up in an informed anti-racist way, school systems reform to bring balanced learning
- Voter guides for equity
- Create cross-racial connection opportunities
- Board governance insist on diversity and inclusion
- Hold people accountable: leaders, politicians, etc.
- Dismantle laws, practices, and policies that uphold White privilege
- Leverage relationships and institutions to tell our message
- Develop coalitions to hold people accountable

Action Planning Matrix

SUMMARY STATEMENTS FOR SORTING

- We would like the big pay off
- Self-conscious about the payoff; reluctant to claim it as a small pay off
- Technical and adaptive challenges to the pay off
- Easier to access other groups than their own (gems, extra effort, etc.)

ASSESSMENT OF THE PLANNING PROCESS

- Lively conversation from the group; a “white sister look” led to grace
- White—individualistic side; Black—collective action
- Understanding of historical baggage—layers run deep
- Empathy helped the group support each other
- Transparency of grace to be human was present—being human in conversation
- Openness and easy flow—non conflict was not easy but respectful
- A feeling of hopefulness









Book of Learnings:

A Collection of Insights Gathered During the Retreat

- White women need to continue to learn with heart and gut
- White women need to build trust and collaborate with each other—self love
- White women have work to increase solidarity
- White guilt is REAL/ give grace not overused
- Extremely grateful for the play and hope it will go on the road
- Using higher-level brain functioning is harder as you get older
- Do more work so our sisters don't have to
- Work White women have to do; glad to connect with the other White women to share
- Need to learn more about what bonds White women
- Thinking/Acting = Dominance Model
- How many quick fixes we have to use now
- It's my job/duty to speak up/ok to fall and get back up
- Let deeds not words be your adorning
- Matrix ideas—use them
- Didn't understand how rich Black women were to enjoy sisterhood—White women missing out
- Built a new support group to do the work
- Learned White women have genuine compassion without personal relationship
- Happy to be part of mixed groups that was more alike
- White guilt that is not processed holds me back

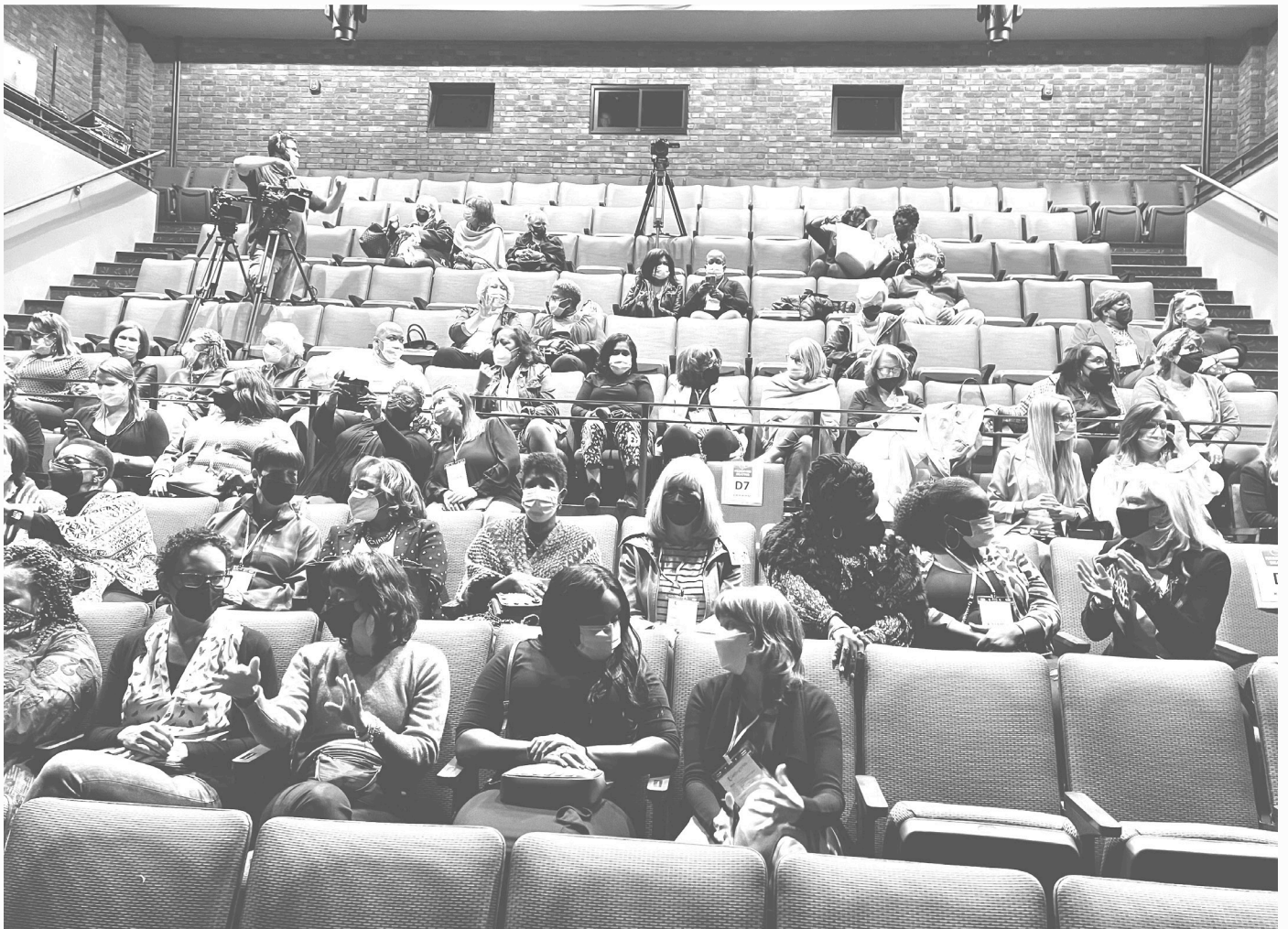


Book of Learnings:

A Collection of Insights Gathered During the Retreat

- Met women for economic inclusion
- Power in Lincoln Douglass work—mind and heart
- Action Planning Matrix can be broken down to actionable items
- Sense of community from Black women
- Racial fatigue for Black women is greater than White women know—help give them a rest
- Persistence is required to learn for White women; self-care is real
- Being better humans for other humans
- Guilt gets om the way of authentic relationships
- Value of gracious learning for Black women; Whites need to help in that learning
- Ways to lessen the wealth gap
- The flaws of Lincoln and Douglass also inform the work
- Very transparent around trust (you all need to be Browns fans)
- Retreat was great—on the right track
- As Black women-- why we may be exhausted but cannot abandon the work
- Think before I speak and use less conversation stoppers
- Lead from the heart and not from the head, would we be more effective??
- Just by doing something—hope we are moving the needle
- Start to take actions NOW
- Take time, show up, repeat.
- Power of authentic connections among all Black women, White women.







Trust, My Sisters My Sisters' Trust

Fundamentally trust is a thing of the soul.

That way that our souls intertwine with each other in certitude and safety---that's real trust!

Which by extension makes it a spiritual thing.

The magical divine touch that raises us above ourselves
Beyond our own boundaries
To embrace in difficulties
Offer grace when there's hurt
Move forward when we want to
Shut down
Want to run!

Trust is built when our souls touch....

SO when someone says, "I've got your back!", check in with your soul to see if she's telling the true!!

Melodie Yates © May 2, 2022



Bridging & Bonding Social Trust Contact Closure

MOVING FORWARD I WILL.....

Really utilize my trust partner

Trust that white women I know
will lead with love

Express gratitude

Not let learning fade

Optimistic

Trust Black women, White women more

Allow this to fuel me

Believe in the power of we

Remain hopeful and stay in work

Identify people to bring into the circle

Open up my friend

Open my mind to trusting
more White women

Keep moving forward with more hope

Make a difference

Rest but not quit

Use my privilege to make an impact

Create better opportunities for kids I serve

Immerse myself

Push → guilt

See all White women as my sisters

Have courage to do uncomfortable things

Continue to practice self-care
so we can continue the work



