



## **CONVERSATION ON RACIAL JUSTICE**

June 18, 2020

### **Notes from Breakout Groups**

These comments have been compiled from notes taken by facilitators during the breakout sessions in the Conversation on Racial Equality & Equity hosted by Encore Boston Network on June 18, 2020. They are not direct transcriptions but are intended to capture the meaning and intent of those who participated. Because this is raw data, no effort has been made to eliminate duplication or to otherwise edit comments.

#### ***1ST BREAKOUT SESSION***

***What brought you here?***

***What are your feelings about recent events and what you see happening in our country?***

- I need ways to get involved. I want to be part of the conversation and solution.
- I have benefitted from white privilege all my life.
- Where do I fit in?
- I am excited about the opportunities. I fear it will die down.
- I am scared. Covid and now this.
- I am frightened. Yet I am hopeful.
- I need to listen (newly retired). I have lived a life of white privilege. Yet I am Jewish and am sensitized to discrimination.
- I am appalled by myself. I am shocked. The concept of white privilege has seeped into me.
- We need to speak to peers about feelings/plans.
- I feel duped. Our country's history is not as we knew it.
- I am awakening to these stories. I feel helpless. I don't have relationships with black people.
- I have a foot in 2 doors (Black participant). I am curious but don't think about white privilege.
- Systemic racism is deep seated. (very strong on this statement.)
- I remember the Rizzo years in Phillie growing up and never expected we'd still be dealing with these issues now.

- I grew up with black friends and have black friends now and feel confused because these issues were never part of those relationships.
- I have no black friends and feel disconnected from these issues even though I want to be more involved.
- We have so much to learn.
- I'm Jewish and have a heightened awareness of prejudice in our society, but have never experienced anything like what we have seen in recent incidents.
- I was at the border on a mission trip to assist refugee families and the treatment I saw was heartbreaking.
- Those of us who grew up in the 60s thought we were part of ending the history of racism in this country and it's despairing to see how much still needs to be done 50 years later.
- There have been improvements since the 50s and 60s -- we should acknowledge that -- but racism is so deeply embedded in our culture that it will take an intentional process by a majority of us over time to put it behind us. I'm encouraged by what I see in the younger generation.
- I want to listen and learn. I am hopeful we can use this time to move forward.
- I want to learn how to speak to those who don't see this as a problem.
- I am here because I am hopeful. We are all human.
- I want to start this conversation---how to think about white privilege.
- I want to hear what others in this group are thinking/how they are feeling. Gain some insights.
- I am concerned about the marginalized people who are vulnerable and exploited.
- This has been so many years in the making -- will take many years to address.
- I want to reflect on myself and this issue.

## **2ND BREAKOUT SESSION**

### ***What is your reaction?***

### ***How do we move forward?***

- I need to listen to people of color. I struggle with my actions.
- I feel helpless as I don't know blacks.
- We need to support black businesses. Make a conscious effort.
- I can call my local reps and discuss how they will address these topics.
- My concern: it is hard for humans to take responsibility for their actions. Yet individuals have power to make decisions and act upon it. If you care: show it!
- I don't know what allyship means.

- I was impressed when I saw whites standing between the police and black protesters to block aggression by the police.
- To me, allies are people who stand side by side with me (a black participant), not in front of me or behind me.
- What about patronizing black-owned businesses. I would but I don't know any. How can we find them?
- I think the thing we can and must do this year is to protect our democracy and use the ballot box to make change so the laws and regulations that perpetuate systemic racism can be changed. (Extended conversation about ways to do that.)
- I feel like I need to learn more before I can know the best actions to take.
- I want to get to know people who are black but don't know how to go about it.
- It is time to focus on what we can do. I am heartened by people pushing themselves to do something now.
- We have seen some whites are great advocates. We need 'racial discussions'.
- We need to take steps forward. Special classes and education around this topic.
- We need to be open minded -- to learn and listen. We must not discount someone else's experience. Have a conversation. You may lose friends over these discussions.
- Big point of agreement in group on this: This is not about being "color-blind" -- but about speaking up which may make some of your white friends uncomfortable.
- Take action -- Invest in Black owned businesses. Patronize them. Buy gift cards.
- You may lose a friend over this -- it may make people uncomfortable.
- Voter registration should be a focus and priority of everyone's.
- We all need to 'check' ourselves.
- "MINT" is the key to moving forward.
- We each need to Invest our MINT: our Money, our Ideas, our Networks, our Time.