

The Revolutionary Love Compass

Revolutionary Love is the choice to labor for others, opponents, and ourselves in order to transform the world around us. You can point the Compass toward whomever you wish to practice loving.

LOVE FOR OTHERS

How do we love others? The “other” is anyone or anything outside your sense of self—a person, an animal, a part of the earth. This practice is called SEE NO STRANGER.

Wonder: Wonder is the root of love. You can look upon anyone and say: “You are a part of me I do not yet know.” Wonder is a practice. For example, when you look at faces on the street, say in your mind: Sister, Brother, Sibling, Grandparent, Child, etc. You can retrain your eye to see all others as kin. Who we see as “one of us” shapes what we do—whose stories we hear, the policies we support, the leaders we elect, and whose grief matters to us.

Grieve: Grieving with others is an act of love. There is no fixing grief, only bearing it. When we bear it with others, we can survive it. You don’t have to know people in order to grieve with them; you grieve with them in order to know them. It can be as simple as a lit candle. When we grieve, we gain information for how to care for another—and how to fight for them.

Fight: We each have the ability to fight for others who are in harm’s way. What tools do you have in hand? What is your sphere of influence? You have a role only you can play. Shallow solidarity is rooted in the logic of exchange: You show up for me, so I show up for you. But deep solidarity is rooted in love: I show up for you because I choose to love you.

Remember: You can move up and down the sequence – wondering about others, grieving with others, and fighting for others. Each informs the other. This is true for the compass as a whole. Revolutionary Love is not a prescription, but an orientation to life—an invitation to a way of being human.

LOVE FOR OPPONENTS

Turn the compass to an opponent. An opponent is anyone whose beliefs, ideas, or actions oppose your own. There are no monsters in this world, only human beings who are wounded. This practice is called TEND THE WOUND. Note that it begins with tending your own wound.



Rage: Your rage is loaded with information and energy. Honor your rage. The solution is not to suppress your rage or to let it explode, but to process your rage in safe containers (that do not harm others or ourselves). Ask: What information does my rage carry? What does it say about what is important to me? You can harness that energy into mindful action. In some cases, that action may be to listen.

Listen: Only when and if you are safe, you can choose to listen to your opponents. The goal of listening is not necessarily to compromise with them, persuade them, or even change them (though that might occur). The goal of listening is to understand them and their wounds. In doing so, you preserve their humanity, and your own. Deep listening is an act of surrender—you risk being changed by what you hear.

Reimagine: Take the information you gained about your opponent's wounds, and your own, and dare to reimagine an outcome, a solution, a relationship, a future that does not leave anyone behind, not even your opponents. Imagine a beloved community that leaves no one outside our circle of care. Imagine cultures, contexts, and institutions that run on love instead of fear. Choose to take one step toward that vision.

Remember: We all have different roles in the labor at any given moment. If you are in harm's way, tend to your own wounds and let others tend to opponents. Revolutionary Love is not the sacrifice of any individual, but the practice of a community.

LOVE FOR OURSELVES

Point the compass to yourself. How do we love ourselves? This practice is inspired by the wisdom of the midwife: BREATHE AND PUSH. It is a rhythm to sustain our energy in any long labor.

Breathe: Let breath into your body as a way to care for yourself. How are you breathing each day? Who are you breathing with? Are you breathing with music or movement or the Earth? What do you need to be able to breathe between your labors?

Push: What is the push you are ready for? We often have to enter discomfort to do the work of healing, forgiveness, apology, and reconciliation. To push requires us to enter discomfort as a way of loving ourselves. We can remember to breathe, before we make the next push.

Transition: Sometimes the labor is so difficult, a voice in us might say: "I can't. It's too hard." This is usually a sign that we are in transition—we are stretching, growing, and becoming more than who we were. When you want to give up, call upon sources of bravery in your life—friends, family, ancestors, and/or the voice of your inner wisdom. Keep breathing and pushing. We must transition ourselves as we transition the world.

JOY

When we labor with love, we let joy in. Joy sustains us in all our labors. Joy returns us to everything that is good, beautiful, and worth fighting for. Joy is the gift of love. Laboring for a more just and beautiful world with love—and joy—can be the greatest meaning of life.



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