

## Group dialogue

Friday, June 3, 2005

Present for discussion: Chris, Peter, Giselle, Chichi, Amy, Tim, Katie, Ashley, Bill, Ken, Peggy

### **What is social justice?**

There are inequalities: class, race, gender, regional inequalities; so social justice is working to overcome them.

Method cannot be top down; it should be grassroots, especially to be sustainable.

Can/should be addressed by government, education or institutions, perhaps not just grassroots; justice implies change for the better.

Need the full participation of those in power and those in need; we have a responsibility to one another as equals.

Equity; in power to create change.

Bill's question: What role does ideology play? Social justice for whom?

It's more about the collective than your own self interest.

There's a blur between ideology and religion.

Ideology means privileged identities.

Access to things like education, housing, etc., that are rights, not privileges.

The difference between charity and social justice.

Imagination is important.

But we have to be in reality, too.

## **What is social responsibility?**

Responsible for others in the world.

Envision the collective, vs. "I need to get mine."

Individualism and American ideology, capitalism; are we inundated with an Americanism that is against social responsibility?

Foreign policy: is this how the United States demonstrates social responsibility?

Charity/helping people vs. consciousness, collective identity of people coming together.

Must understand the world that you are born into, the privilege/role that you have, and transfer that act to a broader group of people, teach consciousness.

Feeling part of a collective; not a complete outsiders; our liberation is bound together.

What is liberation: thinking beyond getting a job & specific outcomes; the power over our own lives, imagining an ideal world.

What is the motivation for social responsibility?

Work in the system or change it?

Where do social change movements stem from – the middle class?

Is there activism in today's middle class?

There is a difference between liberal democracy and social democracy.

## **What is privilege?**

Who has power: white, male, straight, Christian, tall/thin

Money

Material resources

Social connections

Access to jobs, health care, education

Ability to express yourself

Education: skills, understanding of social norms/culture, consciousness

Consciousness of history, slavery, capitalism (US citizens have short, episodic memory)

The individual's charisma, sheer ability, and character, though, play a role in determining your success

“Franchised”

Western Europe's social programs help more people have access

Where you get your college degree from – the selectivity of the school

## **What does it mean to be underprivileged?**

Impediments – foreign, non-white

Lack of access to education, social networks, powerful friends

Lack of income / resources

There's a problem with this term: takes away agency, humanity

Lack of basic needs (food, clothing, shelter, health care)