



TRUTH & TRANSFORMATION MODEL

CRITICAL ANALYSIS

Step 1

We admit that supremacist logic in sundry forms has been core to Western culture as a whole as well as in the development of our own particular nation, society, community, and sense of self, and whereas we are powerless to control the people and the circumstances into which we are born and the ways they have shaped us, we do have power to change its persistently inequitable outcomes.

I/We - You commit to it as "I;" you live it as "we".

Supremacist logic - (a.k.a. logic of domination) the basic notion "we're gonna be on top". This double-dealing philosophy articulated in short or at length is operationalized by systems of inequity (injustice, oppression, exploitation)—for example, racism, sexism (patriarchy, misogyny), heterosexism, queerantagonism, classism, ableism and ageism.

Equity - as differentiated from equality, that which brings historically marginalized persons up to a comparable level of power to be self-determining, not just that which creates the same recognition or same opportunity after generations of actively advantaging/privileging certain some identity groups.

Outcomes - material, economic, physical, emotional or spiritual impacts, not just thoughts or feelings.

Rationale for Step 1:

Seekers of truth and transformation learn to accept that though supremacist logics pre-date them, they have power-to (agency to) shift from power-over dynamics to power-with others.



CRITICAL ANALYSIS

Step 2

We realize we can't make the journey to better by ourselves; it will require strength beyond just our own.

Cont'd Rationale for Step 1:

It is important to note that traditional 12-step programs accentuate the principle of powerlessness. This has proven itself over many years to be key to personal/interpersonal addiction recovery. However, one of the structural ways in which supremacist logic has historically preserved its power is to place itself beyond the ability to address, in the category of "that's just the way it is" or "human nature". Whereas this model respects the role of powerlessness, it also emphasizes, as in the "Serenity Prayer," "the courage to change the things I can."

Rather than starting at the traditional "I need help," this model starts at "I want better."

Rationale for Step 2:

Seekers of truth and transformation come to understand that concepts like individualism, self-sufficiency, and self-interest all serve the desire to be on-top. By putting ourselves in collaboration with others, recognizing the inherent interdependence of life and seeking support from and extending support to others, we not only enhance each other's well-being, but we create possibilities that would otherwise not exist.



CRITICAL ANALYSIS

Step 3

We routinely **ask** our evolving community, professional support, and/or God (as we understand God) **for help in learning to seek the good of others in cooperation with them.**

Rationale for Step 3:

Seekers of truth and transformation learn to trust that it is in seeking the good of others in cooperation with them that they will find their own well-being.



SELF-AWARENESS

Step 4

We take **fearless moral inventory** of our specific relationship to power and privilege and how they have been used to advantage or disadvantage ourselves or others.

"Have been used" - This passive construction is employed here in order to make room for two simultaneous understandings: (1) the ways I/we have actively advantaged ourselves and disadvantaged others as well as (2) the ways in which others have advantaged or disadvantaged on our behalf. The phrase is constructed without an explicit subject (an actor) not to somehow lessen discomfort or culpability, as is often done with constructs like "Jane was hit," when in actuality, "Dick hit Jane."

Rationale for Step 4:

Seekers of truth and transformation learn to value self-discovery, and this is the beginning of that. An effective way to start is with a list of how actions such as threats, disregard, belittling, back-channeling, and the like may have negatively impacted yourself or others.



SELF-AWARENESS

Step 5

We admit to ourselves, to God (as we understand God) and to other human beings the exact nature of our wrongdoings, not just our thinking and feelings about the subject in general.

Rationale for Step 5:

Seekers of truth and transformation examine each item in their moral inventory, taking time to delve into the problem that each creates.

It is important to note that traditional 12-step programs are rooted in the principle of anonymity. This too has proven itself over many years to be key to personal addiction recovery. However, one of the structural ways in which supremacist logic has historically preserved its power is through anonymity, plausible deniability, and distance between actors and the impact of their actions.

While limiting the number of people you take into your confidence may be useful at this stage, regular interaction with other committed seekers of truth and transformation serves as practice for public interaction later with those who do not hold the same commitments.



SELF-AWARENESS

Step 6

We begin the work of transforming our shortcomings of allegiance, behavior and character, which were previously shaped by our social addiction to wanting to be on top.

Rationale for Step 6:

Seekers of truth and transformation learn to resist the inclination to stop at thinking, feeling, and talking better. An actual shift in allegiance must occur between what was previously acceptable to you as it relates to the outcomes others must endure and what is acceptable now.

The way to get at shortcomings of character is to first interrogate allegiances and behaviors. The desire to pursue the process the other way around is a trap that gets you focused on being considered a good person, which is a version of self-interest that leads you right back to trying to be on top.



CULTURAL COMPETENCE

Step 7 *for the historically marginalized...*

We reach for healing from over-exposure to systemic, structural or behavioral hostility, while holding ourselves accountable to others seeking healing and while learning how to accept only equity in our dealings with others.

The Brief Divergence in Process

beginning with cultural competence is based on real differences in the harm done to one privileged versus one marginalized over time by supremacist logics and the systems erected to concretize them.

"Systemic, structural, or behavioral hostilities" - the hostile doings that produce persistently inequitable material outcomes. They are hostile because they harm. The harm done does not have to be accompanied by ill-intent. In fact, quite often harmful impact is not accompanied by ill-intent, any more than a complex mechanical system like a lawn mower intends to harm that which comes in its path. Nonetheless, systems of inequity and mechanical systems both quite efficiently and effectively accomplish the ends toward which they were designed.

"Accountable" - both in terms of requiring of one another and in terms of belonging to one another.

Rationale for Step 7:

Seekers of truth and transformation learn that their own instincts for equitable interaction have been misshapen over time, so they must develop accountability to and learn to trust the feedback of those equally if not more so committed to equity.



CULTURAL COMPETENCE

Step 7 *for the historically privileged...*

We work to evolve our shortcomings, while holding ourselves accountable for growth to those we often negatively impact and while learning how to relate equitably across social identities.

The Brief Divergence in Process

beginning with cultural competence is based on real differences in the harm done to one privileged versus one marginalized over time by supremacist logics and the systems erected to concretize them.

"Accountable" - both in terms of requiring of one another and in terms of belonging to one another.

Rationale for Step 7:

Seekers of truth and transformation learn that their own instincts for equitable interaction have been misshapen over time, so they must develop accountability to and learn to trust the feedback of those most impacted by their efforts.





CULTURAL COMPETENCE

Step 8 *for the historically marginalized...*

We make a list of persons who are currently harming us and/or structural impediments to equity we encounter regularly, and we commit to either improving those realities or eliminating them at the earliest possible convenience.

Harm - can be material, economic, physical, psychological, or spiritual, and are often several or all these things at the same time.

Structural Impediments - obstructions to equity not dependent on an individual actor's willfulness or intent; they include but are not limited to ways, means, rules, representation, sponsorship, information, insight, access, time, perceived value, and so on.

Rationale for Step 8:

Making amends starts with one's self. Seekers of truth and transformation learn not to be paralyzed by the amount of pain their actions have caused. They must also look for structures that increase likelihood of doing harm in the future or opportunities to do good and leverage them in benefit to others.



CULTURAL COMPETENCE

Step 8 for the historically privileged...

We make a list of persons who identify differently than us whom we have harmed, are in a position of power to harm, or are in a position to aid in overcoming or removing structural impediments to equity, and we become willing to make amends or be of assistance to them all.

Harm - can be material, economic, physical, psychological, or spiritual, and are often several or all these things at the same time.

"Make amends" - set to right, even at one's own expense.

Structural Impediments - obstructions to equity not dependent on an individual actor's willfulness or intent; they include by are not limited to ways, means, rules, representation, sponsorship, information, insight, access, time, perceived value, and so on.

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CULTURAL COMPETENCE

Step 9 *for the historically marginalized...*

We seek to eliminate or improve hostile or harmful dynamics wherever possible—the only exception being when to do so would somehow injure others or ourselves—and we solicit aid to remove whenever possible (or, if not, overcome) structural impediments wherever encountered.

"Whenever possible" - much of what we have behaved ourselves into is more complex than we initially want to admit. Sometimes our attempts at good can cost others in ways we did not anticipate; sometimes our efforts will require stop-gap remediation followed by long-term reconstruction. That is why this work must be entered into in discernment with those most impacted by the inequities being corrected.

Rationale for Step 9:

Seekers of truth and transformation learn that talking, thinking, and feeling better toward others is no substitute for doing better.

The forgiveness that so many who have harmed others seek is a process, not simply a gift, that requires both formerly oppressed and former oppressor to choose to join one another in creating new possibilities. However, seekers of truth and transformation must also understand that forgiveness does not have to mean reconciliation.



CULTURAL COMPETENCE

Step 9 for the historically privileged...

We **make direct amends** to those we harm wherever possible—the only exception being when to do so would somehow injure those involved—and we **give material aid** to remove whenever possible (or, if not, overcome) structural impediments wherever identified.

"Make direct amends" - set to right, with the persons impacted, even at one's own expense or embarrassment.

"Whenever possible" - much of what we have behaved ourselves into is more complex than we initially want to admit. Sometimes our attempts at good can cost others in ways we did not anticipate; sometimes our efforts will require stop-gap remediation followed by long-term reconstruction. That is why this work must be entered into in discernment with those most effected by the inequities being corrected.

Rationale for Step 9:

Seekers of truth and transformation learn that talking, thinking, and feeling better toward others is no substitute for doing better.

The forgiveness that so many who have harmed others seek is a process, not simply a gift, that requires both formerly oppressed and former oppressor to choose to join one another in creating new possibilities. However, seekers of truth and transformation must understand that forgiveness cannot be coerced through expectations that those wronged always respond graciously.



BETTER PRACTICE

Step 10

We continue reflect on our evolving allegiances and behaviors and their impact on others, and when we are wrong *or complacent*, promptly admit it and make amends.

Rationale for Step 10:

Seekers of truth and transformation learn that going through these 12 Steps is a process that both takes time and is recursive, not linear, as in it spirals upward, in essence doubling back on itself, retracing ground previously covered, albeit from a higher vantage point.

Although seekers have already begun to identify power excesses/abuses and to correct inequalities over which they have influence, slipping up or recognizing previously unrecognized blind spots is normal. Growth often follows Maslow's Stages of Learning—from unconscious incompetence, to conscious incompetence, to unconscious competence, to conscious competence.

Furthermore, seekers of truth and transformation understand that equity does not end with correcting inequalities. Equity includes repair of the damages done while inequalities were allowed to persist.



BETTER PRACTICE

Step 11

We promote and participate in communal reparations, defense, solidarity, and construction efforts on behalf of those historically disadvantaged by structures and systems that advantage or privilege others.

Communal Reparations involve attempts to return to exploited persons assets they or their ancestors have generated or materially contributed to the creation of. Historically this has taken many forms, including cash pay outs, land redistribution, joint ownership, equity stake, dividend/royalty payments, establishment of trusts, agreements for future business or support, and often various forms at the same time.

Communal Defense involves protecting the space for historically marginalized persons to dream their way forward.

Communal Solidarity involves standing with, listening to, responding supportively to the self-determinations of those most impacted.

Communal Construction involves the building of intra-communal economic infrastructure and political power that is not solely dependent on the goodwill of others.

Rationale for Step 11:

Seekers of truth and transformation learn the importance of moving recovery from the plane of the personal, interpersonal, and communal to the plane of the structural, institutional, and systemic.



BETTER PRACTICE

Step 12

Having begun a journey of truth and transformation, we seek to **reimagine possibilities for how we relate to one another and to invite others into the practice of equity in all that we do.**

Rationale for Step 12:

Equity corrects inequalities. Equity repairs damage done while inequalities were allowed to persist. And ultimately, Equity reimagines the ways in which we relate across differences.

What sets those who pursue equity apart from those who seek to be on top is that the goal of equity is never exclusion. So invitation is essential to the practice of equity. All are welcome. Although, as in the development of any skill, you're going to do equity poorly before you do it well, and will need those who are further along to refine your efforts.

Acknowledging this, seekers of truth and transformation come to understand that the journey continues, even after completing the steps. The steps are only a precursor, a readiness drill, for the world changing yet to be done. Seekers are thus encouraged to support other seekers with what they've learned, while they continue their journey.

