
**NOT FOR OTHERS, BUT WITH
OTHERS FOR ALL OF US**

Weaving Relationships, Co-creating Spaces of Justice

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we come to this space from many places
some continuing a life long journey
others on a journey just begun
some with transformative epiphanies
others despite hurtful experiences
some with hopes of creating the same transformations for others
others out of a sense of social responsibility

we come from many places,
we bring our bodies, minds and hearts
we come with our desires, fears, visions . . .
we all still come
we all still bring what we can
we come together as a gathering

in this place, we make commitments to us
from spaces inside ourselves
to spaces we share together
to spaces outside of ourselves with others not here

from the inner space, i commit to
listening carefully to each of us
sharing myself to deepen, energize, inspire dialogue
taking risks, stepping out of my comfort zone

in the space that we share, we commit to
 making our feelings known to those around us
 being supportive and patient
 cultivating safety by listening, respecting and not expecting
 building inclusion by being patient, encouraging and open
 taking risks by being honest, vulnerable and courageous
 owning this process so that we may together nurture seeds of understanding,
 critical reflection and powerful relating

in joining the inner space to the space that we share, we commit to
 being open to growing and unpacking difficult questions
 viewing individuals not as representatives of their groups
 educating ourselves and learning from others
 engaging ourselves about oppressions occurring in our midst
 confronting conflict over oppressive conditions head on
 opening ourselves to knowledge, growth and change in service to others and
 ourselves

here, we bring our many gifts
 words and poems
 heart and silent connecting
 soul, crystals and clarity
 music, drums, dance
 presence and commitment

now, we share and relish
 the splendor of each others' gifts
 the interweaving of our experiences and lives
 the pregnancy of the space that we share
 the birth of a new wholeness

here, we pursue our commitments and dreams
 to create
 to witness the possibilities of change
 to be the change we wish for others

now, we struggle
 to keep pace with each other
 to pay attention to issues arising among us
 in some places we do well, in others we do not
 yet, even through those we hope to learn

here, we grow the space together

now, we let the questions and answers act as dancing figures
 circling around
 lifting each other to ever more elaborate performance

moving always in rhythm
 watching the dance with care and attention
 trying not to force the steps or to let them run wild

we enter the dance floor, this space, as a gathering of individuals
 we share this space now as a beloved community
 as we continue on our shared and separate journeys
 we carry this beloved community within each of us, a dance inside of us . . .

"Gathering . . . To Grow a Beloved Community"

—Biren (Ratnesh) A. Nagda

A fundamental and distinguishing quality of intergroup dialogue is that it is a co-facilitated group experience with at least two facilitators representing the focal identities in the dialogue. As other chapters have conveyed, intergroup dialogue facilitators "wear many hats"—establishing an effective climate, choosing appropriate roles, using different engagement methods, organizing discussions, and working with individual and group dynamics (Griffin & Ouellett, 2007). They also "walk the fine lines" between participant-facilitator, co-learner-role model, and guide-change agent (Nagda, Zúñiga, & Sevig, 1995). These are usually conceived of as individual roles and responsibilities. We extend this knowledge base to understand more about co-facilitation, especially how facilitators conceive of their roles and relationships with each other and students in their groups.

In this chapter, we first provide the theoretical context for the ways power may be conceived of in relationships. We focus on the relational engagement of facilitators and what that means for their deepened learning about alliances and how these alliances manifest in work with their co-facilitators, the students, and themselves. We conclude with an interweaving of two poems written separately by a pair of co-facilitators, to capture their intertwined journeys and conjoined commitments to social justice.

Engaging the Relational Power in Intergroup Dialogue Facilitation

In the introductory chapter, we emphasized the importance of relationships as a nexus of analysis and a catalyst for change. Beverly Tatum (2007), writing about cross-racial friendships, shares our emphasis:

Relationships across lines of difference are essential for the possibility of social transformation. Change is needed. None of us can make change alone. Genuine friendship leads to caring concern. Caring concern leads to action. And we need to take our action from a position of strength that comes from self-knowledge and social awareness. (p. 100)

We have also stressed the importance of both the dialogic relationship building and the critical analysis and action dimensions of a critical-dialogic approach to intergroup dialogue (Nagda & Gurin, 2007). Learners are encouraged to use a power analysis to read structures, policies, and situations with power being understood in terms of relations of domination and subordination (McMahon & Portelli, 2004). Power-over, signifying a hierarchy of advantaged and disadvantaged, characterizes these relationships. Increasing awareness of social identities and social inequalities is understood to motivate learners to engage in changing and challenging these differentials.

While the power-over analysis is important, we also conceive of other forms of power—power-with (Surrey, 1987) and power-within (Starhawk, 1987)—that are geared toward empowerment, equality, and social justice, or what Jean Baker Miller (1982) calls “agency-in-community” as contrasted with “self-separate-from-community.” Kreisberg (1992) elaborates,

Power-with is manifest in relationships of co-agency. These relationships are characterized by people finding ways to satisfy their desires and to fulfill their interests without imposing on one another. The relationship of co-agency is one in which there is equality: situations in which individuals and groups fulfill their desires by acting together. It is jointly developing capacity. The possibility of power-with lies in the reality of human interconnections within communities. (pp. 85–86)

In intergroup dialogue, we attend to strengthening intergroup relationships within the context of identities and inequalities as a catalyst for personal and social change.

The co-facilitation relationship in particular represents the shared space in which to actualize the potential of power-with and power-within. Co-facilitating intergroup dialogues is an avenue to engage in alliance building and action—promoting understanding of identity, inequality, and social justice—by working intensively in intergroup collaboration teams. The co-facilitation relationship involves sustained engagement across different social identities and social positions, harnessing of the different and shared strengths and responsibilities, and commitment to a continual learning process around a specific joint endeavor to advance social justice.

Context and Method of Inquiry

This chapter is based on training senior undergraduate facilitators in a School of Social Work through a two-quarter sequence of courses. The first course

focuses on the theory and practice of intergroup dialogue facilitation—dialogic communication and critical analyses integrated with delivery of educational modules and group facilitation skills (Nagda et al., 2001). Students practice facilitation in small (3–5 persons) and larger (10–12) groups. The second course parallels actual facilitation and provides additional skill building and supervision.

The two primary authors—Nagda and Timbang—analyzed papers from one cohort of students who had completed the initial training course and the supervised facilitation practicum. At the beginning of the two-course sequence, all students conducted a “Taping Project,” a self-interview using a protocol to audiotape their responses (adapted from Tatum, 1992, and Garcia & Van Soest, 1997). We asked the students to turn in their audio recordings for safekeeping and returned them toward the end of the first quarter. We assured them that we would not listen to these tapes. At the end of the first quarter, the facilitators listened to their tapes to reflect on their learning. At the end of the second quarter, the facilitators wrote a paper reflecting on their overall learning—from the taping assignment and paper at the end of the first quarter, to their actual facilitation experience. Our inquiry was focused on the two papers, not the tapes. The two secondary authors—Fulmer and Tran—were student co-facilitators from a different cohort than the ones whose papers we read. Independently, they each wrote poems as part of their final paper at the end of two quarters. We include their poems to signify the meaning generated for them as part of the dialogue experience that parallels our focus on relationships in intergroup dialogue and co-facilitation.

We paid particular attention to how facilitators wrote about learning in relation to their co-facilitators and students in their dialogue groups. We also looked for ways they talked about the complexity of their own identities, and how that manifested in their relationships with others. The co-facilitation relationship and the collaborative work served as an important crucible for deepened learning. We discuss our findings along the following four major themes.

Re(de)fining Understanding of Alliances

Many social justice educators and practitioners consider alliance building one of the prime outcomes of their efforts and an effective mechanism for social change (Adams, Bell, & Griffin, 2007; Zúñiga, Nagda, Chesler, & Cytron-Walker, 2007). Most of the facilitators’ previous learning and consciousness raising had emphasized allies as individuals committed to social justice and

peaking out against injustices. Facilitators shared their own nuanced learning about alliances through the deepened relational engagement with the cohort of facilitators, their co-facilitators, and with students.

I am energized to begin working in a co-facilitator role because of the support built into that relationship. A lot of the speaking out and action for social justice I have taken in my personal and professional life has been by me alone. I look forward to being able to work together with someone who has a similar passion and commitment. . . . too often I am calling out others and do not have anyone calling me out on a consistent basis. As much as I need to challenge myself, I also want to be challenged by others. (White woman)

The facilitator clearly recognizes the significance of the co-facilitation relationship as a place of continued empowerment.

Through the courses, facilitators redefined their understanding of what it meant to be in alliance for social justice. While many facilitators continue to use the language of "being an ally," as will be evident in their quotes throughout the chapter, its meaning changed for them. For example, a facilitator wrote about her shift from seeing an ally as someone who primarily listened to hers to someone who is also on a journey of learning about identities with hers:

I would consider changing my response to what it takes to be a good ally in social justice work. I talked a lot about the importance of being a good listener, but I've since realized just how complex being a good ally really is. [It] takes a lot of self-discovery and understanding our own multiple social identities, . . . involves knowing yourself and supporting each other with trust and validation. (Native American White woman)

Another facilitator shared a shift in her understanding from unidimensional concern for equality for all to a multidimensional person who is toward social change as well as enhances social relations both across and within racial lines:

In the self-interview, I had difficulty articulating what good allies look like. . . . I had described an ally as someone who is willing to put effort towards creating change for equality of all groups, that's all. Now I feel an ally can be an ally at different levels, such as, an active social-change agent, a person who is willing to speak out against racism and oppression even in the smallest situation (like a racial joke), . . . someone who demonstrates through their own life the value of embracing diversity and teaches others by individual example of how to respect differences. (Latina woman)

Yet another facilitator wrote about the transformation in her understanding of racism, and thus shifting her stance of ally-ship as acting on behalf of others to realizing agency-in-community:

My story changed dramatically when I realized that I am influenced greatly by racism. My position of dominance doesn't mean that I have been unaffected, or positively affected by racism. I do have societal privilege and power as a White person, but I also have a limited life experience, and my vision of the world is narrowed and incomplete. I have a flawed relationship with myself. These are all parts of being dominant too. By recognizing this, I am no longer fighting racism from a position where I am fighting a problem for someone else, but rather I am fixing it for all people, including myself. Personalizing my experiences as a dominant person in the scope of racism was huge. It changed the entire lens through which I view racism and how I approach fighting it. (White woman)

The theme of collaborative agency and the intertwined nature of personal and social change resonated with others:

The biggest piece of advice I can offer to future facilitators is to commit yourself fully to this process of personal change and doing anti-racist work with others. This is not just about creating change for others but about changing yourself as you learn about the impact of oppression and privilege on your own life. These two processes are deeply intertwined, and it is because of that union that this will be both incredibly challenging and rewarding. It is also the start, or the continuance, of a life-long journey, and it is helpful to view this experience not as a one-time event but as a piece of a larger puzzle that we all must work together to assemble. (White woman)

With this shifting emphasis on *relations-defining-alliances* in contrast to *actions-defining-allies*, facilitators also became much more in tune with the affective elements of alliances. Reflecting on their original recording, they say,

The most significant change would be the use of the word "support." I am surprised that I did not use that word even once. . . . Today that is my number one requirement. (White woman)

In my responses to the ally questions in the interview guide, I never even mentioned the word "trust." I found trust to be a crucial element in alliance building. (Latina woman)

Facilitators redefined allies as individuals taking action against injustices to an emphasis on building relationships of authenticity, mutual support, and challenge in working together for social justice. In essence, they shifted their understanding from *being an ally* to *being in alliance*, and perhaps more fundamentally from facilitating to *co-facilitating*.

Deepening Relations: Care and Conflict in Co-facilitation

The affective reframing of alliances made facilitators aware of the importance of actively building relationships and how easy it may be to take relationships for granted, especially when co-facilitators know each other. One facilitator shared knowing her co-facilitator prior to the course and feeling “so confident that [he] and I would make such a great team, that we really did not talk about the relationship at all.” Tatum (2007) titled her essay “What Kind of Friendship Is That?” to grapple specifically with the distinction between superficial acquaintances and genuine cross-racial friendships and, in our case, alliances. She cites authenticity and mutuality as core elements of genuine relationships, much like the facilitators who quickly realized the necessity to strengthen their co-facilitation teams through honesty, support, vulnerability, and trust:

Being honest and vulnerable with your co-facilitator is very important as it is a great way to model for the group and to move closer to your co-facilitator. (African American woman)

Another answer that would be different is the importance of supporting and being supported by my co-facilitator . . . of being able to trust, and support each other. . . . The dynamics that go into co-facilitation are hugely important. (White woman)

Engaging and Changing Co-facilitation Dynamics

Developing these caring relationships should not, however, be conceived of as devoid of difficulties. Bernice Johnson Reagon (1995), in her classic essay “Coalition Politics,” says that coalitions or alliances are not home spaces; they are not necessarily comfortable or safe. These can be uncomfortable spaces because of both the newness and the challenge to be in relation to others. “Most of the time you feel threatened to the core and if you don’t, you’re not really doing no coalescing” (p. 541). Thus, authenticity in deeper alliance building across differences must grapple openly with issues of identity and inequality as uncomfortable as it may be (Tatum, 2007). For co-facilitators, some of the strengthening of their alliance came through difficult experiences,

both within their teams and in the dialogue groups. One such challenge had to do with a replaying of dominant-subordinate patterns in facilitation with the group:

[My co-facilitator] was doing more of the calling out and I was the more nurturing one. [She] was focused on the mechanics and I was focused on the emotions. . . . We were playing out internalized domination and internalized oppression within our own team! We need to focus on sharing those roles. I need to do more calling out and she needs to do more connecting to emotions. . . . By mid-quarter, the group was actually noticing the very same thing, as they wrote their comments on their evaluations of our team. This was especially difficult for me to hear because in many of our dialogues, White privilege was playing out. As a person of color, I wanted to be calling out too, especially with *speaking* from my experiences *as* a person of color; I wanted people to hear that and I wasn’t sure that they were. . . . I challenged myself to speak from that place, not only for the benefit of the group but for my benefit as well. (African American woman)

[My co-facilitator] shared with me that she felt herself step into the “touchy feely” role more than she wanted. She felt pressure as the facilitator of color to be the one reaching out emotionally, and we talked about how I felt the pressure to be tough and call out the dynamics. Through mutual support, we helped each other overcome these roles [in] breaking down the typical “White facilitator” and “facilitator of color” roles. (White woman)

These co-facilitators engaged in openly acknowledging and dialoguing about these dynamics to *jointly* problem solve. As is evident, breaking down this dichotomization of roles was important to harness both the collective agency of the co-facilitation team and the individual agency to name oppressive dynamics. While many White facilitators talked about being able to connect with other White participants through their stories, it is important to consider the words of the facilitator of color. In essence, “*speaking* from my experiences *as* a person of color” gives her agency and not to be spoken for or on behalf of. Instead of the intended experience of alliance, she experiences not being able to call out or challenge White privilege as diminishing her agency and thus reproducing White privilege in the co-facilitation work.

Engaging Intersectionality and Multiple Identities

Facilitators also wrote about changing their frames of reference; they move from recognizing themselves as *only* defined by their positions of dominance or subordination to understanding the *intersectionality* of their identities. Owning intersectionality of both positions of privilege *and* subordination

appears to have been transformative and directly affected their understanding of productive alliances:

My own story has changed dramatically. It has been a process of realizing that in order to be an ally to oppressed peoples I must first be an ally to myself and commit to learning about my own oppression. I cannot be truly effective in this work until I can learn to deal with the things that have the power to silence me. I learned this the hard way. When my own oppression got triggered I was left speechless while my co-facilitator waited for me to confront racism. (White woman)

For other facilitation teams, issues emergent in the dialogue groups drove home the lessons of intersectionality. One team, an African American woman and a White woman, talked about how homophobia among their group members challenged them to look at their opposite positionalities:

Dealing with [blatant homophobia/heterosexism] has been very confusing to me. . . . One of the most difficult things to work through was dealing with homophobia from the women of color in our group. It was such a struggle for me to think of how I can be an ally to them as a White woman even though I felt attacked by them as a queer woman. This is still an issue that creates a lot of anxiety in me. (White woman)

Through the alliance developing as co-facilitators, her co-facilitator shared this challenge with her:

There were some very difficult moments. . . . We were dealing with so much homophobia in our group. . . . There were many dialogues where the tension between Christianity, which is a very dominant group in our society and a group that I am a part of, and heterosexism and homophobia came up. I had such a struggle internally with these conversations, because I was so disgusted with what I was hearing. It was also hard for me because I didn't want those who were Christians in my group to think that I was denying my faith because I didn't have the same views as them regarding sexual orientation. Even as I tried to call people out in dialogues regarding Christianity being an oppressor in society even today, I got nothing but resistance from many people. This was so disheartening for me because I was not trying to attack anyone, but just bring up some new information to think about, as well as support my co-facilitator. At the same time, I wasn't going to let people off easy, as hard as that was. (African American woman)

While the White co-facilitator experienced homophobia as a direct threat to her being and identity as a queer woman, the African American facilitator

found challenging homophobia a potential threat from others to her Christianity. Yet, it pushed her to grapple with the intersectionality of her identities and appreciate her own agency.

It changed my story. . . . I was speaking from a place of dominance, as I so often speak out of my oppression, failing to see those places of dominance I have as well. It caused me to think about my other places of dominance, like being able-bodied, and how I can become an ally to people in other oppressed groups. It was not that I have never thought about these things before. It was just that I had a chance to actually call out oppression with a pretty tough group, and I felt gratification in doing that. It gave me courage to continue to do this work. (African American woman)

Another facilitator shared his early struggles to confront his own heterosexual socialization into gender roles and gendered hierarchy, and the uncertainties about how he should interact with a White lesbian co-facilitator. Later, he wrote about being angry about the blatant homophobic intolerance in the larger community with anti-gay speakers and engaging in a dialogue with his co-facilitator.

I became upset by the fact that some guy was coming to my city and getting people angry and riled up about same-sex marriage. . . . As [my co-facilitator] told me about the children that were screaming "You're sinners" and "You're going to hell," I grew so angry that goose bumps rose on my arms. (Latino man)

The growth from uncertainty and anxiety to an empathetic anger was borne out of the close collaboration between them. As she struggled to confront her own Whiteness, he confronted his own maleness, heterosexuality, and homophobia. He acknowledged his own transformation:

When I was at [my co-facilitator's] wedding ceremony I got goose bumps again. But it was different. I kept on saying to myself, "This is what it is all about." . . . They looked so happy, so in love. . . . Technically they were already married but celebrating their union with family and friends is a big thing. I felt very lucky to have been a part of their big day, to be her friend. (Latino man)

While they were facilitating interracial/interethnic dialogues, the co-facilitators' deeper engagement and meaningful connectivity appears to have helped expand the scope and care of their social justice agency inside and outside the dialogues.

The relational understanding of being in alliance pays special attention to the collective empowerment of all parties, and not a reproduction of power

inequalities in striving toward justice. The facilitators' reflections show how their understanding of social justice activism shifted in many ways. They come to appreciate not just being individual or solo activists but being activists in collaboration. They see the value of affective connecting as an important part of alliances as opposed to solely action-based alliances. At the same time, they do not take for granted that affective relations alone are equivalent to alliances, but that actively strengthening and deepening the relations are purposeful toward greater personal and social change.

Deepening Understanding of Self-in-Relation

In structures of domination and subordination, relationships are marred not only by group-based inequalities, intergroup hostilities, and interpersonal distrust, but also by the impact on individuals' sense of self. As articulated by a facilitator earlier, the journey toward social change is intertwined with personal change. Through the preparation courses and actual co-facilitating, facilitators continued to deepen their understanding of self-in-relation to others and the larger society.

Recognizing Internalized Oppression and Internalized Domination

To support the facilitators' continued journey toward change, we emphasized critical self-reflection of the interconnected nature of structural racism with internalized dominance and internalized oppression. Some students of color wrote about understanding the complexity of racism and the need to understand both the personalized impact of internalized oppression and the diversity of experiences among people of color.

I became aware of how common the issue of internalized oppression is for people of color . . . how embedded it is within us. Before, I attributed my feelings of inferiority to my own personal flaw. To hear from other students of color their feelings of internalized oppression was so emotionally intense for me. (Latina woman)

A White woman facilitator shared her own growing awareness of patriarchy and its impact on her. Her commitment to antiracism was unquestioned; yet in the class she had shared how she felt stuck in progressing toward redefining herself as an antiracist activist.

My main challenge was looking at my internalized oppression, it was difficult to realize that it was getting in the way of my being an effective facilitator. There was a strength that came from this, which was the ability to share my struggle, and to help others who may be experiencing the same kind of struggle. (White woman)

A White male facilitator revealed how new the experience of sharing in intergroup dialogue was for him, both because of his own life experiences and because he was the only White man in the class:

I live in a box that has been white male. I could see others around me who were different than me, I just never allowed them into my box and I never ventured out. . . . My willingness to open myself up to others has greatly changed. . . . Communicating in this open space has been huge for me. I don't do this with anyone, and to share like I have done with this group has been a gigantic step for me. I have struggled with being the only White male in our class and trying to keep an open mind and an open heart. I have tried to not personalize any feedback relating to my social identity, but still struggle with that. I realize it is vital that I continue to work on these things. (White man)

Moving Through Internalized Oppression and Internalized Domination

Grappling honestly with internalized domination and internalized oppression enables facilitators to personalize the impact of structural inequalities on themselves and contextualize their previous ways of being in patterns of domination and subordination, including "blocks to openness" or "walls" that hindered deeper relating.

[I wanted to] bring more heart and feeling into this work. Challenging myself to do this was hard, because of the privilege I have to avoid uncomfortability and express myself with cognition rather than with emotion. In my tape I talked about "not being as open with my feelings as I should be," but I didn't connect this to privilege. I did identify fear as one of the primary blockers to my openness. Sharing my emotions was one of the most significant ways I could encourage other White students in the group to open up. . . . It was critical for me to realize that giving in to my fear of sharing emotion was not only a way for me to act out my privilege, but it was also a way that I would be showing other White students that this is acceptable. . . . [It] was a way that I modeled positive ally behavior. (White woman)

I was able to [be an effective ally] by being aware of any walls that I was building. I was able to be honest with [my co-facilitator] . . . our partnership became stronger as I knew that she always had my back, and I had hers. (African American woman)

Facilitators' critical self-reflections of internalized oppression and internalized dominance were directly related to how they moved beyond feeling immobilized in the realizations to building deeper relationships with each other and with students in their groups, especially others who were similarly positioned as they were in systems of inequalities.

I realized that I needed to start with self-examination of how I might be helpful and why I might have the ability to help. . . . I remember this revelation coming to me

in a personal dialogue [about our internalized oppression] with another member of my own ethnic group. . . . I realized how I had not been as full a supporting ally as I could be. (Latina woman)

As I now face my areas of internalized dominance, I feel a new sense of purpose and encouragement. . . . Having a fuller understanding has further motivated me to be an ally and use my dominant positionalities as a source of commonality in challenging others with those same positionalities, especially other White people. . . . As I move forward, I challenge myself not to get stuck in feelings of guilt or shame but instead to connect with the root of those feelings and use that to spur my energy for personal and social change. (White woman)

The facilitators' personal reflections and dialogues with other facilitators appear to destigmatize internalized oppression and internalized domination as personality weaknesses and sources of shame and guilt. At the same time, they see their new realizations not simply as personally liberating, but as socially connecting with others like them and different from them to build more power-within and power-with to affect social injustices.

Deepening Social Justice Practice

Co-facilitators' new and refined understandings of alliances, power-with, and agency-in-community are also influenced by their actual co-facilitation work. We found their learning in facilitating dialogues to resemble their learning in co-facilitation relationships described earlier.

Re(de)fining Leadership

Facilitators' new understanding of *being in alliance* parallels their reconceptualization of their roles as change agents or leaders.

[I] see my role as creating a climate for change, as opposed to changing the individual. When I am faced with the challenge of changing another human being the task seems so daunting that all hope of being gentle goes right out the window. However, when I am faced with the challenge of creating a "climate" there is no other response than to be gentle and loving. (White woman)

As a leader I am expected to know the answers and lead the group to solutions around racism. This is not my job as a facilitator. Rather, it is to help students see the issues in different ways to establish better understanding. Then, the student can decide for himself/herself what action he/she is prepared to do. (White woman)

For both facilitators, the shift from an authoritarian, power-over leadership to a more connective leadership was profound. Not only was this

a conceptual shift, but it was evident in relational ways of being with participants.

The facilitation experience made me observe as opposed to just seeing, engage in active listening and not just hearing, more consciously validate people's experiences instead of minimizing them. (South Asian woman)

Strengthening Facilitative Agency: Becoming Facilitator-Participants

Facilitators strived to balance their roles as facilitator-participants and discovered ways of participating more authentically. A facilitator shared that being part of the group also meant continuing her learning journey and deepening her engagement:

I have learned that there are definitely skills involved in being an intergroup dialogue facilitator—validating, probing, making connections—but those skills mean nothing in the absence of a meaningful and challenging personal journey. The times I was most "effective" as a facilitator were the times when I was fully engaged and participating in the dialogue on a personal level, holding myself accountable and examining and acknowledging my White privilege with the group. (White woman)

For another facilitator, the personal journey was coming to understand how his masculinity made it difficult for him to stay present with the emotionality in the dialogues:

I struggled with sitting in discomfort and not rushing to problem solve, divert topics, or some other tactic to change the feeling in the room (actually in me). It was hard to sit with emotional topics. . . . This has to do with my social identity. It's not that I can't do it or that I don't want to do it, I just think I was conditioned to not go there, and rather, as a man, to take charge and change it or control it. I can now see how damaging this can be to myself and to others. (Native American man)

Working with the discomfort also involves taking risks and being vulnerable which may challenge prospective facilitators' notion of a leader as *apart* from the group. Rather, they see their own sharing as modeling for participants how to engage in meaningful dialogue through an exchange:

Taking the risk to share of myself as well as taking risks to probe a participant deeper will enable me to extend my learning from the students in my dialogue group. . . . Even as a facilitator, I must take responsibility in also sharing in order to learn what others have to say about my thoughts. (Latina woman)

Strengthening Facilitative Agency: Challenging Oneself and Connecting With Others

The theme of working *with* students does not forsake the responsibility that facilitators hold to sustain and deepen the dialogue. Facilitators shared how they came to understand the dilemma of partnering with students, yet challenging students to learn honestly about issues of identity and inequality. The more connective role involved a shift in how facilitators saw the importance of knowledge and storytelling in dialogues, especially bringing their lived experiences as an asset to facilitation.

Another important aspect of my learning has to do with going with my gut and sharing from my heart. In the beginning of the dialogues, I felt that I thought too much about what I said. . . . I would think about how what I said was perceived and how especially White students would take it. It really made a difference for me to let go of that as the weeks went on. (African American woman)

In a way, the African American woman facilitator was undoing her own fear connected, as she wrote later, to internalized oppression.

The importance of speaking more heartfully was not only for the facilitators' own learning and growth but directly related to building meaningful relationships with participants through purposeful sharing of stories.

I was encouraged to talk from my experiences when talking about things like Affirmative Action, internalized oppression and taking action. I was challenged to [share] how I have *come* to learn about privilege, alliances and oppression, and how they are "embodied" in myself [instead of just regurgitating what I had learned]. . . . I feel like there was no better way to share my learning in dialogues. . . . (African American woman)

When reading my [first] paper, I feel like I was still "in my head" when trying to own my White experiences. I hadn't pushed myself hard to speak the truth about my own experiences of White privilege. . . . In order to truly own my experiences as a privileged White person, I had to model sharing my own stories. . . . I feel like it was [during facilitation] that changed my whole relationship with my stories. . . . I felt a new sense of responsibility in group as a facilitator. (White woman)

For both these facilitators, owning and embodying their stories fostered greater empowerment in the dialogues.

Another facilitator shared how the co-facilitation partnership provided the context for risk taking; it allowed them as a team to balance the

facilitator-participant roles and to "be open and honest about my emotion and experiences." She described a specific incident where she saw her new commitments and risk taking challenge not only the students in her group but her own fears to come to life:

Hearing the "n" word used so carelessly by a White person [in a story she was telling] struck a very deep emotion inside me. At first I did not know how to respond. In the past I might have just kept quiet and let my feelings stay silent within me. Then I realized that I needed to let my emotions do the talking. I had never before spoken so freely from my heart in a group like that. . . . Even now thinking about that I have tears in my eyes because it was the first time I think I really let go of both my fear of sharing intense emotion and my privilege to keep silent. (White woman)

The facilitators' shifting conceptions of leadership and commitments to deepened, mindful, heartfelt, and embodied engagement also show new way of experiencing social justice agency. Be it through undoing their internalized oppression or internalized domination, giving voice to their own stories to connect with participants, or taking risks to interrupt remarks and dynamics, facilitators availed themselves of power-within to forge power-with for social and personal change.

In conclusion, the facilitators' reflections that we have shared by no means convey an exhaustive picture of what happens in the actuality of co-facilitation. But they do show what is possible in the relational power of co-facilitating intergroup dialogues. The fundamental shift from *being ally* to *being in alliance* emphasizes relational agency for action: power-with and co-agency to work *with* and not *for* others, power-within to connect personal and social change for increased agency, and *productive* power-over to foster environments for deepened learning and relating across difference. Tatum (2007) cites Miller's (1986) work on constructive relational connections: when relationships are marked by authenticity, mutuality, and social transformation, interactants experience five things—increased zest, a greater sense of empowerment, greater self-knowledge, increased self-worth, and desire for more connection. These are exactly the sentiments that facilitators wrote in concluding their reflections.

Words can't truly describe how grateful I am for this learning and my personal growth that has made me feel stronger as an African American woman, I feel empowered and more complete. . . . I have found my voice, a sense of peace and in essence I have found myself. (African American woman)

The relationship that formed between [my co-facilitator] and I had a tremendous impact on my evolution as a co-facilitator, colleague, intern, brother, son, uncle, and friend. . . . I begin to smile because of the person that I am becoming. (Latino man)

I have changed in my [self-]confidence. I no longer wonder about whether or not I will be accepted. I have had several amazing experiences where I felt accepted by people of color on a more intimate level than I have ever experienced. . . . If I am willing to take a long hard look at myself, then perhaps I will be able to see you better. (White woman)

I will continue to look for ways to name things with love, ways that I can continue to educate myself, and ways to connect with others who are active—or want to be—in the work. (Native American man)

The power-with in relationships that the facilitators experienced through intergroup dialogue made an indelible impact on them. In the pursuit of social justice, they see themselves inextricably related to others; their sense of self is intertwined with their relations to others and their *joint* social justice agency. We thus end this chapter with the voices of two co-facilitators, Tran and Fulmer, who each wrote an original poem as part of their final reflections after facilitating intergroup dialogues. We wove the two poems to embrace the truly interconnected nature of their insights, separate yet together, independent yet interdependent.

i (we) have come to know the true reality
not by coincidence
but through deliberate
reflection, engagement, and action
with authenticity, courage, and will power

what do i owe, to myself
to engage in intergroup dialogues?
what comes from the expenditure of:
self-awareness through an increased awareness,
a result of committing to open dialogues
history, truth retold and told
society, unbound and free
personal truths, discovered and redefined

i (we) made my (our) decision!
to change and renew my (our) lens,
to store my (our) blanket(s) of hopelessness and fear,
to search and reach for
hopefulness, empowerment, and compassion

what do i owe?
my entire being
personal truths spoken and held,
yours and mine
my soul of identities
spun undone
woven together
me.
you.
us. together. us, together
supporting our uniqueness, our sameness

i (we) made my (our) decision!
to travel on the road that is less traveled
i am (we are) affected, touched, and appreciative by
those with me (us) and around me (us)
others are moved by me (us)
we are all
traveling together
i (we) made my (our) decision!
not to stop
not to slow down
not to lose direction
not to turn around

what do i owe it to myself?
what do i owe it to you?
our future children, our past parents
what do i owe it to myself?
what do i owe it to you?
to us?
to what was and could have been,
and what we will create

though i (we) may have failed in the past
i (we) will not let myself (ourselves) crumble
instead, i (we) will use it and
turn it into strength
i (we) will rise!
there is an anchor for
my (our) soul and my (our) feelings
there is an anchor for
my (our) actions and battles
i (we) will rise!

i am (we are) the difference!
i am (we are) determined!

what do we *not* owe to intergroup dialogue?

humanity,
yours and mine.
dignity,
yours and mine.
love and compassion,
yours and mine.

Thai Hung V. Tran, 2009

Nichola G. Fulmer, 2009

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love and compassion,
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Thai Hung V. Tran, 2009

Nichola G. Fulmer, 2009

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