

# WEEK 2: STRENGTH

2020 LOVE-A-THON FOR JUSTICE  
CALENDAR OF LIBERATORY PRACTICE



## MONDAY: MEDITATION

There are so many demands and distractions pulling us, and meditation can help us 'train' our attention back to the body and what we care about.

To begin, get comfortable (you can be seated, standing, or lying) and find a place of aliveness in your body—maybe a breath or sensation. If your mind wanders, gently bring it back to the breath or another place of aliveness in your body.

Sit for as long as you like. If you are new to a meditation practice, you may want to start with 3-5 minutes.

Read the following passage at the start and end of your meditation.

### MEDITATE:

*Out of the huts of history's shame  
I rise  
Up from the past that's rooted in pain  
I rise  
I'm a black ocean, leaping and wide,  
Welling and swelling I bear in the tide*

*Leaving behind nights of terror and fear  
I rise  
Into a daybreak that's wondrously clear  
I rise  
Bringing the gifts that my ancestors gave,  
I am the dream and the hope of the slave.  
I rise  
I rise  
I rise.*

—Maya Angelou, from "Still I Rise"

## TUESDAY: REFLECTION

Words hold power. They can build us up or knock us down. Through writing, we name the truth of our experiences, open up pathways to healing, unlock our imaginations and tap into our longings. With inspiration from the prompt below, set aside 10-15 minutes to free write.

### REFLECT:

Move away from thinking of strength as 'power over.' Instead, let yourself think of strength as our ability to **support** each other, to be driven by **vision** and **creativity**, to find **joy** and **connection**, and to move or act in ways that align with **what we care about**.

What do you think would be different for yourself or your communities if we felt our strength in this way? Where and how do you feel your strength(s) that unapologetically push against the often punitive, 'power over' notions of strength we have been taught?

## WEDNESDAY: CREATION

Too often, feelings of shame, guilt, despair (most often a result of experiences of trauma) can keep us from feeling or revealing our full strength and power.

### CREATE:

Today, we invite you to take a 'portrait' of yourself in your full strength and dignity. Find a space where you feel most comfortable and take a few minutes to reflect on your many strengths (past, present, and future). **Allow your whole body and spirit to really feel this strength**—in your bones—and take a selfie, or ask someone in your pod to take a photo of you.

This photo is only for you. You don't need to share it with anyone else, but keep it somewhere so you can go back and look at how good strength looks on you!

## THURSDAY: CONNECTION

### CONNECT:

Take some time today to make a list of people in your life that exhibit the principles of strength we've explored this week. What are ways you have seen them practice or show their strength? What has seeing them be in their strength helped you to do or see for yourself?

Now we invite you into a practice of revealing for the sake of building **authentic, transformative, mutual relationships**. Let the people on your list know how you see them and how their strength has impacted you. Call them, email, text, use whatever form of communication works for you—but let them know.

Remember: **what we pay attention to grows**. Our strength is inherent and present... let's let it GROW!

## FRIDAY: ACTION

*"Freedom is not something that anybody can be given. Freedom is something people take, and people are as free as they want to be."*

—James Baldwin

### Take action to support the Cook County Budget for Black Lives!

Systems of policing and incarceration harm Black, Brown and poor communities. Investing in people, not punishment, makes everyone safer. As we stay at home more due to the rise of COVID in Illinois, there are still things we can do to continue to lift up abolitionist demands and organize while we're apart keeping each other safe from the pandemic.

The Cook County Budget for Black Lives would divest **\$157 million** from the Cook County Jail in order to reduce harm and invest tens of millions of dollars in good jobs, mental health care, safe housing, restorative justice, anti-violence programs and other resources that allow Black, Brown, and poor communities to thrive. Click this link to sign on to the campaign and send a letter to Cook County Commissioners to Support the Budget for Black Lives: <https://p2a.co/hbe2iSH?p2asource=CTJC>

## SATURDAY & SUNDAY: REST & COMPLETION

Racialized capitalism—which drives and is driven by ableism—tries to convince us that our value comes from our productivity, that our worth is tied to profit. We lift up a truth from the Nap Ministry: **"Rest is a form of resistance because it disrupts and pushes back against capitalism and white supremacy."** Let's practice this resistance together.

Let the week's practices metabolize in you, returning to any practices you wish to revisit. Let them be nourished. Let them take root. And Saturday and Sunday simply practice what it is to rest. Enjoy the fruits of your week, care for your body and spirit. Maybe you will have a hot bath, a delicious meal, a restorative nap, a long catchup with someone you've been missing, or a solo dance party. Practice what feels good. We'll see you Monday!

*"Sometimes we are blessed with being able to choose the time, and the arena, and the manner of our revolution, but more usually we must do battle where we are standing."*

—Audre Lorde