

Black Lives Matter Book Discussion

Ground rules for discussion

Based on the discussions that led to this group, we chose *Mindful of Race* to not only read and discuss Ruth King's Buddhist perspective of race but to share our own journeys, challenges, difficulties, and pain around race.

- We are here to listen and learn as well as to speak. Tune into your own experience – how you are being touched and shaped by the gifts offered. Be curious about your inner experience, not just your thoughts.
- Speak from your personal experience and not in terms of right and wrong, correct and incorrect. Likewise, avoid abstractions (e.g., analyzing concepts introduced by the author at the expense of sharing personal reflections).
- Please avoid interruptions or “cross-talking.”
- While gentle clarifying questions can be useful, listeners are not to probe, argue, seek agreement, or invoke forms of retaliation. Nor should listeners speak of their own story when someone is sharing. Do not take attention away from the person speaking.
- Keep your sound muted until you would like to speak up. This minimizes background noise as well as the chances of talking over one another. It's also helpful to raise your hand when you'd like to speak, so others know to “give you the floor” and mute themselves.
- When you feel uneasy, be aware of how you feel while also staying present to what you are sharing or to what is being shared. If someone says something that lands poorly with you, let them know, but try to do it in terms of how you felt, rather than saying or implying that it was wrong.
- At any time during the discussion, if things become too intense or uneasy, you can pause in silence together. Begin by relaxing and checking in. You may track your emotional experience in silence (unpleasant, shamed, pulsing, hiding, etc.), or if the person speaking is willing, they may track their experience out loud while others bear compassionate witness.
- Whatever is said in the discussion group should stay in the discussion group. Please do not share the comments made by others with those who were not in your discussion group.