



2023 Unity Church Spiritual Justice Practice Series / Intersectionality

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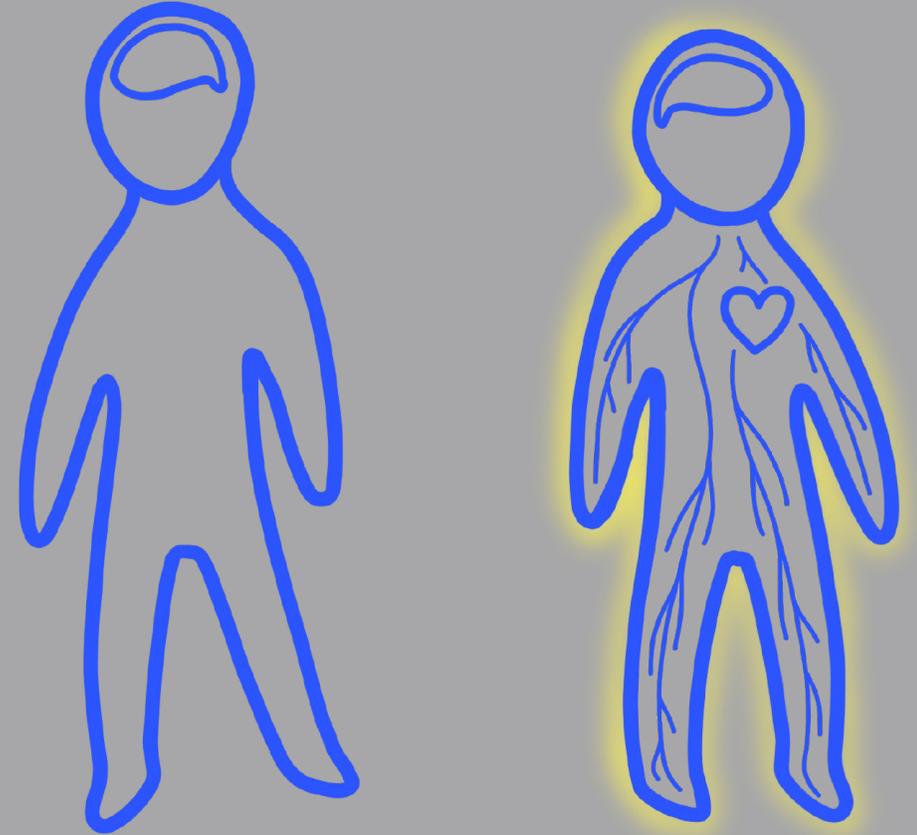


We are gathered to discuss Intersectionality...

What are my body, heart, and mind telling me right now?

Is there a deeper need underneath this?

What words describe my needs in this moment and in this context?





**intersectionality /
kimberlé crenshaw**

**simultaneous,
overlapping +
compounding nature
of multiple forms of
injustice or
discrimination**



The Intersectionality Wars, Vox, May 2019

<https://www.vox.com/the-highlight/2019/5/20/18542843/intersectionality-conservatism-law-race-gender-discrimination>

- Originally a **legal concept**
- Among those early writings of **Critical Race Theory**
- Beyond a notion of “rational” legal **changes to right social discrimination**
- **Original article** (1989) *Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics*
- Became a polarizing motivating **concept used by the right to drive fear**, concepts of victimhood
- The theory’s fundamental truth: that individuals have individual **identities that intersect in ways that impact how they are viewed, understood, and treated**
- About a critique of and then **restructuring of how social power is organized**



“Our social justice problems like racism and sexism are often **overlapping creating multiple levels of social injustice**...The way we perceive race or gender discrimination is partial.

Intersectionality offers us a frame or a **prism that allows us to see the cracks in social change solutions**. Intersectionality allows us to address the multiple layers of discrimination a person might be experiencing. Intersectionality allows us a way to **bear witness to the realities we are often too uncomfortable to confront.**” -
kimberlé crenshaw



Small Group Conversation →



What has been my definition of intersectionality?

How have I been using the word or concept?

What have I been using it for?

What comes up for me now after hearing this framing/definition?



Tema Okun on Intersectionality + White Supremacy Culture

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capitalism teaches us profit is more important than people while systematically advantaging those in the white group (although not equally). Classism teaches us the wealthy are deserving and the poor are to be blamed while reproducing racism in the disparate reproduction of wealth and deadly exploitation of labor. Sexism and heterosexism teach us white men are superior to women (and all "others"), gender binaries are "normal" while gender fluidity is threatening, with the degree of threat (targeting all who defy gender binaries) tied to race and racism. Christian hegemony teaches us that Christians (and a certain kind of white Christian at that) are divinely capable of shaping and defining reality for the rest of us. The power elite design these ideologies to teach us who is valuable and human and who is not in the name of power and profit.

In other words, white supremacy operates in collaboration with other oppressions; they reinforce and reproduce each other.

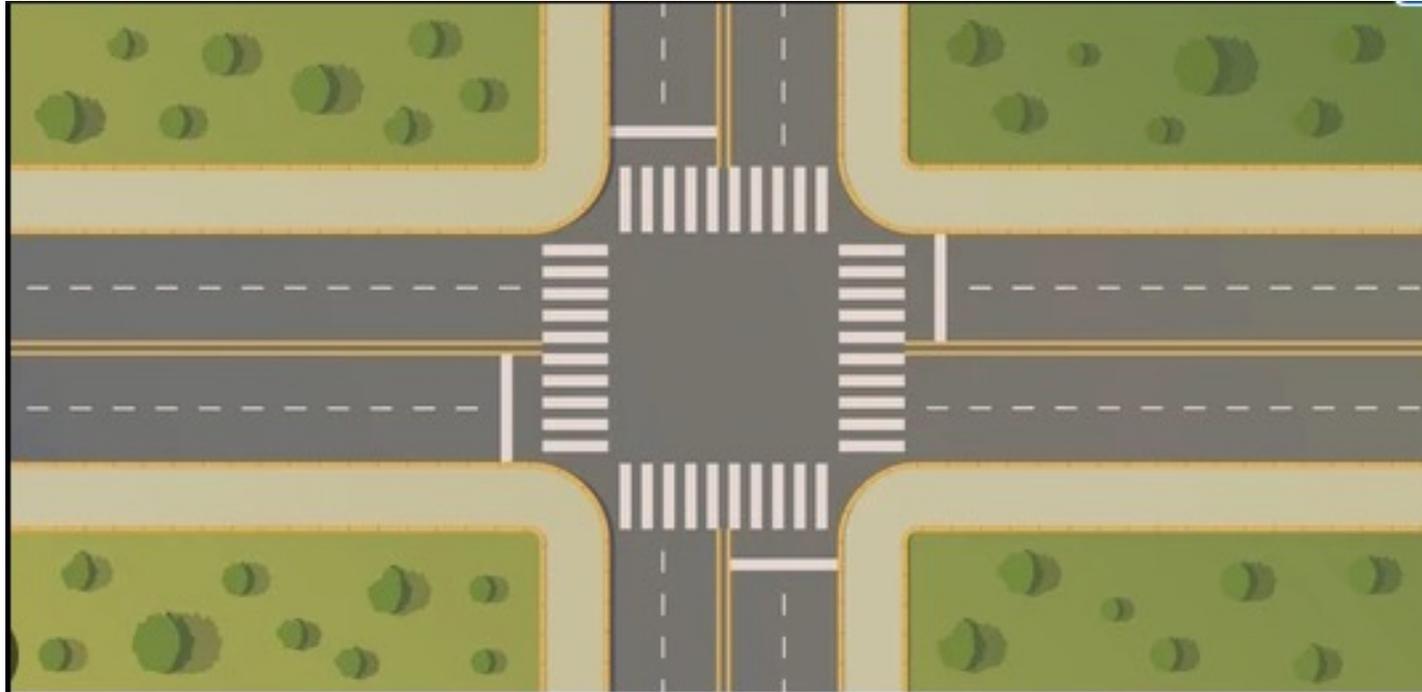


Intersectionality + the Antidotes to Either/Or Thinking:

- **Notice when you or others are simplifying complex issues**, particularly when the stakes seem high or an urgent decision needs to be made;
- When urgency arises and binary thinking emerges, **slow down and encourage people to take a pause, a breath**, restate the goal, and dive deeper into alternatives;
- When you or others are faced with an urgent decision, take a break and offer some breathing room to think creatively and **allow intuitive wisdom to arise**;
- Avoid making decisions under extreme pressure and work to **distinguish what is actual pressure and what is pressure that you or others are creating**;
- **Avoid trying to assign a single cause to a problem or a challenge**; acknowledge the ways in which oppressions intersect and reinforce each other as well as the ways in which oppression can be operating at the interpersonal, institutional and structural levels.



Designing Solutions + Strategies





**Race, Gender, Class, Religion, and Sexuality are
Inextricably Linked, Intersecting, and Compounding in a
USA Context.**

**Attempts to discuss them as separate are inaccurate and
incomplete.**



1. What practices would I like to incorporate and give attention to in my spiritual work/ministry?
2. What do I want to try, shed, release, invite in my spiritual work/ministry?

Return to your groups → Practice listening + reflecting back what you think you've heard. Check your reflections. Make offers with permission.





Sources

- The Urgency of Intersectionality, TED/Kimberlé Crenshaw - https://www.ted.com/talks/kimberle_crenshaw_the_urgency_of_intersectionality#t-173089
- The Intersectionality Wars, Vox - <https://www.vox.com/the-highlight/2019/5/20/18542843/intersectionality-conservatism-law-race-gender-discrimination>
- How To Do Intersectionality, Rinku Sen - <https://narrativeinitiative.org/blog/how-to-do-intersectionality/>
- White Supremacy Culture, Still Here, Tema Okun - https://drive.google.com/file/d/1XR_7M_9qa64zZ00_JyFVTAjnjVU-uSz8/view