

Liberatory Stuff

Collective liberation is the absence of oppression, as well as the presence of self-determination for everyone. Collective liberation is when all of our “selves” enhance—rather than undermine—one another, while our social systems support the free association and flourishing of all of us. This requires a concept of flourishing such that everyone can experience it in their own way at the same time. Here are some questions to guide you in your ever-evolving roles in collective liberation.

Current self. What makes you, *you*, right now? Consider your unique combination of qualities and experiences, as well as your demographics and your position in local and global society.

Role Models. Who in your community or in the world embodies the possibilities that you want for yourself? Spend some time on the internet or the library to find some role models.

Participation in oppression. Is there any human or non-human population that suffers in order for you to live the life that you do? Are you suffering in order for others to live the life that they do? Can you name the systems that create these competitive conditions? Can you describe how they have shaped you?

Imagination. Can you imagine a future self that lives in a community or world of other living beings and ecosystems who all enhance each other? What does it feel like to be you in that world, and how does that world function? What feeds your imagination for collective liberation?

Inspiration. Can you name examples of creative fulfillment, cooperation, or flourishing in your life, community, or world?

Theory of Change. How do we get from this oppressive world to a liberated one? How do we get more liberated in our communities in the recent future? Which people or media guide you in thinking about this?

Healing. Have you come to terms with your past experiences and been able to heal from past traumas? Are there ways that you are lying to yourself to keep yourself protected from shame or social harm?

Values. What do you believe in, that you personally need more of? What do you believe in, that the world needs more of? What doesn't exist yet that the world needs more of?

Strengths. What are your strengths? Think about these four things:

- Abstract. A mindset or style of thought that you can apply to anything.
- Socio-emotional. The way you feel, relate to others, or relate to others' feelings and opinions.
- Physical. Your body, the physical world, and what you can do with them.
- Technical. How you apply your above strengths in the world in specific ways.
- Desired. How you want to expand, or your possibilities for growth.

Possibilities. Which of those strengths need more cultivation for you to feel fulfilled? Where could your strengths be better applied to your values?

Free association. Look at your strengths again. Pay attention to your feelings as you look at them. Circle in green the ones that are fulfilled. Circle in red the ones that are not seen or cultivated by your peers, but that you wish they were. Are there any that you forgot? Next, write down the 10 people in your life who are most influential, or who are the closest. This includes home, work, and other areas. Open yourself up to the possibility that the relationships you have in your life might not be the ones you need right now. Allow yourself to imagine dissociation from anyone, as appropriate for your self-actualization. In other words, imagine your self-actualization with a totally different group of peers just for the exercise. Remember what you have circled and seek peers that can cultivate those desired strengths. This takes time, and leaving existing relationships can be dangerous depending on your situation. It is very fulfilling if you do it right. I ask members of organizations to do this before I tighten

up their organization. It's very important that each individual know what they want from life, and then from the group(s) they're a part of, so that the existing relationships can support each member's emergent growth. See the free association assessment.

Avenues of self-cultivation. Where do you need to position yourself to open up possibilities? What possible experiences do you want to have to build your identity and offerings? Consider: organizations, programs, conferences, universities, volunteer opportunities, family members, old friends and mentors, teachers, professors. Spend some time searching for these people or groups. Use your contact list on your phone, your email, Facebook, Google, YouTube, etc. through the lens of seeking nourishing relationships.

Boundaries. If you don't have a sense of self, you can end up with a scattered life that's not fulfilling for you, and not liberating for others. With social media and all the calls for our attention and energy, make sure to truly know what's fulfilling for you and what you need more of when you go out into community, online or in person. What are some of your key boundaries, with regard to time, resources, physical needs, emotional needs, and values?

Exploration. Allow yourself room to explore ideas, people, or experiences that are very different from what you're used to. Allow yourself to grow, be challenged, and transform emotionally. You should *feel* different as you grow. This is a tough balance to strike with knowing who you are. For me, I know I'm very scholarly, and that's always gonna be who I am, but what I choose to apply that to will change as I get exposed to new ideas and experiences. I know that I won't be fulfilled if I don't make sense of the world through writing.

Existential perspective. What do you think, feel, or believe about how everything in existence fits together? How might this perspective be challenged or enhanced?

Practical stuff

Organize your contact list. Use Facebook, airtable, a spreadsheet, email, or your imagination to organize your contacts. I like using a software where I can move each piece of data around. Numbers is good on Mac, Excel and LibreOffice Calc work too, but are not as fluid to move around. Don't just think about what you need, but think about who needs you. Do this carefully, and practice your boundaries. Know your emotional and financial positions, and offer or request support from a place of self-knowledge. Diaspora is a more liberatory and private alternative to Facebook.

Organize your time. Use the sheets provided to make a routine for yourself that honors your strengths and values. Use an app, calendar, or planner to schedule time-specific things. The amount of time that you spend on each thing depends on your answer to the self-reflection questions and on your financial situation. Take the time to plan this upcoming week, based on the liberation reflection you did above. Leave time for rest, mistakes, inspiration, or friends who might need your support.

Organize your finances.

Basic financial planning. Go to empathematics.com for a free financial planning spreadsheet. Or if you're reading this on a device, click [here for Mac](#), and [here for PC](#). Using this, you can find out how much your target income is each month. This sheet should be in conversation with all the other questions.

Accounting software. If you're a business, I suggest GNU cash. GNU Cash is free as in "free beer" and as in "freedom". They aren't part of the profit machine, and are very much a part of the liberation ecosystem. For individuals, Mint is a for-profit personal finance tracker. It doesn't care about your privacy, but it's free and works well. I use it, but I can't say I suggest it on liberation principles.

Organize your bookmarks. I suggest using Firefox as a browser because it has better privacy and cooperative principles than Safari, Google Chrome, or Internet Explorer. Make a folder for each project, and make folders for each area of internal use.

Organize your apps. Put them in order of what's most practical, and what's most satisfying. Align them with your daily or weekly routine.

Organize your files. I suggest saving current projects on the desktop. I use Tresorit, which is an encrypted cloud service that works similar to Dropbox, except it doesn't have access to your data at all. Try to use file extensions that are multi-platform so you're not stuck with one brand of hardware or software.

Organize your room/playspace. Put the healthiest thing as priority. Organize your space around what helps you be emotionally healthiest or most fulfilled.

Organize your workspace. Create the most space and the best workflow for the priority project(s). Nail that down, then work on the next priority thing.

Organize your books. I like to put the ones that make me laugh or relax close to my bed. I also like to order my bookshelf from practical to visionary. The ones that are applicable to my immediate challenges come first. I like to have a mix of books about intrinsic value, practical stuff, and things that challenge me to think differently about collective liberation.

Organize your network. Now that you've reflected on how you want to co-transform with the world, and you have everything organized, you can organize outwards. Reflecting on the possibilities for self-cultivation, reach out to the people that will help you cultivate that, and let them know what you need. Attend or create happenings that co-transform your network towards liberation. Ask for what you need, and offer what is most authentic to you.

Social Self-Awareness / Healing

1. Can you interpret your life in terms of the power dynamics that have shaped you?
2. Have you reinterpreted every aspect of your life through your adult eyes?
3. Can you acknowledge to yourself how you have participated in oppressive systems?
4. Do you draw on personal experience to affect transformation in others?
5. Do you feel at ease, irritable, inferior, or the need to be superior?

Free Association assessment

This questionnaire is to assess how easy it is for you to choose who to be connected to.

Think of the closest people to you (however you interpret that). What would be the steps necessary to live a life separately from them?

Do you have a separate bank account, email address, passwords, home, car, source of income, network of friends?

How much do you have in savings?

Do you have a passport?

Think of people who you'd like to be closer to. How would you invite closeness with them?

Think of the people in your life right now. How did those relationships form? Did the other person initiate it, or did you initiate it?

How comfortable do you feel initiating conversation with someone you're interested in?

Which of your desired strengths do you see in others?

Do any of your close friends bother you in some way? How comfortable do you feel talking about those issues with them? Do they respond in a constructive way?

If you had to leave your job, what would be your next steps?

In what ways do you disagree or differ with the people closest to you?

How can you find more support for the other parts of your being?

Theory of Change assessment

Do you think the same way as your parents? In what ways do you differ?

How different can you imagine the world than what already exists?

How have you influenced your environment in the past?

Appendix

Routine	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday

Blank	no
Checkmark	yes
“_”	Kind of

Pull this out and post it where you do stuff. Bedroom, bathroom, office, fridge, wherever you need it!

Routine	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday

Blank	no
Checkmark	yes
“_”	Kind of

Pull this out and post it where you do stuff. Bedroom, bathroom, office, fridge, wherever you need it!

Leftover / Lingerin^g Stuff

- 1. Look back at your social position page.** What kind of power have you had—or have you been denied—in these systems?
- 2. Review all of your life experiences in the context of power.** What parts of yourself have been hindered by these systems? What parts of yourself have been expanded by liberation? This can take a few months or years to think through.
- 4. What strengths and values will you spread in the liberation ecosystem?** How will you be your best self and advance liberation?