

The Work of Noticing Patterns

The Noticing Patterns of Oppression and Faithfulness Working Group has been living into a charge from Annual Sessions 2018: *“to develop a practice to ...observe, name, and reflect back to us long-standing, unseen patterns and practices that result in our complicity in oppression,”* and which soon after expanded to include *“to take up an active, persistent and loving practice of noticing and interrupting patterns of oppression and cultivating and affirming new patterns of faithfulness”* across the Yearly Meeting. Staying engaged with this work when we bump into each other’s tender feelings is a challenge for New England Friends. The working group tests our leadings in love and is aware of tensions expressed by the corporate body around the practice of noticing. We ask Spirit’s guidance in seeking way forward with this transformative work.

There are some who respond to the noticing practice from a place of feeling really thirsty, and who experience this practice as bringing them water.

It has felt to others as if this practice is bringing them something poisonous. It can feel threatening to our beloved community to be asked to acknowledge unintended and unrecognized consequences of actions that reflect our complicity with systems of oppression.

All of us need to hold each other with compassion. This work is long, messy, difficult, and nowhere near complete. Let’s consider together the following queries:

What have been the unmet needs that are starting to be met by the noticing practice?

What is being lost or disrupted in the noticing process?

What can we learn from the answers to these questions?

The Working Group looks forward to hearing how Friends are being led in this practice. We are eager to engage with your ideas, leadings and concerns during Sessions and throughout the year.

Thank you, Members of the Noticing Patterns Working Group

Polly Attwood (clerk), Melody Brazo, Melissa Foster, Janet Hough, Celadry Humphries, Becky Jones, Pamela Terrien. Fran Brokaw and Jeremiah Dickinson (Elders)



SENTENCE STEMS:

These starters invite us to name what we are experiencing in a way that gives equal value to emotions, physical reactions, inner knowing, witnessing, listening and curiosity about assumptions and messages being spoken.

CORE:

- I feel...
- I hear...
- I see...
- I know...
- I wonder . . .

Inviting deepening/reflecting:

- In this moment, I hear God inviting us . . .
- A pattern I recognize . . . ,
- The deeper call I hear . . .
- I am confused because . . .
- I see us using power to . . .

[For more information about Benjamin Lay go to this link: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Benjamin_Lay]