



Workshopping Solidarity

An excerpt from the [Unlearning Scarcity, Cultivating Solidarity](#) toolkit

What is Solidarity?

Solidarity is generally defined as awareness or group unity based on shared identities, interests, or shifting opportunity structures. We particularly like [this intersectional approach to solidarity](#), which describes it as an ongoing process of **creating ties and coalitions across social groups by negotiating power asymmetries**.

To properly understand whom we are referring to when we say we “stand in solidarity” with others, we must examine solidarity on the axis of *intersectionality*. **Intersectionality** is a theoretical framework developed by Professor Kimberlé Crenshaw that posits multiple social categories (e.g. race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status) intersect at the *micro* level (individual experience) to reveal interlocking systems of privilege and/or oppression at the *macro* (social-structural) level, such as a combination of racism, sexism, and heterosexism.

It is important to note that intersectionality is not additive, or a “checklist” of identity categories because different forms of oppression build on each other to produce a new, specific expression of oppression.

When evaluating our commitment to standing in solidarity with others, we need to **look at who we tend to prioritize and why**. For example, as Asian Americans fight for equity in the U.S., we need to ask ourselves: are we constructing a “better future” for Asian Americans only based on the ideas of cisgender, affluent Asian Americans? Or perhaps those who are conventionally attractive and able-bodied? Who is being erased, mis or underrepresented in our conversations for change?

For Asian Americans standing in solidarity with the Black, Latinx, Indigenous, and other marginalized communities -- who are we seeking out, listening to, and supporting (financially or otherwise) in those groups? What voices from those groups are we ignoring, consciously or unconsciously?

Defining Solidarity For Yourself

Developing your own personal ethos of solidarity is a necessary *personal* process so you can define what solidarity really means in your life. Some questions to consider are:

1. Who do I want to stand in solidarity with? Consider the intersectional identities such as race, gender, sexual orientation, class (both current and childhood), education level, religion, nationality, ethnicity, physical and/or neurodivergence

- What type of relationships do I have with individuals from these group(s)?
- What does intimacy with these communities look like?
- What are the major issues that affect members from these group(s)?
- How nuanced is my understanding of these issues?
- How can I learn more about the root causes that allow these issues to continue?

2. What does solidarity mean to me?

- What motivates me to stand in solidarity with others?
- What does sustained maintenance of solidarity look/feel like?
- What are the best ways I can show solidarity? What talents/passions can I offer in movement spaces?
- How much research, reading, and learning/unlearning am I willing to seek out?
- What am I (and what am I not) willing to personally sacrifice to stand in solidarity with those I want to support?
- What are the end goals I want to achieve with my solidarity? Are they in line with the overall mission of reducing overall harm in our society?

3. What delineates solidarity from performative allyship/co-opting in my life?

- Are there people I follow, watch, listen to that may be performative in their actions? How do I properly examine and reconcile this?
- What are the actions I've seen that *are* getting to the root of issues I care about? How can I instill them in my actions of solidarity?
- What does co-opting look like to me, and how do I ensure I do not participate?
- Am I willing to acknowledge when I am wrong and/or lack knowledge? How do I tend to react in these kinds of situations?

For the full segment on transformative solidarity, examples of Asian American solidarity across history, steps for combating scarcity, and ways to hold yourself accountable please refer to [Part 2 of the toolkit](#).