

# FORTIFICATION

SPIRITUAL SUSTENANCE  
FOR MOVEMENT LEADERSHIP

DISCUSSION GUIDE:

# PAST

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ROOTING IN HISTORIES;  
WE HAVE BEEN HERE BEFORE

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# FORTIFICATION

**Fortification COVID-19 Edition is a conversation with Cara Page, Susan Raffo and Anjali Taneja with multiple guests, curated and hosted by Caitlin Breedlove and grounded in our evolving spiritual mandate in and beyond COVID-19.**

These episodes are centered in the experiences of resistance and abolitionism in response to the colonization and policing of People of Color and Indigenous communities; Queer and Trans; and people with disabilities in the Medical Industrial Complex (MIC). It introduces listeners to the histories that led to this moment as well as the present time expression and future visions needed to transform and intervene on the MIC.

We ask you to reflect, not only from the thoughts in your mind, but also from how this material feels to your heart, your belly, and everything between. Spend a moment to find and create a space where you are that grounds you—a comfy pillow or chair, a cup of water or tea, a candle, leaving your phone in the other room.

These questions can be used individually for reflection or, if you like, in conversation with a small group. If in a group, ask folks to listen to the podcast (each 60-75 minutes) prior to your conversation and provide the guiding questions to folks' in advance. To support this, there are definitions or reflections on some of the terms we use in these questions at the end of this document.

# QUESTIONS

## Past: Complex Histories to Remember & Transform

### **CARE/PROTECTION/SAFETY/PRACTICE**

- What do you remember/know of your ancestors responding to hard times?
- What can you remember, what do you still know?
- If you can't remember or have never been told, what does that feel like for you?
- Why might you not remember or not have been told?

### **LEGACY/LINEAGE**

- What has been your relationship to the care and wellness of your community, your family, your kin?
- What parts of this are generational?
- How does this care and wellness exist for the land, for spirit, and for your physical body?

### **THE STATE/STRUCTURES OF POWER & DOMINATION**

- How have systems of power and domination impacted your people?
- How have you been conditioned to live with this, whether as one whose people have been impacted or as one whose people have had impact (or both)?
- What have you learned about survival, resistance and resilience in relationship to this? Has this learning been generational?

# DEFINITIONS

**THE MEDICAL INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX (MIC)** is a system that:

- Relies on wealthy, white, cis, heterosexual, able bodied, and Christian ideals of whose body is healthy and whose is diseased; whose is pure and whose impure & sinful (Sins Invalid)
- Prescribes who is expendable and who is deserving of access to quality & dignified spiritual, emotional, physical, psychic, environmental and developmental care and who cannot; and determines a curative model of health.
- Determines whose body is criminalized and pathologized based on a racist, capitalist, ableist, heteronormative, patriarchal, white supremacist and capitalist idea of what is beauty and desire; and what bodies are fit and unfit to survive and exist for the purpose of labor and production to amass wealth for the wealthy.
- As an extension of state control and violence it uses institutions as a platform for surveillance, policing, torture and erasure of those deemed as expendable, 'uncured', 'unfit', seen as 'criminal', 'abnormal' and 'diseased'.
- Relies on fear to employ curative models to militarize disease under the false guise of global security; and ensures a global economy based on controlling profits made from disease. Definition created by Cara Page and others

**PRISON INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX** describes the overlapping interests of government and industry that use surveillance, policing, imprisonment, detainment and other forms of criminal institutionalization as solutions to economic, social and political problems. Through its reach and impact, the PIC helps and maintains the authority of people who get their power through racial, economic and other privileges. There are many ways this power is collected and maintained through the PIC, including creating mass media images that keep alive stereotypes of people of color, poor people, queer people, immigrants, youth, and other oppressed communities as criminal, delinquent, or deviant. This power is also maintained by earning huge profits for private companies that deal with prisons and police forces; helping earn political gains for "tough on crime" politicians; increasing the influence of prison guard and police unions; and eliminating social and political dissent by oppressed communities that make demands for self-determination and reorganization of power in the US. (Critical Resistance)

**SAFETY AND WELLNESS** refers to a physical, mental, emotional, spiritual and economic state of being that is about our own lives and also the lives of those we are interdependent with. Our safety and wellness are impacted by our interpersonal relationships, our ease in having our basic needs met including food, housing, clothing, safety in public spaces, dignified care when we are vulnerable and/or unwell, a sense of belonging, free practice of our own cultures, education that helps us to understand our experience of life and the communities around us, ease of movement and accommodations to support that ease, and our feeling of autonomy over our own lives. It's impacted by whether or not we experience targeting and violence and/or invisibility and isolation because of things or the perception of things like our race, gender, class, religion, size, ability, age and more. Impact on our safety and wellness also includes how public and private systems and institutions are accessible to us and/or show respect for our lives and the lives of our kin, the environment that is around us including the extent of pollution, noise, etc. It's about the smallest things including the world of viruses and bacteria and the more immense, such as what happened to our ancestors and whether or not our people have been able to heal or integrate or repair those past generational experiences.

**CARE** is an internal felt sense and an external relationship of support and mutuality. Care is about tenderness or dignity or practical response; the tending of a life or of lives from a place of connection and support. Care depends on centering the dignity and sovereignty of a person or community. "Supportive care" is a practice of consent. It is only the individual or community receiving care that can determine if that care was supportive. Care is also a spiritual practice, a heart-centered open-ness to the vulnerability of life without any assumption or definition about how anyone experiences or understands their own vulnerability. Care can be individual (self care) and intimately relational (such as care between two people) but it is most strongly maintained when it is collective, established as an interdependent system of support that works to ensure that all of those things that support safety and wellness are intact and available for all members of a community.