



Soul Matters

Practicing Resistance

Small Group
January 2026

Welcome to Practicing Resistance

*...it starts when you say We
and know who you mean, and each
day you mean one more.*

– Marge Piercy, from [*The Low Road*](#)

Out of all our themes this year, resistance is among the most complex. But it also may be the most simple.

Let's start with the complexity.

Sometimes resistance involves bravely picking up a picket sign; other times it asks us to courageously put down our masks and allow who we really are to see the light of day. Sometimes it involves defeating the enemy; other times it's a matter of noticing that treating "them" as the enemy defeats us all. Often the path of resistance asks us to stay in it for the long haul, but just as often it's about taking that first tiny step. Most of the time it requires us to fight to the bitter end, and yet there are many moments when we need to stop resisting and let go. Resistance certainly takes the form of speaking the truth to power, but often what the world needs even more is for us to speak the truth in love.

Bottom line: practicing resistance is tricky business and takes multiple, even contradictory, forms.

But beyond this complexity lies the simplicity of Marge Piercy's words. In **all** cases, she reminds us, practicing resistance starts when we say "We!" For instance, the power of our picket sign resides in the fact that it hangs alongside those of others. Being who we are usually begins with another person loving us for who we are. Both the long haul and our first courageous step are made possible by reaching out to receive a helping hand.

It's all one big reminder that none of us resist alone.

Or maybe what really needs to be said this month is that none of us **have to** resist alone.

Yes, we certainly need pushed and prodded this month. But maybe what we need most is to be reassured. Reassured that when the road gets too treacherous and the forces against us grow too big, others will be by our side. Maybe it's not more courage that is required, but more connection. Maybe what we really need to hear is not simply "Resist!" but "I will resist with you!"

Maybe it is as simple as that.

Spiritual Exercises

It's one thing to analyze a theme; it's quite another to experience it. By pulling us out of the space of *thinking* and into the space of *doing*, our spiritual exercises invite us to figure out not just what we have to say about life, but also what life has to say *to us*!

With that in mind, pick and complete the one exercise that speaks to you the most. **Come to your group ready to share why you picked the exercise you did, how it surprised you and what gift it gave you.**

Option A

The Many Archetypes of Resistance

We sometimes have a hard time seeing a place for ourselves in the work of resistance. The roles that get most lifted up are those of courageous front-line activist, dynamic organizer and charismatic spokesperson. While these roles are essential, there are many of us whose skills, attributes and passions just don't mesh with them, making it hard for us to figure out how we can contribute to the causes we care so deeply about.

This is why Satya Doyle Byock, psychotherapist and author, created and shared a list of [twenty archetypes of resistance](https://satyadoylebyock.substack.com/p/archetypes-of-resistance). Her goal is to widen our imagination and enable us to more easily see a place for us in the work of resistance.

So, for this exercise, you are invited to read through her list and let it work its magic. Ask yourself where you see yourself in it and it will help you see your place in work of altering the world. Here's a link to that list: <https://satyadoylebyock.substack.com/p/archetypes-of-resistance>

And here is a list of questions to help you on your way. Come to your group ready to share the key insight, message of challenge or message of comfort that emerged from your engagement with the list and questions.

Engagement Questions:

1. Which 2-3 archetypes resonated with you the most? Were those roles ones you are already embodying or did the descriptions help you recognize a calling you've not been aware of before?
2. What archetypes were missing? Especially ones that would fit you better than what's there? For instance the Court Jester, Storyteller, Cautionary Voice or Outlier?
3. Are there any archetypes that you are drawn to but feel too scared or insecure to embody? How might that fear or insecurity be rooted in old stories about yourself that need challenged?
4. If the archetype descriptions helped you identify a nascent hunger or calling, what has been holding you back from allowing the seed of that hunger/calling to flourish?
5. What role has your upbringing played in shaping your personality in the direction of the archetypes you most resonate with?
6. Is it possible that leaning into one of these archetypes might help you heal an old wound?
7. How did this exercise help you to identify a new action to do or cause to get involved with?

Option B

New Years & Resisting Old Patterns

New Years is about resisting old patterns and creating new ones. Many find that picking a “word for the year” helps them stay on track and resist their old patterns more easily. So for this exercise, carve out some time to read the articles below for guidance/inspiration and pick your word for the year.

And if you want to go the extra mile, consider getting creative with your word for the year by using [rock art](#), [typography](#), [scrabble pieces](#). You could also [doodle it](#) or embed your word in [an image](#) or [a shape](#).

Come to your group ready to share not only the word you picked but what led to you picking it. Also come ready to share any surprising insights that emerged from your process of deciding on that word.

For Inspiration and Guidance:

- How to Choose a Word of the Year: <https://www.elizabethrider.com/word-of-the-year/>
- Next Year's Words: <https://www.uua.org/braverwiser/next-years-words>
- One journey of picking a word for the year: <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=624829093218247>
- “Door” is My Word: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rajFdgkcLng>
- When God helps you pick your word: <https://www.tiktok.com/@lovingsingle/video/7302508391438535979>
- The word all of us might pick: <https://www.tiktok.com/@abciview/video/7314836534593686785>
- Adding monthly word check-ins: <https://www.instagram.com/reel/DHIG4oAut8r/?hl=en>

Option C

Photograph Resistance for a Week

The instructions for this exercise are simple: For each day of one week, take 1-2 pictures of “resistance.”

Don’t overthink it. Don’t predetermine what counts as “resistance.” Just keep your eye out for whatever seems to be announcing itself to you as a form of resistance. So one minute you might find yourself taking a picture of the TV screen as the news reports on a protest. But an hour later, it might be a flower pushing itself through a crack in the sidewalk. And then a day later you may find yourself taking a picture of your dog refusing to take a bath or of your wife’s tattoo which she got to resist the stereotypes of what Grandmas should and shouldn’t do.

And for the final step: At the end of the week, go through all the pictures you took and look for common themes. Let those common threads tell you how your definition of resistance seems to be growing in ways you didn’t fully realize!

Come to your group ready to share 2-3 of your favorite pictures and 1-2 of the insights the exercise gave to you.

Option D

Resist and Reclaim the Language of Oppressive Literature

Nikesha Breeze is a [multimedia artist](#) who uses her work to explore art as a means of reclamation and healing. One of her projects is called *Mutiny of Morning*. For it, she took pages from Joseph Conrad's book, *Heart of Darkness*, and selectively "reclaimed" certain words from the pages to "force them to leave [Conrad's] colonized mind" and create black out poems that illuminates the African voices that were silenced. It is a stunning and healing way to use art as a means of resistance.

- Explore Breeze's project here: <https://nikeshabreeze.com/works/mutiny-of-morning>
- Listen to her discuss the project here, beginning at minute 19:15: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BTyHDuLH9ml> & for a deeper exploration of Breeze's process follow [this link](#).

With Breeze's work as inspiration, identify a text you have a connection to that has been used to serve an oppressive purpose and then resist and reclaim it by selectively "pulling out" and highlighting certain words that tell a different story or cast a different vision.

Option E

Bumper Sticker & T-Shirt Resistance

Social justice t-shirts and bumper stickers don't topple oppressive systems, but they can start a discussion, [communicate solidarity](#), [help others feel less alone](#) and [inspire bravery](#) in others. Yes, sometimes they are mere virtue signaling, but for most people they are an [act of everyday resistance](#) and often force the wearer or car owner to become [better informed](#). And, as any historian will tell you, by placing your values on your shirt or car, you're participating in [a tradition of resistance](#) that has shaped every major social movement of the last century.

So, for this exercise, you are invited to give bumper sticker and t-shirt resistance a try. And here's why: you will learn a lot about yourself! The process of picking the message for your shirt or sticker will force you to clarify what you believe in fresh ways. The conversations that your shirt or sticker invite will challenge you in ways you can't predict. And even if you think you know what you want your shirt or sticker to accomplish, a different impact is very likely to reveal itself.

There aren't a lot of guidelines for this exercise. Just be sure to wear your shirt a handful of times or put your bumper sticker on your car for a week or two. You can find a bunch of t-shirt options [here](#), [here](#), [here](#) and [here](#). You can find bumper sticker options [here](#), [here](#) and [here](#).

Come to your group ready to share what surprised you about the experience and what it taught you about yourself.

Option F

The Story of When Resistance Changed You

Most of the time, our resistance efforts are aimed at changing others or the world around us. But often **we** are changed as well. We set out to make the world better and, to our surprise, we end up better.

So, what is your story of being enriched by resistance? Spend some time revisiting the experience in your mind, digging around for details you may have not fully appreciated at the time:

- What assumptions did you go into the experience with?
- What unconscious need or hunger might have led you to that form of resistance?
- What exactly was it about the experience that made it so enriching for you?
- What person was central to your story?
- Why did the gift you received come as such a surprise?
- How exactly were you changed?
- How was your worldview altered in a way that shows up even today?

Come to your group ready to share your story as well as the new insights you gained by revisiting it.

Option G

Ask Them About Resistance

One of the best ways to explore our monthly themes is to have conversations about them with people who are close to you. It's also a great way to deepen our relationships! Below is a list of questions to guide your conversation. Be sure to let your conversation partner know in advance that this won't be a typical conversation. *Remember to also answer the questions yourself as they are meant to support a conversation, not just a time of quizzing them.* Come to your group ready to share what surprised you about the conversation and what gift or insight it gave you.

Resistance Questions

- As a kid, did you resist the rules, or did you follow them? How might you see an echo of that earlier self in your life today?
- How did your parents' acts of social justice resistance shape you?
- Has your resistance to change grown or eased as you've gotten older?
- Of all the moments of your life where you found the courage to accept change instead of resist it, which one are you most proud of?
- Is there a time from your past where you wish you would have found a way to resist the fear of failure?
- Do you have a life story that exemplifies the saying, "[What you resist, persists](#)"?
- Is it possible that the form of resistance life is calling you to right now is [rest](#)?

Option H

Which Companion Piece Speaks to You?

Sometimes we come across a quote, song, article or movie and it perfectly captures what's going on for us right now or allows us to view our current circumstances in a new light. With this in mind, spend some time this month going through the Companion Pieces section below to find the one piece **that speaks most powerfully to you.** (Or "[shimmers](#)" most strongly for you.) Come to your group ready to share the piece you picked, why it called to you and what insight, memory, or message of comfort or challenge it offered you.

Finding Your Question

This list of questions is an aid for [deep reflection](#). How you answer them is often less important than the journey they take you on.

So, read through the list of questions 2-3 times until **one question** sticks out for you and captures your attention, or as some faith traditions say, until one of the questions “[shimmers](#).” Or as we like to say, “Read over them until one of the questions **picks you**.”

Then reflect on that question using one or all of these questions:

- What is going on in my life right now that makes this question so pronounced for me?
- What might my inner wisdom be trying to [say to me](#) through this question?
- How might this question be trying to wake me up or get me to realize something through this question?
- How might Life or my inner wisdom be trying to offer me a word of comfort or challenge through this question?



1. As a kid, did you resist the rules, or did you follow them? How might you see an echo of that earlier self in your life today?
2. Of all the moments of your life where you found the courage to accept change instead of resist it, which one are you most proud of?
3. Is there a time from your past where you wish you would have found a way to resist the fear of failure?
4. Have you been following the path of least resistance for so long that you no longer notice?
5. Is it time to heed the warning that “[What you resist, persists](#)”?
6. Has joy ever been an “act of resistance” for you?
7. Has your resistance to change grown or eased as you’ve gotten older?
8. How might resistance be calling you to rest?
9. What song, book or movie has inspired or supported your resistance efforts?
10. Our self-focused culture is not designed to encourage activism and other-centered resistance. Who do you have to thank for you becoming someone who counter-culturally cares about and works for needs greater than your own?
11. How is [your corner of the world](#) calling you to help save it?
12. What small step could you take in the next month or two to make your resistance more radical?
13. **What’s your question?** Your question may not be listed above. As always, if the above questions don’t include what life is asking from you, spend the month listening to your days to find it.

Companion Pieces

Recommended Resources for Personal Exploration & Reflection

The following resources are not required reading. Nor are they intended to be analyzed in your group. Instead, they are here to companion you on your personal journey this month, get you thinking and open you up to new ways of embodying this month's theme in your living and loving.

Wise Words

Whatever you fight, you strengthen. What you resist, persists.

Eckhart Tolle

Change is never painful. Only resistance to change is painful.

[Unknown](#)

Always say “yes” to the present moment. What could be more futile than to create inner resistance to what is? Surrender to what is. Say “yes” to life — and see how life suddenly starts working for you rather than against you.

Eckhart Tolle

There is no controlling life. Try corralling a lightning bolt, containing a tornado. Dam a stream and it will create a new channel. Resist, and the tide will sweep you off your feet. Allow, and grace will carry you to higher ground. The only safety lies in letting it all in.

[Danna Faulds](#)

When you argue with reality, you lose—but only 100% of the time

[Byron Katie](#)

Suffering = Pain x Resistance

[Shinzen Young](#)

When you experience resistance, you find the lessons that you are meant to learn.

Jon Gordon

Don't prepare. Begin. Our enemy is not lack of preparation. The enemy is resistance, our chattering brain producing excuses. Start before you are ready.

Steven Pressfield

Our resistance is not predicated on how likely it will be to alter the conscience of the oppressor.

We resist to retain our own conscience. And to awaken all others who are still in possession of their own souls.

Cole Arthur Riley

Once a reporter asked A.J. Muste, “Do you really think you are going to change the policies of this country by standing out here alone at night in front of the White House with a candle?”

Muste replied softly: “Oh I don't do this to change the country. I do this so the country won't change me.”

[Frederic and Mary Ann Brussat](#)

Revolution is not, ultimately, a political calculation. It is a moral one. It is grounded in a vision of another world, another way of being. It is driven, in the end, by a moral imperative, especially since many of those who begin a revolution do not survive to see its fulfillment. Revolutionaries know that as Immanuel Kant wrote: “If justice perishes, human life on earth has lost its meaning.” And this means that, like Socrates, we must come to a place where it is better to suffer wrong than to do wrong.

[Chris Hedges](#)

You are only as safe as the people you are willing to protect.

[Samara Powers](#)

Fascism's most effective tool is that it makes you think there's time, that you can speak up in a bit, not quite yet. You know, when it gets bad enough... by which time, of course, it's too late. Much like that frog in the proverbial warming pot of water.

[Sarah Wilson](#)

It can be overwhelming to witness/experience/take in all the injustices of the moment; the good news is that they're all connected. So if your little corner of work involves pulling at one of the threads, you're helping to unravel the whole damn cloth.

[Ursula Wolfe-Rocca](#)

You are not required to save the world. But you are required to save your corner of it.

[Joan Chittister](#)

We may feel, in the face of the ruthless corporate destruction of our nation, our culture and our ecosystem, powerless and weak. But we are not. We have a power that terrifies the corporate state. Any act of rebellion, no matter how few people show up or how heavily it is censored, chips away at corporate power. Any act of rebellion keeps alive the embers for larger movements that follow us. It sustains another narrative. It will attract wider and wider numbers. Perhaps this will not happen in our lifetimes. But if we persist, we will keep this possibility alive. If we do not, it will die.

[Chris Hedges](#)

After all, if you do not resist the apparently inevitable, you will never know how inevitable the inevitable was.

[Terry Eagleton](#)

The only way to deal with an unfree world is to become so absolutely free that your very existence is an act of rebellion.

[Albert Camus](#)

Caring for myself is not self-indulgence, it is self-preservation, and that is an act of political warfare.

[Audre Lorde](#)

As a rule, it was the pleasure haters who became unjust.

[W.H. Auden](#)

Joy is not justice... I look at joy as a splint, as a cast that's holding that broken bone in place so that it can heal properly. But the healing really comes from justice. Joy is meant to help on the way. Joy is there so that you don't quit.

[Kellie Carter Jackson](#)

If you are neutral in situations of injustice, you have chosen the side of the oppressor.

[Archbishop Desmond Tutu](#)

You can't be neutral on a moving train.

[Howard Zinn](#)

In the end, we will remember not the words of our enemies, but the silence of our friends.

[Martin Luther King Jr](#)

To be yourself in a world that is constantly trying to make you something else is the greatest accomplishment.

[Ralph Waldo Emerson](#)

The perception of glory is a rare occurrence in our lives. We fail to wonder. Life is routine and routine is resistance to wonder.

[Abraham Heschel](#)

Videos & Podcasts

Resistance, Louise Erdrich

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JJb0sYmRqxl>

Florence Reece, "Which Side Are You On?"

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ji8uuGEgS2g&t=85s>
Background [here](#)

Could The 3.5% Protest Rule Stop Donald Trump?, with Erica Chenoweth

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x4syl-hZ9_I

How Fascism Works, Jason Stanley

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qKAdujuHvuQ>

How to Fight Fascism in America, Timothy Snyder

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3NIwH4nKaDg>

The First Step to Resisting a Police State is to Decide If You Are in One

<https://www.instagram.com/p/DJTqNGJPhSk>

Creative Resistance at the Border Wall

<https://www.karmatube.org/videos.php?id=9169>

Understanding Taxation as Resistance & Liberation

<https://www.facebook.com/reel/615168101636961>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=paaen3b44XY>

Resisting the Misuse of MLK's Legacy and Wrestling with His Christian Socialism

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-6k_DTqrEPY

Resisting [the Myth](#) that Poverty is a Character Problem

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ydKcaIE6O1k>

On Resisting Resistance

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u3GV1u2CNKg&t=118s>

The Secret: Surrendering Rather than Resisting

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BwsuiWM2GQo>

Bodies of Resistance, Sonya Renee Taylor

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MWI9AZkuPVg&t=284s>

(Some) Joy is Resistance

<https://www.npr.org/transcripts/1256429496>

On Art & Creativity as Resistance

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2XZ9z6OewR0>

On Dance as Resistance

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_0kvr5EqLhk

Articles

Suffering = Pain x Resistance

<https://becomingbetter.org/suffering-pain-x-resistance/>

Organizing and Resistance for Cowards

<https://douglasunderhill.wordpress.com/2025/02/15/organizing-and-resistance-for-cowards/>

Forms of Resistance, Talia Cooper

<https://www.uua.org/worship/words/reading/forms-resistance>

The 7 Jobs Capitalism Asks of All of Us...

The 7 Forms of Resistance All Around Us...

The Rise Of End Times Fascism

<https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/ng-interactive/2025/apr/13/end-times-fascism-far-right-trump-musk>

Books

[A Protest History of the United States](#)

Gloria J. Browne-Marshall

Author interview [here](#)

[Hospicing Modernity](#): Facing Humanity's Wrongs and the Implications for Social Activism

Vanessa Machado de Oliveira

Related talk by the author found [here](#)

[We Refuse](#): A Forceful History Of Black Resistance

Kellie Carter Jackson

Book review [here](#)

[Social Justice for the Sensitive Soul](#): How to Change the World in Quiet Ways

Dorcas Cheng-Tozun

Movies

[One Battle After Another](#)

[I'm Still Here](#)

[The Lives of Others](#)

[Silver Linings Playbook](#)

[Imprint](#)

[Blood Fruit](#) (Must Watch)

Related video [here](#) (watch first)

Related article [here](#)

Music

Our thematic playlists - on [Spotify](#) and [YouTube](#) - are organized as a journey, so consider listening from beginning to end and using them as a personal musical meditation.

Click [here](#) for the **Spotify** playlist on Practicing Resistance

Click [here](#) for the **YouTube** playlist on Practicing Resistance



© 2025-26 Soul Matters ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

Packets are for use ONLY by member congregations of the Soul Matters Sharing Circle.

Learn how to join at <https://www.soulmatterssharingcircle.com>