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Groundation- from the Rastafari tradition of grounding¹ as the forming of connection and relationships with like-minded people.

Grounding- from *Groundings with my Brothers* by Walter Rodney (1969). Drawing from the Rastafari tradition of grounding to explore emancipatory possibilities and anti-colonial struggle.

Ground Provisions – a term used by people in the Caribbean to describe root vegetables such as yam, cassava, and sweet potatoes. A text by Tonkia Sealy Thompson and Stefano Harney and explores the practice of grounding and generative power of reading together.

Grounding for Group Work by Barby Asante

For me grounding or earthing is an essential practice to create the container for circle practices or any other type of group work. It involves connecting to the earth through your roots, connecting to the nourishing resource of the earth, and trusting the generosity of the earth to support your organising or creative processes.

How to Ground

Get your group to stand or sit in a circle, feet connecting to the ground beneath you all.

Give the direction that you are going to take them through a visualisation.

Ask them to close their eyes or if they don't feel comfortable closing their eyes they can half close their eyes or find a focus point that they will focus on for the visualisation.

Be mindful that you remind your group that if they keep their eyes open, their single point of focus must not be another person as this can sometimes feel intrusive and intimidating from the point of view of another.

The person leading the grounding will ask the group to take some breaths together. 3-4 rounds should usually get the group to be in concert with each other.

Once you feel that the group is breathing together direct them to imagine themselves sending roots into the ground – roots that are digging deep into the earth drawing up nourishment and inspiration from that earth. The earth is also providing stability for your roots in order to enable us to grow from the roots up, developing a sense of safety and support from the ground up.

¹Edmonds, Ennis B. *Rastafari: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford Univ. Press, 2012.

Rodney, Walter, et al. *The Groundings with My Brothers*. Verso, 2019.

Thompson, Tonika Sealy, and Stefano Harney. "Ground Provisions." *Afterall: A Journal of Art, Context and Enquiry*, vol. 45, 2018, pp. 120–125., doi:10.1086/698401.

Move as much focus of the group into the felt sense of rooting, encourage them to move all of their concentration and energy into developing and establishing their roots, imagining their feet, legs, torso, arms, shoulders, and head following their roots into the ground.

You can encourage those who feel safe enough to immerse their whole body in the earth burying their whole body, as deep as they can go, feeling the stability, nourishment and inspiration of the earth in their whole body.

Stay in the grounded place for a few rounds of breathing, reminding the group of the goodness within the earth. You can use words to describe the working of the soil and earth. You can make reference to the colour of the soil, the smell of the earth, the creatures that live in the earth, the quality of the ground all the while reminding the group of what the earth provides us. You want to get the group to visualise themselves completely connected to the earth drawing up the nourishment, safety and stability into their bodies.

Once you have done a few rounds of breathing and connecting deep in the earth, ask the group to imagine their established roots, deep in the ground as they grow up from them towards the sun. Those that are buried in the ground will start to imagine their roots staying in the ground as their bodies grow out of the earth towards the sun.

As they imagine themselves growing, moving towards the light, growing branches that are drawing on the creative energy and inspiration of the sun, drawing down this energy to meet the energy being drawn from the earth.

You might want to ask people to raise their arms so they can physically become that tree rooted in the ground and drawing through its branches the sun.

Take the group through a few breaths of sourcing from the sun.

The final step is to ask the group to draw all the energy into the centre of their body, bringing all this energy into their bodies, ready for the work we will do together in three final deep breaths.

When the breaths are done ask the return to the room and open their eyes.

Take a moment to silently acknowledge the gifts of the earth and the sun, feel the energy in their bodies and the room.

Begin your working process.

Barby Asante
October 2021