

SKILL IN ACTION



THE BOOK CLUB GUIDE

Welcome

Dear friends,

I created this book club discussion guide to help you and your community dig into the work of *Skill in Action* on a deeper level. Coming together to discuss these questions is a powerful way to catalyze change and build resilience together wherever you are.

This guide is intended to help people host book club gatherings free of charge, not to facilitate my work for a fee. If you are interested in collaborating with me (for example, hosting a Skill in Action workshop at your studio) or training as a Skill in Action facilitator, please contact me through my website at www.michellecjohnson.com.

I hope this guide serves you, and I can't wait to learn about how you use it. I'd love if you would tag me ([@skillinaction](https://www.instagram.com/skillinaction)) in your book club photos on Instagram so that we can stay connected, and so that I can see the work coming to life.

Thank you for being here.

With love,

Michelle Cassandra Johnson

Facilitator Notes and Preparation

The details of how to host a *Skill in Action* book club are up to you. You might organize weekly gatherings, going through the sections one at a time, or come together for one big discussion after everyone has finished the book. Maybe you meet in person, or connect over video chat. I find that a group email is the easiest way to get organized, but find what works for you and your people.

If you host in person, you might invite each guest to bring a dish to share, or prepare some of your favorite snacks for everyone. I'd also recommend asking folks to bring notebooks and something to write with, as well as their books.

Gather

Begin by welcoming everyone into the physical or virtual space. Invite everyone to share their names and pronouns (if they aren't yet acquainted with each other) and two sentences on what brought them to this book club. Start by going first to model sharing without going beyond the two sentences, so that everyone is able to share with equal time.

Center

Even if you're not a meditation or yoga instructor, centering the group takes only a few simple actions. You might invite everyone to find a comfortable posture where they feel supported, close their eyes or rest their gaze on the floor, and take a few long, deep breaths together. You can also lead a guided meditation, or use one of the [free recordings](#) from my website. I'd recommend keeping the centering practice to around three to five minutes so that there's plenty of time for the book discussion.

Discuss

Depending on what the group wants, you could serve as a facilitator of the discussion by reading each question, or invite participants to take turns leading a discussion of each one. Some groups prefer to have a completely open discussion. It's really up to the group to decide what feels right.

Here are some sample questions to guide your discussion, but your group might come up with more as you go:

What new awareness have you realized about your relationship with yoga since reading *Skill in Action*?

How do you differentiate the practice of yoga from the industry of yoga?

How has reading *Skill in Action* shifted your awareness of the inequities in the industry of yoga?

Were there parts of the experience expressed by the author that mirrored your own experience navigating culture and institutions?

Based on identity, what parts of the experiences expressed by the author were different than yours navigating culture and institutions? How do you feel being presented with a different perspective and experience?

Where did you experience discomfort with the content of *Skill in Action*?

What resources can support you to stay engaged in working for justice even when you feel the sensation of discomfort?

What has been your experience of spiritual bypassing in yoga communities? How has it been harmful? What are some possible antidotes to spiritual bypasses?

As a response to cultural appropriation, how might you build systems of accountability with people most directly connected with yoga's lineage?

Which meditation or practice spoke to you the most? How was the experience of meditating or working with the practices in the book? What did you notice?

As you consider the content presented in *Skill in Action*, what parts of it can you bring into your own teaching or facilitation?

What does your heart most desire as you work to build a just world?

How can you carry *Skill in Action* beyond the mat, cushion, or yoga studio? How might you use the principles presented in *Skill in Action* in other parts of your life?

Close & Organize

If the group plans to meet again, take the last few minutes to schedule the next gathering and decide who will host it.

If action steps arose from the discussion, create a plan to implement them.

Don't forget to thank everyone for their presence and willingness to explore these questions, which can be challenging and confronting at times. Coming together is a sacred practice; being in these questions together builds community and resilience to stay in this work for the long run.

You might close with a short meditation, a few deep breaths together, or reading a quote to seal the space before everyone leaves.

If you feel like sharing a photo of the group (with everyone's consent, of course), I would love if you would tag me on Instagram ([@skillinaction](https://www.instagram.com/skillinaction))!

Lastly, please feel free to share these resources with the group:

My Work

- The [Skill In Action Workbook](#)
- [Race & Resilience](#), consulting and trainings offered by Kerri Kelly and me
- My Tedx Talk [There Is No Neutral](#)
- Free [meditations](#) available on my website
- [Off the Mat, Into the World](#), a partner through whom I offer trainings
- Guided meditations with me through [Yoga International](#)
- My [interview](#) with Kerri Kelly on CTZN Podcast

Books

- [The Bluest Eye](#) by Toni Morrison
- [How to Be An Antiracist](#) by Ibram X. Kendi
- [Stamped from the Beginning](#) by Ibram X. Kendi
- [White Fragility](#) by Robin DiAngelo
- [Radical Dharma](#) by Rev. angel Kyodo williams
- [The Master's Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master's House](#) by Audre Lorde
- [The New Jim Crow](#) by Michelle Alexander
- [Emergent Strategy](#) by Adrienne Maree Brown
- [My Grandmother's Hands: Racialized Trauma and the Pathway to Mending Our Hearts and Bodies](#) by Resmaa Menakem
- [Spiritual Bypassing: When Spirituality Disconnects Us from What Really Matters](#) by Robert Augustus Masters PhD

Articles

- [Converting Hidden Spiritual Racism into Sacred Activism: An Open Letter to Spiritual White Folks](#) by Virginia Rosenberg
- [Spiritual Bypassing: Avoidance in Holy Drag](#) by Robert Augustus Masters, PhD
- [I need to talk to spiritual white women about white supremacy, part 1 and part 2](#) by Layla Saad
- [Why White Lady Sisterhood Needs to Evolve](#) by Rachael Rice
- [Welcome To The Anti-Racism Movement—Here’s What You’ve Missed](#) by Ijeoma Oluo
- [How to Spend Your Privilege](#) by Brittany Packnett
- [White Fragility: Why It’s So Hard to Talk to White People About Racism](#) from Good Men Project interview with Robin DiAngelo
- [No, We Won’t Calm Down – Tone Policing Is Just Another Way to Protect Privilege](#) by Robot Hugs
- [Why I Don’t Talk About Race With White People](#) by John Metta
- [What I Told My White Friend When He Asked for My Black Opinion on White Privilege](#) by Lori Lakin Hutcherson
- [Colorblind Ideology is a Form of Racism](#) by Monica T. Williams, PhD
- [Explaining White Privilege to a Broke White Person](#) by Gina Crosley-Corcoran
- [Holy Shit Being an Ally Isn't About Me](#) by Real Talk: WOC and Allies
- [How Well-Intentioned White Families Can Perpetuate Racism](#) by Joe Pinsker
- [Internalized Oppression: Healing Scars You Can't See](#) by Susanna Barkataki
- [How to survive in intersectional feminist spaces 101](#) by Saroful
- [The Definition, Danger and Disease of Respectability Politics, Explained](#) by Damon Young

Other Teachers and Resources

- [Susanna Barkataki](#), creator of Honor (Don't appropriate) Yoga
- [Layla Saad](#), author of the *Me and White Supremacy Workbook* and host of Good Ancestor Podcast
- [Dismantling Racism](#)
- [Racial Equity Institute](#)
- [Internalized Racism Overview](#) from Racial Equity Tools
- [Showing Up for Racial Justice](#)
- [Diversity is an Asset Workbook](#) by Desiree Adaway & Ericka Hines