

Kohenet Yaya

Liberation Priestess + Facilitator

Live Fully, Live Free!

Building a Pluralistic, Multiracial, Multiethnic Jewish Community

**Dedicated to the Memory of
Vilma Haydee Rosado-Torres, Geraldine Haydee Rodriguez-Torres
& Marcelina Rodriguez-Torres**





Also dedicated to my children Ariana Katherine Felix & Manuel Jeremiah Arroyo II. Whose courage and boldness to live courageously, boldly, and unapologetically inspire me every day and are the expression of a lineage of revolutionaries!

Chazak, Chazak, V'nitchazeik-

Be strong, be strong, and we will be encouraged!

Kohenet Ya (Angelique) transparently and irreverently is a Liberation Priestess and Facilitator. Passionate about justice, equity, and healing, she brings a unique framework to support collective healing. Revealing the path to healing and a shift in consciousness, recognizing that we all have spheres of influence that impact each other. Her passion is teaching practices that help us heal from trauma, decolonize, and embody liberation.

Kohenet-Hebrew Priestess Institute reclaims and innovates embodied, earth-based feminist Judaism. Kohenet's spiritual leadership training, ordination programs, publications, and community offerings center ritual as a transformative practice.



Framework: Stages of Decolonization by Poka Laeuni

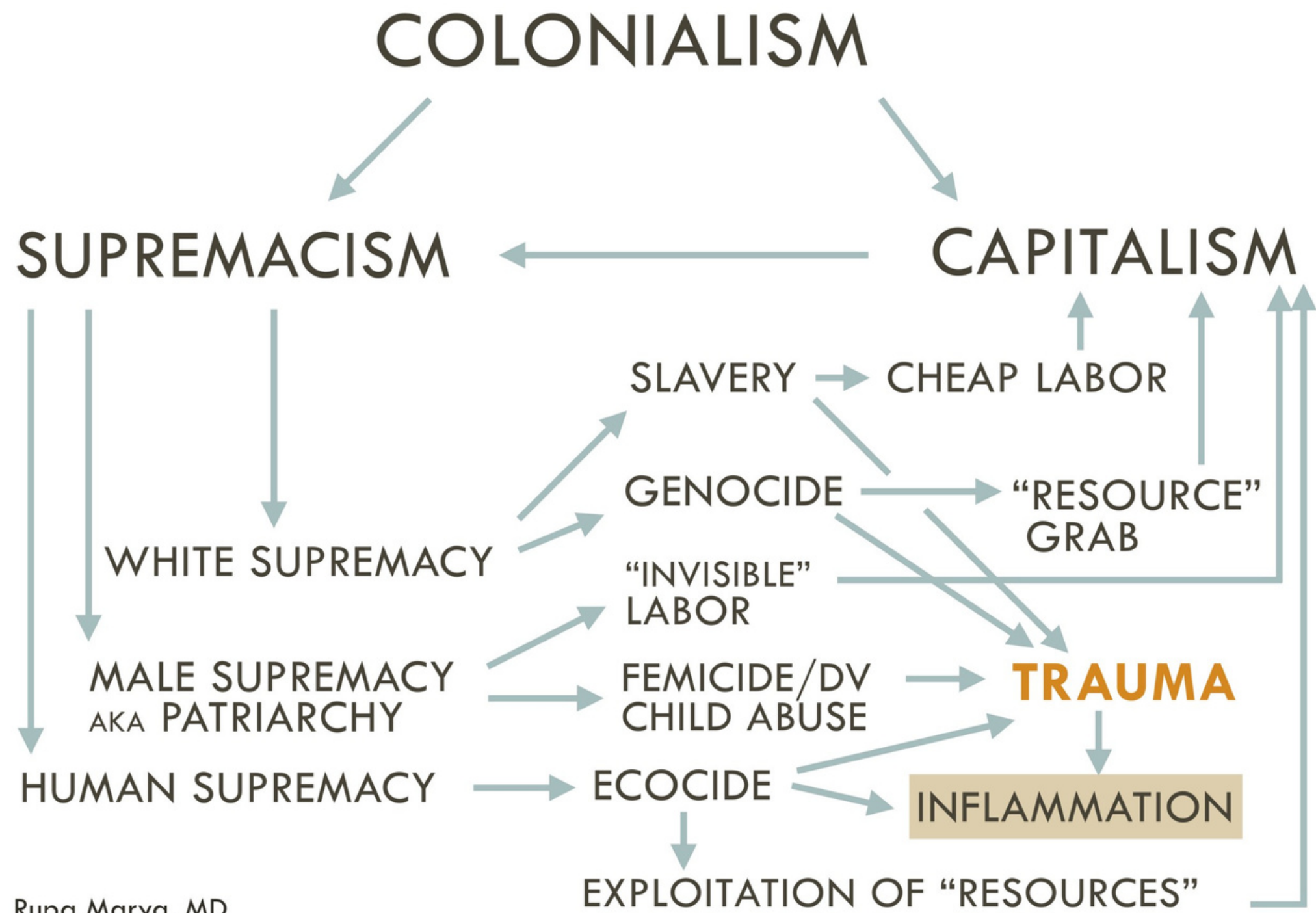


Image:
Three interlocking gold and purple circles.
One circle says recovery & rediscovery.
Another, Mourning & Dreaming and the last commitment & action. In the center is Jewish Identity.

Recovery & Rediscovery

In order to rediscover & recover our multiethnic and multiracial identity, we must begin by evaluating what I call "our villages". We all have a "village" that has informed the world we live in, and belief systems that have consciously and unconsciously shaped our understanding of ourselves and others and vice versa. First, we are going to look at the village, the social constructs, and trauma. There is no way to leave any piece of this out of the conversation of Jewish identity, and it is important that we always begin with ourselves.

For our purposes, we are focusing on America in terms of social constructs. We'll start with the big picture and break it down.



Rupa Marya, MD

In order to understand how we have arrived at our conversation, we must develop a critical lens of the societal constructs that underpin American culture.

In order to address ashkenormativity and how it has been centralized at the expense of our multiplicitous Jewish narratives we have to start with Colonization and its agenda.

Colonization-The action or process of settling among and establishing control over the indigenous people of an area.

Ashkenormativity-A unique form of eurocentrism that has found its way into Jewish culture.

The construct in America depends on the centralization of the European narrative along with a specific intent on marginalizing a myriad of people based on skin color-Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC), in order to maintain power. And in our context Jews of Color, In order for us to build an equitable world, we must acknowledge the harm and its traumatic impact.

Trauma is a key part of understanding how racism has infiltrated our Jewish communities. Understanding doesn't negate or diminish the impact, it teaches us what to be accountable for and what we may need support healing. This is the idea that our survival as a diaspora whose long ourstories have created a distortion of how we think we will survive. And so being isolated and insular in like communities becomes the "norm".

In these conversations, we often only see it from our particular lens "the village". I have found in my work that people get stuck in differentiating personal, interpersonal, and community relationships. So then it behooves us to examine our village and its messages about who is a Jew?

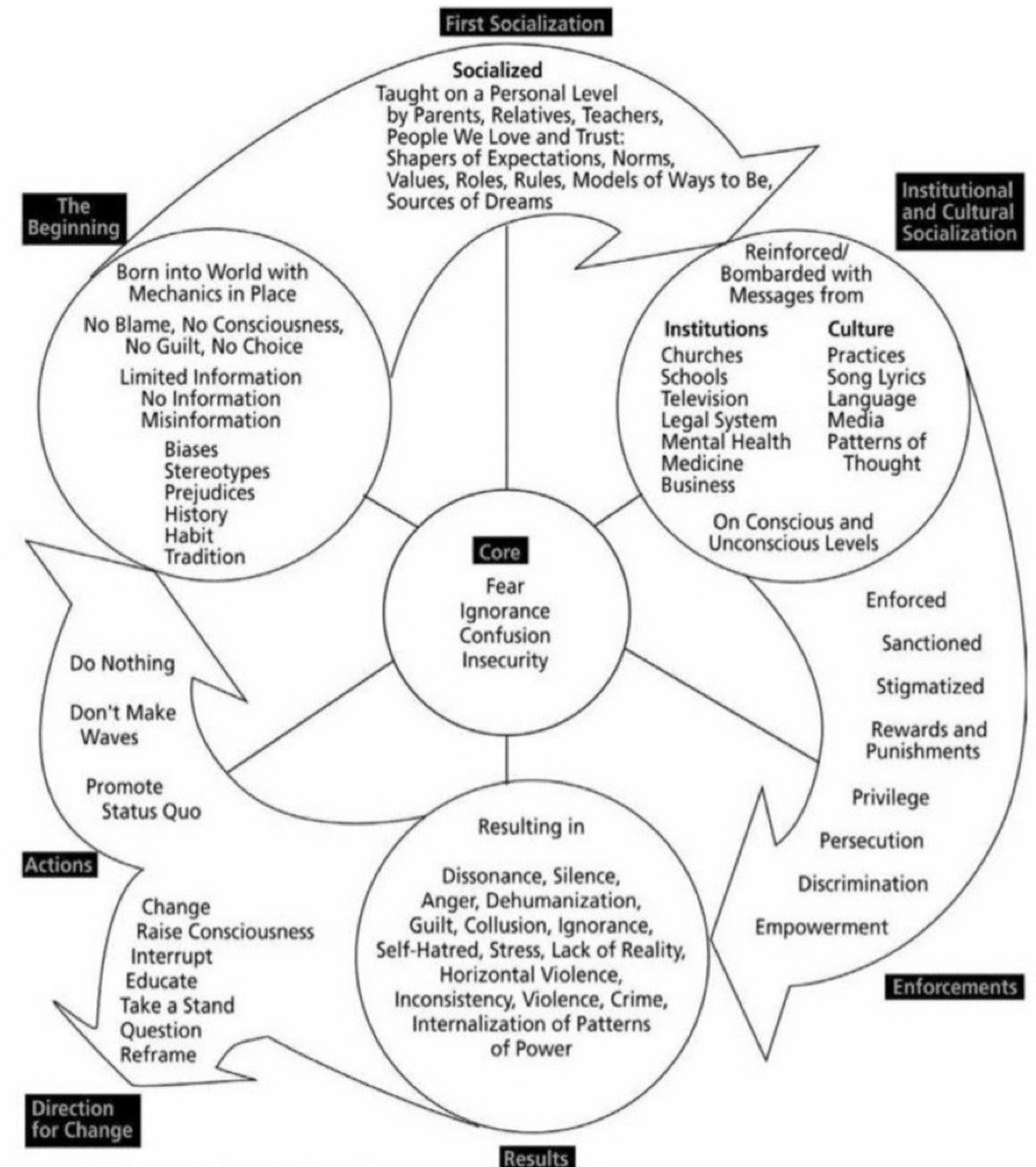
Your Village



In this graphic, we are looking at how cycles of socialization are ingrained. Again allow yourself to evaluate your assumptions of what and who is a Jew?

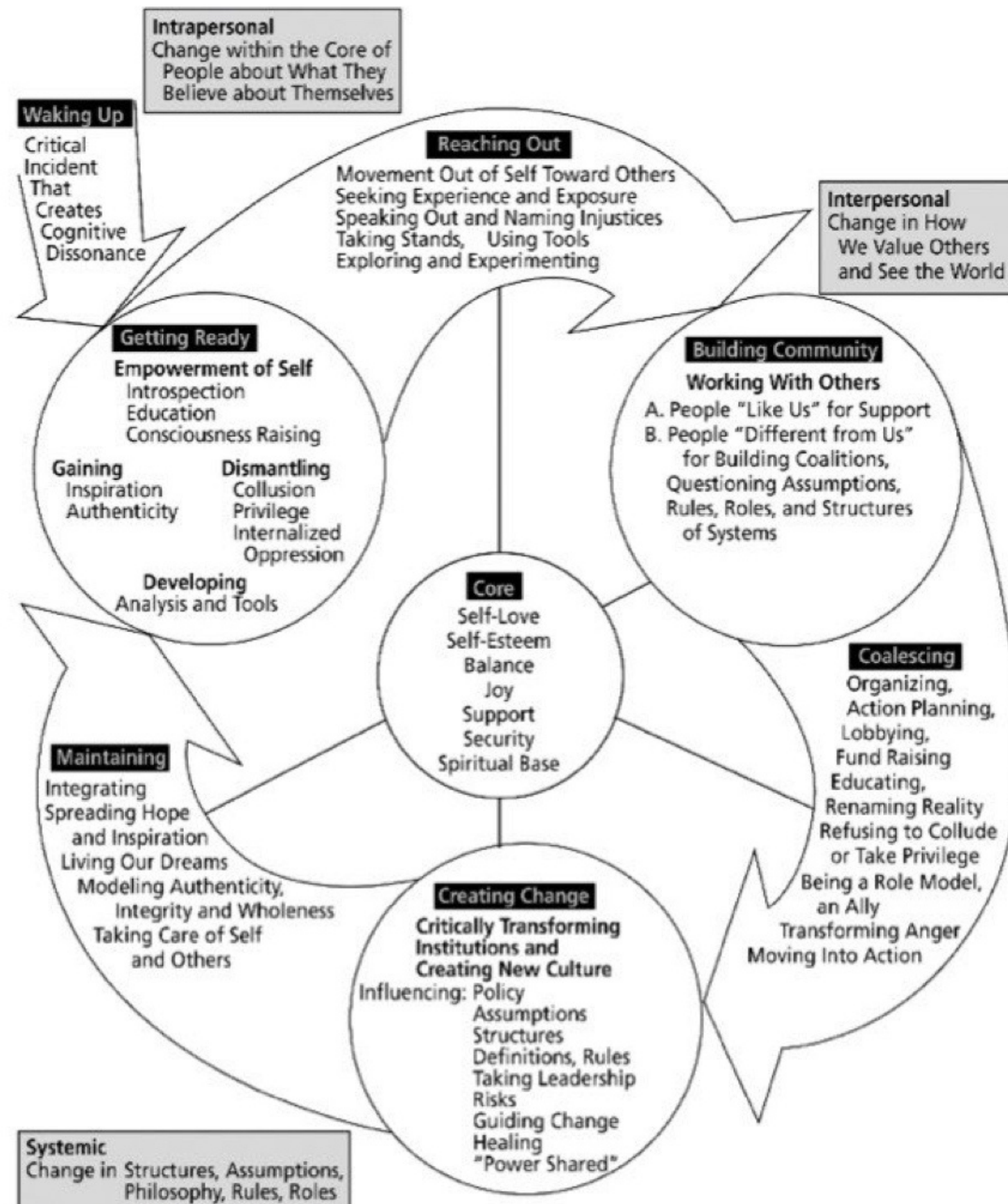
It would be challenging to take a stand for equity and justice when your belief and community is founded on supremacy. We don't call it that, and we must become aware of what we say we value and yet our beliefs and community contracts involve what a "real Jew" looks like and is. In our traditions, we have a foundational belief in dignity and justice.

- Our Rabbis also talk about no longer referring to "Jews by choice" as Jews by choice! They have already moved through the process of conversion and are mishpocha. To perpetuate the distinction is to reinforce exclusion and also potentially perpetuate a form of violence.



Source: Cycle of Socialization developed by Bobbie Harro
© Readings for Diversity and Social Justice, Routledge 2000

Cycle of Liberation



After evaluating the cycle of socialization the question that often comes up is what does liberation look like?
Take a moment to locate yourself in both cycles.

Source: Developed by Bobbie Harro

Next : Mourning & Dreaming