

Radical Optimist Collective



Experience & Approach

The Radical Optimist Collective was co-created over the past three years by a circle of practitioners from a wide diversity of backgrounds and areas of expertise. Our collective originally came together to support and guide individuals and groups doing intentional racial awareness and racial healing work as prompted by experiences in Montgomery, AL at the Equal Justice Initiative's (EJI) [Legacy Museum and National Memorial for Peace and Justice](#). Since 2018, we have worked with more than 50 organizations, companies, congregations and schools from all over the country to create brave and safe spaces for vulnerable experiences triggered by the brilliant historic content provided by EJI.

While our origin story is grounded by our work in Montgomery, these same processes transcended into deeper consultative, training, coaching and facilitation work with organizations and companies. In 2020, the combination of the COVID pandemic and the heightened attention to racial justice that righteously rose up in the spring of 2020 as an outcry to the murders of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor and so many more, we pivoted our services to be virtual and have been successful across a myriad of strategy, training, facilitation and coaching services. Our process is grounded by racial healing and trauma-informed frameworks that recognize the needs for holding individuals in their personal journeys, while supporting a group's shared experience. We honor and acknowledge that each individual comes with their own lived experience, ancestral history, trauma and current context that requires an individualized approach within the bounds of an organizational session. Additionally, we support groups to integrate these learnings into ongoing racial equity and inclusion strategies within their organizations.

Our circle of six practitioners has a collective 100+ years experience in racial equity and inclusion work with more than a dozen industries representing more than 50 organizations and companies. We've led organizations and initiatives, managed people and teams, raised and granted millions of dollars in social change efforts, and as small business creators, we are self-starters on steroids. We are listeners, we are healers, we are trainers, we are facilitators, we are strategists, we are consultants and we are coaches. We operate as a collective because we believe that more hearts and minds are better than one and that drawing on the experiences and strengths from multiple people brings change and much deeper impact. We operate as a collective because we believe that our own structures and methods must challenge [white dominant culture](#) at all times, every action and choice, and especially in the choices we make about how we engage. You can learn more about our [Strengths, Values and Approach](#) of the members of our collective here: [Radical Optimist Collective Bios](#).

Possibilities for Engagement & Partnership

Listening, Reflecting Back

Grounded in our core value of equity, we meet people where they are because we have asked them, listened, validated their lived experience and authentically reflected back their reality. This starts with going deep in our learning and understanding. Radical Optimist begins any engagement with assessment on the front end of the work to increase our understanding of the past and current context, identifying the problems we are aiming to solve, and working to get alignment around these issues as the foundation for designing our engagements. Because our collective circle of practitioners are especially intuitive and empathic, we feel the feelings of other people and groups and use that intuitive muscle to help guide conversations and strategy development. Intuitively, we hear the unvoiced questions, we can anticipate the needs of groups and individuals, and where others grapple for words, we seem to find the right words and the right tone. These strengths allow us to create brave and safe spaces for breakthroughs, ensuring people feel seen and heard, and that their voices are part of the DNA of any developed set of strategies.

Curation, Creation and Facilitation of Core Teams

We don't believe we have all of the answers or that there is one way to do something, but that the most powerful outcomes are co-generated with the stakeholders that any effort aims to impact. "Do with, versus for" is our motto. In order to design a process that is self-sustaining and lives beyond the life of the contract, we use a collaborative process in partnership with an internal team that works hand-in-hand with the Radical Optimist team. This "core team" can already be in existence (ex. DE&I teams) or we can help create it. The team provides focus and clarity, co-creates the working activities, determines whether activities are relevant and on track; helps define the scope of the team's efforts; supports communications channels and feedback loops. The core team informs the design and coordination of the ongoing effort.

Development, Curation and Facilitation of Healing, Learning and Training Experiences

A core foundation of our approach is believing peoples' lived experience, trusting their stories, and designing experiences, training and support to meet one's daily reality, individual and collective needs. Given our years of experience and deep relationships in this work, our collective is able to draw upon the expertise of the individuals in our collective and our larger national network of experts to support any process or to make a referral for other needed resources. See here for our [Example Virtual Training Content & Coaching Overview](#).

Transformational Coaching

We love to work in times of transformation - personal and organizational. Often, these times can be painful and require deep self-reflection and honesty in order to create the necessary breakthroughs needed to initiate a new phase. Leaders in transformational work need support and a space where they can work through organizational challenges and be honest about their areas of growth in a confidential environment. Because our collective circle of practitioners are especially intuitive and empathic, we feel the feelings of other people and use that intuitive muscle to help guide conversations and the coaching process. Intuitively, we hear the unvoiced questions, we can anticipate needs, and where others grapple for words, we seem to find the right words and the right tone. These strengths allow us to create brave and safe spaces for breakthroughs and transformation.

Heart-Centered Racial Equity And Inclusion Strategy Development

As stated above, our work is layered and cascading and we learn a tremendous amount throughout our relationships with organizations and its people. Often, the issues organizations are facing can be traced back to deeper, systemic issues of racial equity and inclusion. In the same way you wouldn't pour Drano down a broken

pipe in the hopes of fixing the sink, many times, we have to rebuild the plumbing to get clean water running again. From the boardroom to the break room, our team has dozens of years of experience in working directly within systems to create and enact strategies for systems change. We embrace 'both/and' thinking at all times and understand that while there is a deep need for personal growth and healing when it comes to racism, there is also a need for real structural change. We regularly engage as strategic advisors and consultants to develop racial equity and inclusion strategies and interventions.

For more information about us, our work, our collective, our approach, contact one of our co-founders Lisa Flick Wilson, flick.lisa@gmail.com or 678-591-2409 or complete the interest form at the bottom of [our website](#).