

***Doing Our Own Work: An Evaluation***  
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**INTRODUCTION**

The Leaven Center is a nonprofit organization where oppression is resisted and hope is engendered. Leaven's mission and purpose is as follows: *Leaven is committed to nurturing the relationship between spirituality and social justice. We offer education, resources, and hospitality for all who seek to be leavening agents for change – resisting oppression, engendering hope. The nature of Leaven programs is guided by our commitment to racial, sexual, and economic justice; feminism; the rights of people with disabilities; and respect for the wisdom of varying religious and spiritual traditions* (www.leaven.org).

The Leaven Center, which is located in Lyons, Michigan, is an outgrowth of the nonprofit organization, Leaven, founded in 1988 by mother and daughter, Eleanor and Melanie Morrison. In a 2004 Leadership Award Essay, one of the founders, Melanie, comments on her conviction for the work she does:

“I am motivated by the conviction that if movements for social justice are going to create lasting and fundamental change, they must nurture *both* personal and social transformation. This two-sided transformation requires that we commit ourselves not only to organizing for institutional change but also to the life-long work of examining where we personally stand in relation to systems of oppression and privilege. It is also my conviction that we cannot sustain this level of work unless we create contexts where activists from diverse movements can gather to: share our grief and anger; celebrate the breakthroughs; forge new friendships; draw strength from our ancestors; critically reflect on our organizing strategies; develop spiritual practices; and find nourishment for our bodies and spirits. The Leaven Center was created to provide such a context” (Morrison, 1).

The creation of Leaven was based on the conviction that not only can participation in social justice organizations be a source of energy and inspiration, but it

can also lead to exhaustion, bitterness, and despair. Leaven provides an avenue which cultivates resources for replenishment and hope. In addition, the founders witnessed “continued fragmentation within movements for social change” (Morrison, 1). Though there is a myriad of movements working for social change, many are working on single issues and are disconnected from other movements. By providing a place where “boundaries are bridged and connections are forged – between people, movement, and issues” (Morrison, 1) we, as a community committed to social change, can better face the interlocking system of oppression that faces us all.

Over the past 18 years, Leaven has collaborated with colleagues to design and facilitate seminars that address issues critical for spiritual and political well-being. More than 40 intensive seminars have been offered; however, one program that has become particularly successful is a seminar called *Doing Our Own Work*. This seminar was created for Caucasian women, committed to anti-racist work, to acknowledge their own white privilege and learn how to be the best ally for people of color. The *Doing Our Own Work* seminar was designed as a supplement to, not a substitute for, contexts where people of diverse races and ethnicities discuss and strategize together how racism can be dismantled. “The seminar responds to the need for white women to ‘do their own work’ – educating themselves about white privilege, confronting white racism, holding each other accountable, and demonstrating good faith as they seek to build genuine and lasting coalitions with people of color” (Morrison, 2-3).

The seminar started in 1994 with local women meeting one evening every week for a few months. It became so well known for its excellent training that women from all over North America were coming to the seminar. The director realized, in 2000, that in

order to expand participation the seminar should be held on three different weekends during the year so that people from all over the US and Canada could attend. Each *Doing Our Own Work* seminar is limited to 14 participants in order for the women to have in-depth conversations and to establish trust. Leaven understands dismantling white racism requires a long-term commitment. This long-lasting commitment will be successful only if participants can discover what truly motivates them to do racial justice work and if they find life-long anti-racist allies in whom they can confide. The *Doing Our Own Work* seminar looks at the holistic picture of ending institutional racism in this nation.

Despite its success, this program has never been evaluated. With majors in Community Development and Social Change, in addition to Sociology, I am very interested in the implementation of sustainable nonprofit program design. I chose to study the *Doing Our Own Work* seminar because I was intrigued by the program's unique perspective. It is uncommon to find a space where white women can come together to understand their own place in anti-racist work. In addition, The Leaven Center's inventive nonprofit set-up provided a rich learning environment for my future work because the Center is committed to engaging volunteers, staff, and participants in significant social justice work. **For my capstone project, I studied the effectiveness and long-lasting impact the *Doing Our Own Work* seminar has had on the women who have participated during the last five years.**

By the use of the phrase "*Doing Our Own Work* seminar" I refer to the three weekend format of the anti-racist seminar that was created in 2000. This was designed for each group of 14 women to participate in three different weekends during a six-month period. I define the concept of "effectiveness" by measuring whether I could see

evidence that the women left the seminar changed, knowing more than they did when they came, having explored a spiritual resource that will be helpful in sustaining their anti-racist activism, and having identified a “sphere of influence” that will serve as the focus of their anti-racist action and reflection. In other words, the seminar was deemed “effective” if the women felt equipped to become agents of structural anti-racist change in their personal and/or professional lives. The term “long-lasting impact” refers to the concept that the women, years after attending the seminar, still feel passionately about anti-racist activism, are still actively involved in the work, and are still applying the concepts of the *Doing Our Own Work* seminar in their personal and/or professional lives. By “women,” I am referring to participants in the *Doing Our Own Work* seminar between 2000 until 2004. These women are all Caucasians between the ages of 16 to 82 years old from various regions around North America.

Because participation in *Doing Our Own Work* is voluntary, I assumed that all of the women who attend are interested in seeking support, education, and resources to deepen their commitment to challenging white racism where they live and work. Therefore, I also assumed that these women committed to full engagement in the seminars and had a sincere desire to translate their learning into action. When studying the long-lasting impact and the effectiveness of the seminar, I hypothesize that the majority, if not all of the women, will report that the seminar was both effective and had a long-lasting impact on their personal and professional lives.

## **MEASURES**

The key measures I used were:

- How did the seminar deepen the participants' understanding and awareness of racism?
- How did the seminar aid in translating the participants' racial justice commitment into action?
- How did the seminar give participants the tools needed to become more effective anti-racist allies?

The key measures I used to study this, in the surveys and follow-up interviews, were:

- The participants' most memorable experience during the seminar.
- The participants' utilization of the "sphere of influence" concept and spiritual resources.
- The participants' relationship with white people and people of color since attending the seminar.

To gain insight into my research question, I created a survey with four sections.

The first was composed of demographics I felt were important to the study, such as what year they participated in the *Doing Our Own Work* seminar, what state they lived in when they participated, and what their occupation was at the time of the seminar (Appendix B, page 46, #1-3). I chose to look at these demographics because these variables could have a significant impact on what the participants took away from the seminar and their perspectives going into it. The first demographic question is a categorical variable, because it has categories that can be ranked and have equal distance between each option (Appendix B, page 46, #1). The third question is a nominal variable as it contains five categories that are exhaustive and mutually exclusive, but cannot be ordered or ranked (Appendix B, page 46, #3). The second and third section are composed of a series of

ordinal, Likert scale questions measuring the helpfulness of the seminar and the long-lasting impact on the women, respectively (Appendix B, page 46-48, #1-11 and page 48-50, #1-9). They are ordinal variables because Likert scales can be ranked along a continuum. The last section is a collection of three open-ended questions (Appendix B, page 51, #1-3) looking at details regarding the participants' anti-racist activism since the time of the *Doing Our Own Work* seminar and how the seminar can be improved for future participants.

There were two weaknesses with the measures. First, the length of measures could have been a hindrance to the response rate. Though the survey will only take ten minutes, the six page hard copy version could have seemed daunting to a busy, over-worked past participant. However, because I also provided an online survey, the response rate was still 71%. The second weakness was the fact that the majority of the survey is in the same format. Though I feel the format was reasonable, it is possible that respondents might fall into a pattern when filling it out; however, looking at the results I do not feel that was the case.

### **SAMPLE**

The target population for my research was the participants of the *Doing Our Own Work* seminar. The target sample was the women who participated in the seminar between 2000 and 2004. This was because in 2000, the format of the seminar changed from being one evening every week for a few months to a structured three-weekend seminar each year. I did not survey the 2005 participants because they would not have had enough time to evaluate the lasting impact of the seminar on their lives. The target population was 48 women; however, I could only gather accurate contact information for

41 participants as some of the participants had moved without providing Leaven with updated contact information.

The seminar's format change invited many other modifications. First, having the seminar three weekends throughout the year made the seminar more accessible for women from different regions of North America. Expanding the geographical participation changed the landscape of conversations and interactions amongst the women. The increased variety of women increased the number of different experiences the participants had had. In addition, this new format created a venue for over 40 hours of "class time" at The Leaven Center, extensive reading between the weekends, weekly conversations with an appointed reflection partner from the program, journal writing, and anti-racist action in their "sphere of influence" that they identified to reflect upon and work through between weekends. Because the women that participated before 2000 might have had a different experience with the seminar, I chose to only look at those involved with *Doing Our Own Work* after 2000.

My sampling frame was all of the *Doing Our Own Work* registration sheets from 2000 to 2004. For this research I used convenience sampling. Though I have the registration forms for all of the participants some of the women have moved and I was not been able to find their current contact information. Therefore, it is impossible to do a random sample because my sampling frame was not complete.

## **METHODS**

The methods of data collection I used were self-administered surveys and follow-up interviews. The data was collected between January and May of 2006. The primary source of data came from the surveys, the majority of which were web-based. However,

the last question on the survey asked if the respondent would be willing to participate in a short phone interview. I chose a survey to collect data because it provided a comprehensive overview of the participants' thoughts on the seminar. Conducting follow-up interviews allowed me to capture their personal stories in great detail.

I decided to use a self-administered survey, as opposed to the other types of surveys, for many reasons. First, the respondent has time and privacy to complete the survey. In addition, allowing the participants to respond in private helps decrease social desirability that might come into play. By letting participants fill out the surveys at their own discretion, they do not feel pressured to say the seminar was “extremely informative and helpful at providing tools and skills for confronting and challenging racism and white privilege” (see the Appendix B, page 46, #3); instead, they can be more candid with their answers. They also have time to think through comments they want to add under each question and at the end with the three open ended questions.

I assumed that I could increase the response rate by giving the participants an online option or a hard copy version through the mail. At [advancedsurvey.com](http://advancedsurvey.com), I was able to make a survey for free. Not only was it free, but it offered just what I needed – an unlimited number of questions and easy access for participants. It was not until the end of the creation process that I realized there was a problem. The Leaven Center Director and I felt that it was important for the women to be able to write as much as they needed while making comments after each question and for the last three open ended questions. [Advancedsurvey.com](http://Advancedsurvey.com) did not allow this. For the basic, free services respondents could only type 150 characters into the text boxes, so we decided to upgrade the services and pay \$29.95 for unlimited text responses for a month. We believed the women's

responses justified the cost. With clear instructions, follow-up reminders, free return postage for the hard copy survey, and an online version of the survey I was able to attain a 71% response rate.

The online survey was identical to the hardcopy version. To save on postage and printing, the director of The Leaven Center contacted the 41 women with current contact information through e-mail, letting them know that I was evaluating the *Doing Our Own Work* seminar (Appendix B, page 41). These contacts were made individually to increase rapport with the prospective participants. I continued to build rapport by e-mailing them individually to introduce myself and to give them the option of doing the online survey (Appendix B, page 42). After a week I sent a follow-up e-mail reminding them of the online survey and the importance of their participation to assist in strengthening the seminar for the future (Appendix B, page 43). After two weeks I mailed hard copy versions of the survey to the women who didn't have e-mail access, with a new introduction (Appendix B, page 44). After I got a response, I sent them a thank you note indicating my appreciation for their time and thoughts (Appendix B, page 45).

There were some problems I had to consider when conducting self-administered surveys. The first problem was the typically low response rate for this type of survey; however, I was fairly confident there would be a high response rate due to the replies I received from the participants about their eagerness to help when the director sent out the initial introduction letter. Another typical concern about self-administered surveys is that there is no interviewer. Therefore, if there is confusion or a problem with a question, there is no way to speak to their concern. Though I hoped the survey was self explanatory, I gave my e-mail address and phone number in case of problems (Appendix

B, pages 41-44). I made sure that the women knew that the information they provided in the surveys was completely confidential so they could be as candid as they wanted to be. In addition, I felt that because of my majors and my interest in the nonprofit sector and social justice activism, I had built some underlying rapport and trust with the women because we were working toward the same causes.

My last concerns regarding the surveys were the possibility of acquiescence responses and the placement of the demographic questions. The survey is split into four sections: 1. demographics; 2. helpfulness; 3. long-lasting impact; 4. open ended questions. It seemed necessary to do this because I created the survey questions by looking at the goals of the seminar. Then I used each goal to look at its effectiveness at the time of the seminar and its long-lasting impact on the women today. These two sections take up the majority of the survey and they are in the same Likert format the entire time. Though I was concerned that the respondents would fall into a pattern, I was hoping that they would understand the importance of the study and would take time filling out the appropriate responses. Because the two main sections make up the body of the survey and the open ended questions seemed to be a good conclusion, it seemed only logical to put the demographics at the top as a sort of introduction. The best practice for survey design is to mix up the questions; however, I feel the format and placement of questions were appropriate for this instrument.

At the end of the survey I asked if the respondent would be interested in participating in a short phone interview about her experience with the *Doing Our Own Work* seminar (Appendix B, page 51, #3). I planned on interviewing all the women who were interested; however, 83% of the respondents replied they would participate in the

phone interviews. Because of time constraints, I used stratified sampling, with specific goals in mind to choose ten women to interview. I made sure these women were from different regions of North America, had participated in the seminar at different ages and during different years. By identifying the most important variations in the population, the results are as representative as possible with a non-probability sample. After looking over the surveys and deciding which women provided a broad range of views on the seminar, I called ten of them to set up a convenient time for us to talk when there would be few distractions. I also made sure that I interviewed some women who commented extensively on the survey and others who didn't comment at all. In order to hear a range of opinions, I made a conscious effort to interview women who indicated mixed feelings about the seminar and those who thought it was wonderful. From there, I used the interview guide (Appendix B, page 52) to gather specific stories and details about the seminar. To ensure that I had accurate data from the interviews, each phone conversations were audio-recorded, with the respondent's permission, and I subsequently transcribed each recording. In addition, I used active listening skills, probing about interesting aspects of the women's responses, and made sounds that reaffirm their statements. After the interviews were completed I sent the women thank you notes reminding them of their importance to the evaluation process and how enjoyable it was to get additional insights from them.

The most obvious potential problem was that the follow-up interviews had to be by phone. Research indicates that there is a rapport that can only be built in person; however, I addressed this issue by truly engaging in each interview. I believe through my tone of voice and probing questions, the participants could hear my interest in our

conversations. Another issue with in-depth interviewing is that there is less control over what is discussed. It is important to be able to guide the interview in the direction needed, but after the conversation is transcribed I will be able to pick out the most meaningful aspects. While this is a very common experience in-depth interviewer face, it happened in two extremes in my interviewing experiences. My first interview was difficult. It was obvious the woman was not interested in giving much detail and though I tried to have many engaging questions, she would not give more than a few sentence responses. The interview guide that was predicted to take 45 minutes to an hour was over in fifteen minutes. On the other extreme, I conducted an interview with a retired high school teacher who recounted her forty years of teaching experiences in great detail. No matter how hard I tried to get the interview back on track, she continued to relish in past memories that did not relate to the *Doing Our Own Work* seminar. The last problem with retrospective data collection is the fact that people's memories are not perfect; therefore, it's impossible to get perfect data. But with the follow-up interviews, I was interested in finding the story behind the surveys. It was thrilling to see how each person experienced the seminar in a unique way and yet similar themes ran through each experience to create a complete story.

## **RESULTS/DISCUSSION**

After analyzing the data from the surveys and interviews, I would contend that The Leaven Center is doing an excellent job fulfilling the mission and purpose of the *Doing Our Own Work* seminar. Not only is the organization providing a conceptual framework of white privilege, it is also empowering its participants to become more engaged in anti-racist work. While there are far more positive aspects of the seminar, the

data that shows there are some areas for improvement. The Results/Discussion section will examine in detail the strengths and weaknesses of this unique anti-racist seminar.

*“Doing Our Own Work” as compared to other diversity trainings*

During the interviews, I was interested in finding out whether the women had been to other anti-racist seminars before or after they attended *Doing Our Own Work*. Repeatedly in comments on the surveys and during the phone interviews, women praised the uniqueness of the *Doing Our Own Work* seminar as compared to the other diversity trainings they had attended. While most had been to other trainings, they all asserted they had never experienced anything like *Doing Our Own Work*. One woman I interviewed said the training was “unbelievable – once in a lifetime.” Based on the data, for the majority of women who participated, it was truly a life changing experience. Beyond the professional impact, where every respondent cited, at the time of the evaluation many women felt the seminar had affected the core of who they were and what their life was all. Another woman I interviewed commented, “Since Leaven, I have...become engaged to a black man, and our relationship is based upon an open, frank, and loving understanding of race and racism. My ability to engage in that kind of relationship was limited before the Leaven Center...It has affected my choice of where to live, what do with my life, where my priorities lie, everything.”

Not only was the content of the *Doing Our Own Work* seminar more intense and hands-on than other seminars participants had been to, the spirit of the training was quite different. Each of the nine women I interviewed agreed that the seminar offered a space to do “one’s own work.” As one woman said “the training was very humanizing...It was a really safe space to get all emotional and kind of ‘rock yourself out’ and have it be

really normalized.” Many women commented that while other diversity trainings are workshop-oriented, the *Doing Our Own Work* seminar strives to be a “spiritually nurturing experience,” engaging the whole person in the occasion. I suggest that because the seminar is a “live-in situation and profoundly more detailed” with time for reflection and rest, the participants are able to process what they are learning.

*Understanding of Racism & White Privilege to become More Effective Anti-Racism Allies*

Through the surveys, it seems that the Leaven Center is having success deepening participants’ understanding of racism and white privilege and empowering them to be more effective anti-racist allies.

**Deepening understanding & raising awareness of racism, oppression, & privilege—immed.**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Informative and Helpful	3	10.3	10.3	10.3
Very Informative and Helpful	8	27.6	27.6	37.9
Extremely Informative and Helpful	18	62.1	62.1	100.0
Total	29	100.0	100.0	

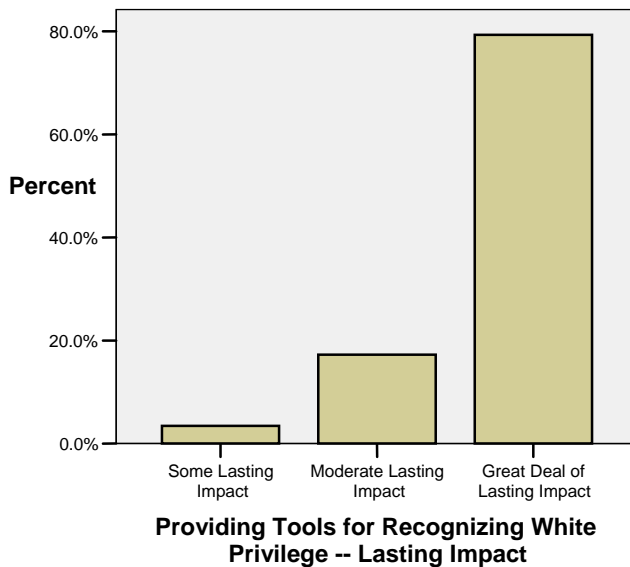
**Conceptual Framework for Ongoing Racism Activism -- Lasting Impact**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Moderate Lasting Impact	7	24.1	24.1	24.1
Great Deal of Lasting Impact	22	75.9	75.9	100.0
Total	29	100.0	100.0	

As represented by the above tables, immediately after the seminar, all but three participants indicated that the seminar was “very” to “extremely” helpful at deepening their understanding and raising their awareness of racism, oppression, and privilege. Years after attending, all of the women gave Leaven the highest marks for having a lasting impact on providing a conceptual framework and analysis for their ongoing anti-

racism activism (Appendix A, Chart 1-2). In a continuing trend, when looking at the immediate reaction as compared to the long-lasting impact, it is clear that the information provided during the *Doing Our Own Work* seminar sticks with the participants long after they leave the Center, providing a greater impact on the women once they have been able to apply what they learn in their lives.

The data indicates that teaching the participants to recognize white privilege is what the *Doing Our Own Work* seminar does best. Immediately following the seminar 89.6% of participants felt the seminar was “very to extremely informative and helpful” at providing analysis and tools for recognizing white privilege in themselves and others. Years later, after interacting with co-workers, peers, and clients, 96.5% of the women believed their time at the seminar continued to help them recognize white privilege in themselves and others (Appendix A, Table 1-2). See the charts below for a clear illustration of the seminar’s success in terms of providing tools for recognizing white privilege.



In the interviews, the women were asked to describe their most memorable or meaningful experiences of the seminar were. Three out of nine of the women agreed that the **role-playing** was the most beneficial. This exercise provided examples of institutionalized racism that could occur in their everyday lives. The participants had to act out how they would confront the white privilege at work in the situation. In response to these exercises, one woman working as a social worker said they “gave [me] the comfort to now address things in an appropriate way...I am just really glad I had that experience to role-play in a safe setting, so now out in the community I am effective.” This is a feeling held by many of the women in my study; because they were able to share their concerns and work through their prejudices in a safe space, they are more confident and “much more willing to take risks as a white person when working along side and in solidarity with people of color than I was before” (a master’s student at the time of the seminar, who is now working in anti-racist education on the West Coast).

This leads to the idea of providing the tools necessary to become an effective anti-racist ally to people of color. The *Doing Our Own Work* seminar is created as a supplement to working with and engaging in genuine relationships with people of color on personal and professional levels. One woman said it best: “I appreciated that [the seminar] was specifically targeted at white women so that we had that time to challenge ourselves. It is not fair for me to expect [people of color] to carry my white guilt on top of their experiences of [race and racism].” This idea of letting go of one’s “white guilt” in order to become an effective ally was frequently mentioned. One woman who was a student when she attended the seminar said the following about how *Doing Our Own Work* assisted her in claiming and shaping a white identity:

“My largest struggling coming into the *Doing Our Own Work* seminar was my trying to create a positive white identity, and finding strength for the long-term struggle without hating myself. Leaven helped me learn to find a positive white identity by choosing to identify with the white people throughout history who have struggled against the oppression perpetrated by their peers. I have also learned to ground my commitment to anti-racism, anti-oppression work in self-love instead of pure fairness. This has been invaluable to my future work, as I am now able to find positive reasons for white people to do anti-racism, anti-oppression work...Leaven gave me a broader and deeper knowledge of anti-racism, white privilege, my people’s history, and the way oppression functions. Being an ally relies on having good intentions, but also, more importantly, on understanding the experiences of my peers of color. The more I know about what I’m doing, and what my blind spots are, the more able I am to serve as an ally.”

This sentiment is echoed by many other participants when one examines the survey data (Appendix A, Charts 3-4). The pattern of the data that reveals this aspect of the seminar had a significant lasting impact on the participants is evident. Immediately after attending the seminar, the responses were wide-ranging, with the majority (60%) of participants contending it was very helpful in assisting them to become more effective allies. However, almost 95% of respondents felt Leaven greatly improved their effective anti-racist abilities years after attending the seminar. One woman who was employed in a Chicago nonprofit at the time of the seminar said, “I have ten times the skills today...*Doing Our Own Work* provided an amazing context and foundation to do this work intentionally every day.”

#### The “Sphere of Influence” Concept

I would contend that *Doing Our Own Work* has such a lasting impact on the participants because the seminar is spread over six-months. During the first weekend, the facilitators have the women pick a “sphere of influence” to focus on and reflect upon during their time at home between sessions. One woman I interviewed defined the sphere of influence as “any area of your life in which you feel you have or exert some

kind of influence or power in shaping.” After choosing one area of their life to focus in on, whether it is their job, family, or friends, they then reflect upon what they can do to make systematic anti-racist changes in that area. Each participant is also assigned an accountability partner to talk with, via phone and e-mail, about her progress with her sphere of influence while away from Leaven. This partner was another participant of the seminar. The women were encouraged to write journals about their feelings toward their “sphere of influence” and communicate at least once a week with their accountability partner about their feelings and progress being made in that area.

By implementing a plan of action, working through roadblocks with their partner, and bringing back their successes and disappointments to the large group, each woman has a significant experience to build upon once the seminar is over. Every woman I interviewed still uses this concept of “sphere of influence” in her life today. Many women who now do anti-oppression trainings not only use the concept but the phrase as a way of explaining systems of oppression more clearly. When asked if this concept had remained useful in her life, one woman commented, “Yes. First, it helps make the issue not so overwhelming. Second, it really makes me look at the areas I do have control over and where I can make a difference. Third, when you have to set that goal, it gives you more drive to fix it.” While this statement generally summarizes what all of the women said about this model, many of them said the effects of their work took some time to see.

Frustration was a key theme in many of the written comments and in the interviews. This was not an irritation with the anti-racist work, but rather with the interval of time between the seminar and the ability to see the fruits of their labor. However, the encouraging thing is that each of the women interviewed had powerful

success stories to share. One woman's story represents the overall climate of this waiting period. As director of a national nonprofit in the Midwest, this woman was interested in giving recognition to women who worked for diversity issues in her city. She had pitched the idea of having an awards ceremony for women active in diversity issues for six-months; however, by the time she left her position with the agency, nothing had happened. She was frustrated that all of the energy she had put into her "sphere of influence" hadn't taken off. A year after she left that position, the agency and the city picked up the idea. It is now an annual thriving event! She explains, "The seeds of influence that were planted [were not] realized during the time I was there, but they are now...If you had talked to me six months after I took the seminar, [I would have said] none of this was effective, because at the time none of it looked like it was." She now has a great appreciation and respect for the model of "sphere of influence," because she understands how beneficial it is in the work she does every day.

Many of the women said having the experience of first trying out the concept was helpful so that they could then use it more effectively after they had left the seminar. It was refreshing to hear success story after success story of women creating institutional anti-oppression changes in their workplace, having thought-provoking conversations with co-workers and friends, and hearing how confident they were that the work they were doing was significant and effective in the anti-racist struggle.

### *The Spiritual Component*

Similar to the concept of "sphere of influence," the facilitators of the seminar placed great importance on exploring spiritual resources to sustain one's anti-racism activism. The opinions expressed about this aspect of the seminar were diverse. While

there was a larger percentage of participants who felt that this aspect was informative and helpful both immediately after the seminar and in the years that followed, there were a number of women who felt that this concept has little to no usefulness in their lives. One woman explained the spiritual environment: “At the time, the seminar [was] infused with this value that this is spiritual work. The space was very challenging, but it was also a place for people to know how we challenged each other was done in this context of hopefulness and uplift. The whole tone of it came across really strong.”

In addition, another participant felt that “despite the fact that it was meant to be interfaith, much of the spiritual language and the organizational structure alluded to surround Christian traditions.” This woman, in particular, did not feel her Jewish friends gained very much from the spiritual aspect of the seminar because they didn’t relate to the language and/or ceremony; however, she felt it was extremely helpful and informative for her own spiritual connectedness. Here are some additional quotes from participants regarding the exploration and discernment of spiritual resources:

*The following positively reflect the spiritual aspects of the seminar*

“My initial expectations did not include spiritual resources. It wasn’t even in my world view. Grappling with the concept and my personal spiritual reality/needs was humbling. It was a gift that I would never request, nor want, but couldn’t give up now that I have it.” – At the time this woman was employed in the social justice arena in the Midwest.

“It was really great for me. Most of the women came from traditional faith-based backgrounds, so for me, as a younger person, I was still trying to figure out a spectrum of what spirituality was.” – At the time this woman was working on her MSW at a Midwestern university.

“I’m not a spiritual person. [*Doing Our Own Work*] allowed me to feel more comfortable to get in touch with myself in that way. It’s not something I have been utilizing to sustain my work, but I know it is essential to do effective work. I would have never gone *there* on my own.” – At the time this woman was a social worker in a Midwest nonprofit.

*The following explore the more difficult aspects of the spiritual piece of the seminar*

“If anything the seminar made this more difficult. Many people have portions of spirituality wrapped up in cultural appropriation (Buddhism, earth-base spirituality, etc.). Our conversations surrounding spirituality made it more difficult to discern what a positive spiritual resource could look like.” – At the time this woman was employed in a predominately white, for-profit career.

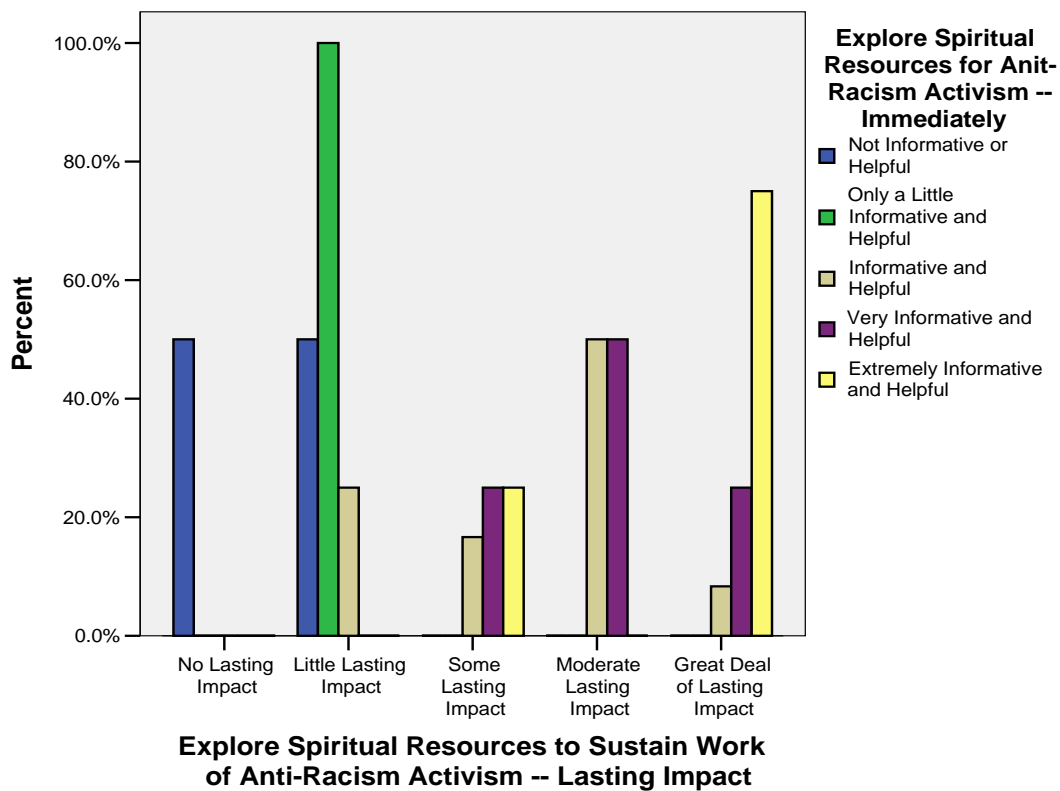
“That’s probably the part, in terms of activism, that fell the shortest. I really think I struggled with it. I think if I wasn’t a person who had as much motivations or desire I probably would have fell quicker. I don’t know what they could change or do to make it different, but it is probably the hardest piece to carry out of there. It is an important part of Leaven, it just needs some reworking.” – At the time this woman was a social worker in a Midwest nonprofit.

“The mention of spirituality was a block to me that I worked through...My own personal spirituality is extremely important to me. Having to define it is hard for me, so talking about its importance is hard...Sometimes when people talk about spirituality I feel they are talking more about Christianity than I am, I start to fidget and then I stop listening to what they say...Whether it helped or hindered, probably a little of both at the time. Two years ago, I was struggling, now it would not have bothered me. For some people it might have been more of a put off than it was for me...and a great help to some. So [the spiritual aspect of the seminar] should stay in.” – At the time this woman was a retired school teacher from the Midwest.

Through the survey comments and interviews I conclude the women who seemed to gain the least from this aspect of the seminar were those who were strongly embedded in their faith community and women who had never considered anti-racist work spiritual before they came to *Doing Our Own Work*. Many women commented on the intensity of the seminar; it would make sense that someone who had rarely been exposed to the idea of combining spirituality and activism would be prone to “shutting down” during this segment. In addition, a few women who are very active in their faith communities, whether through employment or volunteering, felt that this aspect of the seminar was a nice boost, but did not teach anything they did not know before. This was a very interesting aspect of the research. If there were more time, I would be interested in

finding out more about the women who benefited the most from the spiritual component; however, that was beyond the scope of the present study.

The Leaven Center believes strongly in the unification of spirituality and social justice. From the data it is evident that the participants understand this is a key component of the seminar and appreciate its role. It is also clear, from the chart below, that the majority of the women felt the seminar helped them discern spiritual resources years after they attended, as compared with immediately after they participated. Examining the participants' comments about reworking the somewhat Christian emphasis might create a more inclusive spiritual environment for future seminars.



*The Harder Aspects: Institutional Change and Building Genuine Relationships with People of Color.*

The data suggest that most of the women fall primarily into three employment categories:

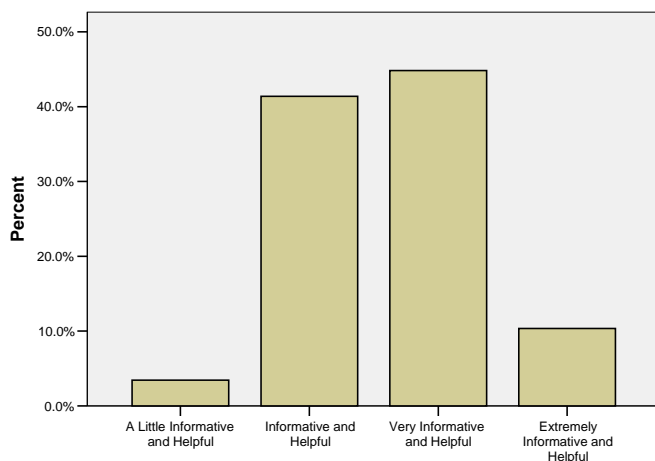
1. Social service agencies,

2. Universities setting as administrators or program facilitators,

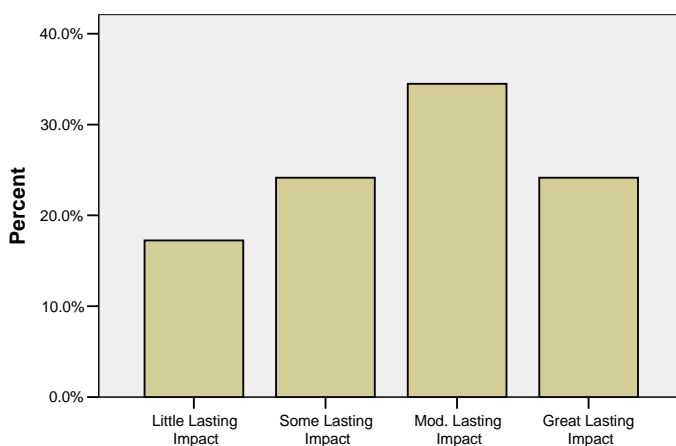
3. Liberal-minded churches,

while a few are in the for-profit sector or are retired. I feel this might play an important role in respondents' beliefs that they are creating institutional changes and building genuine relationships with people of color. While most of the women who work in social services interacted with people of color on a daily basis, many of the participants working in churches and in some universities did not have that experience. This made putting into practice the techniques learned in the seminar quite difficult. In addition, creating anti-racist institutional change can mean different things depending on one's environment.

In the survey comments and interviews, several women indicated that measuring whether they were creating institutional change was difficult. From my analysis it seems that the majority are succeeding in creating positive change where they can; most, if not all, of the participants have challenged systematically racist workplace policies, held anti-racism/diversity trainings, and created a more inclusive work environment for people of color. One can see from the charts on the following page that the strategies provided during the *Doing Our Own Work* seminar had a significant and lasting impact on approximately 83% of participants, as compared to the immediate impact of this portion of the seminar.



**Providing Strategies for Institutional Change -- Immediately**



**Providing Strategies for Institutional Change -- Lasting Impact**

The pattern of participants seeing more significance in the seminar after a few years continues when examining how *Doing Our Own Work* helped deepen relationships with people of color (Appendix A, Charts 5-6). The following story stood out as a great example of how *Doing Our Own Work* helped a University Residence Hall Manager begin to build genuine relationships with students of color:

“Leaven helped me...realize that being a racist wasn’t always about behaving in racist ways. It has to do with the plain history of racism and how pieces of history still linger today. Whether I, as an individual, choose to act racist or not, racism still exists. As a white person, I play into that whether I want to or not: institutional racism. Before [Leaven I] never thought I was racist in any way...

I had a student that was a victim of racism, the only African American on her floor. I spent a huge amount of time with her, listening and supporting to her. I responded in exactly the way my bosses would have expected me to respond. I thought I had done everything right...In working with this person, she said, "You just don't get it" and I couldn't understand that. I did everything I needed to work-wise, I went through the whole check list and then that was it.

I had separated myself from this human being. I was in my job role and I had done everything mechanically, because I didn't get it. It wasn't until I went through this workshop and kind of understood it's not about me and what I do, it's about all the things that happened to make this woman be victimized in this way and the things she will have to go through her entire life because racism isn't going to be resolved in the next 20-30 years.

Since then we had a program called Purple Person day...It was a hugely successful event. [However] some of the messages were only aimed at black and white racism, not other areas of oppressions. [A group of African American students] brought these concerns to me and I felt like they really heard me. I felt like I was *there* and understood them. The outcome was so different. We were able to work together to improve the program for the future and to gather some understanding... This time I made much more of a bridge than a division. I could be present with them."

Many other women said they take more risks, are more assertive, and feel like they can be more authentic with people of color than they were before they attend *Doing Our Own Work*. It seems a lot of participants now feel like "strong, anti-racist white [people], which in turn helps to deepen relationships with people of color." One social worker living on the West Coast said, "It got to a point where I just had to get in there and get dirty, and [I knew] sometimes I would get called out on that stuff. Being at Leaven, it made me feel like I had this other community of women that were also struggling and I knew that I could rely on them for support...[*Doing Our Own Work*] gave me the courage to get past trying to be a good white person and get in there and do the work."

In addition, when asked to give a story about how their relationships with people of color have changed since attending the seminar, many women recounted conversations

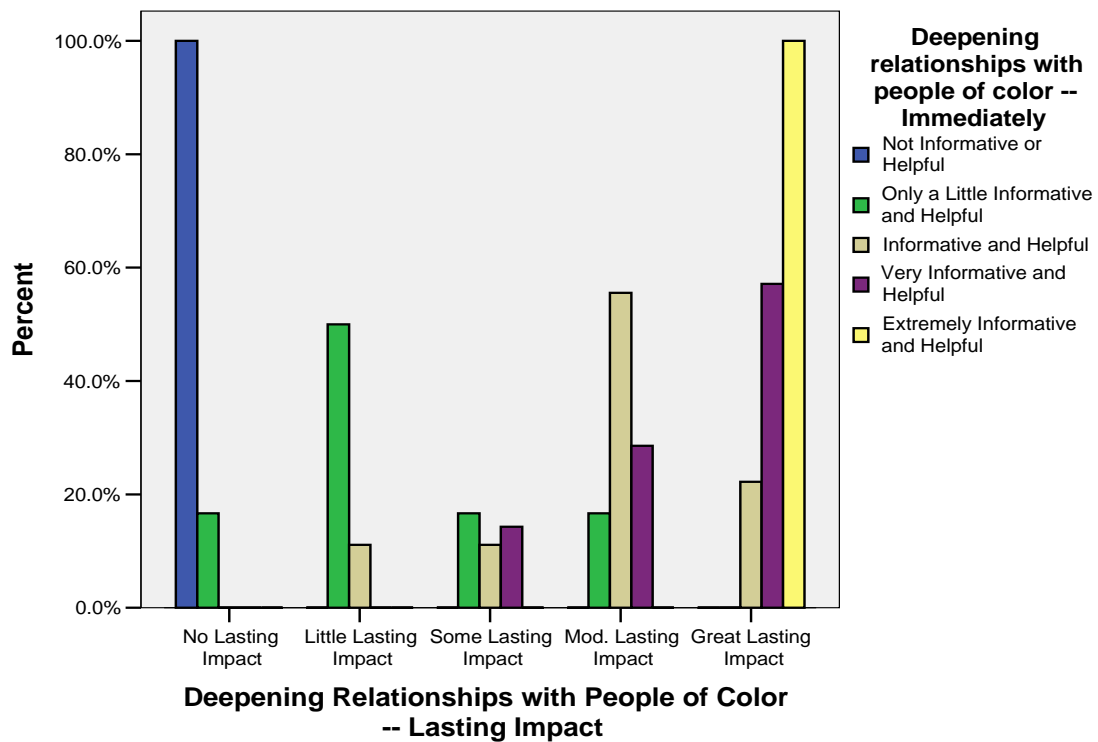
they had had with co-workers of color. It was obvious the women were proud to report that these co-workers had seen a difference in their way of life and did, indeed, see them as allies in the anti-racism struggle. Here is one social worker's story:

“A person of color co-worker just said to me (and I feel this is really based on my work from the Leaven Center) – she said, “You know you're the only white person that I have talked to that understands a safe place for people of color. [The Leaven Center] moved me beyond the place where I feel I need to be involved in everything. And I don't know if before the Leaven Center I could have respected a safe place for people of color only...Just to know what that means to them, because they never get that. [*Doing Our Own Work*] moved me to think beyond the white perspective.”

When examining the statistics on the variable “deepening relationships with people of color,” one can see some unique patterns. Immediately after attending *Doing Our Own Work*, the data is in a bell shape curve (Appendix A, Chart 5). This means that close to an equal number of people thought the seminar was helpful at deepening relationships with people of color as those who did not think it was helpful at all. Most of the participants found it was somewhat helpful, but did not have a strong inclination either way. However, as time progressed most of the participants' feelings become much more positive (Appendix A, Chart 6). Approximately 75% of the participants felt the seminar has “some to a great deal of lasting impact” on their deepened relationships with people of color.

But what is most interesting can be seen in the chart on the following page. When examining the immediate and long-term impact of the seminar, one can see that the extremes stay the same. In other words, those participants who left the seminar feeling there was no immediate benefit and those who felt that the seminar had an extremely positive immediate effect on their relationships stayed the same years later. Respondents who were in the middle on their feelings of the immediate effect migrated toward the

more positive views in terms of lasting impact (for more detail look at Appendix A, Table 3). One could surmise that this may be based on their personal and professional environments. If a participant did not have any relationships with people of color to deepen, it would be hard to deduce whether or not the tools given to aid in deepening one's relationships with people of color were successful. In addition, those participants who felt that this aspect had a great deal of immediate impact on their lives probably had a chance to put the tools/exercises they learned at *Doing Our Own Work* right to work when they returned to their everyday lives.



### Ideas for the Future

Both the survey and the interview included a question about how Leaven could improve *Doing Our Own Work* for future participants. Many of the women did not feel the seminar could be improved in any way because it was such a great experience when they attended. It was apparent, through the survey and interview data, that each woman

gained a noteworthy amount of knowledge from the seminar; it was also clear how much they cared about its future success. Every suggestion or idea they shared was clearly thought out and relevant to their experience. I have included a list of their comments grouped by common themes. At the end, I have expanded on the two aspects most frequently brought up by the participants: ‘Support Groups and Follow-Up Retreats’ and ‘Timeliness of Resources and Current Events.’

### ***Program Content***

- One woman would love an additional, follow-up seminar focused on the next stage of this work which addresses the deeply embedded institutional racism.
- Many participants were interested in a more specific discussion on “how to put ourselves in situations where we interact more with people of color (life decisions, job decisions, places to hang out, etc.)” Along similar lines, another woman would appreciate the seminar focusing more on “deepening relationships with people of color and the variety of ways people of color view racism.” In addition, one woman was interested in having the seminar address interracial dating relationships.
- Other women were hoping future seminars could address racism from an international perspective. One participant felt an international-based author to add would be Angela Davidson.
- A few women felt the seminar focused heavily on black/white racism, while not addressing the other components of racism such as poverty, Latinos, Asians, etc. They hoped that could be leveled out some in the future. One of the women would also like to see more about the class component of racism.

- One participant said she had recently begun learning more about the “deconstruction of gender and race, because white women often overlook race and assume that gender transcends race.” She thought this might be an important aspect to add to the seminar.
- One participant would like the “emotional process” more clearly addressed. She feels it would “provide a kind of permission/guide for folks who may have a hard time wading into that area.”
- Another respondent felt in future seminars the sphere of influence concept could be carried into a bit more depth, by encouraging participants to find way to continue it after the seminar is over.

### *Structural Adjustments*

- A few participants felt that having an intergenerational representation of the facilitators would be a great addition. One woman felt that the seminar was more directed at middle-aged women, rather than students. Though most, if not all, of the students commented on how much they appreciated being able to learn from the older women’s experiences, they did feel they could not relate to some aspects of the seminar.
- One respondent felt that the voice of the urban community was missing. She felt the “people that were drawn to the seminar weren’t necessarily involved in urban work, they were engaged in the struggle in a different way.”
- One respondent that felt she was a person who needs time to internally process things before talking with a group; she felt the facilitators could be more

conscientious with time so people would have more time for processing and resting.

- One respondent felt that more time for large group, intense discussions would be beneficial. On the other hand, another participant felt there should be more opportunities for small group dyads so that shy people would have a chance to share their thoughts and those people who like to talk wouldn't have to monopolize the large group conversations (she was a talker).
- Another woman felt Leaven should "consider having seminars with similar cohorts. While there is great value in the diversity of sexuality, age, spirituality, of participants, there is also value in having a group with more similarities to encourage support once out of the seminar (for instance, a cohort that all work together, or a group of people who are all friends prior to the seminar)."
- Many of the younger women agreed that there should be "a little less '60s folk music...Some is okay; however, it is not that young-woman friendly." Many suggested adding in a mix of contemporary political folk or social-conscious rap music.
- One woman felt the "cultural appropriation" discussion could be better addressed in a different manner. She felt it was handled in a "dualistic manner" when she attended the seminar.
- One participant was pleased to see that the upcoming *Doing Our Own Work* seminar was for mixed genders. She felt this would add an important element to the experience.

- Many of the participants felt that maintaining a sense of accountability (perhaps an accountability partner) would be great after leaving the seminar.

### *Inclusiveness*

- While a large majority found the spiritual aspect of the seminar to be very rewarding, a number of women thought it should be reworked to include other faith traditions besides Christianity.
- A number of participants remarked on how sacred and special the Leaven Center was, indicating that the space and land was very much a part of their *Doing Our Own Work* experience. They hoped that when *Doing Our Own Work* was done in other locations that it stayed “living and breathing” by shifting and changing to fit the place and the people attending the training at that particular time.

### *Support Groups and Follow-Up Retreats*

The women who attended the *Doing Our Own Work* seminar became genuinely attached to one another. A good number of them still keep in contact with their “homework buddy” (a pair was even in each other’s weddings!), but would like more interaction with the like-minded women they met at the seminar. The message repeated most frequently was: **Keep us connected.** Though three women suggested an online support group, most of the participants are interested in coming together every six months or annually to check-in and get recharged. Some women who live near Leaven were interested in creating a monthly support group to talk about their successes and shortcomings in their anti-racist efforts. It is understandable that having an annual *Doing Our Own Work* reunion weekend would be costly; however, it seems like these women are very interested in the possibility.

For those further away, participants felt an online community where women could post stories and articles would be a good way to stay in touch. It seems this could be a possible addition to the Leaven website if they could find a technology volunteer. I have found a potential candidate. Also, many women would love to get e-mail updates about current anti-racist issues and ways to get involved despite their busy lifestyles (tips on how to merge daily activities with activism so the participants don't "lose their spark"). Perhaps Leaven could get a release from all of the participants to have a "*Doing Our Own Work* Directory" so that staying in contact could be a more viable option. Women who live near each other could meet and support each other without having to come to Michigan.

### ***Timeliness of Resources and Current Events***

There was urgency in many respondents' comments about current racial affairs. Many women felt it of great importance that the videos and articles were up-to-date and included "contemporary racism issues that illustrate different levels of racism – there are some great ones that demonstrate institutional/systematic racism." Women mentioned including writings from Peggy McIntosh, Angela Davison, and Marge Bolen, lyrics from conscious hip-hop, and video clips from films such as *Crash*.

One woman had a great idea for a possible seminar experience: On the day the seminar focuses on world history, have the participants bring in a current example of something to talk through with the group, that is happening in the world right now that is a manifestation of racism. This would bring the issue to the participant's doorstep. For women who are more "green" on the topic, they could bring in a joke that had been

floating around their office and for those that had more experience critical analyzing racism they could bring in some “hot topic” issues current in their local community.

### Conclusion

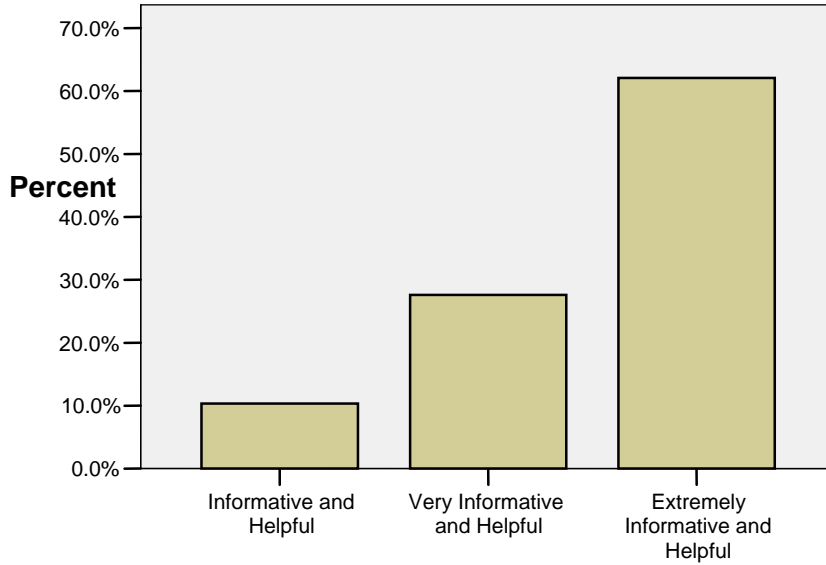
Evaluating the *Doing Our Own Work* seminar has been a great journey for me. I went from knowing very little about the research field to implementing a full-scale evaluation project. I have learned so much about research, sustainable nonprofit programming, and anti-racist activism. If I had more time I would be interested in extending my research by individually studying particular groups that attend the training. I feel it would be beneficial to understand the different experiences of the women who work in urban social service settings as compared to those who work in faith-based organizations. In addition, I think it would add depth to the study by examining the participants who came to the seminar with a lot of previous activist experience as compared to those who were “greener” in the subject. I would speculate that much of the variation in responses had to do with these four fundamental participant characteristics.

If I were doing this research again I would include a question about the overall rating of the *Doing Our Own Work* seminar. This would give me a way of gauging respondents’ overall feelings about the seminar which is a major component of how effective it is.

In conclusion, based on my research, I feel that the Leaven Center is truly impacting the lives of white anti-racist activists long after they leave the *Doing Our Own Work* seminar. It is obvious that most of these women are still actively engaged in the anti-oppression struggling in their personal and professional lives. Leaven gave them the tools and confidence needed to sustain their activism.

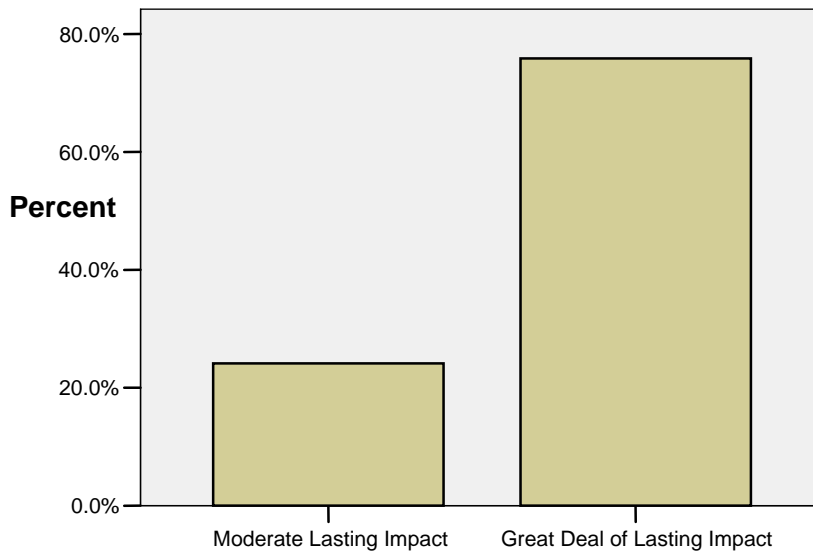
# Appendix A (Charts and Tables)

**Chart 1**



**Deepening understanding & raising awareness of racism, oppression, & privilege -- immediately**

**Chart 2**



**Conceptual Framework for Ongoing Racism Activism -- Lasting Impact**

**Table 1-2**

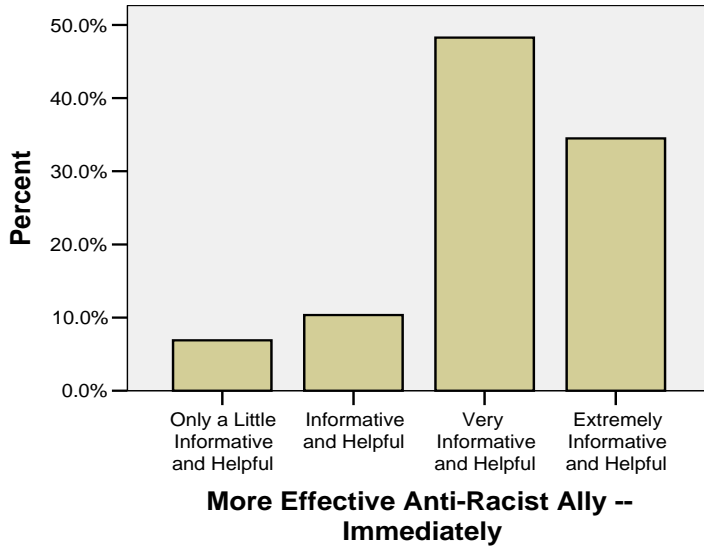
**Recognize privilege - immediately**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Informative and Helpful	3	10.3	10.3	10.3
Very Informative and Helpful	11	37.9	37.9	48.3
Extremely Informative and Helpful	15	51.7	51.7	100.0
Total	29	100.0	100.0	

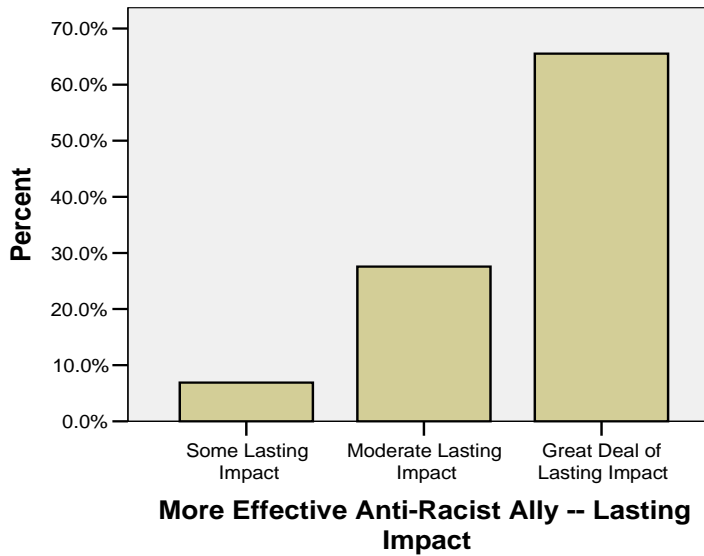
**Providing Tools for Recognizing White Privilege -- Lasting Impact**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Some Lasting Impact	1	3.4	3.4	3.4
Moderate Lasting Impact	5	17.2	17.2	20.7
Great Deal of Lasting Impact	23	79.3	79.3	100.0
Total	29	100.0	100.0	

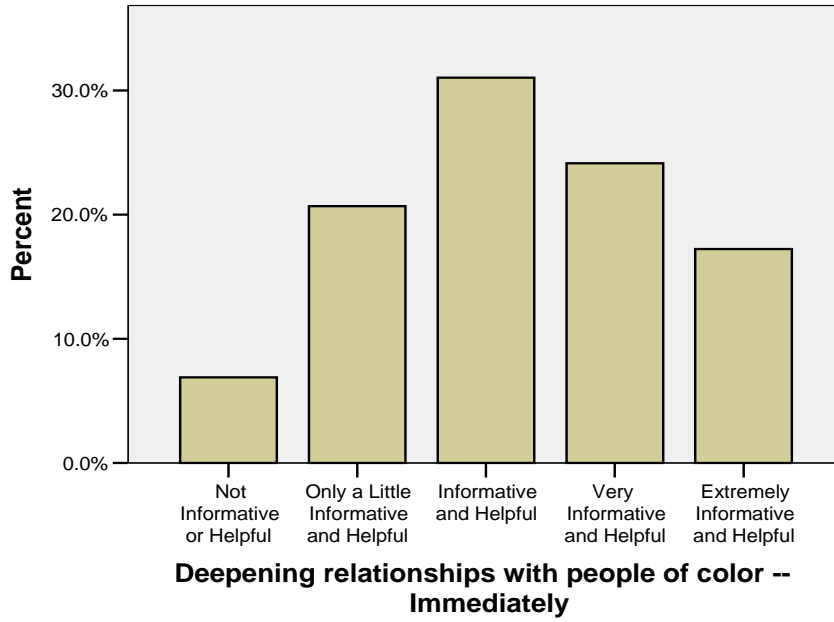
**Chart 3**



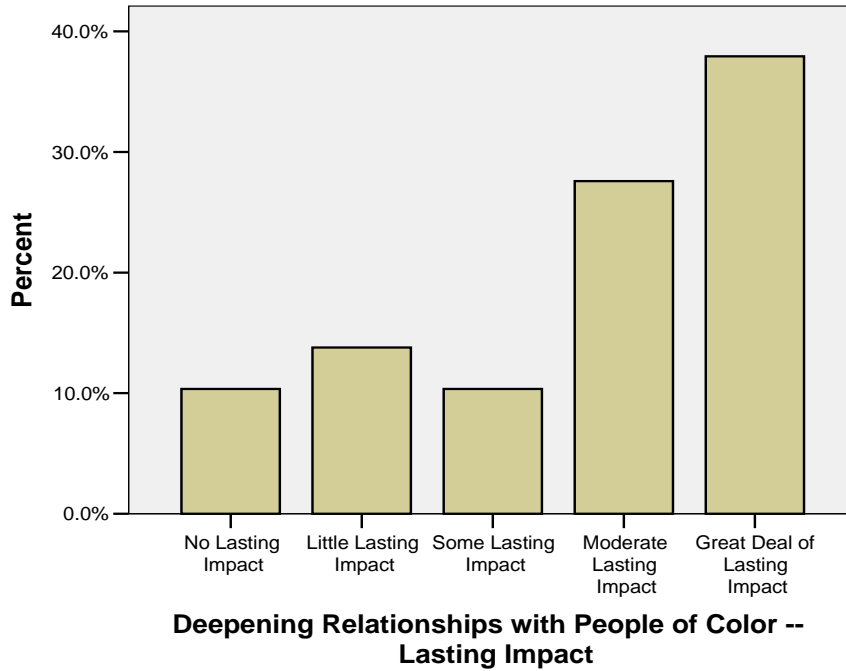
**Chart 4**



**Chart 5**



**Chart 6**

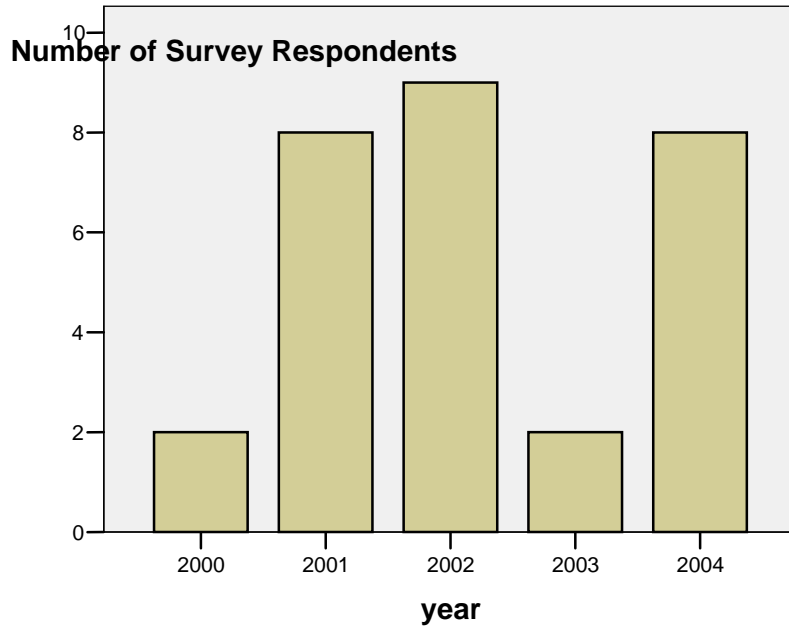


**Deepening Relationships with People of Color -- Lasting Impact \* Deepening relationships with people of color -- Immediately Crosstabulation**

			Deepening relationships with people of color -- Immediately					Total
			Not Informative or Helpful	Only a Little Informative and Helpful	Informative and Helpful	Very Informative and Helpful	Extremely Informative and Helpful	
Deepening Relationships with People of Color -- Lasting Impact	No Lasting Impact	Count % within Deepening relationships with people of color -- Immediately	2 100.0%	1 16.7%	0 .0%	0 .0%	0 .0%	3 10.3%
	Little Lasting Impact	Count % within Deepening relationships with people of color -- Immediately	0 .0%	3 50.0%	1 11.1%	0 .0%	0 .0%	4 13.8%
	Some Lasting Impact	Count % within Deepening relationships with people of color -- Immediately	0 .0%	1 16.7%	1 11.1%	1 14.3%	0 .0%	3 10.3%
	Moderate Lasting Impact	Count % within Deepening relationships with people of color -- Immediately	0 .0%	1 16.7%	5 55.6%	2 28.6%	0 .0%	8 27.6%
	Great Deal of Lasting Impact	Count % within Deepening relationships with people of color -- Immediately	0 .0%	0 .0%	2 22.2%	4 57.1%	5 100.0%	11 37.9%
Total	Count % within Deepening relationships with people of color -- Immediately	2 100.0%	6 100.0%	9 100.0%	7 100.0%	5 100.0%	29 100.0%	

**Table 3**

**Chart 7**



# **Appendix B (Ethics, Participant Correspondence, Survey Instrument, and Interview Schedule)**

## Ethics

### **1. Who are the Human Subjects?**

I have gotten the consent of the Indiana University Human Subjects Review Board.

I sent the survey to 41 women that have participated in the *Doing Our Own Work* seminars through The Leaven Center. They are from around the nation and from Canada. The women range in age from 16 to 82 years old. They have participated in the seminar between the years of 2000 until 2004. From this pool of respondents, I will select ten women with different demographics to complete a follow-up phone interview.

### **2. Informed Consent**

Before the surveys or interviews were conducted, they received a letter explaining that their participation is voluntary. In addition, I made sure they understood that they may quit the research at any time and that I will not lie about any of their responses.

### **3. Confidentiality**

I have changed all the names of the women in the paper, in order to protect their confidentiality. When talking with Melanie, the director, I am very vague in personal descriptions when talking about results. In addition, for the interviews I made sure the woman was in a place she felt comfortable to speak freely.

### **4. Broad Ethical Considerations**

To minimize the damage done to the general public, I made sure to describe in details the reasons for the seminar only being for white women. It is not in substitution for interaction with people of diverse backgrounds but it an important space to discuss white privilege and how to be better allies in the larger community.

Hi Miriam,

Greetings! I am writing to ask your help with an exciting project being undertaken by a student at Indiana University who is doing her senior thesis on the *Doing Our Own Work* seminar. Her name is Hannah Gardi and she is studying Community Development and Social Change, in addition to Sociology. For her senior thesis, she has chosen to study The Leaven Center and the *Doing Our Own Work* seminar. Because we believe Hannah's thesis can be of great benefit to Leaven and to future *Doing Our Own Work* participants, we have provided Hannah with a list of former participants and their contact information.

Hannah will be looking at the effectiveness of the seminar and she will be seeking to measure what lasting impact, if any, the seminar has had on your life. **Within the next few weeks, she will be mailing you a survey which will take approximately 10 minutes to complete.** At the same time, she will be contacting you by e-mail to see if you would prefer to complete the survey online. All of the surveys will be compiled and read solely by Hannah so please be completely candid in your answers. At a later time, she will do selected phone interviews to gather more information. If you would like to be interviewed, you may indicate your interest when you fill out the survey.

Thank you for your help with this project. We are confident that Hannah's findings will be of great use as we continue our efforts to improve the *Doing Our Own Work* seminar for future participants.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me or Hannah. Her e-mail address is [hgardi@indiana.edu](mailto:hgardi@indiana.edu)

Melanie Morrison

The Leaven Center  
[www.leaven.org](http://www.leaven.org)  
989-855-2606

Hi Miriam,

My name is Hannah Gardi. I am senior at Indiana University studying Community Development and Social Change, in addition to Sociology. For my senior thesis, I have decided to study the effectiveness and long-lasting impact of the *Doing Our Own Work* seminar.

To do this, I would love your help. I have created an online survey, for your convenience you can click this link: [www.advancesurvey.com](http://www.advancesurvey.com) and be taken directly to the *Doing Our Own Work* survey. It will only take about 10 minutes to complete!

The first section, questions 4 through 14, are make up of questions about the helpfulness of the seminar at the time you participated; the second section is composed of questions (15 through 23) about the impact of the seminar in your life today. The last section are open ended questions to provide me with more detail regarding what you are doing now and how you feel the seminar can be improved for future participants.

Your participation in the survey is completely voluntary and all the information you provide will be confidential. I will be using the information to write a paper on sustainable programming in nonprofits and to provide feedback to Melanie and The Leaven Center staff.

Thank you so much for your time. Your participation will enable us to continue to improve *Doing Our Own Work* for future participants.

If you have any questions, please feel free to e-mail me at [hgardi@indiana.edu](mailto:hgardi@indiana.edu), or call me at 517.449.6595.

Thanks so much,

Hannah Gardi

Hi Miriam,

I hope all is well in your life! I just wanted to send a friendly reminder about the opportunity you have to participate in the *Doing Our Own Work* survey. Your contribution will help me provide The Leaven Center with concrete ways they can continue to improve the seminar for future participants.

You can access the survey by clicking the following link: [www.advancedsurvey.com](http://www.advancedsurvey.com). It will only take 10 minutes and the information you provide will be invaluable.

If you have any questions feel free to call me at 517.449.6595 or e-mail me at [hgardi@indiana.edu](mailto:hgardi@indiana.edu).

Have a great day,

Hannah Gardi

Hi Miriam,

My name is Hannah Gardi. I am senior at Indiana University studying Community Development and Social Change, in addition to Sociology. For my senior thesis, I have decided to study the effectiveness and long-lasting impact of the *Doing Our Own Work* seminar.

**The survey enclosed will only take 10 minutes to complete!**

Your participation in the survey is entirely voluntary and all the information you provide will be confidential. I will be using the information to write a paper on sustainable programming in nonprofits and to provide feedback to Melanie and The Leaven Center staff.

Thank you so much for your time. Your involvement will enable us to continue to improve *Doing Our Own Work* for future participants.

If you have any questions, please feel free to e-mail me at [hgardi@indiana.edu](mailto:hgard@indiana.edu), or call me at 517.449.6595.

Thanks so much,

Hannah Gardi

Hi Miriam,

Thank you so much for taking the time to complete the *Doing Our Own Work* survey! Your participation will help us continue to improve the seminar for women in the future.

I will be contacting you soon to set up an interview time. I look forward to speaking with you!

Have a wonderful day. Thanks again.

Sincerely,

Hannah Gardi

# “Doing Our Own Work” Survey Instrument

Thank you for taking time to reflex upon your experience with the *Doing Our Own Work* seminar. Please feel free to be completely candid in your responses. With your participation we can continue to improve the seminar for future participants!

1. When did you participate in the *Doing Our Own Work* seminar?

- a. 2000    b. 2001    c. 2002    d. 2003    e. 2004    f. 2005

2. What state did you live in when you went to *Doing Our Own Work*?

\_\_\_\_\_

3. Which of the following best describes your occupation at the time of the seminar?

- a. student    b. employed    c. retired    d. working at home    e. other

## Section One: Helpfulness

On a scale of 1-5 with 1 being not helpful and 5 being extremely helpful.

Immediately following the *Doing Our Own Work* seminar, how informative and helpful was the seminar in:

1. Deepening your understanding and raising your awareness of racism, oppression, and privilege?

- |                            |                                    |                         |                              |                                   |
|----------------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1                          | 2                                  | 3                       | 4                            | 5                                 |
| Not informative or helpful | only a little informative/ helpful | Informative and helpful | very informative and helpful | extremely informative and helpful |

Comments

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2. Providing analysis and tools for recognizing white privilege in yourself or others?

- |                            |                                    |                         |                              |                                   |
|----------------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1                          | 2                                  | 3                       | 4                            | 5                                 |
| Not informative or helpful | only a little informative/ helpful | Informative and helpful | very informative and helpful | extremely informative and helpful |

Comments

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3. Providing tools and skills for confronting and challenging racism and white privilege?

- |                            |                                    |                         |                              |                                   |
|----------------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1                          | 2                                  | 3                       | 4                            | 5                                 |
| Not informative or helpful | only a little informative/ helpful | Informative and helpful | very informative and helpful | extremely informative and helpful |

**Comments**

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**4. Providing historical background about racism and white privilege?**

1	2	3	4	5
Not informative or helpful	only a little informative/ helpful	Informative and helpful	very informative and helpful	extremely informative and helpful

**Comments**

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**5. Translating your racial justice commitment into concrete actions and strategies for change?**

1	2	3	4	5
Not informative or helpful	only a little informative/ helpful	Informative and helpful	very informative and helpful	extremely informative and helpful

**Comments**

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**6. Assisting you in claiming and shaping a white identity?**

1	2	3	4	5
Not informative or helpful	only a little informative/ helpful	Informative and helpful	very informative and helpful	extremely informative and helpful

**Comments**

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**7. Assisting you in becoming a more effective anti-racist ally?**

1	2	3	4	5
Not informative or helpful	only a little informative/ helpful	Informative and helpful	very informative and helpful	extremely informative and helpful

**Comments**

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**8. Helping you explore and discern spiritual resources to sustain the work of anti-racism activism?**

1	2	3	4	5
Not informative or helpful	only a little informative/ helpful	Informative and helpful	very informative and helpful	extremely informative and helpful

**Comments**

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**9. Providing strategies for institutional change?**

1 Not informative or helpful	2 only a little informative/ helpful	3 Informative and helpful	4 very informative and helpful	5 extremely informative and helpful
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**Comments**

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**10. Developing connections, networks, and/or friendships with other white women committed to anti-racism activism?**

1 Not informative or helpful	2 only a little informative/ helpful	3 Informative and helpful	4 very informative and helpful	5 extremely informative and helpful
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**Comments**

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**11. Deepening relationships with people of color?**

1 Not informative or helpful	2 only a little informative/ helpful	3 Informative and helpful	4 very informative and helpful	5 extremely informative and helpful
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**Comments**

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**Section Two: Lasting Impact**

**On a scale of 1-5 with 1 being no lasting impact and 5 being great lasting impact.**

**In the years since taking the *Doing Our Own Work* seminar, how much lasting impact did the seminar have in:**

**1. Providing a conceptual framework and analysis for your ongoing anti-racism activism?**

1 has had no lasting impact	2 has had only a little lasting impact	3 has had a lasting impact	4 has had a moderate amt. of lasting impact	5 has had a great deal of lasting impact
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**Comments**

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**2. Providing analysis and tools for recognizing white privilege in yourself or others?**

1 has had no lasting impact	2 has had only a little lasting impact	3 has had a lasting impact	4 has had a moderate amt. of lasting impact	5 has had a great deal of lasting impact
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**Comments**

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**3. Providing tools and skills for confronting and challenging racism and white privilege?**

1	2	3	4	5
has had no lasting impact	has had only a little lasting impact	has had a lasting impact	has had a moderate amt. of lasting impact	has had a great deal of lasting impact

**Comments**

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**4. Becoming a more effective anti-racist ally?**

1	2	3	4	5
has had no lasting impact	has had only a little lasting impact	has had a lasting impact	has had a moderate amt. of lasting impact	has had a great deal of lasting impact

**Comments**

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**5. Translating your racial justice commitment into concrete actions and strategies for change?**

1	2	3	4	5
has had no lasting impact	has had only a little lasting impact	has had a lasting impact	has had a moderate amt. of lasting impact	has had a great deal of lasting impact

**Comments**

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**6. Helping you explore and discern spiritual resources to sustain the work of anti-racism activism?**

1	2	3	4	5
has had no lasting impact	has had only a little lasting impact	has had a lasting impact	has had a moderate amt. of lasting impact	has had a great deal of lasting impact

**Comments**

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**7. Providing strategies for institutional change?**

1	2	3	4	5
has had no lasting impact	has had only a little lasting impact	has had a lasting impact	has had a moderate amt. of lasting impact	has had a great deal of lasting impact

**Comments**

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**8. Developing connections, networks, and/or friendships with other white women committed to anti-racism activism?**

1	2	3	4	5
has had no lasting impact	has had only a little lasting impact	has had a lasting impact	has had a moderate amt. of lasting impact	has had a great deal of lasting impact

**Comments**

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**9. Deepening relationships with people of color?**

1	2	3	4	5
has had no lasting impact	has had only a little lasting impact	has had a lasting impact	has had a moderate amt. of lasting impact	has had a great deal of lasting impact

**Comments**

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## ***“Doing Our Own Work” Interview Schedule***

What was your age when you attended the seminar?

Were you living in an urban or rural area at the time? What kind of area do you live in now?

Did you have any children at the time? Do you have any children now?

At the time of the seminar did you draw from any particular faith tradition? Do you now?

How did you find out about Leaven?

What motivated you to participate in *Doing Our Own Work*?

What other experiences have you had with anti-racist training and/or seminars?

How is *Doing Our Own Work* different from the other program?

How is it similar?

What (and why) was your most memorable or meaningful experience during the *Doing Our Own Work* seminar? (activities or elements)

In what way has *Doing Our Own Work* impacted you personally? (Can you give an example?)

Can you give a story of how *Doing Our Own Work* has impacted you professionally?

Tell me how you have utilized spiritual resources to sustain your anti-racist activism?

How has this continued to have meaning in your life today? (In what ways? Example.)

In the seminar, participants are encouraged to choose a Sphere of Influence as a focus for their anti-racist activism. How did you pick your Sphere of Influence at the time of the seminar?

Do you feel this concept has or has not remained useful in your life? Why or way not?  
If not, are you now focused on a new Sphere of Influence? If so, what is it?

Can you tell me a story of how *Doing Our Own Work* has affected your relationship with people of color? (In what settings?)

Can you tell me a story of how *Doing Our Own Work* has affected your relationship with white people?

How could Leaven make *Doing Our Own Work* more useful for participants?