



READING & DISCUSSION GUIDE

LOVING CORRECTIONS
adrienne maree brown

New York Times-bestselling author adrienne maree brown knows we need each other more than ever, and offers a practice for holding collective power, righting wrongs, and generating true belonging.

Ethical, pondering, and wondrous, adrienne maree brown's *Loving Corrections* is a collection of love-based adjustments and reframes to grow our movements for liberation while navigating a society deeply fractured by greed, racism, and war. In this landmark book, brown invigorates her influential writing on belonging and accountability into the framework of "loving corrections"; a generative space where rehearsals for the revolution become the everyday norm in relating to one another.

Filled with practical wisdom on how to be a trustworthy communicator while providing bold visions for a shared future, *Loving Corrections* can speak to everyone caught in the crossroads of our political challenges and potential. No matter how new to the struggle, or how numerous our failures, brown's indispensable writing is an invitation to us all. Includes an afterword by Janine de Novais.

Who is this book for?

This book is for activists, community organizers, funders, people who benefit disproportionately from structural inequality, people wanting to collaborate across difference, and anyone else looking to establish more intentional practice in their relationships.

Introduction

"If we understand that we cannot cancel other living beings from the world, then how do we find dignified ways of being in communities that face, address, and evolve beyond harmful patterns?"

1. What does it look like to engage in conflict with a sense of commitment to one another and to social justice? How can we lovingly correct one another without cancelling one another? How can we receive corrections from those we care for without letting our own discomfort get in the way of making necessary changes?

Righting Gender: Relinquishing the Patriarchy

“If a woman tells you she is tired, that the dynamic of labor between you is imbalanced, it means you have been carried by her without realizing or honoring it. In naming this, she is reaching for interdependence with you.”

2. For men: Account for the ways in which you benefit from patriarchy. Take note of uneven distributions of labor and care. How can you work beyond your own discomfort to believe women if they say you are scaring or overwhelming them? How can you work to dismantle those patriarchal systems and mindsets in your intimate relationships?

Righting Imagination: Celebrating Ursula and Her Loving Corrections

“In a loving correction, we focus on aligning behind ideas rather than setting humans in binary systems, in which some of them are permanently wrong. If we can become skillful at staying connected through conflict, we can see paths where some of our most closely held ideas and practices evolve toward a collective future. People must be ready to work, to put effort and intention into communicating. And they must be willing to be vulnerable.”

3. How might we turn to science fiction to go beyond criticism and to challenge and reimagine the world we live in? What role can literature play in challenging the world we live in? How can we share across divergent belief systems?

Righting Racism: A Word for White People

“I am blessed by the antiracist white people in my inner friend circle. Instead of perfection, these friends are committed to practice, to asking questions, and really listening to the answers, to doing their own work and not putting it on me, to releasing rigid control, and seeing that there are many ways to be productive and efficient, to growing ease in taking leadership from Black people, from people of color.”

4. For white people: Consider the ways in which you benefit from white supremacy. How can you work to dismantle that privilege? How can white people redirect their energy from charity-models to resource redistribution? How can we imagine a world that is not post-racial, or colorblind, but post-racist?

Righting Family: Sisters Checking In. An Interview with adrienne, April, and Autumn

“In an essay Alexis Pauline Gumbs wrote about Aishah Shahidah Simmons, she talks about *sister* as a verb. When April came out to visit me in Oakland; when we took our sister vacation; and when we started being more intentional about how we spend our time together, that felt like we were making sister a verb in our lives.”

5. What makes long term commitment to relationships through friction, disagreement, difference, and distance a sustainable practice? How can intergenerational cycles of repressing conflict be traded for accountability?

Righting Solidarity: Flocking Together

“I am a student of belonging and I recognize that my liberation is tied up with the liberation of all oppressed peoples. I invite you to join me here and learn as we go.”

6. When feeling overwhelmed by multiple crises unfolding at once, cultivate a practice of turning to community organizers on the ground for leadership. How might we divest from oppressive systems and learn to practice humanity, connection, and solidarity transnationally, beyond social media?

Righting Ableism: Disability Justice Is for All Bodies

“Each body that you have lived in and will live in—your child body, teen body, adult body, elder body, healthy body, ailing body—each one is sacred, sovereign, special, and deserving of support. Each body you come across in the world, from parents to friends to lovers to children to teachers to coworkers to strangers—each one is sacred, sovereign, special, and deserving of support.”

7. How can we be clear about the needs of our own bodies and support others to care for their bodies on their own terms? How can we acknowledge and make room for the needs of everyone in the room? How can we support all bodies, in all their divergent needs, as sovereign?

Righting High: A Word to My Fellow Cannabis Users

“I try to get high for pleasure and relief, not escape.”

8. As organizers, how can we maintain clarity of mind and bring our best selves to collective work? How do substances such as cannabis impact our ability to work together?

Righting Boundaries: Cultivate Your Privacy. Tend Your Wounds

“It is a mark of our loneliness when the only place we can bring our wounds is to a fickle public sphere. It can be dangerous, it can be performative, it can briefly generate some attention and sense of togetherness, but it is rare that intimate, deep healing happens in the public spaces of the internet. We need to be held in conversation, in real life.”

9. How can we seek authentic connections AFK/offline? How can we cultivate a practice of speaking about what is tender, intimate, private, and new to us? How can these conversations happen in more intimate spaces and out of the spotlight?

Righting Abundance: An Emergent Strategy Primer for Funders

“Trust people working over time to cultivate strategies and scale them appropriately. Fund with a fractal strategy—pay attention to groups who are experimenting and growing strategies starting at a small scale.”

10. Questions for funders to ask themselves: How can I direct my resources toward justice? Does my involvement sustain current conditions of inequality? How can I add to a movement’s momentum rather than their workload? How can I follow the effective models set by the Auburn Seminary Spiritual Resilience Fellowship, Emergent Fund, Groundswell Liberation Fund, and Third Wave Fund?

Righting Ego: Four Insights for Radical Organizing from the Mysterious World of Mushrooms

“What impresses me most about mycelia is that the majority of its existence and work is done underground and yet it tangibly contributes to the resilience and well-being of itself and its entire ecosystem. I think humans, and especially those of us who are seeking collaborative justice, have so much to learn from our distant fungal relatives.”

11. Consider the role of fungal networks in binding soil and establishing lines of communication across species. What can mushrooms teach us about communication, equity, abundance, resilience, and loving correction? How can we recycle what we have, including pain and toxicity, into something sustaining and life affirming?

MURMURATIONS

Stewarding the Future

“How do we build the future on a deep yes, a deep longing for what we want? And in the context of practicing loving corrections, what do we mean when we say abolition, accountability, interdependence, community, and liberation?”

12. Where do pleasure and love fit into liberatory politics? How do the ways we treat our own bodies relate to our relationships, our imagination, and our political commitments?

Building a Compassionate Economics

“We don’t have to try to be connected; we must become mindful to the truth of our existing and constant oneness.”

13. Consider the role fear plays in shaping social life, structures of power, and intimate relationships. How might we exchange judgement and binary thinking for compassion and community?

Realizing Our Abolitionist Dreams

“We dream of abolition but to make it real we must understand that every relationship with other people, or with the land we are on, is practice ground. And we need each of these places to practice toward a viable, embodied accountability, one we can rely on under pressure.”

14. How does accountability differ from punishment? In what ways can we be more honest about where we stand and what we each need in the present?

How to Be Accountable with Your Words

“When I take the risk of speaking not through or over my emotions but rather in alignment with, or even from, my emotions, I am speaking my truth.”

15. How can you be more precise in our speech? How can you learn to speak through fear? How can you speak from your body? How can you speak in a way that holds space for other truths?

Accountability Begins Within

“I suspect that this externalization of accountability, especially the structural outsourcing of accountability from the self or community to the government or religious institutions, is part of what feeds cycles of harm. When we are not able to choose accountable actions on our own, when we are only held accountable once we are caught by another body, many of us can get caught in a state of arrested development, childlike, acting from a place of reckless abandon, instant gratification, and short-term thinking.”

16. Who and what are you accountable to? What is the difference between a “state of collective fragility” and one of internal accountability? How might accountability operate differently if not reliant on policing or external call-outs?

Returning to the Whole

“One of the first steps we can take toward generating internal accountability is to develop an assessment of why the world is as it is. This requires us to leap from the uninformed faith we have in the societal myths we were given as children, to the informed faith that we need to co-create the real world as adults. This informed faith is based not on cultural myths but instead on lived experience, political education, and analysis.”

17. How can we recognize that we all have healing to do and identify what that means? How can we cultivate an ongoing practice of healing?

Love Looks like Accountability

“If we hope to strengthen the net of our society, we need to strengthen the bonds between each pair and group of individuals. What we want is a net so strong, so satisfying, that no one can fall through it.”

18. If we can ground and center our own bodies and beliefs, how might we show up more intentionally for others? Can we commit to giving and receiving feedback? Can we commit to respecting one another’s boundaries?

Breaking Is a Part of Healing

“Our spiritual work is, at its heart, finding a sacred peace in the present, which will change, and which will end. I want to explore how our spiritual practices and beliefs around death interact with the work we must do here on Earth.”

19. How can spirituality center life and the earth rather than the promise of an afterlife? How might a sense of collective wonder for life and respect for death shift how we think about and practice accountability?

Accountable to Earth

“Another practice I’m interested in is folding the Earth into every other thing I do, every decision I make. When I consider any concern I have for people, place, animal, culture, danger, I root myself back to the relationship to our Earth and the changes currently unfolding for her.”

20. How might centering the planet and non-human life change our actions? How can we hold ourselves accountable to the land?

Accountable Endings

“We have all been inundated with the colonial, capitalist, heteronormative, and patriarchal ideas that this dying world inflicts upon us. Interrogate these ideas as they arise. Ask yourself if any of them actually feel true and compelling to you. One hint that they don’t is when you find yourself in structures of obligation, imbalanced care, constant sacrifice, or perpetual frustration.”

21. How can we center curiosity and wonder for the world around us? How might we learn to notice when ideas and habits are no longer worth holding on to? How can we move through climate crises collectively with curiosity, care, and accountability?

SOLSTICE AND EQUINOX SPELLS

The last section of *Loving Corrections* is a series of poetic spells for each season. Below are fragments from each.

A WINTER SOLSTICE SPELL

“we sing forgiveness
we sing of the fire
between skin and dirt
the rivers within us
the storms we conjure
before we sleep”

A SPELL FOR THE SPRING EQUINOX

“Let us act like we got some roots
Know that we are held deeply
Even as we dance towards the golden breast of the sun
life delectable again”

A SUMMER SOLSTICE SPELL

“jit and jive
the frontmost line
is everywhere now
but we still alive
we carry our dead
in our eyes
crying out: it’s summer”

A SPELL FOR THE FALL EQUINOX

“ours is not the only life on earth
nor the only death
let your altars hold the earth
and the sky, and sea

it is time to gather and grieve
time to listen and pray
time to find the cave that
curves against our spines”

A FINAL WINTER SOLSTICE SPELL

“aim for clean snow and pure water
air that smells of pine and sweetgrass
dirt you can eat
fire that burns with purpose”

22. What role do poetry and spells play in teaching us how to bring about change?

Conclusion: From Fragility to Fortitude

“To break one’s own patterns down, to enter the space of truly not knowing what to do differently and surrendering to that, becoming not “nothing” but rather something entirely foreign, something unrecognizable, and perhaps not even truly visible to the past self . . . This is miraculous work that requires strength, repetition, and practice.”

23. In what ways might meditation make movements and their organizers more resilient? What are we practicing in our day-to-day relationships and how do these practices align with the values we are working towards?

Afterword by Janine de Novais

“How do we craft freedom from unfreedom, craft “happy pockets” amid despair, and lovingly correct course?”

24. Janine de Novais draws out the act of “loving correction” as one that is both deeply uncomfortable and essential to our ability to learn and to our wellbeing as people and communities. She reminds that these are acts of friendship and love, which ultimately make personal relationships and movements more resilient.

READINGS & TOOLS

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About the Author

adrienne maree brown grows ideas in public. She is a student of the works of Octavia E. Butler and Ursula K. Le Guin. Some of her books include *Emergent Strategy*, *Pleasure Activism*, *We Will Not Cancel Us*, and the speculative fiction trilogy, *Grievors*. She is the editor of the Emergent Strategy Series.