

CHAPTER 1

Getting Ready

The first challenge for any group considering Peace and Power is to figure out if this is for you! Making a change to act and interact in cooperative ways that build strong community requires a commitment from everyone, challenges many practices that are habitual, and requires new learning for everyone. If you use this process, be aware that you, along with everyone in your group, will be called upon to make significant personal changes.

As you and your group consider using Peace and Power, it will be helpful for you to think about the following questions. These questions provide a background from which you can clarify your shared intentions to bring about fundamental change.

- ***Do we agree about our purpose?*** It is common for members of a group to have different ideas about the group's purpose. Identifying a simple statement that reflects a common understanding of what you are all about is a good foundation for the work of Peace and Power.
- ***Do we seek to equalize the balance of power among everyone in the group?*** If people in your group can answer "yes" to this question, Peace and Power processes are for you. This is easier said than done, and you will probably find that you will want to return to this fundamental value as a group over and over as you work out how to make it a reality.
- ***How independent are we?*** If your group is part of a larger hierarchical structure (for example, a school, corporation, or business) it will be more difficult to enact Peace and Power processes fully. It will not be impossible, but realize that you may have to make major adjustments (see Chapter 12.) If you are relatively independent of an external hierarchical structure (for example, a community activist group, spiritual community, or intentional community), you will still be influenced by everyone's habits in hierarchical ways of working together in a group. But you will be relatively free to create your own processes consistent with Peace and Power.
- ***Are we all committed to spending time together?*** It is not possible to develop a community unless you spend time together. You may not be able to be together often, but you need to have some regular and agreed-on time to be together, either in person or using a virtual meeting room with both audio and video. Not everyone has to be present each time your group meets, but everyone needs to know when and where the group meets.
- ***Is everyone willing to pay attention to the group's process?*** Peace and Power processes require taking time and turning attention to reflect on and discuss the group's process. Bringing values and actions together is only possible if you take the time to discuss what

is happening in the process, and together carefully consider if your values and your actions indeed match.

- ***Do we seek meaningful change in ourselves and in the world at large?*** Peace and Power processes are designed to create practices that nurture and empower. These ideals are appealing to most people, but because they are rarely reflected in action, it is hard to anticipate what it will take to make them happen. A key to making this change happen is a shared vision that this is possible, and a shared intention to take the actions needed for it to happen!