

# Healing steps for leaders of color serving in white spaces:

*How to retreat, release, reintegrate, and invite*

## Retreat

**Retreat is taking an intentional pause, a posture in which we distance ourselves from what is bringing heaviness.**

### Stories

Here are some ideas to engage with stories that mirror your own cultural background and elevate its beauty and assets.

- Watch a movie.
- Pick up an autobiography.
- Watch a documentary.

### Breaking Bread

Meals that are shared with others remind us that at that table, we share in filling our basic needs of nourishment and connection.

- Pick a recipe you have always wanted to make and take your time making it.
- Invite friends to share a meal.

### Spiritual Disciplines

- Prayer of Examen.
- Centering practices or contemplative prayer.
- Engage in worship through song.
- Practice Sabbath by stepping away from work.
- Invite people to be a part of a discernment circle with you.

### Travel

- Take a day trip with friends.
- Visit a neighboring city and learn its history.
- If possible, take a trip abroad.
- Visit a local spiritual retreat center.

# Release

**Naming our experience—the exhaustion, the pent-up frustration, the hurt—helps us release it.**

## Communicate

- Call a trusted friend.
- Text a friend or group of friends, inviting them into the moment and asking for prayer.
- Journal.

## Laughter

Laughter is a reminder that death and darkness do not have the last word. Laughter has the power to pierce through the webs of lies and cuffs that keep us enslaved.

- Research local comedy clubs and attend.
- Meet up to share a meal with a friend that you can laugh with.
- Pick up a comedian's book.
- Listen to podcasts that have a comedic flare.

## Artistic Expression

- Join a paint night.
- Find open-mic opportunities.
- Write your own stand up comedy.
- Write poetry.

## Movement

Moving your body through exercise can help defuse some of the tension, and sometimes you may need to physically move away from a situation for a while.

Here are ideas to move:

- Take a walk, hike, or run.
- Enroll at a local dance studio and learn a new kind of dancing.
- Take a local martial arts course.
- Enroll in a workout class at your local gym.

# Reintegrate

**The work that we do cannot be accomplished alone. So, when the reintegration is appropriate, I always enter with a clear why and how.**

Having a couple of phrases that capture your “why” keep the purpose and direction of the work in constant alignment as you engage in your daily rhythms.

## Take a moment to reflect on why you do what you do:

These could be statements, a bullet list, scripture verses, stories, mantras, etc.

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## Values and Commitments

What are the values and commitments you want to abide by in your cross-cultural work and relationships?

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Who can you invite to help you delineate these?

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## Boundaries

Think of a current invitation or situation in which you need to make a decision about your involvement. How might the values and commitments listed above directly inform your decision?

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# Invite

**No one can appreciate or understand the topography of who we are without an invitation. So as leaders, we invite.**

List the names of people you would like to invite to get a glimpse into your reality:

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## Ways to invite others:

- Share meals at a restaurant or cook something together. Explain a cultural food or meal tradition that is meaningful to you.
- Watch movies that highlight your experience.
- Listen together to music that you love, or share a link to a song or short video that connects with your cultural reality.
- Attend a local event that you enjoy.
- Share a podcast that you find helpful or energizing.



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