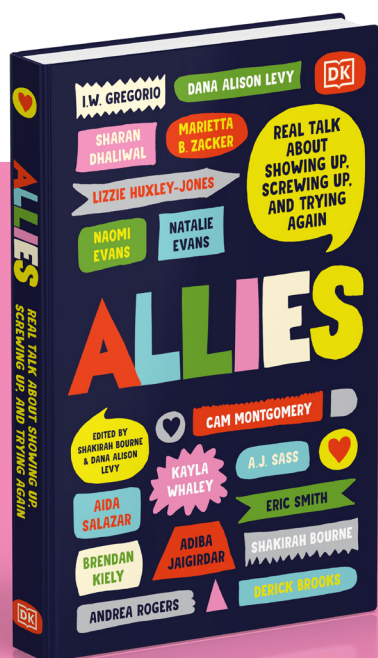




ALLIES

REAL TALK ABOUT SHOWING UP,
SCREWING UP, AND TRYING AGAIN

DISCUSSION GUIDE



WRITTEN BY JULIA E. TORRES

JULIA E. TORRES is a nationally recognized veteran language arts teacher-librarian in Denver, Colorado. Julia facilitates teacher development workshops rooted in the areas of anti-racist education, equity, and access in literacy and librarianship, and education as a practice of liberation. Julia's work has been featured on NPR, Al Jazeera's *The Stream*, PBS Education, KQED's *MindShift*, *Rethinking Schools*, *Learning for Justice* magazine, and many more. She is a current Amelia Elizabeth Walden Book Award committee member, a member of both the Book Love Foundation and ALAN boards of directors, an Educator Steering committee member, a The Educator Collaborative Book Ambassador, and a co-founder of #DisruptTexts.

DISCUSSION GUIDE

As an ally you use your power—no matter how big or small—to support others. You learn, and try, and mess up, and try harder.

As you contemplate and discuss the questions

below, consider and reflect on each of the 17 essays featured in *Allies: Real Talk About Showing Up, Screwing Up, and Trying Again* and how they might tie in. There are no easy answers, but the book, together with these discussion questions, invites you to think about your own experiences and choices. Because we're all in this together. We can all be allies. And we all need allies.

Discussion Questions:

Society

1. What is the difference between being an ally, an accomplice, or a co-conspirator?
2. What is the difference between calling out and calling in? Which, from your perspective, is more effective when striving for change?
3. What structures in society exist that keep us from seeing one another as fully human? What tools exist to dismantle them?
4. What laws exist to protect vulnerable individuals in society? How can individuals ensure they are upheld?
5. Which forms of oppression are people in society the most vocal about? Which are the groups about whom we remain silent?

Community

1. Who are the leaders in your community who are holding conversations or performing actions of allyship?
2. Identify some examples of community activism that you feel are successful. Identify some examples that have missed the mark and explain why.
3. Describe a time when someone in your community advocated for those being victimized.
4. What actions should communities take to create and uphold emotionally and physically safe spaces for vulnerable groups and individuals?
5. How do community norms and expectations limit the ability to honor differences?

Individuals

1. What small actions can you take on a daily basis to advocate for those around you experiencing oppression or marginalization?
2. From your perspective, is it possible to help those in need, to garner sympathy for those experiencing oppression, without dehumanizing them?
3. What responsibility do you feel you have to those experiencing prejudice or discrimination?
4. What experiences have you had that have changed your views about the importance of being an ally?
5. How are your actions influenced by those around you? Can you recall a time when you stood alone to rectify injustice?

Critical Analysis

1. What are the implications of being a private ally and publicly silent?
2. Where are you in the social hierarchy of power within your country or community? How does your position impact your interactions with others?
3. What recommendations would you give to someone who fears being made an outcast for standing against injustice?
4. How can empathy and action work together?
5. How does your lived experience contrast with someone who shares opposing identity markers?

