# At A Glance: Overview of Lessons

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<th>Lesson</th>
<th>Learning Goals</th>
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| **Introduction to Revolutionary Love** | ● To define and explore revolutionary love as a choice to labor for others, opponents, and ourselves in the pursuit of justice  
● To redefine love as more than emotion, but rather as the choice to enter into sweet labor  
● To explore and reflect upon our own understandings and definitions of love | “Three Lessons of Revolutionary Love In a Time of Rage” (Kaur, 2018) |
| 1: Wonder | ● To explore the practice of wonder through examining the processes and power dynamics of storytelling  
● To examine the ways that stories reveal information about the listeners, the storytellers, and the society and culture in which it is told  
● To question how issues of race, gender, class, sexual orientation, and other social factors shape how stories are told, heard, and valued  
● To reflect upon our own practice of wondering about others | Wonder and storytelling: “The danger of a single story” (Adichie) |
| 2: Grieve | ● To explore the practice of grieving as a labor of revolutionary love and a practice of solidarity building  
● To learn about and from the fight for Black lives, past and present  
● To learn about and from the experiences of Sikh Americans after the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001  
● To examine how collective grieving—in communities and as a nation and world—might transform our visions and actions for justice | **Part 1:** Grieving, Anti-Black racism, and revolutionary love: *The American Nightmare* (Kendi, 2020)  
**Part 2:** Grieving hate crimes against Sikh Americans after 9/11: Documentary film: “*Divided We Fall: Americans in the Aftermath*” (Kaur and Raju, 2008) |
<p>| 3: Fight | ● To explore the relationship between the practices of revolutionary love, anti-racism, and fighting for justice | Fighting through anti-racism and revolutionary love: <em>How to build an anti-racist world</em> (Kendi, 2020) |</p>
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<th>4: Rage</th>
<th>• To reflect upon our roles and responsibilities in the fight for justice, including our work as accomplices/allies for others</th>
<th>Rage, reckoning, and revolutionary love: “Killing Race: Militant Resistance” (hooks, 1996)</th>
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| 5: Listen | • To explore the practice of listening to opponents by studying examples of deep listening  
• To reflect upon our roles and responsibilities in listening to opponents  
• To discern challenges and possibilities of listening to our opponents  
• To examine how we can learn from listening to opponents and apply this information in our work for justice | Deep listening and revolutionary love: Confederate Pride, White Supremacy, and My State Flag (Moral Courage, 2017) |
| 6: Reimagine | • Learn about the theories and processes of prison abolition and their relationship to the practices of reimagining and revolutionary love  
• Exercise our collective imagination by reimagining systems of justice, harm, and collective care, and accountability  
• Consider the practices of rage and listening to opponents in the work of reimagining  
• Consider alternate forms of justice and healing that could be implemented in place of our current systems  
• Reflect upon our own commitments to act in the service of a collective vision of justice | Reimagining justice: Prison abolition and restorative justice Materials include What a world without prisons could look like (Van Buren, 2017); Ruth Wilson Gilmore Makes the Case for Abolition (Intercepted Podcast, June 10, 2020) |
| 7: Breathe | • To examine “breathing” in revolutionary love through the principles and practices of collective care and disability justice  
• To name and challenge structural inequalities (such as ableism, racism, sexism, classism, homophobia, | Breathing and lessons from disability justice movements: Materials include 10 principles of disability justice (Sins Invalid, 2019); Organizing in a Pandemic: Disability Justice Wisdom |
transphobia) that treat some bodies as less worthy of care, attention, and love
  ● To explore the role of interdependence and reflect upon our own practices of collective care

| 8: Push | ● To examine the processes of healing from harm and accountability from violence  
  ● To analyze the principles and movement-building strategies from Tarana Burke’s “Me Too” campaign  
  ● To reflect upon our own processes of accountability and responsibility when we commit harm  
         | Pushing, healing, and revolutionary love: Me Too is a Movement, Not a Moment (Burke, 2018) |
| 9: Transition | ● To explore the processes of transition as individuals, communities, and as a nation  
  ● To reflect on the practices of transition as a revolutionary act of loving ourselves  
  ● To cultivate our own bravery in commitments for justice  
         | Transitioning ourselves, our communities, and our nations: These Are The Times That Grow Our Souls (Boggs, 2003) |
| 10: Joy | ● To explore joy as a practice of revolutionary love  
  ● To engage with artists, activists, and practitioners who explicitly center joy as an act of resistance, resilience, and creation  
  ● To reflect upon and share the practices, people, objects, and places that bring us joy  
         | Joy and revolutionary love. Materials include: “On Joy and Sorrow” (Gibran, 1923) and Racism is Terrible, Blackness is Not (Perry, 2020) |

**Key Points for Educators and Learners**

In revolutionary love, *how we do the work is as important as the work that we do*. We believe that our classrooms and communities can be places of deep creativity, bravery, and transformation. We invite you to bring the practices of wonder and revolutionary love into the ways that you teach and learn.

The following are some key points about how to understand and teach what revolutionary love is (and what it isn’t).

**Revolutionary love is ...**

*Revolutionary love is* an orientation to the world and to the work of justice that is most successfully practiced in community. Revolutionary love is more than an emotion or feeling. It is the ongoing choice to labor for others, opponents, and ourselves.
Introduction: What is Revolutionary Love?

**We recommend that all students begin with this introductory lesson, especially those who have not read the book See No Stranger.**

Description

“Love is a form of sweet labor: fierce, bloody, imperfect, and life giving—a choice we make over and over again. Love can be taught, modeled, and practiced. . . . “Revolutionary love” is the choice to enter into labor for others, for our opponents, and for ourselves in order to transform the world around us. It is not a formal code or prescription but an orientation to life that is personal and political, rooted in joy.”

(Kaur, 2020, p. 310)

This lesson complements Valarie Kaur’s 2018 TED talk: Three Lessons of Revolutionary Love in a Time of Rage and invites students to examine and explore Kaur’s definition of revolutionary love as a force for justice.
**Learning Goals**

- To define and explore revolutionary love as a choice to labor for others, opponents, and ourselves in the pursuit of justice
- To redefine love as more than emotion, but rather as the choice to enter into sweet labor
- To explore and reflect upon our own understandings and definitions of love

**Materials Needed**

- Valarie Kaur TED talk: [Three Lessons of Revolutionary Love in a Time of Rage](https://www.ted.com/talks/valarie_kaur_three_lessons_of_revolutionary_love_in_a_time_of_rage) (20m)
- The [transcript](https://www.ted.com/talks/valarie_kaur_three_lessons_of_revolutionary_love_in_a_time_of_rage) of the talk is also available.
- The [Guide to Revolutionary Love Compass](https://www.valariekaur.org/compass)
- Strongly Recommended: [See No Stranger: A Memoir and Manifesto of Revolutionary Love](https://www.valariekaur.com/books/see-no-stranger) (Valarie Kaur, 2020)
- Material or device to write; art supplies (e.g. markers, colored pencils) and easel paper or whiteboard

**Opening Reflection**

Before viewing the TED talk, reflect upon the following questions. These prompts can be answered individually and/or in small groups.

Reflect and free-write upon the following questions.

- How do you personally define love?
- How did you learn about love from your family, friends, partners?

Share your responses in groups or pairs. In your groups, consider the following discussion questions:

- What do you notice about these definitions of love? What is similar and different about these definitions of love?
- What types or kinds of love are included in these definitions (i.e. romantic love, familial love, love of country, self-love)?
- In what ways, and from whom, have we learned what it means to love and be loved?

**Options for educators:**

- If time permits, you may choose to have individuals begin by freewriting about the prompt individually, then work in small groups to create a collective illustration of their responses on larger pieces of easel paper or on a chalk/white board. Small groups could present their illustrations and the discussion questions could be discussed by the class or larger group.
**Definition and Guiding Questions**

“Love is a form of sweet labor: fierce, bloody, imperfect, and life giving—a choice we make over and over again. Love can be taught, modeled, and practiced. It engages all our emotions: Joy is the gift of love. Grief is the price of love. Anger protects that which is loved. And when we think we have reached our limit, wonder is the act that returns us to love.”

‘Revolutionary love’ is the choice to enter into labor for others, for our opponents, and for ourselves in order to transform the world around us. It is not a formal code or prescription but an orientation to life that is personal and political, rooted in joy.” (Kaur, 2020, p. 310)

1. What is revolutionary love, as defined by Valarie Kaur?
2. How is revolutionary love similar and different to our society’s popular definition of love?
3. How can revolutionary love be a force for both personal and political transformation?

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**Engagement and Dialogue: Introducing revolutionary love**

**View**

- Three Lessons of Revolutionary Love in a Time of Rage (Valarie Kaur, 2018, 20m).
- The transcript of the talk is also available.
- As you view the film, consider the following questions:
  - How does Kaur define revolutionary love?
  - In what ways is Kaur’s definition of love similar or different to your/your group’s definition of love?
**Activity: The art of revolutionary love**

After viewing the film, engage in the following discussion and illustration activity. If working in groups, you may utilize the same groups as created in the opening reflection.

Discuss the following questions:

- How does Kaur define revolutionary love?
- How is revolutionary love similar or different from the ways that you have been taught about love?
- Which of the 3 directions of revolutionary love—love for others, opponents, or ourselves—are you most curious about? Why?
- Based on Kaur’s talk, what is the relationship between love and justice?

Using images, symbols, and phrases, create an illustration of the definition of revolutionary love as defined by Kaur.

**Options for educators:**

- In a larger group, educators may choose to divide the students into 3 groups to focus their illustration on one of the directions of revolutionary love. For example: Group 1: illustrates love for others, Group 2: love for opponents, Group 3: love for ourselves.
- These illustrations could be shared with the large group by having each group present their illustration or by arranging a “gallery walk”: posting the illustrations around the room and asking students to walk around and view the illustrations as though viewing art in a gallery.

After creating and sharing these illustrations, refer to the questions below to facilitate dialogue about the film and illustrations.

**Sample dialogue questions**

*See the Key Points section below to guide the dialogue.

- What are some key distinctions between love as we have been taught (illustrated in the introductory discussion) and revolutionary love (as defined by Kaur)?
- How does revolutionary love ask us to act in ways that are different from the ways that love is “supposed to make us feel”?
- Do you think that we need revolutionary love in our communities and country now? Why or why not?
- What do you think are the challenges of fighting for justice through revolutionary love? What are the opportunities and possibilities?
- What do you think revolutionary love looks like in practice?

**Closing reflection**

Read the [Guide to Revolutionary Love Compass](#) and reflect on the following questions:
- Which of the three directions of revolutionary love—love for others, love for opponents, or love for ourselves—are most challenging for you to practice? Why?
- Which of the 10 practices of revolutionary love are the most intuitive or easiest for you to practice? Which are the most challenging? Why?

**After completing this lesson, educators may choose to proceed sequentially through the 10 lessons, or may “drop in” to any of the lessons that interest them.**

### Key Points

- “Revolutionary love is the choice to enter into labor for others, for our opponents, and for ourselves in order to transform the world around us. It is not a formal code or prescription but an orientation to life that is personal and political, rooted in joy” (Kaur, 2020, p. 310).
- There are three directions of Revolutionary Love: love for others, opponents, and ourselves. “Loving only ourselves is escapism; loving only our opponents is self-loathing; loving only others is ineffective. All three practices together make love revolutionary, and revolutionary love can only be practiced in community” (Kaur, 2020, p. 310).
- Revolutionary Love is a continual practice, a choice to labor and each of us has a role in any given time. We can all be midwives in this time of great transition (Kaur, 2020).
- Revolutionary love draws from the teachings and examples of generations of activists, community leaders, scholars, and ancestral wisdoms, particularly those of Black, Indigenous, women of color.
- “Revolutionary love is demanding labor, but it is also creative, transformative, and joyful labor— immeasurably complex and messy, tumultuous and revelatory, marked by wonder, and worth it” (Kaur, 2020, p. 315-316).
For Deeper Exploration

● Read *See No Stranger: A Memoir and Manifesto of Revolutionary Love* (Kaur, 2020)
● Additional readings to accompany this lesson for undergraduate audiences may include *All About Love* (bell hooks) and *Art of Loving* (Erich Fromm)
● Educators and scholars could explore the ethic of love within their specific fields. For example, “How have scholars and practitioners theorized or applied an ethic of love (or an ethic of care) in your field of study?”
  ○ Examples: In the field of education, scholars/pedagogues who write about teaching and learning through an ethic of love and healing include bell hooks, Paolo Freire, Antonia Darder, Jeffrey M.R. Duncan-Andrade and Ernest Morell, Antonia Darder, and Shawn Ginwright.
  ○ In the field of peacebuilding, scholars include Johan Galtung, John Paul Lederach.
  ○ In ethics, scholars include Judith Butler, Sara Ahmed, and other scholars of moral theory

Additional Resources and Readings (a partial list)

● [Notes and references from the TED talk](#)
● Selected [Reading list](#)