

# Queering Religious Leadership: Trans and Non-Binary Seminarians (Re)Envisioning Ministry

## Trans Liberation Toolbox



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LEADERSHIP COHORT**

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# Agenda

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- Introduction
- Call to Worship
- Introducing the Tools
- Honing the Tools: Discussion Groups
- Sending Forth

## **Objective:**

By the end of this workshop, participants should feel comfortable using a spiritual tool to transform ministry spaces for transgender and non-binary people.

**“For the master’s tools will never dismantle the master’s house. They may allow us to temporarily beat him at his own game, but they will never enable us to bring about genuine change. Racism and homophobia are real conditions of all our lives in this place and time. I urge each one of us here to reach down into that deep place of knowledge inside herself and touch that terror and loathing of any difference that lives here. See whose face it wears. Then the personal as the political can begin to illuminate all our choices.” - Audre Lorde**



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# Call to Presence

## Part I

L: We know that the house we have been given is not our home

**C: It is time that we build something new, a home of our own.**

L: We have had our tools stolen, and the tools we have been given do not fit us.

**C: It is time to take back our tools, tools that come from our lives and experiences.**

L: This world needs our voices, without them it is empty.



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# Call to Presence

## Part II

**C: Our bodies, our voices, our lives are blessings.**

L: Now is the time for us to stand together and stand strong in who we are.

**C: Now is the time to tell *our* stories, and make this a conversation with us, not about us.**

L: Bring your gifts, bring your tools, let us stand together.

**C: Let us build together.**

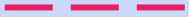
**ALL: Together we shall not fall. Amen.**



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# The Tools



# Discernment

Tool 1/6

- “Corporate” Discernment
  - Embodied and Communal
- Social Analysis
- Connected to:
  - Embodiment, Expansiveness, Transition



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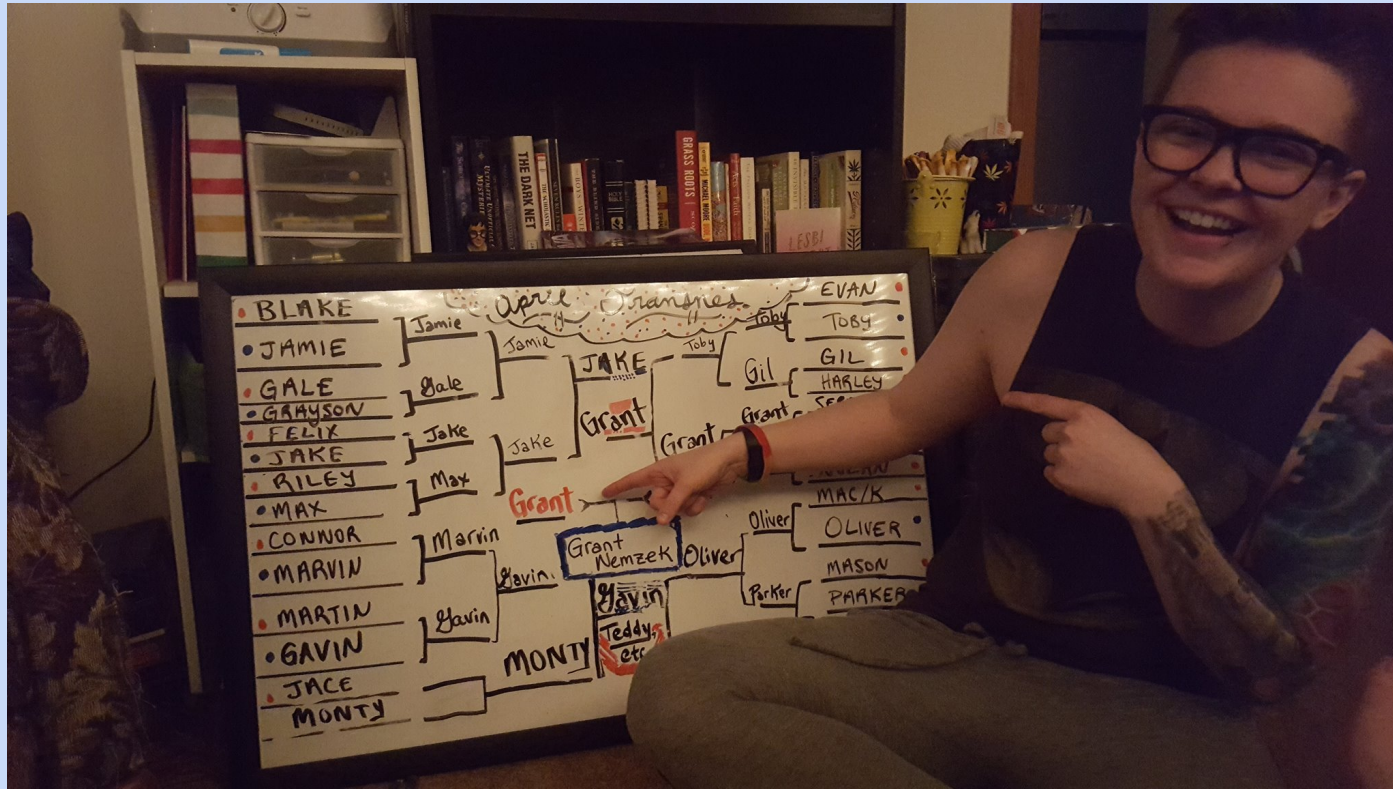


Photo courtesy of Grant Nemzek



# Boundaries

Tool 2/6

What are boundaries?

Anecdote.... (Story time)

Practice using boundaries.



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Boundaries are guidelines that a person creates to identify reasonable, safe, and permissible ways for other people to behave towards them and how they will respond when someone passes those limits.

- Wikipedia “personal boundaries”



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# A Story...

**“I was asked to tell my transition story in a sermon and when I was done, the senior pastor let me know that he wanted me to talk more about my personal struggles with transition and the ways I have felt about my body. This made me really uncomfortable. I was more interested in talking about my story and the oppression that trans people face. It felt like I was being forced into a box of trans people’s narratives.”**

**- Thomas - Trans Seminary Student**

# Embodiment

Tool 3/6

“Deep truth that you sense, feel,  
and honor within your body.” -  
Jenna Ward



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**““My narrative doesn’t have an ending, because my gender journey is not complete.””**

**- Jodi Norton in Justin Tanis**

**Embodiment**

Tool 3/6



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# Expansiveness

Tool 4/6

- **Rejection of the forced narrative**
  - Rewriting of reality
- **Experienced for many at the beginning of understanding one's-self as trans. And continues across the journey**
- **Reflection of the working of God throughout history**
- **Entering into this reality makes this reality easier for others to enter into.**
- **Brings about and is brought about by each other tool.**



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# Expansiveness

Tool 4/6

“Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure. It is our light, not our darkness that most frightens us. We ask ourselves, Who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented, fabulous? Actually, who are you not to be? You are a child of God. Your playing small does not serve the world. There is nothing enlightened about shrinking so that other people won't feel insecure around you. We are all meant to shine, as children do. We were born to make manifest the glory of God that is within us. It's not just in some of us; it's in everyone. And as we let our own light shine, we unconsciously give other people permission to do the same. As we are liberated from our own fear, our presence automatically liberates others.”

- Marianne Williamson



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# Transition

Tool 5/6

- Gender and gender expression exist on a constantly rotating sphere with a constantly shifting axis. Gender can exist anywhere on the sphere at any time.
- Transition is often forced by family and other social agents into death based rituals
- Redefine the purposes of death v life based transition rituals and recenter the trans voice
- *I didn't come her to die, nor be your butterfly*



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Self-definition and self-determination is about the many varied decisions that we make to compose and journey toward **ourselves**, about the audacity and strength to **proclaim, create, and evolve** into who we know ourselves to be. It's okay if your personal definition is in a constant state of flux as you navigate the world.

-Janet Mock

Transition

Tool 5/6



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# Authentic Wholeness

Tool 6/6

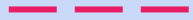
- Bringing your true, whole self into the spaces you enter
- Frees others to also bring their whole selves
- Confronts stereotypes and limiting cultural narratives



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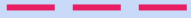
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# Honing The Tools



Group Discussion

# Debrief



**How do you envision these tool informing your ministry or work?**

# Sending Forth

