



Facilitators Guide | Timing: 1.5 hours

1. Gather & Schmooze [~30 min]

Gather your people in person, if possible, in a home or other cozy, personal location. Consider making soup. Leave room for social & connective time.

2. Opening [10 min]

Circle up. As facilitator, share why you have gathered folks, outline the rest of the gathering. Pose one of these prompts for folks to answer, go around the room:

***What is one thing you love about being alive on earth?
or What is your favorite soup?***

3. Chevruta / Paired Study [~25 min]

Hand out the [study sheets](#) and break into *chevruta* (pairs) to read and discuss.

4. Group discussion & bringing the learning home [~20 min]

Re-group as a large group. Use these prompts to facilitate group conversation:

What stuck out or came up during your paired Chevruta study? Share back.

How does what we read and discussed today connect to building a (Jewish) climate movement that can respond and take action in these times?

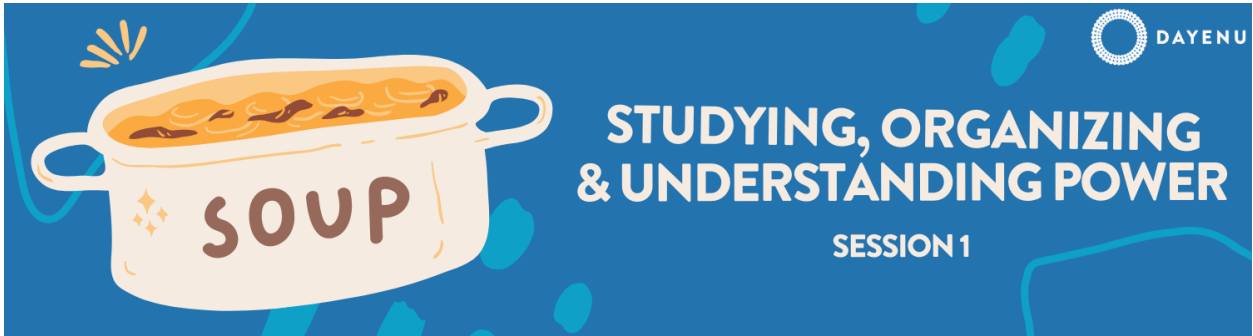
5. Closing [~5 min]

Optional: Do a small action item to put learnings into practice.

Sing or listen to a song. If listening, invite participants to close their eyes.

Suggested song (recording and lyrics): [How Can I? Batya Levine](#)

Please email us at circles@dayenu.org to let us know if you use these materials. Photos welcome :)



SOUP Session #1: Different this time around?

Take 25 minutes to read the three readings below and discuss the following questions in 'chevruta' (pairs).

On Tyranny: Twenty Lessons from the Twentieth Century (2013) Timothy Snyder

Do not obey in advance.

Most of the power of authoritarianism is freely given. In times like these, individuals think ahead about what a more repressive government will want, and then offer themselves without being asked. A citizen who adapts in this way is teaching power what it can do.

Have we observed people “obeying in advance” as described by Snyder? Have we experienced the urge to obey in advance?

“[How to Live Under Trump II](#)” (Jan. 7, 2025) Anand Giridharadas

“...you don't get to choose your era. I know that. The people I've been listening to know that. They are not welcoming the cruelties and hatreds that have been promised by Trump. **I think what they're wondering is how you actually end up getting the country you deserve.**

[...]

(“How to Live Under Trump II” continued)

For some, it is the posture of retreat into the realms you can control: into private life, where you can make a good world for your children and loved ones even if you are struggling to achieve a good world in general. It may be a retreat into doing your actual work, your actual craft, your actual art, resuming a creative posture rather than living in a mode of reaction to the actions of a wannabe autocrat. And this posture of retreat is not, I think, like military retreat. It is not about handing over the country. It is rooted in the thought that what might make the country resistant to what has been happening to it is not more resistance but more health at the roots. Maybe what we can do is nourish the roots again.

For some, there is allure in the posture of returning to the local. I hear many people who are not turning away from politics in general, but who are redefining the geographic sphere to which they pay the most attention. They are thinking closer to home. They are going to meetings they always left other people to go to. Again, this doesn't seem to me like a capitulation to anything. It seems like an analysis of where there is actually room to maneuver.

For others I hear from, there is a posture of reorganizing. By this I mean people who are also not content to stand in hair-trigger opposition to Trump and every little thing he does, but who rather want to spend the next many years building the pro-democracy movements and civic organizations and political parties that, had we already them, would have prevented this mess. [...]

I also notice in many people a posture of rethinking. The first Trump presidency was a time of great and often smug certitude. He was so wrong that the contrast made us right. [...] Now I see and hear around me people who are getting into a posture of real rethinking, who are returning to curiosity, who are willing to ask real and hard questions about what many of us missed and didn't see and may not see still. Their posture is not outward but inward.

I want to be very clear. Much of what is coming in the next few years will be very grave and will be deserving of strenuous resistance and pushback and investigation and suing. I don't believe the phenomenon I'm observing is people tuning out and unplugging and kissing the country goodbye. That is probably happening, too, somewhere out there. But that's not what I'm seeing.

What I'm seeing is people attempting to attend more holistically to a nation in ill health. What I see is people spreading back out across many lanes, taking on what they know how to take on — at the level of the symptoms, and at the level of the causes. What I see is many postures of trying.

Are we personally experiencing or observing the reactions or “postures” described by Giridharadas? Which ones?

“If There Is No Struggle, There Is No Progress” (1857) Frederick Douglass

Those who profess to favor freedom and yet deprecate agitation, are men who want crops without plowing up the ground. They want rain without thunder and lightning. They want the ocean without the awful roar of its many waters. The struggle may be a moral one; or it may be both moral and physical. But it must be a struggle. **Power concedes nothing without a demand.**

What does it mean that “power concedes nothing without a demand”?

Are these three texts in tension with one another? If so, how? If not, why not?

How does this apply to us now?

- How can we ‘not obey in advance’ when it comes to the climate crisis and climate justice?
- Giridharadas writes about ‘tending to the local’ – what opportunities are we seeing at the state or local level to advance the climate justice movement?
- Giridharadas also writes about ‘reorganizing’ – What might it look like to ‘reorganize’ with climate justice or climate action as the goal?
- If power concedes nothing without a demand, what might our demands be, as climate activists, or as Jewish climate activists, in the coming year?