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## Day 20: Allyship

In every social justice movement, there are three groups of people: Those who are **impacted** by the injustice, those who **perpetuate** the injustice, and **allies**.

An ally is a member of a dominant group, not impacted by the injustice, who believes that eliminating oppression benefits everyone. An ally uses their privilege and spheres of influence to dismantle different systems of oppression. Similar to other marginalized groups, people with disabilities rely on their allies when advocating for access and social change.

In order to be an effective ally to individuals with disabilities, there are a few things everyone needs to know. First, allyship and neutrality are not the same; being an ally is an active role, not a passive one. When practicing authentic allyship, people are either on the side of the oppressed or they are on the side of the oppressor. There is no middle-ground. In order to truly recognize which side you're on, you have to be willing to evaluate your own privilege and practices. Are you knowingly or unknowingly perpetuating ableism? If the answer is "yes," what are you going to do about it? Self-accountability of allies is essential in the Disability Rights Movement.

Additionally, allies must understand that individuals living with disabilities know what they need. If they share experiences and desires for change with allies, believe them. It is not an ally's job to be the expert on ableism or to judge the validity of the need. For this reason, continuing to do research and asking trusted individuals with lived experience is recommended. This ensures accuracy in advocacy on the part of allies.

Lastly, allies to the disability community must know that change is possible. When people with disabilities and their non-disabled allies work together in dismantling ableism, we can truly live in a community that values disability as human diversity, free of attitudinal barriers, where all people benefit with full access and inclusion.

## Learn More

### Read:

- How To Be An Ally of the Disability Community – Article <https://www.paraquad.org/blog/how-to-be-an-ally-of-the-disability-community/>
- 6 Ways to be a Better Ally to People Living with Disabilities – Article <https://mashable.com/2015/07/26/disability-ally-inclusive/>

### Watch:

- 5 Tips For Being An Ally – Video with Closed Captions (3:31) [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_dg86g-QIM0&t=10s&ab\\_channel=chescaleigh](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_dg86g-QIM0&t=10s&ab_channel=chescaleigh)
- How to be A Better Disability Ally with Daphne Frias – Video with Closed Captions (3:20) [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R2jluFJRn18&ab\\_channel=JameelaJamil](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R2jluFJRn18&ab_channel=JameelaJamil)

### Discussion:

- Are you an ally of people with disabilities? If so, what things do you do to dismantle ableism?
- List three things you could do to assist in the Disability Rights Movement.

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