

## **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS/PROMPTS FOR BEAUTIFUL TROUBLE BOOK CLUB:**

### **Starting Out:**

- What do you or your group hope to get out of this book? Goals/learning outcomes?
- Do you have any preconceived notions of *Beautiful Trouble* and/or creative activism? What is your definition of creative activism, and how does it differ from just plain old "activism"?
- Have any of you been involved in creative activist movements in the past? What did those look like? What sort of political event did they arise out of?

### **Tactics:**

*"Specific forms of creative action, such as a flash mob or an occupation."*

- What kinds of tactics are you most familiar with (that you've used before, or else seen incessantly in the media?)
- Which tactics surprised or shocked you in *Beautiful Trouble*? Were there some that you found particularly effective/ineffective?
- Which tactics fit the goals of your organization? Did the "common uses" section help inspire any movements/ideas/strategies?
- Refer to the template on Page 92, and, as a group (or in smaller groups), brainstorm and share your own tactics.

### **Principles:**

*"Hard-won insights that can guide or inform creative action design."*

- Have everyone read through the principles section of the book beforehand. Bring to the session an article on a current movement/action/public art work that has made headlines worldwide (or, if you can't find one, choose a case study from *Beautiful Trouble*).
  - Can you identify the principles that seem to inform the action? (i.e. Is it apparent how the action uses their "cultural terrain" to their advantage (p.142), maintains nonviolent discipline (p.148), or uses the power of ritual? (p.198)). Can an outsider witnessing a given action elucidate the principles that inform it in the first place?
- Now, which principles in *Beautiful Trouble* are especially important to your group's action, given its the social, historical and political context?

### **Theories:**

*"Big-picture concepts and ideas that help us understand how the world works and how we might go about changing it."*

- Because theories require the most academic and conceptual background, it is useful to see how they work in relation to the other elements of the book: tactics, principles, case studies and even other theories. Pick a few theories from the book, and use the sidebar to refer you to related sections. As a group, discuss how certain theories are at play in a given case study. How does a conceptual theory inform a movement?

## **Case Studies:**

*"Capsule stories of successful and instructive creative actions, useful for illustrating how principles, tactics and theories can be successfully applied in practice."*

-One professor introduced this section by asking students to pick two case studies that they found particularly compelling, and to identify why. Was there a lot of overlap? The goal was to find out what impressed/moved/excited people, and why.

-How do the actions in the case studies synthesize complex issues in a way that makes them accessible to large audiences? How do they engage the public and capture the imaginations of those who may be unaware or disinterested in the issues at hand?

-In other words, which mediums are most effective for relaying messages to large sections of the population? Which tactics, principles and theories are crucial to the successes or failures of these actions?

**Note:** As these are just discussion prompts, we hope you will refer to [beautifultrouble.org](http://beautifultrouble.org) for further resources.

We are always expanding our knowledge base and have a page dedicated to further materials here: <http://beautifultrouble.org/resources>