

How to use this resource:

This resource is part of a series on working as allies. It is intended as discussion starter for groups or a think piece for individuals interested in this topic. You may wish to use the following questions when discussing/reflecting on this material.

- What resonates with your experience?
- Which points do you not agree with? Why?
- Which points do not make sense to you?
- What is missing?

Other resources in this series are available at:

www.groundwork.org.nz/resources/allies-discussion-starters

Qualities for being an ally

- Humility – *being passionately aware that you could be completely wrong.*
- Ability to listen carefully.
- Sense of humour – *not taking yourself too seriously.*
- Patience – *for the long haul of the struggle and for different ways of working.*
- Usefulness – *it's not about being right or good it's about being useful.*
- Knowing yourself – *your identity and history.*
- Knowing and acknowledging whose land you are on - *the history of people and place.*
- Groundedness – *inner strength and the ability to stay calm in challenging situations.*
- A thick skin – *the ability to hear criticism constructively. Understanding criticism within the broader context of colonial injustice rather than taking it personally. An understanding that you may be a safe target for understandable rage – develop the ability to hear that rage.*
- Endurance – *messing up, learning, picking up and keeping on.*
- Long-term commitment – *which includes a commitment to personal sustainability and sustainability of relationships.*
- Flexibility – *an ability to go with the flow.*
- Letting go of knowing, of being right, of having the answers – *always being aware of how much you do not know.*
- Being open to constant learning – *acting, making mistakes, getting feedback, reflecting, acting. Check your ideas with people who do not always agree with you.*
- Courage – *to act, to take a stand.*
- Critical awareness – *political awareness, strategic thinking.*
- Self-awareness – *knowing your skills and what you can offer, knowing your limits, awareness of not dominating, awareness of power, ability to reflect.*
- Honesty, humility, courage, wisdom, respect, generosity and love - *The Ojibwe Seven Grandfather Teachings.*

Note: This is not intended as a check list of abstract concepts - these qualities need to be demonstrated through on-going action in the context of alliances.

