

EMPOWERING ACTIONS

By Katy Swalwell & Janelle Ketcher

After reading the book, define the word “empowering” for students (e.g., to make someone stronger and more confident, especially in controlling their life and claiming their rights). Give small groups of students one of the following scenarios card founds [HERE](#) (NOTE: At least 2-3 groups will have the same card). Have them identify what empowering actions were taken and discuss the dilemmas in each. As a large group, ask them to share their thoughts and encourage them to find patterns or insights they noticed about what makes empowering actions harder, easier, more or less likely to succeed, etc. (e.g., stress how often it is that people need others to help them and work together for change - it’s rare that someone is able to overcome an obstacle without a lot of support; note the difference between obstacles that are human-made like racism vs. obstacles that are arbitrary like being born with a disease, highlight how some people have more obstacles than others because of the intersectional oppression discussed in the book’s introduction—and may not get the same response to their empowering actions as people with different identities). Ask students to identify other empowering actions they remember hearing about in the book, identify scenarios in their lives during which they have taken empowering action, and/or brainstorm empowering actions they can take in response to specific situations that are occurring in their classroom or school. During the discussion, create a list of “Empowering Actions” that you can keep posted in your room (e.g., write a letter, picket, start an organization, etc.).