The war on Drugs was, in some respects, the launching point for mass incarceration, fueled in large part by the crack cocaine epidemic that plagued Black communities in the 80's and 90's. The response by and large was mass incarceration and criminalization. What do you think Black communities would be like today if the response to the Crack epidemic was the same as the current, treatment-based, response to the opioid crisis? What do you think could or should be done to mitigate the harm that's already been done by those disparate responses to the crises?

The movie discusses how imagery and stereotypes have been, and continue to be, used to incite fear about Black men in order to justify locking them up and brutalizing them. What issues do you see with how the current media and entertainment industries portray and criminalized Black men? Which narratives do you notice? Which stereotypes do you recognize? What effects do you think these things have on our society? What steps can you take to counter or disrupt these narratives?

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In the documentary, we learned that private prison corporation, Corrections Corporation of America (CCA) has a hand in getting legislation passed (SB1070) that directly helped them increase profits by increasing the criminalization of immigrants and increasing the number of people held in their facilities as a result. What do you think should be done to prevent corporations from impacting legislation, and what role do you think you can play as a community member in helping to bring about that change?

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The movie discusses how the Prison Industrial Complex uses the free labor of incarcerated people to fuel the production of goods for major companies and private industries like McDonalds, Boeing, Microsoft, Anderson Flooring, and even Idaho potatoes, much like the sweatshops that we denounce overseas for exploiting free labor. What role does capitalism/consumerism play in Mass incarceration, and what, if anything, you think we can do as consumers to potentially impact change and help end mass incarceration?

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Throughout the movie, we hear the words: ‘criminal’, ‘convict’, ‘prisoners’, ‘inmates’, and ‘felons’. What images/thoughts feelings do those words invoke when you hear or see them? Now, think of the words: ‘formerly incarcerated person’, ‘person with a criminal record’, or ‘someone directly impacted by the criminal legal system’; What images/thoughts/feelings come to your mind when you hear those words? How do those images differ? Does this difference in language change the associations that you have with these members of our communities? How can we actively work to use words that center the humanity of people impacted by the system instead of words that generalize and dehumanize them?

In the movie we hear the story of Khalif Browder, a young man who was held in jail for 3 years awaiting trial for stealing a bookbag. He was held because he couldn't afford his $10,000 bail. If you found yourself in this situation, would you be able to afford the bail to be released? What would you do if you found yourself in this situation? Do you think the system of cash bail should be ended? Why or why not? What impact do you think this would have on the criminal legal system?

In the movie, we hear the quote: “We are the products of the history our ancestors chose, if we’re White. If we’re Black, we’re the product of the history that our ancestors most likely did not choose.” How different do you think America would look if Black people would have been allowed to choose their own destinies and not be the victims of policies and systems that support mass incarceration?

The first reconstruction of America ended slavery. The second advanced civil rights, we want the Third Reconstruction to expand the ‘we’ in ‘we the people’ and make liberty and justice for ALL a tangible reality. What does your vision look like for the third reconstruction of America?

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