Oppression Is A Learned Behavior

The goal of this exercise is to see how oppression is a learned behavior, often beginning when we are very young. These questions will provoke thought, evoke memories (some may be good, some not so good), and prepare you for some personal work. As you are doing this exercise, please pay attention to how you are feeling. You will not be required to share your specific responses during the debriefing of this exercise – only if you want to – so please be as honest with yourself as you can.

Choose one oppressed group to which you do NOT belong. You may want to use a group we discussed earlier.

1. What is your first memory of either coming into contact with someone from this group, or hearing about someone from this group?

2. What stereotypes do you hold about this group, or have you held about this group in the past?

3. Where did these stereotypes come from?

4. Have you been able to debunk these stereotypes? How have you done that?