

Year of the Tiger

An Activist's Life

By Alice Wong

Teacher's Guide written by Sandy Ho

Vintage

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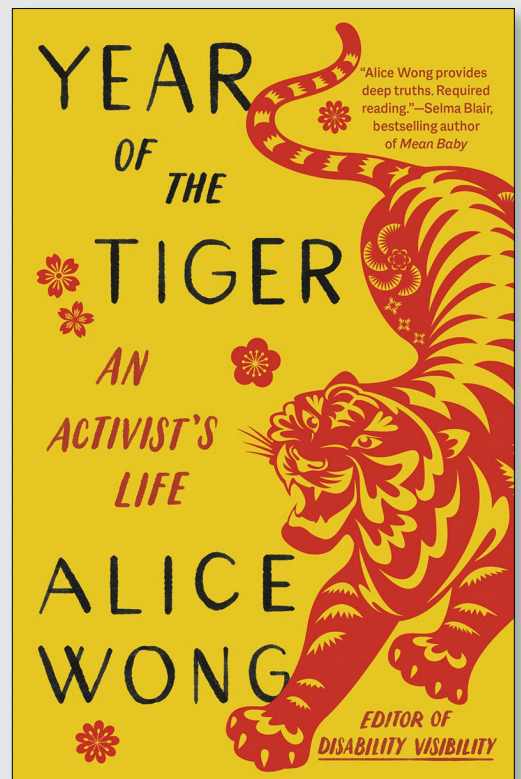
"Alice Wong is one of our foremost disability advocates, and yet this book isn't only about disability, though it discusses disability with frankness and humor; more importantly, it's not about 'overcoming' a condition. This book is about a colorful life lived alongside disability—a full life. This memoir is a must-read."—Esmé Weijun Wang, author of *The Collected Schizophrenias*

ABOUT THE BOOK

This groundbreaking memoir in essays offers a glimpse into an activist's journey to finding and cultivating community and the continued fight for disability justice.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Alice Wong is a disabled activist, media maker, and research consultant based in San Francisco, California. She is the founder and director of the Disability Visibility Project, an online community dedicated to creating, sharing, and amplifying disability media and culture, and the editor of the acclaimed anthology *Disability Visibility*. Alice is also the host and co-producer of the Disability Visibility podcast and co-partner in a number of collaborations such as #CripTheVote and Access Is Love. From 2013 to 2015, Alice served as a member of the National Council on Disability, an appointment by President Barack Obama. You can follow her on Twitter: @SFDirewolf. For more: disabilityvisibilityproject.com.



Book cover for *Year of the Tiger: An Activist's Life* with a marigold yellow background. On the right side is an illustration of a crouching tiger in red in the style of Chinese paper cuttings with delicate cutouts in various shapes giving form and definition to the tiger. The tiger has a fierce expression, eyes and jaws wide open, teeth bared. The tiger has large paws with four claws extended. On the left in black large text YEAR OF THE TIGER at the top and ALICE WONG below. In the center in smaller red text AN ACTIVIST'S LIFE and in the lower right corner EDITOR OF DISABILITY VISIBILITY. Small, delicate red flowers are sprinkled throughout. Book cover by Madeline Partner.

PROLOGUE

Email excerpts that have been edited for length

TO: Sandy Ho
FROM: Alice Wong
SUBJECT: Interview for DVP blog?
DATE: May 17, 2016 3:23AM

Hey Sandy,

I know we talked a while ago about me interviewing you about the summit so that we can publicize the call for proposals and info about the call for art.

Are you ready to answer 6-8 questions? Here they are below. Take your time responding:

- Tell me a little about yourself and your background as a disability advocate.
- I first learned about you through your Letters to Thrive tumblr that I absolutely love. You were kind enough to re-publish a letter of mine. One thing that excited me is that you are another Asian American disabled woman who is proud of all her identities. Do you ever feel that way when you meet other disabled women of color?

Alice Wong, Founder and Project Coordinator Disability Visibility Project

Website: disabilityvisibilityproject.com

Twitter: @DisVisibility

Swag Shop: disabilityvisibilityproject.com/sweet-swag-shop/

— — —

TO: Alice Wong
FROM: Sandy Ho
SUBJECT: Interview for DVP blog?
DATE: May 27, 2016, 10:24PM

Hi Alice! Please edit or ask me to clarify where necessary. Thanks again for interviewing me! And for helping to get the word out about the summit! Soooo fricken excited!!

- Tell me a little about yourself and your background as a disability advocate.

I'm a queer Asian American woman who is a wheelchair user with Osteogenesis Imperfecta (O.I.), and I am also someone who is hard of hearing. I was born, raised, and educated in Massachusetts. My introduction into disability advocacy stemmed from a blog I had 5 or 6 years ago where I reflected on growing-up with O.I. as the sole representative of disability within my family. As I wrote more about my own experiences I connected with other folks with O.I., but it was really when I began asking more probing questions that usually began with "why?" and "how come?" that my curiosity around disability led me to a whole constellation of disability advocates who helped me connect the dots to figure out some of my own answers.

PROLOGUE
(CONTINUED)

- I first learned about you through your Letters to Thrive tumblr that I absolutely love. You were kind enough to re-publish a letter of mine. One thing that excited me is that you are another Asian American disabled woman who is proud of all her identities. Do you ever feel that way when you meet other disabled women of color?

Thank you for letting me republish that letter! It wasn't until I first came across you, and your openness to be a collaborator, 'older sister', supporter, and co-schemer that I honestly didn't even realize what had been absent from my understanding of disability. It took a lot of exposure to multiple identities within the disability community for me to begin to feel comfortable engaging in disability justice work. Sometimes I come across articles that talk about how women in the workplace need to be encouraged to "lean in" or "speak up" etc. etc. But the disabled women of color that I know? We **are** the ones who tend to be making the most noise, looking after one another, facilitating connections, teaching, sounding the bullshit alarm, or sticking their necks out.

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TO: Sandy Ho

FROM: Alice Wong

SUBJECT: Interview for DVP blog?

DATE: May 27, 2016, 10:33PM

Dude, thank YOU for taking the time to answer these questions. I'm fricken excited too. Or as they say in Boston, wicked excited :-D

Oh yeah, I totally forgot this –do you want to include a short bio and photo? I'll use the logo of the summit as the header image, but I want to make sure I include a few images (feel free to send me several from your activism).

I'll have this post out sometime next week after Memorial Day.

WHEEEEEEEE!!

Your older sister/fellow troublemaker, Alice

— — —

Text message excerpt that has been edited for length

Sun, Sept 12, 2021

12:21AM Alice Wong: BTW, the manuscript is almost done!!

12:21AM Sandy Ho: YAYYY!!! When do I get to read it and get my grubby nooby Ho hands on it?

12:22AM Alice Wong: Will turn in later this month I think. Maybe early 2022? The next step is formatting and rounds of copyedits.

12:23AM Alice Wong: Once I have a review copy you will get one asap for the discussion guide.

12:23AM Sandy Ho: CONGRATS!!!! ON TURNING IT IN SOOOOOON. Can we celebrate?!

INTRODUCTION & CONTEXT

Developing this Discussion Guide was just one in a series of many acts of friendship, love, and celebration between Alice and me. The conversation we shared in the selection from “#WestwardHo” is about how we met, two tigers finding kinship in disability community and discovering a lifelong champion and friendship in the other. Alice and I got to know each other through a series of collaborative projects including #LettersToThrive, the Disability & Intersectionality Summit, the #AccessIsLove campaign with Mia Mingus, and the #UntillAmFree series centering Dr. Keisha Blain’s book *Until I Am Free: Fannie Lou Hamer’s Enduring Message to America*. After nearly a decade, organizing together feels like tracing and retracing the lines in the palms of our hands, we are familiar with each other’s work styles, crip politics, and abiding love for excel spreadsheets. We are the tigers who are all about just getting it done. We are tigers who are vigilant and protective of our time, work, hearts, and communities that we belong to. Organizing together is filled with trust and space for our best tiger selves to emerge; Alice is often reminding me I should do something because I want to, and not because I must or feel like “I should.” Where Alice’s powerful visionary ideas are held in meticulous planning documents that are always months if not years in advance, I build upon her scaffolding to offer new ways to convene disability community, and more ways to amplify and throw glitter on multiply marginalized disabled people. This enthusiasm and wholehearted trust of my ideas with Alice is something I have rarely come across among other people, and organizations. More than any other reason, this trust is why I continue to find joy in our work together.

No discussion guide could ever adequately encompass and lift-up the lessons from Alice Wong’s activism, but one that has sustained me over the past few years during the pandemic is understanding that joy is a discipline. Part of this discipline is rooted in our shared dreams and approaches when it comes to disability activism and community organizing. The other part is borne out of our friendship and the love that we have for this relationship. Our mutual admiration for nerdery culture including *Star Trek* fandom—specifically LeVar Burton, fun stickers, letter writing, Michelle Yeoh, cats, ice cream, and public libraries are just some of the things that we enjoy screaming from the rooftops about. We discuss the pros and cons of coffee (Alice’s preferred drink) vs Thai iced tea with boba (my personal drink of choice), and I delight in sharing my love for Legos by texting photos of my builds. Alice and I also thrive off the kind of secret dream-planning for our personal lives that is reminiscent of the manifestations we devise in our childhoods, but somehow as adults forget amid the responsibilities and demands of “real life.” But in the ways that I have come to trust my co-scheming tiger friend with ideas to launch in the disability community, I treasure and have deep gratitude for the completely unbridled tiger forward encouragement Alice has for all of us to achieve our life’s goals—not just the ones related to disability activism.

It is in that spirit of our tiger camaraderie and friendship that this Discussion Guide was created. I hope that current and future disabled oracles, activists, other readers, educators, and students of *Year of the Tiger: An Activist’s Life* come away from this work with new ideas and perspectives whether about cat culture, sci-fi and fantasy genres, or disability activism. This guide is meant to be an invitation to celebrate and delve whiskers-first into the latest contribution to the canon of Alice. Go forth and make it so!

GENERAL READING QUESTIONS

1. *Year of the Tiger: An Activist's Life* is a revolutionary archive and collage of Alice Wong's past, present, and future. In what ways is the totality of this memoir, and the format it is written activism? How has this book added to your perspective of activism and activists?
2. What does this work offer to the landscape of memoir as a form of storytelling by and about disabled people?
3. Cats, their features, and the tiger essence are present throughout the memoir. In what ways does the tone, voice, and flow of this memoir embody these cunning and majestic animals? What big cat practices and rituals resonate with you?
4. Documenting and sharing conversations with family, members of the disability community, and friends are some of the ways Alice contributes to disability culture and activism. Why is it important for disabled people to create and curate public archives of our lives? In what ways is archival work a Disability Justice practice?
5. Alice writes about her disabled body as an oracle. What changes need to happen for our world to listen and amplify more disabled oracles? What guidance does this memoir offer to better care, love, and support oracles?
6. Undergirding her truths and stories is an air of fantasy, science-fiction, and insatiable curiosity for other worlds yet to be conjured and explored. How has leaning into science-fiction and fantasy guided her activism? In what ways has this also brought about unanswered questions?
7. There's no shortage of humor, snark, and unapologetic mic-drops throughout *Year of the Tiger: An Activist's Life*. These sentences, intertwined throughout the book, reveal Alice's personality and voice behind "the work" she is most known for. What things surprised you to learn about her? What moments gave you joy? Were there times when you also shared in her rage?
8. There are so many moments of bold, flavorful, unapologetic, and cunning ways that joy emerges throughout this book. Experiencing and sharing joy is a ritual Alice lives by and lives for. Why is joy so important and in what ways can it be both life-giving and weaponized?

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

1. Make a collage that is a celebratory archive of your own nerd culture: niche hobby collections, aspirations, or desires.
2. Write your own obituary. While obituaries are often seen as something that is sad and emotionally distressing to write and read—write your own obituary that celebrates the shit out of your own life, that boldly manifests your own accomplishments, and gives instructions on how you should be remembered in the unapologetic way Bossy Tigers do for their own loved ones.
3. Create a zine of the artifacts that led to a decision, or a moment that was important to the person you are now. How do these snippets come together to create a more full picture of that time? Include evidence and data points from a wide variety of sources including text messages, tweets, Facebook posts, Instagram posts, and hashtag moments.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

(CONTINUED)

4. Develop your own Food Heaven Menu for various community actions. What would a menu for a sit-in look like? How would you curate a menu for a twitter chat? What are the appetizers, main courses, and dessert options for a community coming together to distribute mutual aid? What are some of the ways you would practice food accessibility and equity in developing this menu?
5. What's the soundtrack for the days when your body needs to "slow the fuck down"? What would you include in a playlist for the moments you need to get amped up by Big Cat Energy?
6. Create a T.V. Guide for some of your favorite and most influential shows/movies. What would your guide suggest for the hours you need to relax? What movies would you turn to for hours of pure indulgence? What kinds of shows help you through times when you feel isolated, alone, and need a reminder of community care? (And don't forget to recommend snacks to go alongside your T.V. Guide!)
7. Curate a spreadsheet that is packed with joyful practices and indulgences, and revisit it often. Create categories for these practices such as: foods to eat, shows to watch, YouTube links to watch, friends to text, funny cat memes to share, internet wormholes to fall into, forthcoming books to read, desserts to try, shows to watch, and of course photos of cats, snails and tigers to flip through!

**SECTION DISCUSSION
QUESTIONS****ORIGINS****General Questions for this Section**

1. What are some of the cultural influences of the 70s and 80s that contributed to Alice's attitudes as a young disabled Asian American woman?
2. Alice characterizes nerds as "... those who embrace difference, seek community, and support the powerless." How does our society's portrayal of nerds and nerd culture provide lessons and role models for young disabled people? In what ways might narratives about nerds of color be important?
3. What issues formed the initial seeds of tiger rage and perspectives that would later propel Alice's activism?
4. How did the role of family and community support the ways Alice was able to push back against discrimination and exclusion?

"Lessons from a Chinese School Dropout"

1. What are some of the ways that autonomy is present in this essay? (For Alice? For her community of Chinese church elders and Aunties? In the legacy of her grandfather naming her?)
2. Alice shares three lessons of writing Chinese characters. In what ways do these lessons inform the power of words as art?
3. In her family's San Francisco home there is a large calligraphy that depicts the evolution of the character fú. Why is it important that we understand the origins of words? Can you think of other examples of words that have also evolved over time?

SECTION DISCUSSION QUESTIONS (CONTINUED)

“Untitled High School Poem”

1. “I already was a cyborg teenager before acquiring the consciousness of being one.” How did writing poetry as a teenager support growing into this cyborg consciousness?
2. Why is it important for young disabled people to have places and outlets for creativity, expression, and exploration?
3. How does Alice talk about the ways her family provided care before, during, and after surgery? Are there similarities or differences in the ways care for disabled people are discussed in other contexts?
4. Alice describes the changes and trauma her disabled body has gone through using elements of nature and cyborg characteristics. How do these descriptions challenge the ways disabled bodies are perceived by the medical-industrial-complex?

“Did You Enjoy High School?”

1. How did ableism manifest in Alice’s high school experience, and contribute to her understanding of advocacy?
2. What are some ways educators can disrupt ableist practices of segregating disabled students?
3. How can nondisabled peers or other allies amplify the rage disabled classmates who experience ableism might feel?
4. How might invisibility and/or visibility of disability amplify or deter advocacy efforts for young disabled people?

ACTIVISM

General Questions for this Section

1. What are some of the forces of oppression and systems that require disabled people of color to become activists?
2. What are some of the ways Alice’s activism is an example of community-building? How does her work build upon other movement struggles for liberation?
3. In what ways is the form of Alice’s activism just as important as the issues she’s fighting and advocating for?
4. How has #CripTheVote evolved over time, and influenced the ways disability has evolved as a political issue?
5. Why is it important that disability activism continues to center and be led by disabled people? What are some of the barriers that make it difficult for disabled activists to access power as movement leaders?

SECTION DISCUSSION

QUESTIONS

(CONTINUED)

“Snack Manifesto”

1. In this insert, Alice writes “Snacks fuel activism.” What are some examples of social justice activism that center food equity and access?
2. If you could design your own menu of snacks to share with your own community, what would your selection include? What are some accessibility practices you would implement?
3. How does this Snack Manifesto amplify disabled joy? And what are some ways it resists ableism?
4. What is another life-giving manifesto that guides the way you show-up for others, and care for yourself?

“Inclusive Politics & the Disability Community”

1. Alice writes “... the majority of conversations around inclusive politics are performative.” What are some examples of this? Why is it important to be self-critical and reflective about our own politics and practices?
2. Why might it be difficult to challenge performative inclusion, and what would you suggest to upend these practices?
3. In what ways does the octopus of “hot disabled sparkles” extend disability justice even further? What else would you add to the tentacles for more hot disabled sparkles?
4. Have you experienced unlearning your own ableism? How has that shifted your own perspectives of power-building and political struggle?

“Just Say NOPE”

1. These text bubbles are examples of ways disabled activists of color can protect their own time and boundaries. What other kinds of questions might solicit a bold tiger “nope”?
2. What do you notice about the questions being asked on this page? Why do you think it was important that Alice, as a disabled oracle, include these questions and her responses in this book?
3. What are some other suggestions of ways disabled people of color can enforce boundaries, protect their own time, and energies?
4. What does this say about the kinds of labor disabled women, femmes, and other people of color are expected to provide? How can our movements shift away from these kinds of entitled requests?

“Activist Wisdom”

1. In this piece, Alice offers some pointed advice that she shares from her own experiences and years of activism. Can you identify some of the systems and institutions that her wisdom aims to dismantle?

SECTION DISCUSSION QUESTIONS (CONTINUED)

2. What are some ways that her activist wisdom centers and practices love? How does your own activism embody love, celebration, and joy?
3. What are some bold, cunning, and sly traits of big cat energy that are reflected in her activist wisdom? What other activist wisdom would you suggest for this list?
4. How does this list of wisdom promote sustainability practices to avoid things like “activist burn-out”?
5. What, if any, activist wisdom surprised you or that you have more curiosities about? Were there any statements that resonate with you in particular?

“Fuck You Pay Me”

1. In what ways does capitalism promote ‘scarcity’ mentality? What needs to change about our world for all of us to have what we need to thrive?
2. What policies or systems contribute to the cycle of poverty that many disabled people, including disabled activists, are forced to live in?
3. How does our society perceive the labor and contributions of disabled activists? What is one concrete thing that you can do to change or improve these perceptions?
4. How does Disability Justice resist capitalism and the violent harm it inflicts on Black and Brown disabled bodies? Is there a future world where reparations for disabled people exist?
5. What is the world that rises in place of capitalism’s ashes?

ACCESS

General Questions for this Section

1. The quote on this section breaker comes from Mia Mingus, “Access for the sake of access or inclusion is not necessarily liberatory, but access done in the service of love, justice, connection, and community *is* liberatory and has the power to transform.” What are some of the topics that are addressed in this section, and how do they resonate with love, justice, connection, and community?
2. Too often access and accessibility are conceptualized in very rigid terms. Throughout this section, there are examples of access as fluid and evolving. What are some that left an impression on you? How do those examples change your understanding and approach to accessibility?
3. What do you notice about the ways allies provide support in various accessibility contexts that Alice shares from her life? In what ways might lessons from these allies contribute to the ongoing conversation about being an ally to disabled people and communities?
4. What are some of the ways that Alice navigated internalized ableism? How have you observed or experienced internalized ableism?

**SECTION DISCUSSION
QUESTIONS**
(CONTINUED)

5. How is access a contributor to the idea of a Crip Tax? How might accessibility be something that convenes and welcomes more radical body-minds rather than a way to exclude, or cause harm?
6. How does fighting for access contribute to disability rage, love, and ultimately nurture radical relationships to disabled body-minds, and joy?

“Getting to the Marrow”

1. What are some of the attitudes and systems that attempt to stymie the appetite of a self-identified chán pēi?
2. How does the power of creativity manifest in Alice’s passion for and adaptation to enjoy food? Why is it important that her parents support her love of eating?
3. In what ways is loving a radical body both a challenge to the medical-industrial-complex and preparing a disabled body for an uncertain future?
4. What are some of the factors that may be overlooked when medical professionals offer “recommendations”?
5. In what ways is being an enthusiastic chán pēi a measure of bodily autonomy, self-determination, and quality of life? What insights might this offer to people offering “medical advice” and other similar kinds of recommendations?

“Food Heaven”

1. What other flavors would be added to your own food heaven?
2. Alice is meticulous about texture, flavor notes, and the contrast of different tastes. Doodle or write a description of your own favorites. What memories are connected to these foods?
3. For Alice, taking pleasure in eating is also connected to safety and accessibility of her food indulgence. Are there foods that you wish you could safely eat or try? What do you imagine them to taste like?
4. What is a kind of food that you think is overrated or not indulged in enough?

“Pureed Spinach & Mushroom Soup”

1. If you were to attend a community Big Cat potluck, what would you bring to share?
2. Social media platforms including Tik Tok, YouTube, and Instagram are some of the ways that recipes and cooking have become a more widely shared experience. What are some ways that you share recipes with friends, family, or your communities?
3. How would you make a favorite recipe into something more accessible for people with various food access needs? What “crip cooking” hacks would you use to adapt, but still share the essence of its taste?

SECTION DISCUSSION QUESTIONS (CONTINUED)

CULTURE

“Cat Life”

1. What aspects depicted in “Cat Life” resemble your understanding and experiences of activism?
2. What other animals, real or fictional, bring you delight and resonate with your own way of life?
3. Why is it important that disability is seen in other life forms and natural elements around us?
4. “It takes practice to live the Cat Life . . .” Alice writes. What are some of the ways you practice living the “ferocious feline in you”?

“How I spend My Saturdays (and Nights) at Home”

1. What are some habits and rituals that you practice to help slow you down, and remain present in the moment?
2. What surprised you to learn about the ways Alice goes about her day? What are some ways you sustain and fortify yourself to do your own work, and why might it be important to share these practices with others?
3. How has Alice expanded her own capacity to do her work and be a disabled activist? What kinds of resources have you found helpful or do you think would be helpful for activists to maximize their time and energy?
4. What are some of the factors and thought processes behind the decision-making of whether Alice gets involved in a project, request, or other asks of her time and labor?
5. Reflect on your own experiences, and think about the people in your life who encourage you to be protective of your own time. In what ways has this advice to you been helpful, what shifts have you continued to make as a result?
6. How might the demands of a person’s time contribute to their visibility and power in activism? What does the intersectionality framework add to these understandings?
7. Alice writes that her work as a disabled activist is in addition to “the work of being disabled.” In what ways does this add to the culture of work, employment, productivity, and capitalism? How are disabled people exploited or disposed of in a culture of “work”?
8. How do you assert moments of pause and relaxation throughout your day? How did these moments come about, and in what ways have they changed over time?

SECTION DISCUSSION QUESTIONS (CONTINUED)

“Lunar New Year Memories”

1. What are some of your own (chosen) family food traditions? What role does each family member take on in preparing these dishes?
2. In what ways have your own cultural traditions, and the role you have in them evolved over time? How have cultural traditions been a convenor of the present, and a legacy for the future?
3. How are your cultural traditions shared and documented? Why is it important that disabled people share these stories of their own families, cultures, and ways of belonging?
4. Gender roles and the Patriarchy are often supposed arbiters of traditions. In what ways do matriarchs and women in your family, and in other communities you belong to, resist these standards?
5. How does a person's class and experiences of poverty influence access to communal celebrations, and traditional practices? In what ways have Alice's parents and her family's cultural traditions changed previous Lunar New Year narratives?

“Proust-ish Questionnaire”

1. Create a spreadsheet and insert the questions from the Proust-ish Questionnaire into the document. Then note your answers to each question for yourself.
2. Revisit your own answers to the Proust-ish Questionnaire every Lunar New Year, and observe how they change over time.
3. What are some of your favorite internet questionnaires and why?
4. What other questions would you add to this questionnaire?

STORYTELLING

General Questions for this Section

1. In what ways is the form of storytelling just as important and invaluable as the narrative being shared, and the person telling the story?
2. For some disabled people who are non-verbal or who do not use spoken English as their first language, the notion of “voice” in storytelling can be limiting. What are some of the ways that access centered storytelling supports the way we love radical bodies, narratives, and archives?
3. In what ways are disabled storytellers disrupting ableist ideas of normalcy? Why is this important to disability activism, and other justice movements?
4. What other examples of “cripping” storytelling have you come across? How did it support your connection to the storyteller and narrative?

SECTION DISCUSSION QUESTIONS (CONTINUED)

5. How is storytelling collective carework? Are there examples from this section, or from other disabled-media that you can point to that show elevate storytelling in this way?
6. Can you think of a time when you saw yourself reflected in a story? What was powerful about that moment?
7. How does storytelling differentiate and further ideas about representation, and visibility?
8. How has Alice's experiences of finding her own "voice" and place in the disability community contributed to her influence as an activist who creates change through storytelling?
9. How does Alice's relationship to time nourish, hydrate, and allow her storytelling to ferment? What are some of the falsehoods of capitalism that have harmed storytelling, and storytellers?

"Choreography of Care"

1. The stories that Alice elevates often emerge from conversations with other disabled people on a specific shared experience. How does the stitching together of these interviews "crip" storytelling?
2. What are some similarities in the perspectives that are shared? How do Alice, Kenzi, Alana, Patty, Ingrid, and Rachel refer to their attendants?
3. How does the idea of the "choreography of care" add to the ingenious artistry of crip living?

"Tiger Tips on Interviewing"

1. In what ways is interviewing a form of storytelling, crafting, and editing?
2. What insights did you come away with from Alice's interviewing process? Are there any interviewing tips that you found particularly helpful, or that you will try to incorporate in your own interviewing practices?
3. What are some of the ways that interviewing can lead to surprises and unexpected moments? Why is accessibility important to facilitating these moments when interviewing?
4. How can journalists and other professionals in media, academia, and others who interview disabled people contribute to a culture of consent?
5. In what ways is interviewing a mechanism to broaden disability movement, representation, and visibility?
6. What other ways of gathering stories exist besides interviewing? How has social media, technology, and hashtag activism contributed to the art of inquiry and lifting-up shared experiences?

SECTION DISCUSSION QUESTIONS (CONTINUED)

“Letter to Asian American Disabled Women and Girls”

1. Write a letter to your younger self. What are some falsely held beliefs that you thought you needed, but turns out you didn't need to rely on them as much as you thought? What are some of the truth bombs you would include in this letter? What aspirations would you share, manifestations, desires? What are the words you wish you were told as a young person, and still today?
2. How does Alice address ideas about the model minority myth and idealized notions about being a role model? In what ways does this challenge your own thinking and relationship to the idea of role models?
3. Why is it important for young disabled people of color, especially women, girls, femmes, and trans people to hear the message “This may seem like a cliché, but *you do you*”?
4. In what ways is letter writing to future generations of disabled people a form of storytelling?
5. Write a letter to your future self. What are some of the historical moments you would include? How might the origins of disability justice and disability rights inform this future reality, or dreams you have? What paradigms do you hope are dismantled in this future? How do you imagine disability will be celebrated, and what challenges do you think disabled people will continue to experience in this future? What shameful and uncomfortable tensions do you imagine our movements to be struggling with in this future?

“About Time”

1. How does Alice's relationship to time provide her the spaciousness and capacity to write? In what ways does procrastination provide access to self-interrogation, and why is this important?
2. “In putting together this book, I realized that life is one never-ending edit.” She writes. How might these ‘dark arts’ of writing and editing challenge the culture of perfectionism, internalized imposter syndrome, and instead embrace the messy ‘cripness’ of being a time traveling disabled oracle?
3. How is disability justice embodied, and what principles are nurtured and allowed to breathe, emerge, and manifest in the process of writing, doodling, and scribbling?
4. In this essay, Alice challenges the notions of who is “allowed” to be considered a legitimate writer, and what kinds of practices are the “right” ones. In what ways is writing as a form of social justice activism an act of resistance, an intentional practice of making space for possibilities to survive long after the writer themselves have passed.
5. What are some of the other reasons that activists write? Why is it important for social justice movements to write as a form of self-preservation?
6. What are your own meditations on time? How do you experience and conceive of time in relation to your own work—is it expansive or does it constrain?
7. How might collective care and mutual aid bend time in ways that work for all of us?

SECTION DISCUSSION QUESTIONS (CONTINUED)

PANDEMIC

General Questions for this Section

1. What are some of the ways public health continues to practice eugenics? And how has being a disabled oracle prepared disabled activists to respond?
2. What are some examples or instances of how communities of disabled people, Black communities, and LGBTQIA+ have been providing mutual aid to show up for one another during times of crisis?
3. How do disabled oracles push back against rhetoric of “returning to normal” during the pandemic? How does their leadership offer guidance through interdependence and collective access?
4. Doodle or describe a world where congregate settings and institutions of any kind cease to exist. What rises in their absence, what is made possible instead?
5. Imagine the year 2070. What is the Disabled Oracle’s American Dream? What manifestos will guide our communities, activism, and political will to achieve actual belonging for every cyborg, human, disabled person, and next evolution of crip being?
6. What recipes for survival do you turn to, or have been passed down through your own families, communities, and movement leaders? What is your survival soundtrack—create a playlist or mixtape that would play in the background to your survival revolution.
7. What are some examples of the ways privilege dictates the fate, safety, and outcomes of some but further inequities and increase vulnerability, and risk for others?

“A High-Risk Timeline of Alice Wong, Proto-Oracle”

1. Alice’s “artifacts” are snippets of text messages, emails, blog posts, and text messages. What are some of the artifacts that might be sold in the gift shop in The Oracle Archive? Can you doodle or write a description of some of these items?
2. The format of storytelling is just as important as the storyline being shared. Why might Alice choose to tell the story of her experiences during the pandemic through these carefully, and intentionally placed artifacts? What does this arrangement say about public health guidance during this time?
3. In what ways do activists tell stories in real time? What is the role of technology and social media in the ways community members support one another?
4. What are some of the ways disabled people sought to advocate for priority vaccination for themselves and all vulnerable, immunocompromised, essential workers, unhoused, and communities of color? Why was it important that disabled people developed an advocacy strategy rooted in Disability Justice principles?

SECTION DISCUSSION QUESTIONS (CONTINUED)

5. What might be the labor costs to disabled people, their communities, families, and caregivers who were forced to adapt and figure out how to survive? How does this enforce the narratives from public health that disabled people are acceptable losses?
6. How did this time period contribute to the rise of disabled oracles? Develop a fictional background for disabled oracles to share with future Oracle Archive younglings in a similar style that Alice wrote at the start of this essay.

“In Praise of Peaches”

1. What are some ways that you have experienced interdependence and mutual aid in your own friendships?
2. Why is it important to have friendships outside of “the work”?
3. In what ways was this act of friendship an example of care and love during a particularly difficult time? How did Alice describe the peach cobbler, and the experience of eating Elberta peaches?
4. Social justice movements are known to move at the speed of trust in relationships. How do relationships in community provide sustenance and sustainability for disabled communities during precarious times?
5. Why is it important for disabled people to have safe and equitable access to nature? How does this joy sustain and provide a reminder of our interconnectedness to one another and our environments?

FUTURE

General Questions for this Section

1. One of the quotes that opens this section is “Let’s fly” from Captain Michael Burnham, U.S.S. Discovery. Given the option to fly with the mission of exploring other portals and worlds, describe the crew that you’re flying with. What are the principles that guide your crew’s explorations?
2. Who are your movement ancestors? How do you honor and celebrate them?
3. What are some of the ways you experience, receive, give, and resist care? Why is it important that the future of care, and the future of every issue, is led by disabled people?
4. In what ways does nerd culture and science-fiction embolden Alice’s future aspirations? How does nerd culture resist the rhetoric of a “return to normal” during the pandemic?

SECTION DISCUSSION
QUESTIONS
 (CONTINUED)

“Ancestors and Legacies”

1. How did Alice protect the legacy of her friend Stacey Park Milbern? Why might it be important that in life and in death, disabled people remain held in community by those they are in closest relationship with?
2. What are some of the ways communities support one another through grief and loss?
3. In this essay, Alice writes about the importance of being vulnerable as an important part of collective liberation. Think about some of your own moments of vulnerability, what are some ways that those around you have supported the labor it takes to process it?
4. Reflect on Alice’s question that she poses, “What do we leave behind when we are gone?” Write about your own legacy that you hope to leave behind. Share some ways that those closest to you can protect and remember this legacy.
5. How can communities in collective struggle for liberation ensure that our ancestors remain movement leaders alongside us in the future?

“As I Lay Breathing”

1. What was the role of social media in the #SuckYouPhilips campaign and advocacy efforts aimed at Philips?
2. The “artifacts” that built the #SuckYouPhilips campaign are strung together in this essay similar to the essay “A High-Risk Timeline of Alice Wong, a Proto-Oracle.” What are some of the ways that disabled oracles built upon each other’s wisdom, lived-experiences during the pandemic, and previous strategies?
3. What are some of the systems and mechanisms that contribute to the ways the medical-industrial-complex can avoid accountability for its actions?
4. How does the pandemic shape the advocacy strategies of disabled people? Why is this an important lesson for disabled activists, advocates, and organizers?
5. In what ways do the “traditional” pathways of advocacy ‘fail’ disabled people, and/or remain inaccessible to disabled advocates in this particular advocacy campaign?
6. Imagine breathing in air that is not obstructed by global warming, the medical industrial-complex, a global pandemic, or made toxic by ableist public health politics. What would that air smell, taste, and feel like to you? How would you describe it? What does the weight of it in your lungs feel like as you inhale, and exhale?

SECTION DISCUSSION

QUESTIONS

(CONTINUED)

“The Future of Care?”

1. Write your own headlines in response to the ones that Alice has listed—What would a headline that reimagines caregiving say?

What would a futuristic headline say about the relationships between technology and its influence on healthcare decisions?

How would a headline about a disabled-led infrastructure deal read?

Imagine a headline where politicians come to an agreement on what must be done, and who must be leading an effort on an equitable, inclusive, and disability justice-informed negotiation.

2. Develop a Tiger Care Infrastructure Act that centers Big Cat Energy. What are some of the policies you would propose? What data and information would you collect? How would this Act promote the liberation, care, and long-term support of Big Cat Energy? Who are the providers of this care? How would this Act be enforced, and be held accountable to all Big Cats of the present and future?

“My Grown-Ass Disabled Person Make-A-Wish List”

1. The range of Alice’s list is as expansive as the world-builder, media maker, and curator of culture herself. Lean into the ambitious, unapologetic, and fierce tiger energy as the author herself has done. What would go on your list?
2. Typically, “Make-A-Wish” is a program that provides young people with disabilities or other forms of life-threatening and/or terminal illness. Why is it important that grown-ass disabled people also are granted a wish for a once-in-a-lifetime and often elaborate dream?
3. In what ways does dreaming and wishing for grandiose life goals upend narratives about “deserving” or “undeserving” disabled people?
4. Who in our society is given the right to dream big, to share these dreams, and manifest them into reality?

“Thank You, Mrs. Shrock”

1. How does Alice describe the ways Mrs. Shrock made her feel seen and supported?
2. Why is it important to thank and express our gratitude and appreciation to the people who helped make us the people we are in the present?
3. Do you remember the first time someone in your life really listened, heard, and saw you for the person you would eventually become? If you could write them a note, what would you say?
4. What are some of the attributes of a person who will rip the door to a future wide open, in the similar way that Mrs. Shrock did for Alice? How is this also activism?

SECTION DISCUSSION QUESTIONS (CONTINUED)

5. How can our futures continue to rip the doors wide open for other cyborgs, crips, disabled people, and oracles? How can we close the door, dim the lights, and bring down the curtains on the kinds of futures espoused by telethons?
6. What were some of the things you feared as a young person? How would you respond to those fears now?

“Future Notice”

1. The title of Alice’s self-composed obituary, rather than closing a chapter on her life, is still a manifestation of her future. Share your reactions to this essay. What startled you? What made you smile? What made you yearn for more for all of us?
2. Alice’s future includes becoming the editor in chief of a disability-centered U.S. publisher, and she writes that this launches “what is considered the first of several golden ages of disability publishing.” How would you describe the golden age of disability publishing, what do you think needs to happen for the publishing industry to actualize that moment?
3. What are some of the broader systems and institutions that Alice imagines to be dismantled by the year 2070? What is the role of disabled people in reimagining a society that is not rooted in and limited by ableism?
4. Write the lyrics to the songs:
 “Ableism Is Trash”
 “Fuck You, Pay Me”
 and “S.T.F.U. White People.”
5. Amplifying and supporting “the next generation of disabled cyborgs,” as Alice writes, is one way elders in the disability community can continue their legacy. What are some other ways that disabled elders can extend their platforms, power, and privilege to incubate and lift-up new strategies and directions of our movement?
6. Doodle Alice’s holocats: Blueberry, Claude, Cinnamon, Meowmee Jr., Mittens, and Phil. What kind of features do they have? Please include detailed feline image descriptions for each of them.
7. Create a doodle of the logo for the Society of Disabled Oracles. What symbols would you include, and why?

Conclusion

Year of the Tiger: An Activist’s Life makes clear that disabled people will always exist and be part of a future, whether in this timeline or in some other universe yet to be explored. This work, and the work of previous disabled writers and storytellers have pieced together some of the artifacts and origins of how our story began. Alice’s memoir is only one example of many stories that are being told. How are you planning for your own disabled future in ways that are bold, fierce, courageous, ambitious, and majestic? What kind of future will your own story tell?

ABOUT THIS GUIDE'S WRITER



Photo of the author scream yelling at a Boston pride parade in the Elizabeth Warren float. She is seen wearing a rainbow colored PERSIST t-shirt, over a pink dress that has illustrated boobs on it, fishnet tights, and white chuck taylors. She is holding a unicorn blow-up toy and an Elizabeth Warren persist poster. Sandy is sitting in her blue power wheelchair.

SANDY HO is guided by the light of the closest disco ball. Born in the year of the tiger, her boldness has shown up in her community organizing and activism as the founder of the [Disability & Intersectionality Summit](#). She is also one-third of the team behind the [“Access is Love” campaign](#) in partnership with Alice Wong and Mia Mingus. Her essay “Canfei to Canji: The Freedom of Being Loud” is included in *Disability Visibility: First- Person Stories from the Twenty-First Century* edited by Alice Wong. She produced the teacher’s guide for *Year of the Tiger: An Activist’s Life* by Alice Wong (September 2022). In 2022 Sandy received the [Disability Futures Fellowship](#). Currently she is the director of the Disability Inclusion Fund at Borealis Philanthropy. Sandy spends her time reading, cheering for the Red Sox, and daydreaming while drinking tea. She identifies as a queer disabled Asian American woman.

SUGGESTED REFERENCE

Ho, Sandy. (2022). Teacher’s Guide for *Year of the Tiger: An Activist’s Life* by Alice Wong. <https://disabilityvisibilityproject.com/book/tiger/>

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