

Book: Marsha: The Joy and Defiance of Marsha P. Johnson by Tourmaline

Session 1

1. What are your first impressions of Marsha P. Johnson's early life? The relationships with her chosen and biological family?
2. What are the material ways that people showed up for Marsha, and how she showed up for others?
3. It is expected that history is drawn to talk about Stonewall, but it is also important to address the small refusals that led up to Stonewall. What were the small refusals you noticed from Marsha and others mentioned throughout the chapters?
4. What are some small refusals in our everyday lives that we can use to push back at the oppressive state?

Session 2

1. Marsha is often described as joyful and generous, even when she has very little. How does Tourmaline complicate the idea of joy—does it feel like resistance, survival, self-expression, or something else?
2. In what ways does Marsha's activism seem informal or unrecognized compared to traditional ideas of political organizing (after some discussion draw attention to page 202).
3. Our reading highlights Marsha's increasing visibility within activist spaces. How does visibility function as both a source of power and a source of danger. How might this relate to the times we are in?
4. What emotions did these chapters bring up in you—anger, admiration, grief, hope?

Session 3

1. Have you interacted with any other media that discusses the legacy of Marsha P Johnson? What does this account written by Tourmaline add or differ from the other content you've interacted with?
2. If you could have a conversation with Marsha, what might you want to say or know. She was a big believer that her physical body might be gone, but that her spirit would be left behind.
3. How has Marsha P Johnson impacted you directly? since you are at the center of your universe, how do you think this impact will continue to shape your life. Marsha's model is that each one of us by being ourselves can change things, through small acts.

Activity: Write a letter to a queer youth who might not know about Johnson, who needs someone to look to as a north star. a guide to weather the continuous storms we are encountering today.