

Healing Meditations, for Women of Color, by Women of Color

Donia Torabian

P: Paula

A: Amani

G: Gala

Am: Ameera

R: Ruth

R: So this is what my mother taught me. We're all keepers of our own fire. We need to be tended and fed and loved so that we may be warm and warm others. Sometimes peoples whose fires are not burning as bright as ours may come to you for your energy and your warmth. And as a firekeeper you should share your warmth, and tell that person when sometimes they need to feed their own fire somewhere else. What you feed grows and, whether at any moment of any day you have a bonfire or just have embers, we have to remember to tend to our own flames. So my mother taught me to place my feet strongly and firmly on the ground, and to square my shoulders and to sit heavily into my body. I close my eyes and I feel the roots in my feet reach towards the earth. I thank my creator, Naquel'tani, for today and I stretch out my awareness of my body and my spirit and my history, calling to my ancestors, asking them to enter my space. I reach to them to honor them and to receive their guidance and their love. I imagine them wrapping around me and enveloping me, within me as well. I use my breaths to cleanse and to expel all the heaviness that's stuck to my body and my mind like dusting away sand. I try to send love to all the parts of my body where I hold my pain and my oppression, like in my shoulders, my stomach and my hips. Each time I breathe in, I imagine my fire getting a little bigger as my ancestors and I gather around it, and when I open my eyes and reoccupy my space I feel cleaner and calmer, more balanced and not alone.

A: I associate life force with maybe an openness to healing and not just survival but of a desire to survive, of thriving, of holding my survival in tandem with my trauma which I'm not sure I'll ever be without but in being able to heal in ways that can make me feel whole even when I still hold traumas and that's a life force to me and to have moments or days when the center of my body is not in my trauma. I think that that's what it might look like to let a life force into my body. To still hold my pain and my trauma there where it is and accept it for its state in its healing but for the moments in which the root of my body is grounded not in pain and not in

trauma but in something else. In my survival, in my hope, in my love, in my being alive, that's a life force.

R: I think oppression is the pit in your stomach when your experience, the experience that you're allowed to have, is something different than the experience that others are allowed to have because of your shape, your size, or ethnicity, race, sexual orientation, gender. I think it's that hollowness that feels like you yourself are not allowed to exist in this world, because this world is forcing you into an expectation or a story that it's already written for you and that pit feels like a violation, that oppression feels dehumanizing.

Am: I think, when I think of oppression I think of it as like um knowing that there's a sun but constantly being followed by a cloud so you can't see it. It's the type of thing where it's like you know that joy exists but there's something preventing you from being able to access it. Um, it would be really bitter, it would be heavy. Definitely heavy. Really heavy.

G: I scheduled a time for me to cry everyday. So I was like, okay, Friday it's gonna be 4pm and Saturday I'm gonna do it at 11am. So I would walk down, onto the grass and sit by the river and stare at it and cry. And it wasn't sad crying and it wasn't happy crying it was just kind of like a really essential and cathartic experience and it was really important to me and it would, even if I was feeling super happy that day, I just made sure that I had my moment with myself to go and kind of check in and I would do that through crying.

Am: These are just some of the things that I tell myself.

A: This is just a reminder that you are radiant and gentle and fierce and smart and deserve much more than this moment.

Am: I am not defined by my wounds and I will allow myself to grow and heal. I am capable, I am strong, and I am enough.

G: It's not selfish to ask for help and you're not taking away from anyone else's energy by asking for what you need and like, you deserve it. You deserve to feel supported and secure.

A: Healing comes in waves, and maybe today the wave hits the rocks and that's okay. That's okay darling. You are still healing. You are still healing.

Am: This is how I remember to see each day as a gift. I keep a list on my phone of all of the great things that happens throughout the day. And so sometimes it'll be like my outfit. Or sometimes it'll be that I had the courage to ask a question in class, which is something that I don't typically do because I'm afraid to feel stupid. And I also, I feel really grateful when I hear good things happening to people that I love. So everytime I text my mom or my sister and I ask them how their day's going and if they tell me that something good has happened I'll write it in my phone so at the end of the day before I go to bed, I'll just read all these marvelous things that happened to me and I'll just be so happy and then I'll go to sleep happy and wake up happy. That's another important thing. Going to sleep happy and waking up happy. If I wake up happy I'm so, I'm so thankful for that.

P: A lot of recovery was gonna be me reparenting myself. And being like my own mother in this case. And that has been an image that like was really confusing at the beginning but has become very reassuring. It feels like I'm almost taking care of one side of me. Like the side that's more capable goes and like cooks a meal and feeds the other side that's like not strong enough to do it. What I like to think of is this image of when you're a kid and they put you in the bathtub. So you can imagine yourself alone or with a sibling or someone you love, who you share pure joy and love for. So imagine yourself just naked in the bathtub and the water is warm and there's soap and smells like lavender or whatever other smell you prefer and imagine yourself just like floating there and yourself as well on another side, cleaning yourself, like washing your hair and washing your body and do that work for yourself while also relaxing and feeling like you're receiving it from someone else. Because I think that's what self care is like, like recognizing your weakness and being strong enough to provide care, so being like your own mother when you're a kid and you take a bath.

R: I think people see healing and medicine often times as selfish and I think that that's really dangerous. I, in life, carry a lot of people. I ask to carry a lot of people. But if you can't maintain yourself, if you can't defend your own happiness and your own joy, then you can't sustain and that's a really difficult thing to hear and understand and really prioritize but being, being a being of radical joy and love and compassion is such a revolt against this world that wasn't created for us, that wasn't created for women of color or of marginalized identities. And to celebrate yourself and all the beauty and wisdom that you and your ancestors hold, is such a revolution.