

Virtual Love. Virtual Healing.

Episode Transcript

Visions of Ancestral Resilience

Thursday, June 25 , 2020

Scheherazade Parrish: Hello everyone, I am Scheherazade I will be hosting today for the fourth and final series in our Virtual Healing Virtual Love speaker series. Couple things before we get started, we will be using the chat. And the question and answer tools in this webinar to capture your thoughts and share out, important links so make sure you keep your eye on the chat box or links to the facilitators to the presenters, and to information that they have to share for you. The first important link in the chat tab is going to be for the closed captioning tool, we are using the otter AI to capture this session today, you may need to click the chat icon to get access to community chat.

As we begin if you have any questions for our panelists please use the q&a tab, which is located at the bottom of your screen. We also invite you to review the questions your fellow participants may have posted there is an option to vote up a question, and that'll let us know if you have the same question which one needs to be answered most readily with that.

Welcome back to the Allied Media Projects Speaker Series Virtual Love Virtual Healing. As you know, this is the first time that we have hosted a fully virtual event or community. I hope you've enjoyed it, and we wanted to do this as a way to connect the large network of community and media based organizers currently practicing social distancing. So, whether it is from home with family or even the brave community members who daily risked their lives and health for others, I want to say welcome and thank you for joining us this afternoon. Before we get started, I wanted to, we want to acknowledge the land that Allied Media org is organized from. We began by acknowledging and uplifting the history of Detroit, as Anishinabee and other



indigenous peoples stolen land, the largest majority black city in the nation with a long legacy of African diasporic global contributions, which was once the last stop unigram known by is called name midnight, Detroit is also the city with the largest concentration of Arab Americans, a border city with historic and growing Latinx communities, and a legacy of Asian American communities and movements. We ask that if you would like to acknowledge the land where you are currently, please place the name in the comment section in the chat.

Now to get started. Today's session is going to be led by Talitha Johnson and Lottie V Spady of Healing by Choice, which is an amazing collective of healers that we are very excited to like work with, and represent. And so, without further ado, I'm going to turn this over to you all, welcome. Thank you.

Lottie V Spady: Thank you so much for having us today, very excited to be here. And, as you pointed out, we're here as members of the healing by choice, which is a circle of healers. We work around, healing and transformative justice as the center of our work. And we want community members to work to reclaim their own power to heal, and to grow into communities where safety, love and integrity reside. Some of the practices that our healers share include Reiki, meditation, Tai Chi, peace and restorative circles, herbal and nutritional consultations, and we work with a variety of organizations and individuals to infuse conferences and other gatherings with a healing justice presence. My name is LottieV Spady. And I've been practicing herbalism for about six years, and I work in the community under Earthseed Detroit, and you can find information about me on the Earthseed Detroit. And, yeah, that's me, and I'm with my friends Talitha.

Talitha Johnson: Hello everybody, I am Detroit, born and raised. Detroit has born and raised me, so. I am a herbalist and Reiki practitioner. I work under my business, or on naturals and also Healing by Choice. Lady and I, we will guide you guys through a couple of slides, I'm wanted to, because our time is a little bit short. Today, we're going to jump right into our exercise so I'm going to share my screen with you guys. And I know as I share the screen. A link is being shared with you as well in a chat if you guys could click on that link and then we can walk through these slides together to build our ancestral vision.



You guys won't be alone, please don't get overwhelmed in the process we will be right here with you guiding you through.

So, I'll let Lottie you kind of explain this, this particular page here.

Lottie: Okay, first and foremost, this is an invitation. It's an invitation for us to tap into our collective and individual healing support, strength, thermal determination of those that came before us. So there's a number of ways in which you can participate. If you are at a computer, like Talitha stated we're going to be working collectively in a document. If you've done this before. Awesome. If you haven't, it can be a little bit bumpy to navigate But I'm confident we can do this together because we have all of the universe on our side right. If you are taking part in this using a journal to write or draw, then you will have writing prompts for drawing prompts and we'll be talking through it as well for you to fill out your ancestral vision, as we work. And if for whatever reason you have to or choose to just listen, or participate in a way that just engages your intuition and imagination. That is fine too. So we're gonna go over a few technical tips and like how to copy and paste and how to manipulate the slides and. And don't worry afterward all the resources and things we talked about will be available to you as well.

Talitha: I want to do a quality control check. I am of course all about being in nature and I'm outside so this. I think they're cutting the tree is it too loud to anybody or so on. My background. Too loud? I assume no, since no one is saying anything.

Okay, so we're going to walk you through, if you are at, if you're not at a computer, this is a perfect time to grab your shirt. Because the following slides will be for individuals who are able to click on this link with us and go through this process with us. So if you are not at a computer, this is the time for you to grab your journal and kind of think through who you are today. What image, what flower, what filling superhero. What describes you?who represents you? um, a lot of times we think we know who we are but, you know, we have this ever evolving so for you in this moment right now and just kind of maybe put youY OU in the center. Right. and then just kind of imagine with us



as we continue. Okay. So, for slide number 8 through 32. Those of us who can follow along.

Please select the image of your choice. What represents you which one of these images, cause you don't think too hard just feel your way through it. Right. Which image speaks to who you are, how do you feel on an inside? so I'm five four but I feel five seven on the inside. Right. So like I walk through the road tall but I'm gonna shortly short shorts shorts that So, um, so

Lottie: Can you give us an example of how to paste it on to what?

Talitha: I didn't get there yet. Oh Um,

so, who are you? I'm just kind of giving you guys an option to select. So, here is, you may say somebody. Oh, and let me also say, if you say I like this image. We're going to ask that you put your name next to it right I'm only going to write on this as an example I'm going to take it off so that your name next to it so you know how to get back to your image right, right and just keep it like that. So, if you can, problem on just try to remain next to whichever image you select. And if somebody, you find that somebody has selected the image that you want, guess what you can do. You can select that image. Copy. What is it function and see on on Microsoft, and then Command C on Apple. Right. Copy that Joker. My granddad used to say Joker, get over to the blank pages we have five blank pages. At the bottom of the images so this is an image that you want just grab it and I'll take it right to there.

So, select your image, and don't forget to put your name next to it so you know how to get to it and sorry if this is somebody example I'm just doing a one more time so we remember that funny. Okay. So yeah, put your name next to your vision, this is to leave his vision. Later label your image and say you got two of them that you actually, you feel this way and this way, you can copy him and take him to here, you can, you can have two visions, right there are no limits in the universe.

Lottie: We're absolutely limitless.



Talitha: We are limitless so this is this is as far you can go as far out as you can imagine yourself to be right. And so, back to we didn't forget you if you're not on a screen with us.

If you are on a screen and if you're not on the screen, we want you to kind of think through these type of questions over the next few minutes with us. Um, what historical ancestor figure, who's on your ancestral team. One of my friends we uh we call our ancestors our league of saints. And so I called Bob Marley my uncle so Uncle Bob is on my league of saints, right, helping me on every side. So, who's on your team on your ancestral team. And then some of the other questions that you want to think through is. These can be people from your actual family, your collective family. These can be folks that you know in the community who have passed on. Mama charity, who have gone away, maybe not directly related to them but you know them right there on the other side, legacy, and things like that. And then what characteristics gifts, talents, did they have, what did they. A lot of times when people have cast on, they, they were the people who were cheerleading for you. They were the folks who were like hey you know what did they try to amp important to you. Right. And we're just calling those folks forward and I just before I continue, I just want to be clear when we say ancestors, we are only speaking of people who were elevated in doing good work. So, when calling on ancestors please be mindful of the energy that they embody on this side. And just remember to call on people who embodied goodness, so that you're not calling on things that they, you know, be about it later so.

So yes common folks who are word of goodness. So, I'm glad you want to chime in. I don't want to talk too much.

Lottie: Sure. So at this point, hopefully folks have had a chance to kind of think about their individual presence, that's sort of the anchor for their board. The slide section that we're going to come to next. When you're ready to go there is all about, again, like Talitha emphasized, your team, and not just human like figures on your team, their future representations. There are lifestyle representations. There are food, and diet representations. our plant sisters are in the room. I mean, we want the kind of feeling like if you see an image that's like, oh, that takes me right back to the way the house used to smell on Sundays when I would come home, and there was a chicken in the



oven, you know, that kind of energy to flow through your board because the idea is, how are, how is this team going to help pull us through these hard times that we're going through right now? What kind of advice would they be giving you? What are some of those anecdotes, or phrases or terms that uh that they used to say? I know my grandmother I'm telling you my grandmother told me, and my grandmother told me she was like, I was busy listening to some probably kind of raunchy song on a radio I don't know and she turned to me and said you know what, you're gonna find there's more to life than laying down with someone

Talitha: That sound like a gramma, too!

Lottie: you know I mean? just those kinds of things that this is the time when you know we should feel limitless to focus on like the black excellence, from the beginning of time. Until now, and I'm sorry I'm going on. The next thing you'll come to after your images is a quote library. And of course, none of these sections are exhaustive. We couldn't put everybody or everything or every one or every word there. But I think it's enough to get you started so that once you're finished, you'll I hope we hope you'll be motivated to continue working on this. To really feel like this is a tool in your toolkit for times of trouble. Talitha can you, I'm going to turn it back over to you and I hope you'll share a little bit about how did you even start doing ancestral work?

Talitha: I just, before, before I get to that I don't know if we made it clear that you want to copy one of these images and take it to your board. A quote, and take it to your board. So just build your team. We're going to continue to talk, but build your team and if you have questions, drop it in the chat. Uhm. But we'll continue to just kind of talk you through about how we got here to this space.

So, my path was a very interesting. I was, I grew up in Detroit, born and raised as far as I know, right. And I'm saying it because I don't know like I grew up in a single parent household, and I didn't know my dad. And long story short, I only knew of my father from photos and my mom told me that my dad was Jamaican so you know I thought his picture is me and what laxen is here and I say is this my dad my she say yeah, so, you know, I resonated with the photo I stared into it not even realizing what I was doing as a child, and I was like I don't like him. You know, he never met him from a can of paint.



Long story short I didn't like them so much they're great. He wasn't my father. And, and I was like fully ashamed of everything I represented him and I didn't know where this feeling came from. So long story short, at the age of 12. My mom tells me that he's not my father and I have another father, my actual biological mother, and she shows me that Father photo. And long story short, I stare into the photo. And I knew that was my dad and I had to know more, I had to know more, I had so I went on a quest to know more. It's been a long long journey of finding that side of myself. It's been a very long journey of, since the ages 12 all the way up to like what yours is four years ago of finding that side of my family. At 12 I started like calling and calling and asking anybody who ever knew my dad and I finally got his last name. And I knew that he him and his family lived in Canada. So, you know, I'm a 1213 year old girl, calling, there wasn't Google back then.

So I'm calling on my grandma's phone, and my grandma would be like, yeah, don't be calling up at the country on my phone, you know, I know I didn't I didn't call my country, she got our phone deal and it's like, Hello, who has a problem in Canada. So long story short, somebody finally caught me back, and that set emotion, I'm getting in contact with my grandfather which set in motion. I'm getting in contact with my family in Jamaica, which that emotion me going there in 2016. And in 2016. Oh my god. Like the moment I met my grandfather, because I did meet him before he passed on. I didn't realize in that moment that I was lost. I didn't need to know like what prompted me to want to seek this outlet and feel I like met them.

I didn't even know that I was broken or lost or wondering or, I don't know, right, and the same thing happened in 2016. When I finally went back to the land where my folks were from. so that's like the short version of course it's like more bumps bruises because it's a lot of fun when you go and dig into people of skeletons and stuff like that. But, you know, that's, that's my ancestral journey, and it was phenomenal and I mean the knowledge itself was. What is your site work is wait and go.

So, we're about you Lottie.

Lottie: Yeah. That, that's so powerful it reminds me. What I didn't know it was an ancestral journey at the time but I remember a couple of a couple things that now tie



into this like ancestral vision board so strong. Like when I was going through my divorce. Remember I named myself on my hotmail Hatshepsut I was into Egyptian art and architecture, and I learned about Queen Hatsheput and I was like, This is the energy I need in my life, this is what I need to carry me through she was the queen who would be king, she took her people all the way to Ponte and found. Okay, I don't, I can go on and on and on. She was that, was my personal like homegirl, like, you know, so that was one time and it was because I felt like I didn't have a lot of individuals in the, in the, quote unquote real world on my side.

Everybody's questioning like are you gonna divorce, it doesn't matter why you leave but after that, you know, so I had ran into a place where I had no one to ask. I needed someone that was unequivocally on my side to him my best interest at heart. And I remember later in life. I'm coming to terms with some of my own paths, like both of my parents have made their transitions and I was adopted, and I grew up knowing I was adopted. But after they passed away my adopted parents. I began to, I really felt untethered, lost, and I had no one to ask. I mean, I didn't know. I didn't know who you know. I don't know my family tree. So I've had to draw on the collective, you know, and I do have like my grandmother's picture I have certain ancestors I hang on to but you know even to settle some of the turbulence with my mother like calling on her the ancestor I've invited her, and I to still be in relationship together. like can we still work on this stuff Ma? Because I know you all know the side now. and you know a lot more. And we ,you can still teach me, you know. And so, this ancestral work has come in handy when I felt there was no one to ask because guess what, that they will communicate with you. Like this is just the beginning. Some of you may have done deep ancestral work before or meditative work or altar work or whatever you want to call it.

They do start talking to you.

They are talking to you when you want to do something you know supposed to be doing and then all of a sudden it's like, oh,okay,

Talitha: I remember when I first met you Lottie. You were like talking about the ancestors and we were like ancestors??? like why would you talk to them??



Remember? like, why would you talk to them, for answers. Say bye. I mean, we right here.

Lottie: We're right here, talk to us,

Talitha: people haven't. But I have found like, even though I didn't, I wasn't calling it that that reached out was needed ancestor work. You know that reaching out I agree like over the years. So, a study, study and like if I just for like five minutes. And, and it helped me to like learn how to connect in that in a big way with ancestors, and it helped connect the dots as to why that's important. You know, it's who you are. Someone said to me one time.

They were just so happy to be talking conversation like, you know, this is not my statement but it's just a point.

They were saying that, oh you know people will fuss about their parents right like why would you be mad because that's who you're becoming, right. I never thought of it like that. And then I guess I got older and older and older and I started looking more and more like my mother and I'm like, well you're becoming. And then here's the theme like the more you try to avoid not becoming, it's like you can't help to be who you are, right. So, so what you can do in my ancestral journey has taught me is what you can do when you come face to face with generational stuff right generational baggage because everybody's family got some junk in the trunk, right. So, when you come face to face with that generational baggage I have learned to heal it right, some stuff is bigger than you. Like what we're going through right now. This stuff is much bigger than what you can do on your own. And so as when you call in your lead the saints and you say man god this is heavy. You know, and this don't feel like just mine.

Oh, you know, help, help is not been a time when I went to my ancestors like that, that they didn't come in. You know, they didn't give me a lot you know you ain't messing with that, you know, like seriously. So, so even, even to like that generational baggage.



I've learned to say hey, you know. All right, this is this some baggage, we know I'm holding on to so I need some help, I can give her this one, I see that everyone before me, this is what this was what was bothering y'all. Here it is bothering me too. Right. Can I want to heal? Can we stop it here? you got to stop here. Right.? So heal you can heal your lineage just because everybody before you do whatever. right? no judgment. Doesn't mean do whatever, don't mean that you got to keep that going forward. You can heal your lineage and your ancestors. Oh my god, how about tools on the other side their life we were waiting for someone to do that. We were waiting for someone. Man, because you know living his human life he got so many distractions that we don't even have time and take the time to think about what could help, let alone yourself well let alone like the people before you the people coming after you you know I'm saying like, especially in America on our best day like we're programmed in a kind of selfish kind of way, you know, even though we try our best not to be

so.

So yeah, so just thinking of your lineage, your line, and even, even, even if it's not one that you know, because I didn't know until I knew, but I felt it. Right.

Lottie: Yeah. That healing part is so key is okay. Like, when I made, you know I was thinking earlier about this, this, this assignment. I was thinking about that one board I made that was called I called it my bad-assery board. That bad-assery board had Harriet Tubman had. I mean, it was. Every, I didn't know it actually was an ancestral board. I was activating the power, the characteristics, the individuals, the lifestyle that I wanted me to embody. And when I tell you they activated some stuff.

I had to put that board, I'd take that board and go put it somewhere for a while, I was like, you gotta go.

Talitha: Oh, that's the crazy part like you are that board. That is so crazy.



Lottie: I hit all and it was just, it's so empowering especially at a time like this when you feel like I mean we're up against tremendous odds but do you know putting together that board or a board such as what these are to step back and look like.

Talitha: We got this we got this.

Lottie: I was thinking about that one. And there's some resources coming up later. Just things, not any, like, how to do this work because it is very personal I mean there are a million books on like, how to do ancestral work if that's what you want to do, they're just some examples and some songs and things that have been meaningful to the two of us in our own journey. But, um, there's one. There's one, a book like *The Warmth of Other Suns* which is a great migration story. And I just recall the author saying how migration isn't about geography or movement, you know, it's about freedom. It was about freedom, at any cost. It was about. I'mma die if I stay here. You know, and so that book, I mean I think if you want to tap into some examples of. And I feel like this is ancestral work. This is our narrative work. So some examples of that would be that book *The Warmth of Other Suns*. I love the book written by Michael Twitty *The Cooking Gene*, where he traced his, not only do like ancestry.com but through cooking and he actually worked on plantations doing reenactments of slave cooking and he talks about the pots and when you get to know your pot, or you got that cast iron pot, you don't a lot of people know, they may have their grandma's skillet, or their grandma's cobbler dish or something like that you know so that's another example of just how they're with us walking this walking this walk, you know. And then some of the others are like podcasts on adoption adoption stories that's, that's my particular area that I'm working on how but there are a few in the resources but um yeah it's just really been comforting at a time when it can really help you feel like the will is the rug has been pulled out from under all of us, and balled up and treated you know hurt really badly and deeply.

So..



Talitha: What do you think your folks would tell you? like when I when you were trying to like get through a tough time like I did, I did like what did they tell you to like get through. I don't know something hard.

Lottie: You know. My father told me which I just really resented it at the time.

Isn't It's funny how you get some advice, you're like, I'm not trying to hear that. No. Yes. I always say stop and it's kind of cliché but true like stop and smell the roses he would say stop and smell the roses because when you're gone. You're gone for a really long time. And usually I would be rushing to do something, of course, the last thing I wanted to hear was slow down.

Talitha: Yeah, for sure.

Lottie: I have come to learn over the past few months, especially, and I've been moving towards this direction, all along, a very wise and dear friend of mine said, we've been preparing for this moment. All of our lives, you know. And now I know, give me a rose and I'll smell it, I'm gonna sit down and take my time maybe make a cup of coffee and spend time with that rose. You know, so that was what my father used to say, you know, when you're gone you're gone a really long time.

Talitha: Hmm. That's true. So true.

Yeah. Yeah, my folks told me quite a few things and, but most importantly, a belief they they wanted to stress the importance in who you are. And I remember like my grandpa that was his speech wrong I my life is too strong stern. Right. And as he gotten older, he would see dementia. And he was shuffling around one day and just like people just really didn't know where he was or who he was, or who we were and my face. Wrap because it was like finding out Superman was human right. And I remember my grandma, she looked at me is she's sought a drop in my face and she was like that's why you gotta live now girls live next to me, and I think I've been a very big, you live now. And my grandma just to give you a little context, she has never promoted it living your life by Christian and holy and you know teaser about her just knowing Jesus personally.



Hanging with Moses. She never promoted living your life she was all about like you get up and you go to church and say, Monday through Saturday prepare for church right type of Lady, and, and so for her to see that I think at her older age she got a little down low also in a little bit of understanding as well. She just wanted to be in like live now if you're like me, that has never been her husband. So I really appreciated that idea. So the interesting thing we're gonna start.

Want to see what everyone created oh this is beautiful.
As a beautiful boy. So, all beautiful are beautiful.

Lottie: these are going to be shared with us to help y'all keep working on them or be moved to create your own now that you just have a, you know, oh yeah that that just stay in love.

Talitha: Now this is beautiful and some people may have like copied and pasted it over in their own space and that's cool too. But, um, just understand that your vision, you're not living this life alone, it's a collective vision. Right, I felt the power on those boards and I do want to share real quick. Someone told me. If you're not sure if you're really tapping into your own ancestors or how to tap into ancestors, just get a table and put a bunch of things that you like on a table maybe put a tablecloth in and put a whole bunch of things that represent you on a table. And one day you know lead a room, and he will walk by and you will feel your presence. Right. You understand, so same concept, right. If you choose to do this later. Work with your ancestors, same concept. If you feel so moved -put a table cloth down and, you know, this is stuff that represent them on a table, you know, same concept so. So there's that.

Lottie: Can you bring us into a tool like that. Can you help us, activate or do something with all of our work.

Talitha: So we're gonna bring it to a close, but you guys can continue to work on this on your own. Um, we want to take this time to take a couple of deep breaths together, and breathe life into our board. So if you can I put your center eyes on your board and set your eyes on your vision. I'll pull this.



Just bring yourself sitting up top, back straight. Eating comfortable your legs can be folded your legs easily however you want to be the arms can be whatever just be comfortable with such integrity, and a deep breath out another deep breath in where your chest expands.

Breathing from your belly. And the deep breath. And as you're breathing in and out on your own. Breathing from your belly button or as far down as your breath can go Breathe in and breathe out. Imagine, this is your reality, and your only truth. A permit to yourself, that this is your church. And this is our collective. And when you're ready. Drop a word in the chat, just one word. As to how you feel. After doing this, and when to stop sharing.

So we can.

Scheherazade: Alright I appreciate everybody that joined us. This was phenomenal.

Lottie: I know this is so good I know we have to turn it back over to our awesome hosts, we both, thank you so much for joining us and please feel free to reach out anytime we as you can tell we can probably talk about this for a while.

Thank you so much for being here today.

Talitha: Thank you to Healing by Choice! who were here on behalf of and thank you to Allied Media Projects for having us and thanking everybody who showed up with us and, most importantly, who showed up for yourself.

Scheherazade: Awesome. I was so surprised to see the boards, I was over here, you know behind my shade like...That was great, thank you so much for sharing that with me, and with everyone who came I want to thank everyone who took the time to show



up, like to leave the fish show up for for yourselves first and then show up for community in this way it's really beautiful that was a really beautiful exercise, um.

Again, today's session is brought to you by Allied Media Projects. And we are an organization whose mission is to cultivate media for liberation. We believe that our liberation is an ongoing process of personal collective systemic transformation. We are a network of people and projects rooted in Detroit and connected to hundreds of other places across the globe. Together we grow and exchange ways of using media to create the world that we need. We do this through three programs. The Allied Media Conference which is a biennial gathering of people making media for liberation. The Sponsor Projects program which makes the radical practical through Fiscal Sponsorship and shared administrative services, and the Speaker's Bureau, where we assist speakers, such as Lottie and Khalifa healing by choice. We assist them in distributing models and practices and theories of media based organization for liberation, with a shared mission to facilitate education, joy, healing inspiration and transformative dialogue, and I don't know about you but that you know i certainly got that today.

Um, so we have just a couple calls to action before you leave, I want to let you know that the Allied media conference will be completely virtual, but it's going to be July 23 through 26th, and you can find more information about that including registration at AMC dot Allied media dot org. Thank you for joining us. This is the final virtual love virtual healing session of the first volume we will be back in the fall so come back in the fall. But yeah, there was no better way no better way that I could see to wrap this up than this exercise which helps us move forward. I. That was great. That was amazing. is are there any other questions? You had some great questions, you have great comments in the chat I hope you had a chance to like look at that you are, like, change your lives.

Thank you for sharing your sharp body there was a question like what is your.

Right. Yeah. And I looked at it. And I thought about that, like, oh, that seems like a prompt for this exercise Did you plan that that way.



Lottie: Oh, you know what, yeah, yeah. Yes. Never lose the smooth right you know yeah to plant Yeah,

Scheherazade: that's just glad you noticed. Well, if that is all I'm going to In gratitude, thank you I'm going to say goodbye. Enjoy the rest of your day. Thanks to everyone who came to participate, your boards are amazing, and I'll catch you all in the fall.

Talitha: I see you guys.

Lottie: Thank you. Love you all. I love each and every one of you every one of you love. Yes. Thank you. Thank you. Bye.

