

Welcome

Hi friends! Welcome to this Movement Monday of our Second Week of Abolition Advent.

My name is Coke Tani, and I use she and her pronouns.

In this particular week of our devotional time together—our embodied time together—we will be exploring and contemplating through our bodies, the living intersectional justice site where the need for racial justice meets the need for justice for all gender-expansive, gender-generative, gender-courageous lives, including: transgender, gender non-binary and gender non-conforming lives.

Before we begin, I would just invite us to enter our space together with humility and openness and especially with the heart of thanksgiving.

First of all, great thanks for those of us and in our lives who have shown and taught and revealed to us lived experiences at any part of this site, that have been different from ours and that have helped us to feel like we are living more fully and faithfully ourselves.

First, that deep thanks.

Second, I want to acknowledge the more public and formal works of several people who've really enriched my own sensibilities as I continue to grow along with you at this site.

First is Dr. Robyn Henderson-Espinoza, whose recent book "[Body Becoming](#)" is a blessing at this place for all of us.

Second, I commend to you the memoir work of Meredith Talusan, who is Filipinx, transgender, and also has lived in what is called an albino experience of melanated existence or non-melanated existence.

And then third, I would really like us to give deep thanks today to the life of William Dorsey Swan, who was born in the 19th century and grew and evolved into the 20th century.

He was actually born into slavery here in the United States, and through his adulthood lived to become the first self-proclaimed Drag Queen here in the United States, and also hosted many a Drag Ball, maybe some of the very first in Harlem.

And so it is because of lives like his, lives like theirs, lives like hers, who inform and are present with and bless our own learning today.

We give thanks.

Let's enter our movement time together, shall we?

Themes

I would like to invite us to consider and contemplate three living themes that arise from our intersectional site today.

The first theme is the possibility that God dreams us into being.

God not only dreams us into being, but God dreams us into becoming, into discovering, into expressing, and full-flourishing of God's dream within us.

That's theme one: God dreams us into life.

The second theme is the theme of: injustice happens.

We affirm that injustice occurs when some feel that they have the right to rupture God's dreaming in us.

This happens at the intersection where fear of difference meets power.

These attitudes, or these interpersonal or political postures include a feeling of entitlement to tell or show others, or to impose upon others, that you are unacceptable, that you are unnatural, that you are "too much," that you are uncivilized, that you deserve to be pathologized, and that you are somehow immoral.

We see that, when we rupture the dreaming of God at the intersection of racialized living and gendered living, we discover injustice that equates as sin—personal and collective sin.

We want to see clearly that this injustice is enacted in ways that constrain lives through policing embodiments, through legislating how our embodied lives can exist and be expressed, in medicalizing, and in "other-ing."

Whether we shun, whether we judge, whether we erase, or we consider others as less worthy of our attention and our love.

That's theme number two.

Let me just do a brief review:

Theme One is that God dreams us into being and becoming.

Theme Two: Injustice occurs.

It is a material and physical expression of the rupture, some feeling they have the right to rupture, God's dreaming of us into our unfolding and becoming.

And our Third Theme today is: "What would liberation feel like, and look like, and be like?"

If we consider the injustice being the constraint, or the closing-off, of God's dreaming in us, then liberation would be the opening or the reopening of pathways, where BIPOC and gender-expansive, gender-courageous, lives get to be fully felt and lived, as God dreaming us or dreaming them.

It is a reopening of the pathways, where those who live at this intersection get time and space to behold, and to have, and to savor the blessings and the gifts that they, and that we, are.

The third part of liberation is that the experience of being revealed as a gift and a blessing.

"Trans" transforms...transforms, crosses into...an experience of contributing to, of sharing to, the group body as a whole.

Our themes for today are:

1. God's dream: being, and becoming through us.
2. Injustice happens when those with fear and power feel that they have the right to rupture God's dream-becoming-in-us, and to constrain that expression through us.
3. Liberation from that happens when we reopen the pathways of becoming and discovering fullness of expression, and of feeling we *now* have that expression to make as a contribution to the *entire* group body.

Let's take a breath into those considerations together.

[Inhale]

[Exhale]

And now, let us prepare to move together on this Movement Monday.

Body Welcome

Part One of our movement and Bodyspirit exploration—again, shout out to Phil Porter and Cynthia Winton Henry of InterPlay for insisting that “Bodyspirit” is not two things or two words, but it's a union.

There's no part of our human experience that doesn't have a physicality to it at some level.

Before we do our applied movement exploration, I just want to invite us first into a remembrance and a welcoming of the body—of your own body.

Several aspects to this:

First is that these movement invitations are not at all about trying to achieve a certain way of looking.

It's not about trying to look pretty or beautiful, or trying to match your body and your movement to some aesthetic that you may have internalized about what “worthy movement” is.

You are here.

You are a fully created Bodyspirit.

You are fully worthy, however you're showing up.

It's also not about following me.

I'll be demonstrating certain ways of doing what I'm inviting us into, but I really want to invite you to do what makes sense for your own body.

This brings us to: all abilities and physicalities and embodiments are welcome and truly, deeply desired and wanted here.

If your own ability means that you do the warmup with your fingers or your toes, or internally—your ligaments, your bones, your cells, your breath, your mouth, your imagination—know that all those ways of engaging this Body Welcome are utterly valid.

I invite you to have the fullness of what you want in your own embodiment.

Let's move.

I'm going to do this Body Welcome standing because that's what I feel called to.

You're welcome to sit, to lie down, to move as much or as little of your own embodiment as suits you.

As we transition to whatever way we want to begin our Body Welcome, or warming up into this space, I want to invite you first to allow Spirit to breathe you, right where you are, and to let it out with an audible sigh.

[Loudly inhales]

[Loudly exhales with a sigh]

Let's practice doing that once more, allowing Spirit to breathe you in and out with a sigh.

[Loudly inhales]

[Loudly exhales with a sigh]

Good!

Allow one side of your body to shake out, to find the shake that feels satisfying for you.

Allowing another side or part of your body to shake itself out, too.

[Loudly exhales with a sigh]

Finding the satisfying shake and allowing yourself to have a little more of it.

Indulge it a bit more.

Now I want to invite you to expand your Bodyspirit, whatever that means to you.

And expand it in a different way or a different direction.

Now find a way to wrap up or embrace your Bodyspirit.

Maybe give it a nice squeeze, or whatever a hug means to you and your embodiment.

Good!

And I just want to invite you to let your embodiment kind of curl downward or inward.

[Loudly exhales with a sigh]

And then to play with uncurling and unfurling.

Good.

Let's be breathed together again with the sigh of God's Spirit.

[Loudly inhales]

[Loudly exhales with a sigh]

I want to invite your body spirit to squirm.

And to find a way to have a little bit of swinging.

Or, if you were imagining the Divine rocking you.

Let yourself be rocked and swung.

[Loudly exhales with a sigh]

Find a way to flick or toss with any part of your body, big or small.

[Loudly exhales with a HOOO!]

I'm imagining showering my room with colors...

[Loudly exhales with a HOOO!]

And giving it sound...

[fshshshfsshhs like a rushing wind]

You find your own way to have that.

Now we're going to do something a little stronger than flicking and tossing.

We're going to thrust and throw, so

[OOOOO]

Give it some sound, if you want.

[HOO! HAA! HUH! HWO!]

Maybe play with a little chopping...a little sharper thrusting, in whatever way your body wants to.

...your whole body, right as you are.

That wholeness is in that part or in the parts.

And now let your body play with smooth and slow.

Just letting your body and sensation lead you from one kind of smooth and slow to another.

And now playing with fast and jerky.

How does your body know how to do fast jerky movement?

And let's return to smooth and allow your body some stillness.

In the midst of the smoothness, find a shape to pause in.

Doesn't have to be clever or made. Your body will just give you a shape.

Let yourself have and savor that.

Moving again until your body gives you another shape.

Let yourself hang out there.

We're going to let our bodies have shape and stillness three times in a row.

Moving from shape.

To shape.

Shape.

Shape.

Shape.

Now let's let our Bodyspirits remember what it's like to be teeny-tiny, maybe even our faces, and having the teeniest movement that we want.

And now invite your Bodyspirit in a way that makes sense for you to explore expansiveness.

And come back to tiny.

And now come back to medium.

I hope this helped you to remember what your Bodyspirit—right where you are—knows how to be, knows how to do, and remembers freedom.

Remembers freedom in all the ways.

Let's get ready for our movement Part 2.

Movement

Now that we've remembered together what our bodies are able to do, and how they're able to be, with loving invitation, I ask us to bring that remembrance forward into these movement explorations around today's theme.

We'll have two explorations.

The first I'm calling an Empathic Movement Exploration.

In this empathic one, if you identify in any way as Black, Brown, Transgender, Gender Non-binary, non-conforming, expansive, generative, I invite you to be in choice about this first part of our movement exploration.

You can listen to it first and then decide if you want to engage it in your body or not.

Because we're going to be in in this empathic go, we're going to be moving through some things that may be activating.

The last thing we want to do here is to reinscribe any harm.

So please be in choice about that.

Otherwise, I invite us now to the first movement exploration.

[Begin Empathic Movement Exploration]

Just as we had curled down and unfurled in welcoming our bodies today, our exploration will be around the act of unfurling.

Before we start to unfurl, I want you to first locate where you'd like to have your movement exploration and to find yourself there.

And now to locate a place in your body that is curious or feeling nudged, or a sense of Divine itch, to have this movement exploration.

In that place, I invite you to imagine the seed or the kernel of God's dream and dreaming in you.

And now that it's there, I invite you to allow your Bodyspirit to move in accordance with the beginning of that unfurling.

So, Bodyspirit and embodied unfurling from that site... allowing it to begin.

Letting yourself have that experience.

And now stop.

And now begin again...

...with God's unfurling...

And stop again.

And this time, when you stop, I invite you to imagine not only being stopped, but being judged for the unfurling that has already started taking place.

I invite you to have a moment of that.

Now continuing on in your unfurling with God...

...following the lead of that unfurling impulse...

And stopping once again.

This time, not only stopping with a sense of judgement, but perhaps a sense of being disciplined, restrained, or constrained in your unfurling.

And given this, I invite you to try to continue unfurling further...

...and now stop.

One last time-

Stop.

And now, in addition to the judgement and the restraint, I invite you to imagine punishment for your unfurling, and even an internalization of that, to the point where your path of unfurling gets rerouted.

This rerouting takes you to a far away place, perhaps so far away that, from time to time, you forget the seed and the unfurling of God's dream in you...

...and I invite your empathic imagination to pause.

And at this point of pausing, I invite you to take a breath into that

[Loudly inhales]

[Loudly exhales with a sigh]

Now, to shake off and out that experience and to notice what you remember about it.

[Begin Movement of Liberation]

Let's now move into the next part of our movement exploration, which is the movement of liberation for today, for this week's theme.

I'm going to put on a piece of music, and this time I invite you to begin again.

It could be from the same seed at the same site or a different kernel at a different site.

But locate how you want to have that unfurling.

And I promise you that I will not be stopping this unfurling.

We will be unfurling together, first to the focused passage of our Scripture lesson for today, which comes from Isaiah 40:4-5.

And then this will continue on into unfurling together, God's dream in us, to a piece of music.

Find your starting place where you are located, as well as your starting place internally.

And let's begin our unfurling of God's dream.

“Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill shall be made low, and the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain.

Then the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all people shall see it together, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken.”

~Isaiah 40:4-5

We continue to unfurl together.

[Two minutes of freeform movement with music]

I invite you to have your ending...

To take your time with it...

To take a breath into it...

And if it serves you, to bring that piece of paper and pen or journal near you, to doodle, to jot down anything... image, phrase... for your own transition and blessing.

May God's dream continue to unfurl as a way of having freedom for all bodies.

Amen.