

# Welcome

Hi friends, welcome to Movement Monday, where together we'll be learning and prayerfully exploring the living intersectional justice site, where the need for racial justice encounters the need for disabilities justice.

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

I want to thank my teachers, as I invite you to thank your teachers, who have helped to raise your awareness and shift how you live in this world on behalf of those living at this particular intersection, whether that be you, your loved ones, and beyond.

First I'd like to thank Rachel Herzig. I'd like to thank Gwynneth VanLaven and Chris Ng.

These three people have really brought disability justice to the practice of InterPlay, and we'll be exploring and queering some of their suggestions and forms today.

I would also like to thank the program and movement seeded in the 1970s called "Crip Camp," and from that, the Emergency 504 Coalition, and the arts organization "Sins Invalid" as well as artist Alice Shepherd (who lives at this intersection) as an artist whose wheelchair-inclusive choreography is central and opens up possibilities for all of humanity through her art making.

I also want to give a deep bow to the late Brad Lomax, who was a disabilities activist as well as a member of the Black Panther Party, and was so key into showing us the possibility of what intersectional justice and love look like.

So let's take a breath together.

And before we get into our themes, I would like to kind of loop back to how I'm introducing myself today in the way that these teachers have taught me.

Today I am joining you in an orange blouse over another orange top. The inner top is a lighter orange with white and black diagonal design on it. The outer top is a darker orange V-neck with flutter sleeves.

My skin is tan. I'm wearing black and white earrings as well as glasses with little rhinestones over the top of the frame. My hair is very short, cropped, quite close to my head, and it's kind of blackish-brown.

I'm joining you from a room where the wall behind me is light blue and is sunlit with a window slightly to my right, as well as a bookcase behind me, a light brown bookcase that goes about six or seven feet high, and is tan and is filled with books and other objects.

So with that, let's go ahead and as your body is able and willing, invite a breath of opening and blessing as we enter our space together.

## Scripture

Before we move into our theme, I'd like to first open with our focus passage as well as a Body Welcome.

Today's focus passage comes from Isaiah 61:4.

I invite you to relax into your body as able and to let these words encounter you, however they will, in this moment.

*"They shall build up the ancient ruins. They shall raise up the former devastations. They shall repair the ruined cities, the devastations of many generations."* - Isaiah 61:4

## Themes

Now I'd like to lift up three themes for your consideration and contemplation at this living intersection, where racial justice encounters disability justice.

The first theme is an affirmation that God continually creates and intends a wholeness for all of creation, in the time span we might consider as both the "Now" and the "Not Yet."

We affirm that God intends wholeness in the "Now" and the "Not Yet."

Second, this place called the "Not Yet," is the site of injustice, longing to be transformed into justice.

And as far as this particular living intersection, we learned that the "Not Yet" is not about waiting for differently-melanated, differently-abled bodies to be to suddenly become more like the hegemonic, idealistic, supremacist standard.

That is not the "Not Yet" which we speak, when we consider the coming of the Body of Christ.

The "Not Yet" is the movement from injustice to justice.

Now in this second theme of the "Not Yet" and of injustice, choreographer Alice Shepherd—whom I named and we give thanks for—she has taught us that just as race is a social construction created by some as a truth, right to control, constrain, and criminalize others and benefit those in power—similarly, the concept of "normal" is also such a social construction—controlling, containing, hiding away, putting away—those considered "undesirable" for the maintenance of power by a very few.

“Race” and “normal” are social constructions.

The second part of injustice in this “Not Yet” zone is that, when we buy into that, our interpersonal behaviors and attitudes do things like assume illness of others, when there is no illness there. There is, in fact, a wholeness we don't yet have the ability to recognize.

It involves treating people like objects, scary objects, instead of sacred subjects at the center of their own lives, standing to contribute and share so much. We treat others as problems, as aberrations, and as less than whole.

That's kind of the “Not Yet” on the interpersonal level. The “Not Yet” at the systemic level is when we consider others as problems to be fixed, and we set up systems to do the fixing.

We consider others as deviants to be controlled, and we set up structures to control other Bodyspirits.

We consider others as poor, dependent, lesser people who are dependent, and we set up systems to address an assumed state of dependence.

And we consider these folks as blight, as ruins, and as devastations.

That becomes baked into our social consciousness unless we're awake to things like this coming Body of Christ.

Now when we talk about systemic injustice in this “Not Yet” zone, lastly, I want to say that these expressions are material and structural, and they have bodily and physical implications for those impacted in severe and harmful ways.

These ways include institutionalization, for instance: how differently-abled bodies were institutionalized, hidden away, and treated as subhuman.

They are incarcerated: they are sent to boarding schools in the names of “Christian” mission, as happened to our Indigenous siblings.

They are put in giant cages of detainment at borders and not allowed access, not allowed into spaces, not welcome, and considered “not good for business.”

This space of the “Not Yet” of God's will for wholeness, we've really got our work, labor, and love cut out for us.

And we have the coming Body of Christ.

We affirm God's intention for wholeness.

We affirm that the “Not Yet” has nothing to do with diverse melanation and abilities, it has to do with our lenses of how we perceive and create systems that prevent other bodies from living into their full wholeness.

And the third area we're looking at is- if that's the injustice and the “Not Yet,” what is liberation?

How do we live into a felt, embodied sense of liberation at this intersection?

So let's take a look at this (holds up hands, one stacked on the other, palms down).

I talked a lot about intersections being like this so far, haven't I?

What happens in your Bodyspirit if you flip this hand and the hands face each other, and this becomes a hovering, living, dynamic space where instead of this (faces both palms down), you have this (faces both palms toward one another).

I just invite you to do this for a bit (slowly circles hands, hovering palms near one another), however you are willing and able, and to notice what happens when we turn toward.

We are so blessed that there was a movement, a great movement in the 70s, similar to when a Crip Camp took seed in California-

We are blessed that out of that grew the Emergency 504 Coalition, “504” referring to Section 504 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act, where laws about exclusion and discrimination were signed into law, but we're never enacted in any structural way that created access and celebration and liberation and togetherness.

For over four weeks, Disability Rights Activists such as Judy Heumann, Ed Roberts, Debbie Kaplan, Phil Newmark, and tons more of differently-abled and disabled bodies gathered for a sit in at the Federal building in San Francisco.

This sit-in, and for some hunger strike, lasted a good 26-28 days. And because of the length of the sit in, all they were asking for was for a hearing by members of Congress, namely HEW (Health, Education, and Welfare).

And the HEW Chair's Office was there, and so demanding to be heard on their terms, they convened to sit in- a rally and then a sit in.

I do this (hovers hands, palms facing one another) because, thanks to people like Brother Brad Lomax, the Black Panther showed up in solidarity to feed and to provide habitable circumstances for the protesters.

Glide Memorial also provided food as well as families and groups of lesbians fed and nourished in many ways, not just digestively, the people who were protesting.

Also, there was a particular journalist who broke a strike and covered solely the story and not much else was being covered.

God's spirit had this foreground in the news for all that time. Mayor Moscone was also in solidarity, as well as veterans and the Machinist union.

All of these marginalized groups came together, realizing that the disability rights activists were addressing something that they themselves could relate to as far as exclusion, discrimination, and trying to be, as Judy Heumann called it, sidelined.

What we witnessed here—and I commend the movie “Crip Camp” to you if you have not yet seen it—is the Emergency 504 Coalition and sit in transformed this (holds hands up, both palms facing downward) to this (turns hands to face palms toward one another).

So many dimensions of solidarity happened, that what we witnessed—rather than the ruins and devastations of racism and ableism—we witnessed the movement from the medical model of liberation to the social model; from the legal model to the social model. “Social” meaning the place of radical interdependence.

And that is what liberation looked like and felt like and is still longing to be.

I want to lift up the themes of wholeness, of “Not Yet,” and of this “facing one another” liberation, in order to welcome in the intimate and infinite body of the coming Christ.

Let's get ready now, friends, to move.

## **Movement**

For our movement exploration today, I want to remind us that our movement times are not about making anything clever or smart or having to look pretty or pose a certain way.

It's actually the opposite.

It's really about allowing ourselves, our organic, our God-given Bodyspirits to become primary and central to our meditation and our contemplation at this theme of “Where does racial justice meet disability justice?”

And “What does that site have to show us about freedom for all bodies?”

Today you can tell my background is different-

We're going to be exploring a form that I learned from Agnotti Cowie who was one of the Co-originaors of InterPlay's art and social change program.

So big shout out to Agnotti for this.

And so I invite you, if you're there with another person, I invite you to consider one another, or if there are more of you, as mutual learners in this mutually learning Bodyspirits.

I invite you to gain consent from one another, to share points of contact, to maybe share leaning in and counter balancing and playing with weight sharing or just simply supporting one another in times of needing to lean in.

If there is not another person there with you and you're like me, I invite you to find a surface in your space that is able to support you leaning and giving your weight and giving your embodied humanity to it.

The most obvious surface is the floor. We all have that, I'm sure, in one way or another.

So that can be where you have your movement exploration.

Today I'm choosing this closet, which has a door I can lean back on. It's also a kind of doorway.

Doorways make great surfaces for this exploration. There's a wall here, a window sill.

Go ahead and find your exploration partner, whether it is another human or whether it is a surface.

As you do that, I'm going to start to demonstrate three things I want to invite us into. And they're pretty incremental and give or take, whatever you want to stay with or move with.

The first is find any part of your body and let that part of your body connect either with the other person or with that surface. And this could be externally, internally, in your imagination.

All those options are embodied options.

Now let that kind of deepen into a lean, where you are giving more of your weight, and you are feeling met, supported by that person or by that surface.

Now I want to invite you to take perhaps an unlikely part of your body.

When we think of moving, regardless of our embodiments and abilities, we kind of have our tropes about those parts of our bodies that can connect and move.

So I invite you to an unlikely part of your body, and to bring that into contact with your surface or your person. Let yourself have that experience and notice what that's like.

The third invitation is from this unlikely point of connection, just seeing, very gradually and curiously what other shapes or movements or leanings or embodiments become possible because of that shape.

And then from that, what else becomes possible?

And from that, what also becomes possible?

We're just playing with our theme today of transforming our treatment and understanding, especially

of brown and black lives, and especially of people living with varied abilities and disabilities as problems or as other, or really isolating and separating ourselves from one another.

We are going to live into the opposite, which is not a problem, but a possibility.

And we're just going to let ourselves have an embodied practice of unlikely possibilities, which we learned about at that 504 sit-in, that radical, transforming interdependence, where the sharing of weight and the offering of support then led to different parties sharing, and different parties offering support, and allowing liberation to occur in ways that dominant culture could never have imagined.

I'm going to put on a piece of music, and I just invite you to play with that, to play with connection, with connection in a surprising way, and then to see where that surprise may lead you. And to follow the lead of the unlikely, and the unlikely connection.

Let's take a breath in together.

I'll go ahead and put on a piece of music, and let's see what our bodies stand to reveal to us.

[-2 minutes of movement, connecting with your point of connection]

Let yourself have your ending.

Let God's spirit breathe you.

If you feel the need to doodle with the pen and paper, to jot anything down from what you noticed while doing that, go ahead and do so.

Thank you for leaning in to this movement meditation.

May the radically transformative interdependence and dance of mutuality and dance of following the lead of the unexpected allow us all to move forward together, in freedom for all bodies. Amen.