

JudyandRamonaEDGES

Episode 4 Transcription

Judy Young 00:00

Historic relationships between academics and community or institutions of community – it felt very one way that the institution was going into community to take things and and not give. And, you know, we're very intentional that it is a reciprocal relationship that we are coming in – we are partnering – we're not coming in, we're partnering, and we hope to learn. We also have to give and it's a... it's a long term relationship, not a fast relationship.

[Podcast intro tunes]

Podcast Intro 00:59

You are now listening to EDGES, Engaging Dialogues Generating Emancipatory Sciences. From the University of California, San Francisco's Emancipatory Sciences Lab at the Institute of Health & Aging, Department of Social and Behavioral Sciences, this podcast aims to foster critical conversations via interrogating power structures, building knowledges of anti-oppression, and encouraging activist-scholar approaches to research, policy, and practice.

In our first season, we are discussing "Emancipating the Academy," and asking questions about our guests' experiences navigating academic careers as well as their visions for liberatory and healing approaches to scholarship and work.

Jarmin Yeh 01:53

Today's podcast we have two special guests, Judy Young, the Executive Director of the UCSF National Center of Excellence in Women's Health, and Ramona Laughing-Brook Webb, Poet in Residence at the Center of Excellence in Women's Health. And I'm also joined by Co-Assistant Directors of the Emancipatory Sciences Lab, Brittney Pond –

Brittney Pond 02:14

Hi, happy to be here today.

Jarmin Yeh 02:17

And Kourtney Nham.

Kourtney Nham 02:19

I'm looking forward to our conversation.

Jarmin Yeh 02:23

Judy and Ramona, thank you so much for taking time out of a Friday afternoon to join us on this podcast. It's such an honor and privilege to have you here with us for this conversation. This is our very first season recording a podcast, and you know, we're just learning as we go, but we're excited to highlight and elevate the good work that you're doing. So, I thought I'd open up with a question which is just tell us a little bit about yourself and your journey to UCSF.

Judy Young 02:57

Wonderful. Well, thank you so much for having us on this podcast. We're very excited to be here. I think I'll just kick it off. And, you know, my background is in public health, women's health and diversity, equity inclusion. And I came to UCSF 16 years ago to focus on bridging partnerships between community and academic institutions. And, you know, over time, I expanded my work to direct the Young Women's Health Leadership Program and the annual Young Woman's Health and Leadership Summit, which was a partnership between San Fran— with, with San Francisco Unified School District. And so really being able to work on bridging work between our community and our academic institutions and how we think about working together and expand that work. And now as Executive Director of the Center of Excellence in Women's Health, I get to work with an amazing team to run programs, support women's health research and policy, and the development of an advancement of women leaders within our institution, making sure that we have women at the top of our leadership structure and advancing women to those positions and how we support women in those roles. And now, also with the launch of the Black Women's Health and Livelihood Initiative, I serve as co-director of that initiative with my colleague, Andrea Jackson, I have the opportunity to address health disparities and health disparities for Black women and Black gender expansive individuals. And so, the journey has sort of been a continuously evolving journey. So, I like to say that it never changes directions, it just continues to evolve as I take on new things and expand – get to expand the work that I do, as new interests and new opportunities keep coming up. So, I have... it's been a wonderful opportunity to expand my horizon and expand connections and continue to work with amazing people.

Jarmin Yeh 05:00

I love it. That's great. Nice to meet you. And thank you again. Ramona, can you tell us about yourself and your journey to UCSF?

Ramona Laughing-Brook Webb 05:08

Well, I'm Afro-Creek Muskogee, Black Indian, and I hail from Baton Rouge, Louisiana. And so, I came from that community into the Bay Area. Very early on, I started working with the young women in Leadership Summit as a facilitator, as a poet, as a host. And I was a community member, a community person engaging with UCSF from the outside, and I started out annually. And then I started working with the steering committee, which was more frequent, and I would facilitate and write workshops and sessions on self-esteem building and finding your voice and crafting your vision for the future. And eventually, the wonderful people at UCSF decided that they would bring me on to expand the work beyond our youth and young adults into the adult arena and into the practitioners arena and finding value and exposing this work. And so, this was the beginning of the launch of crafting my way to becoming Poet in Residence in the National Center of Excellence in Women's Health, which has been my joy. And that allowed me to filter out into the Black Women's Health and Livelihood Initiative, growing into that innovative space has been absolutely a wonderful and amazing. And this is what

brought forward the work that I'm doing in wellness and meditation and poetry and diversity, equity and inclusion. Creative engagement and art innovative work has been my piloting point for UCSF, and it's been a really loving home, and a space where I've been able to thrive. And I have experienced great mentorship and being able to be the kind of visionary and healing artists that I in endeavor to be. So, a poet in an unexpected hospital space.

Jarmin Yeh 07:06

Absolutely, I definitely have more questions about how one becomes a Poet in Residence and melding the arts and health. I think that's absolutely fascinating. I thought before we-we get there, if you could talk a little bit about what does working and engaging with the community – with community look alike and means you? And what sort of strategies have you used to engage with community in your work?

Judy Young 07:34

IUm sure... I'll jump in – for I'll jump in and start and then I'll let Mona jump in and finish a little bit. You know, at the at the Center of Excellence, we've always had a philosophy of engaging with our community, really only when we're invited. So, I think it's really important when you're working at a large institution that you're mindful of dynamics. And so, when we think about working with community, we ask – we look for an invitation to partner with community, we look for an invitation to be engaged with our community, whether it's individuals or community – or community organizations, or a group of community members collectively, and so we always look for that invitation and wait for that invitation and don't sort of just go into community uninvited. And so that's, that's an important piece of engaging with community.

Black Women's Health and Livelihood Initiative also has similar values as well, that we really are thoughtful and intentional about how we work with community. And I sort of say "community," but there's multiple communities, we always sort of, say community, like there's just one, but community is a sort of one way of saying there's multiple levels of community, there's multiple types of community. And so, I just want to acknowledge that because sometimes people say, well, it's not just one community.

And so, we work to be a really thoughtful and intentional partner with all of the different types of communities that we... we partner with. And so, that the strategy really includes being in very intentional conversations about what would partnership look like. We want to be fair and equal partner with our community and community members, our community organizations, so we want to engage in conversations around what do our different cultures look like? What are the different expectations of what work looks like? What are the power dynamics? And how are we going to navigate that? If we're sharing a project, are there budgetary differences? How do we navigate those conversations? What are the expectations around that? What are the expectations around communication? All of those things trickle into – into effect.

And I think the other really important thing that we talk about is, is having an understanding that it's a *reciprocal* relationship. There's always something to offer and always something to learn. And so how do we set up our relationship and our engagement with community understanding that there is... it's not one way it doesn't – you know, in historic relationships between academics and community or institutions of community – it felt very one way that the institution was going into community to take

things and and not give. And, you know, we're very intentional that it is a reciprocal relationship that we are coming in – we are partnering – we're not coming in, we're partnering, and we hope to learn. We also have to give and it's a... it's a long term relationship, not a fast relationship. So that takes time building trust, it takes time to build relationships, takes time to learn. So, those are some things that we work on and those are some strategies that we do, we don't tend to build fast relationships and then dissolve them. We try to build long-term, long-term relationships and understand how we could be helpful and supportive and what the needs are and what the interests are and learn from our community and, and understand the wisdom that's in our community. And so, those are some of the things that we do, and I'll pass it on, see if Mona has anything she wants to add, 'cause I'm sure there's things I've forgotten.

Ramona Laughing-Brook Webb 11:09

No, that was a wonderful answer and covered a great deal. I think, on my end in terms of engaging community and being impactful is a part of – I've moved to through engagement through poetry, I move to engagement through storytelling, I share my legacy, I share my history, I share my work, I share my experiences, I write docu-ritual-drama-theater, and my poetry follows suit. And so, it is oftentimes anecdotal, and it follows along with what is happening, culturally, what's culturally relevant and socially competent in the time, and to the community that we're actually engaging. I approach things from the positionality of friendship and establishing relationships that are going to be long-standing where people feel valued and worthy, seen and accepted, heard and wanted, not just tolerated or needed for the moment. Really creating enduring relationships as Judy shared, that's how I got here was through a long-lasting, enduring relationship with UCSF. And so, continuing in that, I feel like a lot of what I do is offer up a particular lens and a particular perspective, and that is the artist's lens and that is the artist's perspective, where I get to see a lot of things. I get to share what that looks like, from the perspective of those who are receiving, and those who are giving the care. And so, yeah, I feel like a lot of the work that I move through, even when I'm writing the meditations and the meditation practice that we've crafted, it is always thematically themed, to speak to what's happening in the moment, and what's going to be relevant to those who are listening in. I hope that's a good answer to your question there.

Jarmin Yeh 12:55

Yeah, no, that's incredible. I'm often thinking about, you know, in terms of building relationships, and rapport with community, I call that slow work. And it often feels like it goes against some of the pace that we have to – be working in academia sometimes and pushing back against the fastness of academia with the slow work necessary to build trust and community and listen and be actively present. So, I really, I really appreciate your comments there.

Ramona Laughing-Brook 13:25

You know, I come out of the poetry community and the slam scene. And so, when I was running the San Francisco Slam, I cooked Creek Creole food for the entire community every month for 10 years. I brought it to community conversations, let's have dinner together. And then let's listen to some poetry together. Let's hang out. Let's have conversations. Let me show you how you can be a part of what we're doing and not just be a presence. So yeah, that kind of engagement. Release sits to my heart.

Jarmin Yeh 13:58

That's really incredible.

Brittney Pond 14:02

Yeah, this is sort of shifting gears a little bit, but harkening back to something that Jarmin you mentioned in the beginning – I'm curious about what kind of arts integration into health and health care like looks like for you, and kind of even what that is for folks who may not be as familiar.

Ramona Laughing-Brook Webb 14:24

So, what the art integration looks like for me as being able to reflect back to the larger community the experience, the internal workings of what's happening here at UCSF. I have a very particular lens. I'm in a lot of really great rooms of really informative conversations which include a lot of feedback from patients who've had care over years, and includes experience of, experiences of hospital workers and faculty and staff. And unlike everybody else, I get an opportunity to take those experiences, refashion them and add in metaphor, and share them with the larger community. So, the community at large can see how their experience is reflected back. And then those of us who are healers, those of us who are doing the work, those of us who are practitioners, those of us who are bearing witness, also have an opportunity to feel, share and engage.

I get an opportunity to put a spotlight on things that are important that are uncomfortable, I get an opportunity to, to kind of share in the process of visioning what this movement forward looks like, as we look at diversity, equity, and inclusion. And I get to do it through the arts, I share a lot of work historic to my family, I'm the great niece of Louis Howard Latimer, inventor of the filament of the lightbulb, but he's also a great poet. And so, I share stories of overcoming adversity, how we move through success, and what it looks like to hold on to legacy and lineage as a part of what the way we share.

And the beauty of what I'm able to do in this art integration is offer up a different perspective of what it means to be welcomed into the space. I have facilitated the orientation for our resident doctors for the last two years, Dr. Whetstone and I, it has been really my pleasure to be that nurturing entry point where we get an opportunity to talk about what is going to keep you here, what is going to hold you, congratulations on your arrival, and where will we go from here. And so also just kind of looking at things from the perspective of policymaking. For...to the point of like, what does it mean for you to feel loved as a value for you to feel held as a value accepted as a value, where this place is not just a job for you, but this is a place where you find acceptance, where you find respite, where you find your own healing, and helping people to walk into the space that way or at least leave it that way. Giving and creating space for people to share vulnerably and find courage in that strength and vulnerability.

Yeah, I feel like the, the art integration moves in so many different directions. Because there are a number of uncomfortable things that are moving in our world, especially politically, we have a number of impactful activist movements that we have been moving through, and that we will continue to move through. And so, I get an opportunity to give voice to that from the perspective of the communities that I serve, and are within but also within the communities within UCSF doors, you know, from the perspective of a Black Women's Health and Livelihood Initiative, and most people that we directly impact. Yeah, it's my pleasure to do that kind of work. And my background is in interdisciplinary multimedia performance. So, intersectionality is what I am all about, then if there is a way for me to

move a few different viewpoints, or positions of interests, research ideas, movement, together, then I certainly will. And I love opening the space for that. A part of how the art exhibition that's up in the Wellness Center came to be is just another way where art is integrating itself into the wellness practice of our... our sacred healers here at UCSF.

Kourtney Nham 18:16

That's so amazing. Um, I think both of you sort of touched on this in various answers. But I'm curious if you all want to speak to how scholars, practitioners, and artists like yourselves within the academy can effectively contribute towards social change. And so, I think y'all have, you know, begun to touch on this a little bit in your answers about engaging with community, about arts integration, but I'm curious if you guys have any more thoughts on that, and specifically, how that might relate to your ... the Black Women's Health and Livelihood Initiative? I'd love to hear more about that as well.

Judy Young 18:55

Yeah, that's great question. I think, I think, you know, everybody can contribute to social change. And I think it's, it's the role of... I think there's, there's a role for everybody, and there's room for everybody to contribute to social change. And I think everybody, first of all, everyone needs to see that it's their responsibility to be engaged. And so, I think that's, that's the first part is seeing that everyone needs to step in to that role. And, you know, one of the things – I had an opportunity this past year to work with Dr. Camara Jones was our Presidential Chair for this year and I had an opportunity to work with her as a part of her coordinating committee. And one of the things that she talked a lot about is, you moving everybody from, you know, just a place of being *comfortable* at UCSF to being working on... on the working towards social justice, and that everybody sort of needs to step into that arena as we do this work around anti-racism. And so, I think that everybody needs to see themselves as being a part of this puzzle that we need to solve and part of this action.

And so, I think that's the first thing is everybody needs to do that. And we have different roles to play, and, you know, I can't define what everybody's role is. But I think that everybody, no matter what part of that they play as a scholar, it needs – or as a part of the academy – needs to figure out their role, and everybody has a place. And being... being an active member of this and stepping in is a critical piece. And so, I think that is the... the thing – stepping up and stepping in, and having the courage to play a role is... is a big piece. Some people I've heard, you know, say things like, I'm not sure that I fit, I'm not sure what I should do, I don't have the courage to step up. And so, part of it is learning what we can do. And I, you know, want to take just a moment to reflect on the amount of change that we've already had in the time that I've been here at UCSF, in the 16 years that I've been here, there's been a tremendous amount of change. And we have a tremendous amount of work to do. Right? And so, we've done a lot, and we've come a long way, and there's a tremendous amount of work, work to do to accomplish the work that we need to do to sort of have this institutional change that we're trying to accomplish. And so, I think there's a role for every single person, and we all have to get on board, because we're an incredibly large institution, we just have to get on board in that change.

You coupled it with a question around the Black Women's Health and Livelihood Initiative that I've forgotten. So, I'd love to hear how you – what your ... if you could repeat that part of the question that I that I could come back to it and be more specific... have more, have more clarity.

Kourtney Nham 21:28

Yeah, no, it was just a general question. I would love to know more about the Initiative. If you want to share a little bit about the goals and mission of that, and also just how you see it in... fitting in with I guess, like what you just talked about, like people's roles in sort of contributing to social change within the institution?

Judy Young 21:45

Sure, sure. So, you know, Black Women's Health and Livelihood Initiative. You know, we are really trying to address the realities that Black woman face and Black gender expansive people face in healthcare. And so, our mission is to address those health disparities for Black woman and gender expansive individuals and help health disparities and health care disparities. And so, we're, you know, working to decolonize the system that we're in by ensuring that the voices and experiences and expertise of the people who've been historically excluded are actually become included, and actually helped shape the care that they're receiving, that they're actually actively engaged in the process. So, that's... those are some of the issues that we're tackling.

We have many different areas of our initiative that are functioning and working, and we have lots of people that we're excited to – lots of programs and people that are working in our initiative. We were founded several years ago, and I said my Co-Director, again is Dr. Andrew Jackson. And so, some of the things that we're working on under our health and wellness pillar, we have several programs. We just opened a few months ago, our Black Wellness Clinic, which is at Mount Zion in the Women's Health Center. And this is racially concordant care for Black patients. This is a Black providers providing care for Black patients, and it is gynecological and obstetric care. And what is important about this, is it's with a focus... that is allows... there's more time for the patients appointments, the – the care, the providers have a network of support within their... while they're providing care, it's the first and third Friday of every month. They – it allows patients to be seen in a way that they get their – their questions answered, the racial concordant care is shown to make sure that patients get what they need, that their needs are being met in a specific way. We are... we have a patient navigators a part of that, we're just we're in the process of hiring a patient advocate for that program as well. And we hope that that will allow patients to feel that they're not being dropped through the cracks.

Connected to that Black Wellness Clinic, we have a Black Wellness Center on the first floor of our building of the Women's Health Center. And that Black Wellness Center is for the Black community at UCSF and our Black community at large. It's a physical space that provides wellness activities, and it's just a space for people to come in and relax and to chill. It's for, you know, like I said it's for patients, it's for community members, it's for staff, it's for faculty as well. And that's where we have a lot of things, Mona is curating the art in that space. Mona is also curating all kinds of wellness activities, we've had meditation, we have – we've had yoga in there, we have writing workshops, we've had all kinds of things that really focus on the wellness of the individual and the community. Building community in that space. And part of it is for patients and committee members come in and relax. But also, it's about the retention of our employees, because we know from our... some of the data that we have at UCSF, that our Black individuals, fellow faculty, and staff feel less engaged and feel more stressed. And we know from the reports from the Office of Harassment and that the racial complaints are high. So, we want to

make sure we have a space where people can come in, feel welcome, feel safe, and feel comfortable. So, that space is an important space. And so, we're happy to have that space and to have some institutional support to make it happen.

So those are two important things. We have a Black Patient's Family Advisory Council, that we launched last year to make sure that the voices of our patients are heard. And that is a new thing, it's the first patient family advisory council that provides financial compensation to our, our advisors. And so, they're not volunteers – they're volunteers in the sense that they give their time, but they're being financially compensated for their wisdom and their expertise because we know that that's important. And so, we actually compensate them for their time, their wisdom, their expertise, and their experiences. And so, we're making sure that we understand what their experiences are as patients, both the good experiences and the troublesome experiences, so that we can make sure that we're learning from that and making it better when the process of providing a report that we're sending up to leadership into our clinical practices, so that we can understand how we can do better. We have the EMBRACE, which is perinatal care for black families, so that we're working to improve the experience of all Black birthing people, and having better outcomes for our Black babies that are being born. So, all of that fits under our health and wellness.

And that's just sort of one area of our initiative. And that's, you know, it's kind of where we have the most – it's the most robust, but we're doing a lot to make sure that Black individuals are... that are cared for better, because we know that we have a history of having high that health disparities. And historically, you know, going into the hospital not coming out, you know that some of the trauma that we've experienced or having really negative outcomes. And so, we want to make sure that our care is being taken care of, and that were cared for in the way that we deserve to be cared for. And we hope that other communities will see the models that we've developed and then create models for their communities as well. So, this is – these are things that can easily be modeled for any other community that wants wants... wants those similar models.

I'll give you a couple other examples, as well, in our justice and equity pillar, we have really been focused on our anti-racism work. And so, this is where we've plugged into lots of committees within the School of Medicine and within our department to focus on anti-racism work. So, our... our diversity, equity inclusion work as well. And so, we're trying to advance the diversity, equity, inclusion language through really focus on anti-racism. So, taking a step further, and really thinking about how we decolonize the institution, and sort of move the institution, not from... just from the diversity, equity inclusion, which is important, all of those words individually are important and collectively, but also *intentionally* focusing on anti-racism and anti-Black racism, as well. And what that looks like, because when we do that, then we capture everything, right. And so, the anti-racism initiative we've been engaged in. And looking at the policies, practices and structures of our institution that have been built with an anti-racism frame, and how those need to be dismantled. And as Mr. Jones has always said, you know, "how is racism operating here?" That's the number one question to ask. And when you start asking that question, in every space, then you can start looking at what's happening and how you can start dismantling it. But if we're not asking the question, if we're not looking for it, then we're not going to see it.

And then I think finally, what I want to highlight is our in our leadership pillar, we have been focusing on how do we develop leaders at UCSF, within our Black – under Black women leaders, specifically? And how do we support the development of Black woman leaders? And so, for the last year or so we have had leadership webinars to support the development of Black leaders across faculty and staff. And then we're currently developing a leadership program that's specifically for Black women, faculty, and staff leaders who are interested in leadership development. So that's in the... that's in the making, and we're really excited that that will be coming to fruition. We're planning for 2023, and wanting to make sure that we have leaders that look like this. And we already have some amazing Black leaders in our institution, but we want more. And so, those are some things that we're working on. And we have other program areas that we're working on as well. But those are the ones that are... have a lot of traction, and we're very excited about.

Jarmin Yeh 30:25

That's amazing. That's just such incredible work. If folks want to get involved with your Center, what what is the best way that they can reach out?

Ramona Laughing-Brook Webb 30:40

I want to like circle back to one more thing.

Jarmin Yeh 30:43

Yeah, yeah. Please do.

Ramona Laughing-Brook Webb 30:46

And in response to your last question, also, you know, we've had a vice presidential visit very recently to the Black Women's Health and Livelihood Initiative, which was very exciting, and to have embraced platforms, to have the work of this initiative seen from the viewpoint in the lens of the White House was very impactful. It was impactful for me as an artist, to share poetry and meditation with the White House, and our mayoral folks from London Breed's office, it was really beautiful to see everybody in the space and champion this work. And also, this is what brought forth new policy, as it concerns our maternal health care model for the United States.

And that's really important, and it's really meaningful, deeply meaningful to me to continue to be in the room. Given that I'm not a medical practitioner, but I feel very invited, I feel very impactful, I feel a part of this movement in a deep and impactful way that opens the doors for other artists to walk through. I feel by platforming and piloting this idea that artistry exists everywhere and can take part and be important to all kinds of movements and can create and be a party to policy change. Writing the meditations and thematically designed way that really addresses the disparities that are faced by our communities and what's happening in the world around us. And healing the caretakers, you know, that are engaging in this, especially all of us who are moving through this post-pandemic, those of our care teams or our first responders who've had to watch up close and personal how these disparities lead to deadly offense. That's a healing circle that has to happen. And it's beautiful to see that that is been able to move its way through through the Black Women's Health and Livelihood Initiative and policymaking in DC and bringing that a beautiful national attention to the brilliance that is happening here and the success that is happening here.

And also, to the community members and those who are doing the work and are on the ground, knowing that they are actually being engaged from a position of... of offering healing and respite with a clear lens that speaks to the nature of their communities and experiences. What it really looks like to maintain a wellness practice to maintain a sacred healing space, but it's safe space for Black people, for Black women, for non-binary, and just birthing bodies. Having that particular emphasis is really important when bringing in community for fellowship and healing. And I just I didn't want to miss that part of Black Women's Health and Livelihood Initiative, because it is so important that, you know, it has literally not just changed the lives that it serves, but the lives of this whole country. And that is how it will be of service and that's how systematic change happens.

This is how we eradicate oppression in a system that is built specifically to withhold it. This is what it looks like when we get in there and use everything that we have, all of the places that we come from, the educations that we hold, the institutions that we represent. And we use that as the powerful force of change – by being who we are and, and being present and being visible in it. And that's whether it's a writing retreat, or it's an all-hands meeting, or it's an orientation, or an opening, or graduation, or a community engagement in the Bayview like these are all the places that you can find this work and find this impact and where art is also taking the stage and making it impactful platform for change. Just wanted to add that.

Jarmin Yeh 34:52

Yeah, no thank you so much. I think we could definitely drop a link to, you know, all of the contact information in the description of this podcast. I – because I think it's just so important to really connect people to your – to the work that you're doing. It's so important. Mona, I wanted to reflect on something that you said. And it seems like the arts are really a good mirror for us to really see how society's operating in it ... in maybe in a more profound way than we can see when we're just looking around our world without sort of this arts mirror to reflect it back to us. In your view, what are the metaphors that you see from your lens? And, I don't know if you'd be willing to read a poem or a meditation. I know, that's kind of I just dropped that on the spot, but I don't know if you have something ready at hand that you can potentially share with us?

Ramona Laughing-Brook Webb 35:52

Sure, sure. No problem. I have my iPad beside me. I can share each in no particular order. Here. Let me start with your first question which was about the lens of this healing work. You know, I do get to reflect back to the world, back to the university, back to the institution, back to the hospital, back to the department, the experience outside of itself and the experience within it. Having this particular lens is very important, impactful, because I'm able to say things in ways that are a little – lot, a lot easier to digest, dissect, engage. And I like to pose questions that will linger, stay with you, things that can't really be answered, but we should be considering. These are the points of impact where we're just pushing up the needle. You know, I know that oftentimes, we, we think in these tiny increments, but I'm here for like, what does it mean for us to really usher fourth change? What does it mean for us to really be really innovative, we craft that and so through the writing, through the metaphors of the work, is how I do that, how I engage that I'm able to tell a different kind of truth, I'm able to share a different kind of truth and tell the whole story and offer a different kind of perspective there. And as a community member, as a

patient, as somebody who's actually within the – within this department, that is moving this work forward. Yeah, it's been a real gift to have anything to contribute to the success of these models, to the success of our ability to not only be well, but stay well.

And, you know, I think oftentimes, we think in terms of something being broken, and then we have to go fix it. I like to turn things and what does it mean for you to be your own medicine? You know, how are you the joy? And how are you the light? What does it mean for you to trust yourself and your own intuition and this and walk the path with integrity, with honor, with clarity and knowing that we're setting precedent for legacy.

Let's see here, I would love to share a poem. I think I'll share a Latimer piece. So, this is a call and response piece. Unless, Judy, you have a different recommendation of a poem that you'd like to hear.

Judy Young 38:50

No, I love everything you... I can't, I can't think of the name of anything right now. I gotta – I had something but I lost – I lost it. So you share.

Ramona Laughing Brook Webb 38:57

Okay, don't worry, oh, I know what I would like. There's one that I wrote in response to the San Francisco Reproductive Justice Conference, Black Women Now. That's a good example... "I'm Reclaiming My Time."

And it... this poem was created by pretty my listening and then really directly resharing what I heard and I also, I've been writing a series of column response poems between myself and my great uncle Lewis Howard Latimer, inventor of the permanent filament of the light bulb. And so, I've been debuting poems that are mostly in museums in the larger public so that we can share – I'll share in this work, especially since it was written in the 1800s. And I feel that it particularly continues to be poignant even now. So, this piece is by Louis Howard Latimer. It's considered the call and then my piece is "I'm Reclaiming My Time," and it will be the response.

So, "Go Ahead and Stand Aside" by Louis Howard Latimer

Life has changed

The change of progress we must neither pause nor stay,
but ever up and doing, ever moving on our way.

In the rush and crush and struggle of the hurrying human tide,
there is but to do your duty which is to go ahead or stand aside.

You may think to pause and question shall I go or shall I stay?
is it wise to make the venture? Thus standing you block the way
and the billows sweep around you not one moment till they by
hurry on each one is chanting, go ahead or stand aside.

Though the wave seem or you sweeping, do not deal to dismay.

You are part and parcel of it, let the tide turn as it may,
you must still be in and with it,

let who laugh and deride hold your way
and make all others go ahead or stand aside.

And then my response piece, my favorite that is, "I'm Reclaiming My Time."

I'm reclaiming my time.
I no longer give you permission to walk all over my space
and by permission, it do mean my silence.

You may not claim my light as your own.
I am not a part of your emotional labor force.
I do not care about your fragility.
I am reclaiming my time.
Because I deserve time, a legacy of time, an apothecary of time.
I am not in construction.
Now I am in carpentry, smooth brown edges,
which means sassafrass curves,
loving Black and Brown bodies endowed with creationism.
I have no need for these bricks, you got me building,
you can have them back now.
My hands are made for a sweeter vision.
See, I'm reclaiming my time.
And the vision is on its way.
Justice, you are a courtesy call on hold,
deep in the mahogany wood, soaked into the cracks.
Ghosts are living there, waiting for the floor to crumble.
I'm waiting for the ceiling to fall around my waist,
waiting for the resurrection of my dignity,
waiting for you to hear my voice, like you've seen my color
waiting to take up all the seats,
find my value and my hope and my dreams and watch you affirm me.
Because I deserve this time.
I deserve this value.
I deserve this love, this forgiveness, this care,
not the tolerance that you've been feeding me,
but the joy that I know I have to hold.
You must see me.
You must believe me.
You must hold me in the reverence that I deserve.
We deserve time.
I am reclaiming my time.
Because it is my life.
My livelihood and my legacy.
Time.

That's it. That's the end.

Jarmin Yeh 43:03

I feel like we all need to unmute and just give you a big round of applause

Ramona Laughing Brook Webb 43:10

I appreciate that. Very generous.

Jarmin Yeh 43:15

That was so powerful. I am tingling. I have goosebumps. I can't even utter words right now.

Ramona Laughing Brook Webb 43:23

Thank you for that. I appreciate it. Would you also like a medi— a brief meditation as well? Okay.

I actually tried this one yesterday when I was facilitating the session for the patient, family and advisory committee last night. So, this one is fresh off the press. And this is our 10-breath meditation. And we're just going to share one word of affirmation and breathe. And so, let's go ahead and get ourselves into a comfortable space.

Ramona Laughing Brook Webb 43:58

Finding ourselves planted, grounded, held. Finding ourselves connected to the earth. Grounded into the world of goodness that surrounds us that we sit upon. Honoring the traditional stewards of the lands we walk upon. And as we honor the indigenous peoples whose vision we sit and continue to dream through, let us find our connectivity to the earth. The sacred land that we sit upon.

As we feel ourselves moving from the place of the present awareness into the soft gaze, feeling the release and the ankles, letting the feet become limp. Feeling the bend in the knee, release. Feeling the hips letting go. As we remove the day, we feel the spine elongate feeling the back held. After, letting go of the tension in the shoulders, releasing the strain and the arms, feeling the release in the bend of the elbow, feeling the release of the hands, feeling the fingers going limp, the neck outstretched and holding head floating softly above. As we bring ourselves from the position of present awareness into the internal soft gates as we move into the depth of our healing breath. And on the count of three, we're going to move ourselves from this soft gaze into the internal reflection, our internal awareness and move into a place of darkness of sweetness of sacredness of security, finding ourselves in the place that feels like home.

And on this, let us take our first deep breath together and community on this 0, 1, 2, 3, in and hold, and exhaling at your leisure.

Continuing to breathe in your own rhythm and your own pace and in your own time, there is no wrong way to breathe in this and as we breathe, let us affirm in this first breath, we offer up the affirmation of hope.

So, with hope let us take this deep inhale 1, 2, 3 together and hold and exhaling at your leisure.
And this deep breath on gratitude, 1, 2, 3 in, gratitude, and hold, and exhaling at your leisure
This deep breath in joy, 1, 2, 3 in an all and letting go
This deep breath in surrender, 1, 2, 3 and hold and let go.
And a deep breath in on grace 1, 2, 3 and on grace and hold and let go.
And this deep breath is in power, 1, 2, 3 in, hold, and exhaling with sound at your leisure.
Continuing to breathe in your own rhythm, your own pace and your own time.
As we take this next communal breath as we breathe in courage, 1, 2, 3 in and hold, exhaling at your leisure
And a deep breath on faith in, hold, and let go.
And a deep breath on patience, in, and hold, and let go.
Let us take a breath in forgiveness, 1, 2, 3 in, and hold, and let go.
Releasing all pain, all inhibition, continuing to breathe in our own rhythm, in our own pace, and in our own time. There is no wrong way to breathe through this.
And on this let us take a deep collective breath on healing 1, 2, 3, in and hold, and let go.
And a deep breath in legacy 1, 2, 3 in and hold and let go
And a deep breath into sweetness 1, 2, 3 in and hold, and breathe in that sweetness, and let go
And a deep breath in healing forward 1, 2, 3 in and hold and let go.
Deep breath in on compassion 1, 2, 3 in, hold, and let go with sound.
And then our final communal breath bringing us back into present awareness.
We'll take a deep breath in on presence 1, 2, 3 in and hold and exhaling at your leisure.
Continuing to breathe in your own rhythm and your own pace and in your own time as we bring ourselves back into a place of present awareness, feeling ourselves ushering back with the peace of the groundedness with the sacred space that we've been healing and breathing in, affirming all that is for our highest knowing we are deserving. We are worthy. We are loved. We are valuable, and we are ready.
And on this, let us take our last breath together 1, 2, 3 in and hold, and as we exhale bringing ourselves in the present awareness.
Moving back into the position of the soft gaze, finding ourselves becoming present to the groundedness of our feet, our limbs, being supported by the Earth's core. Feeling ourselves supported through our limbs, through the bends, through our muscles. Feeling our seat held, feeling the spine elongating, our back supporting, shoulders outstretched and broad, becoming aware of the elbows, or the wrists, of our hands, of all the parts of our bodies and being that are in respite and are finding their way to a place of awakening. And as we awaken let us elongate the neck. As we feel that good release, giving ourselves one good head turn to the left coming back into the present. And one head turn to the right coming back into the present. And finding ourselves seated and presently aware of the brilliance that surrounds us by screen and by sound.

Thank you for listening. Thank you for being present. Thank you for these 10 breaths appealing together. Ashay.

Jarmin Yeh 54:18

That was that was amazing. I needed that more than I knew. I feel so calm right now. And thank you.

Ramona Laughing Brook Webb 54:29

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to share. I appreciate it. A little bit of what we're sharing, what we're doing, and what my practice looks like here as the PoE.

Jarmin Yeh 54:47

Well, I feel like this is a great note just to wrap up on that was such an again, calming, nourishing conversation. I feel so enriched. I'm so grateful, Judy and Ramona, that you took time out of your day to share with us. Kourtney, Brittany, anything that you want to say, as we close out?

Brittney Pond 55:11

I just wanted to express gratitude and thank you both for being here. I usually feel grounded in meditation by myself, but this felt much more connective, which was very different. And I really appreciate that in this experience.

Kourtney Nham 55:29

Yeah, I just want to echo that. Thank you so much for – both of you – for taking time to speak with us today and just share about all your amazing work, and your insights. And the poem and the meditation I think is such a... such a gift to listeners. So, for folks tuning in, I'm really excited for them to, to experience all of it with us.

Jarmin Yeh 55:53

Thank you so much.

Judy Young 55:56

Thank you so much for having us. Can I share our email in case people want to get in touch with us?

Jarmin Yeh 56:05

Please!

Judy Young 56:33

It's blackwomenshealth@ucsf.edu. Just say it again, blackwomehealth@ucsf.edu. And we'd love to add people to our mailing list or just to check in and you can identify if you're a Black community member or an ally, so we know which mailing list to add you to and we'd love to stay connected. And you can also check us out on our website, so we'd be glad to connect. Thank you so much for having us on.

Jarmun Yeh 56:37

Thank you.

56:40

Thank you so much. It's been a wonderful honor, gift, and pleasure. Thank you so much for this opportunity. And thank you for sharing us with your community and thank you for being in community with us. Appreciate that.

[Podcast outro tunes]

Podcast Outro 1:14:24

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