

[00:00:00] **Lawrence Barriner:** Hi Melissa,

[00:01:22] **Melissa Reyes:** Hi, Lawrence.

[00:01:24] **Lawrence Barriner:** glad you are here.

[00:01:27] **Melissa Reyes:** I'm glad to be here. Thanks for the invitation.

[00:01:30] **Lawrence Barriner:** Yeah, super good to see your face. And the podcast people can't see it, but they'll see the photo.

[00:01:38] **Melissa Reyes:** Awesome. Lovely to hear your voice and see your face as well.

[00:01:45] **Lawrence Barriner:** Well, I'm really grateful that you were down to say yes to the invitation. And so I think we'll just jump right in if you feel ready.

[00:01:53] **Melissa Reyes:** Yeah, let's do it. I'm excited.

[00:01:54] **Lawrence Barriner:** So how are you arriving today to this conversation?

[00:02:03] **Melissa Reyes:** How am I arriving to this conversation? I am feeling in my heart in this moment, feeling excited about reconnecting. Awesome. With you in this conversation and feeling open to, yeah, how it unfolds, what comes through. Just trying to stay present with what wants to come through. So thanks for this space.

[00:02:30] **Lawrence Barriner:** Mm. Shout out to being present to what wants to come through. Yep.

[00:02:36] **Melissa Reyes:** Life practice.

[00:02:38] **Lawrence Barriner:** Yes, yes, I feel like half of my life has been spent trying to figure out how to do that.

[00:02:45] **Melissa Reyes:** Yeah, I would say probably most of my life is. Yeah. Mm hmm.

[00:02:51] **Lawrence Barriner:** You're right. I think there's a big part of my life where I didn't even know I should be trying to do that. Anyway. Well, thanks for sharing a little bit about how you're doing. And now I would love for folks who don't know you, who are you? Or who are you these days? If that helps make that question a little more accessible.

[00:03:19] **Melissa Reyes:** So, I, who am I? I am, uh, Melissa. I use she and they pronouns, currently based in Um, on unceded Lishan Ohlone territory, what's known as Oakland, California. Um, my people, my ancestral lineages come primarily through Borinquen, Puerto Rico. And also on my maternal side, I have a grandmother from Poland. I would say that I am someone who's on a deep path of healing and Working on how to that into my life so that I can

be like fully who I am meant to be on this earth and do the work I'm meant to do and also, you know, function within this world that we live in within late stage capitalism and all the things.

So, yeah, forever kind of in search of the balance of how to do my life's work, my life's passion and feel in abundance. And connection on this on this planet in this time. So I feel in this moment, like, I really strongly identify with this journey of, um, reawakening, like, reawakening a lot of the medicine that has been at least felt in my experience, like, it's been dormant in my lineage, like, um, and so allowing that to come through and trusting. Even though I, you know, I'm a practitioner of traditional medicine and healing work, and even though I wasn't raised with this practice, I don't have stories of folks from my past who've done this work. Like, I know they're out there somewhere. And so it feels like I'm finally at this point in my life. Um, really settling into like, No, this is who I am.

And like, my people have been waiting for me to come back into this work that actually is, is, is ours. And, um, so I'm doing a lot around, like, reclaiming, tending to that, take, you know, finding my own deep practice so that I can, so that I can be in the world in a way that feels an integrity and in balance with, with myself and, and like, what I feel called to do right now.

So, um, that feels like. Who I am right

[00:06:09] **Lawrence Barriner:** Super powerful. I love it. This is why I was like, my friends are awesome. Yeah. Grateful, grateful to hear that from you. And also grateful to know that, you know, you're really diving deep into that. I definitely want to come back to like, like you said, trying to find your own deep practice. It's like, I want to come back to that later. Um, and really. Beautiful to, yeah, be in relationship with you and other people who are like, yeah, there's a lot of stuff in my lineages that is really good stuff.

And even if it has been disconnected from us or from me for a little bit, we're definitely going back to get it.

[00:07:06] **Melissa Reyes:** now, just I love that going back to get it. And I think also for me, it feels like allowing. Yeah, exactly. Allowing it to, like, reawaken too, right?

[00:07:17] **Lawrence Barriner:** Hmm. Silence.

[00:07:19] **Melissa Reyes:** I had a teacher once who would talk about, like, working with the plants, working with plants that are from your ancestral lineages actually reena reawakens your cellular DNA's memory of that plant and of the medicine, right?

And so just the idea of, like, I think that's kind of where I was getting that imagery of, like, feeling these things that are kind of, like, Dormant in in my our cellular DNA because they haven't been in active practice for those of us for whom they haven't been in active practice. And so. There's that.

Yes, going back to get it. And also, I feel like the energy that I'm trying to lean into is that like, I'm allowing it to reemerge. I'm allowing it to reawaken.

[00:08:06] **Lawrence Barriner:** Okay, I'm about to ask, like, so many questions that are actually for later in the show, so I'm gonna pause on them, and yeah, you mentioned it a little before, but I'm curious if you would be able to share, like, how is your mind or your heart or your body or your spirit in this moment?

[00:08:26] **Melissa Reyes:** Um, in this moment, getting, getting grounded, you know, um, working on, on, on arriving from, Things that were happening before, uh, before I put these headphones on and sat down at the computer. So getting present, um, and I think, I mean, you know, if I'm honest, my, my heart is very tender. You know, we live, yeah, I think I started, I was saying this when we were chatting a little bit before starting the reporting, but it's this.

I feel this sense of, like, life just keeps on, keeps on going. And so, um, I'm trying to allow myself to be present to, like, grief that's coming up from things that are happening in my own life, in my own body, in my own, you know, family of origin, in the world right now. So, um... And also be really present to the sweetness and the joy and, you know, we just had these intense storms here in California in the Bay Area.

And it was like several years worth of rain fell in like just a couple weeks time. And now it's warm again and there's all these flowers in bloom. And it's like amazing and beautiful. And then it's also a little scary because it's January and the flowers are blooming a little bit before they're supposed to.

So, you know, it's just like all the contradictions, complications of this moment in time. Um, so. Yeah, I feel tender and grateful.

[00:10:24] **Lawrence Barriner:** Silence. The changing climate, the smiles from the flowers, and the contraction from the fear of like, what is happening? Yeah, the tenderness that I hear and feel. And transitioning to the next piece of this, the next chunk of how I like to do the interviews is this section called Rebel and Revel and Reveal. And start with Revel, because I'm curious. Even in like tender heart places, I imagine there are things that are giving you joy. So I'm curious, you know, like what is giving you joy these days?

[00:11:17] **Melissa Reyes:** My cat Momo, uh, getting increasingly cuddly as she gets older. So

[00:11:29] **Lawrence Barriner:** Ah.

[00:11:30] **Melissa Reyes:** there are many a day when I come home and I'm like having some therapeutic cat snuggle time, I have been, Oh, this is cute. So, every Monday night now I am part of this regular gathering at a dear friend of mine's house, um, that we are playing around with calling stitch, which is. So,

[00:11:58] **Lawrence Barriner:** Yep,

[00:12:00] **Melissa Reyes:** yeah. Yeah. Um, and so there's a group of us that are coming together and crafting and sharing, sometimes sharing a meal, um, and just trying to be in the

creative energy and like have a moment in our week where we just sit and be together and, um, be creative. And it's been very sweet. So I've been embroidering a lot.

That was one of my, uh, things that I picked up in the pandemic is finally. Learning how to embroider and so that's been really fun and sweet and I just finished up a project that I'm going to send to. Uh, some chosen family up in Toronto and I'm very excited about it.

[00:12:44] **Lawrence Barriner:** Oh, that's amazing.

[00:12:46] **Melissa Reyes:** So, yeah, connecting with good humans, being creative. It's bringing me joy.

[00:12:56] **Lawrence Barriner:** Hm, we love a stitch witch.

[00:13:01] **Melissa Reyes:** There was a whole, there was a whole thread, text exchange that was happening on this thread. And I wrote, at some point in the conversation, I was like, Stitch Witches, now available for crafting. Coaching and spellcasting.

[00:13:18] **Lawrence Barriner:** Incredible.

[00:13:20] **Melissa Reyes:** It's a working title. Okay.

[00:13:23] **Lawrence Barriner:** I'm into it. And also I could imagine, I can easily imagine a context in which like all three of those are the same thing, you know, well, if y'all are ever open for online orders. I got some hilarious things that I would love to have embroidered.

[00:13:46] **Melissa Reyes:** I can't speak for the group but personally, yes.

[00:13:51] **Lawrence Barriner:** Stay tuned. All my nibblings have all these excellent phrases that I just want them to remember that they always... I want them to always remember that they said that.

[00:14:02] **Melissa Reyes:** Yeah.

[00:14:06] **Lawrence Barriner:** Little Asa recently has been into... Um, or he's getting to a point in his development where he's realizing that people grow, that like people were babies, like adults were babies. And the other day he just said, Mama, you mean everybody grows? She was like, yes, even Uncle Lawrence? Yes, even Uncle Lawrence was a baby once. And it's just like, yes, I want him to remember that, because also, I forget that about people in the world,

[00:14:44] **Melissa Reyes:** Right.

[00:14:44] **Lawrence Barriner:** you know, like, yes, everybody grows, that person was a baby, and their growth also might not be done yet.

Anyways, okay, Stitchwishes is coming. I love it. Great. Okay, two questions here. What are you against, and what are you for? You can take them in either order.

[00:15:07] **Melissa Reyes:** I am what's coming in this moment. I feel like there's a lot of different ways I can answer this question and what's coming in this moment is I feel a very good, clear stance against perpetuating our ideas of like how things are supposed to be or how things quote unquote should be, um, and turning towards being for opening up to like. What actually feels healthy and safe and connected and loving and like let's move from that place. So, yeah, I've had, I feel very And there's a lot moving right now around these, this idea of like relationships and relationships with family of origin, relationships with partners, relationships with like authority and systems and like how we're And so just this idea of like, most of that stuff, I feel like most of the rules, at least that I've been taught about how that stuff is supposed to be, I'm like, somebody just made that shit up and, and so I actually.

Like, that doesn't actually work for me. And that's not a new feeling. I think I'm just kind of like, in this moment of having a deeper layer of understanding what it means for me to be boundaried in relationships where that kind of stuff comes up.

[00:17:12] **Lawrence Barriner:** Silence.

[00:17:12] **Melissa Reyes:** And so, like, even more clear in my like, this is actually a very clear no for me.

You know, or this is, this is where my yes is, right? And I feel like that's something for me that, like a lot of things kind of plays out in interpersonal things, plays out in like group organizational business project relationship, plays out in like systemic level, right? There's all these like levels of magnitude for that, that I'm feeling in this moment too.

[00:17:48] **Lawrence Barriner:** Would you be willing to give a brief ish example of one of the ways it plays out or has played out? Also, you can say no.

[00:18:06] **Melissa Reyes:** I think 1 example on a more personal level without getting into too much detail is just like expectations. Of how the role that I'm supposed to play in my family of origin and like, how I'm supposed to show up. Right. What does it mean to be like, and realize reflecting on choices that I made when I was younger, that was me trying to be a quote unquote, good daughter, you know, and so, um, now having.

[00:18:46] **Lawrence Barriner:** Okay. Silence.

[00:18:46] **Melissa Reyes:** Yeah, now actually being in a place where I'm like even more deeply tuned into like how I actually don't have obligation. Like I get to, other than to like be my fullest, healthiest version of myself, my most, the most healed version of myself, like that is what my commitment is to. And I hope that that is in loving relationship to other people.

In my family of origin, and if it can't be, then, you know, we go from there, but yeah,

[00:19:26] **Lawrence Barriner:** That is really helpful. I can imagine many people resonating with that context, if you will. Sure.

[00:19:39] **Melissa Reyes:** maybe actually, can I say something that maybe is a little bit more specific, even that feels more true.

[00:19:48] **Lawrence Barriner:** Silence.

[00:19:59] **Melissa Reyes:** and I feel like part of, I'm in this like deep initiation in that work and part of that initiation right now looks like me navigating, um, a couple of memorials that are, that are coming up one for a dear friend of mine and one for someone in my family of origin.

And. I think where what's coming up for me, why I felt called to say that in this moment is because I'm noticing how easy it is to slip into patterns of like, well, this is what you're supposed to do.

I had this conversation with a friend of mine as we're preparing is like, how do we show up and actually.

honor our friend for who we know she was and is. That's not about like expectations of how we perform this celebration for her life,

[00:21:33] **Lawrence Barriner:** Yep.

[00:21:34] **Melissa Reyes:** right? It's actually like, no, actually how, and it's so easy to fall into that. So how can we actually like separate all that out and be like, you know what, actually, no, this is about us getting to celebrate her as we know who she, we know who she was and.

And so, like, how can we center that, and, like, how can that be about actually, like, liberation, a sense of liberation from, like, what we sometimes feel obligated to or tied up to in our lives in the day to day, like, she's on the other side now, like, she gets to be liberated from all that, how can we, like, bring that liberation into the celebration of her life, because, We don't actually have to make X, Y, and Z choice because we feel obligated to.

We can actually say, no, this is what feels right. This is how we honor her.

[00:22:29] **Lawrence Barriner:** Yep, I'm glad you went there. Way more specific. Thanks for sharing. Seems like you started to dip your toe in this next question, so we'll go there in the reveal chunk, which is like, yeah, how do you define your work in the world? And, you know, looking back to late stage capitalism, your work in the world might be different than what allows you to sustain your life.

Or it might be the same, you know?

[00:23:05] **Melissa Reyes:** I define my work in the world as, um, I am, sometimes I use the word, a doula, and I also recognize the complications, the complicated history of that word. And so, I also say like a birth companion, death companion, birth worker, death worker. Um, I have an active practice in birth work right now. And I'm building project that is around, um, death, end of life planning, death companionship ceremony in, um, in that time specifically with a focus on

queer, trans and BIPOC folks understanding that. particular things that folks are navigating, like, that our people navigate in this, in these times in their lives. Um, I see myself as someone as a practitioner of traditional medicine, healing work, working with the plants, working with ceremony to, um, yeah, to support, to support folks. Um, I also do a lot of creative work, creative projects, feed my spirit and bring me joy.

[00:24:44] **Lawrence Barriner:** Um, Okay.

[00:24:45] **Melissa Reyes:** And I feel fortunate that I am mostly able to sustain myself doing that work right now. I'm working on it. I'm working on it. I, I've, I've been, I'm recovering classroom teacher. I'm a recovering nonprofits. Industrial complex worker, and I am right now in a commitment to, uh, setting up my life. So that the work that is the work of my soul is what is actually sustaining me as well.

So, that's a work in progress.

[00:25:20] **Lawrence Barriner:** Yep.

[00:25:21] **Melissa Reyes:** Yeah.

[00:25:24] **Lawrence Barriner:** Yeah, sometimes I wake up and I'm like, man, it would just be so great if everyone could just do their soul work and not to struggle.

[00:25:32] **Melissa Reyes:** Yeah, absolutely. We all deserve that.

[00:25:39] **Lawrence Barriner:** Yeah. Well, grateful to hear that you are continuing on your journey of bringing those two things in alignment.

[00:25:48] **Melissa Reyes:** Thank you.

[00:25:49] **Lawrence Barriner:** This next question like comes from The context in which people are able to do that. So the next question is like, you know, what are you learning about yourself as you do your work?

[00:26:07] **Melissa Reyes:** So much

[00:26:11] **Lawrence Barriner:** Yes. Let's go in

[00:26:17] **Melissa Reyes:** so much. Um, what am I learning about this song? I am learning. Oh my gosh. I mean, honestly, Lawrence, you know, so I am. I do feel like this moment in time where I am grateful and also recognize the layers of privilege that allow me to be on this path where like the quote unquote work that I do in the world is, is incredible.

Or the work that I do in the world is also the work that like, sustains me financially and it's been a, it's been a long and winding path where I felt like there were moments where I would kind of like, tap into it and then something would happen in my life or something would happen in my head and I would like, be like, I gotta go over here.

Right? And. I had a friend once to offer me this metaphor of, like, the idea of spiraling, right? And she was like, it's not like you, um, kept, it's not necessarily like you left and then you came back. She's like, but you're spiraling. And like, In, in that, in that, in that way that like the spiral is kind of like every time you circle back around, like, you're also kind of a little bit deeper in, in a good way, right?

[00:27:46] **Lawrence Barriner:** hmm.

[00:27:47] **Melissa Reyes:** Like that it's not a spiral on like a flat plane. It's like there's actually depth to it. And so you're coming back around and you're actually, you're not in the same place that you were. You're, you're in a, in a place of more depth and alignment. And so I'm like, okay, right. So I'm like, kind of feel like I'm coming back around in this and what feels different right now for me than, than at other points in my life is that, um, I have, you know, there's all the struggles of kind of doing, trying to figure out how to do this work in the world and in the Bay area where I live, where the cost of living is so high.

And, you know, the housing market is wild and like, how do we figure all this out? And. Also, like, honestly, if I'm honest with myself, my biggest barrier has been my own belief in my ability to do this. And my own belief in whether or not I'm worthy enough, or like, that my own belief in whether or not I actually have something to offer. And where I feel like I'm at right now, and part of it is because I've been so broken and open by life, and Is that I'm like, there's this one part of me that's kind of like, what choice do I have? Like, I can't, like, I need to, like, I physically, emotionally, spiritually, energetically, like, I need to be doing this.

And then also into this sense of like, finally tasting, feeling, for possibly the first time in my life, this, this deeper sense of like, this kind of confidence and trust. That I have something to offer like, you know, and I feel a little shy to say that because I'm like, you know, but it's like, it's true that like, I probably don't have the, the, like, Yeah, like I said, the thing that's held me back the most has been my not really believing in myself and like, call it imposter syndrome, call it whatever you want, but like that energy of, of like making myself small.

And so I'm learning about myself is like that learning of how to trust part of that trust also comes from like a deepening relationship connection to my ancestors and like guides who I feel like the more that I'm aligned, I can actually. Tune in more deeply and trust that actually, it's not, I'm not actually doing this work at all, right?

Not feeling and I've heard people talk about it a lot. I feel like I'm finally experiencing it more and more is that feeling of like, this is coming through me. I, my work is to just be present and show up and this is coming through me because there's forces energy. That's much bigger than any of us that are working here.

And so, like how do I show up with, with the, like that balance of feeling in my power, feeling in my confidence, feeling in my trust, and also being humble enough to listen. But humility to me used to actually, I feel like self doubt used to masquerade as humility for me. Like I would,

[00:31:36] **Lawrence Barriner:** it again.

[00:31:39] **Melissa Reyes:** that self doubt would masquerade as humility. Like I would move in a way that I thought was being humble. But really it was me not trusting myself and me giving my power away over and over again.

[00:31:52] **Lawrence Barriner:** That's so deep.

[00:31:53] **Melissa Reyes:** So I'm learning, you know, I'm learning those things about myself and I'm learning how to, how to be in that. Like, how do I show up for my work for myself and for my work, for my clients, for, you know, my collaborators, partners in this work, how do I show up like fully in my power and I guess.

You know, I've learned this phrase from somatics is like, taking up right space in the world, right,

[00:32:25] **Lawrence Barriner:** There's like a whole sermon in there. Wow. Uh, you definitely have already answered this last question of this reveal section of like, how does what you're learning impact the work itself? What comes up?

[00:32:41] **Melissa Reyes:** that what keeps coming up in this moment is

also the flip side, but part of being in trust of like, My right to take up space in the world or my right to, like, be on my path and do this work is that, um, it also comes for me with a level of practice around being able to forgive myself for what I make mistakes, um, because, because, and this is all kind of like swirls up with the, you know, imposter syndrome, self doubt stuff is like this.

When we all make mistakes and when in the past when I have that would completely like deplete me and like be another like act to me as like proof that like I was I'm not actually supposed to be doing x y and z thing or like I'm not capable or I'm not ready or I'm not whatever and actually what I'm learning more and more now is like when I have those moments where I'm like I look back and I'm like, wow, I learned a thing or I'll do this thing different differently next time. that's okay. That's part of this process. Right, like that I can be forgiving of myself. um, the re, so that keeps coming up. So I wanted to say that, but I think it also speaks to the question that you asked about how it impacts my work is because it allows me to stay present. Like my work. In, you know, as a birth through my, this work that I'm getting deeper into around death companionship, it's like so much of the work that I'm doing is about holding space for people about, um, like deep listening and presence and the practice of, you know, providing, creating like ceremony and ritual, the practice of, of, um, providing comfort In all these different ways, the practice of helping kind of mediate that, like, I feel like someone in any given moment, I feel like I'm a therapist or a coach or a counselor, and then I'm like a body worker, and then I'm like a person, like a mediator between a doctor and a, you know, all the steps I'm like kind of moving in between all these different roles and that I can just like stay present in that.

And even if I, it just helps me show up a lot. Better, more fully for people, you know, and like, and like, let the things come through that want or need to come through. And when there are lessons that are being learned, either by my clients or their families or myself, like, receive them as that, like, we're learning something here.

And sometimes that's messy. And we integrate, we grieve, we process and we keep moving. Um, so yeah, I guess it's one part like that. It's helping me show up a lot more fully and completely and in integrity with other people because I'm, I, my ability to do that for myself then translates in my ability to do that for others.

[00:36:17] **Lawrence Barriner:** Yeah, that makes a ton of sense. I was just talking the other day, no, today, earlier today, with someone about holding on to the sensation of making a mistake as, like, making you unworthy. Just like, gets so much in the way of actually doing what's present, being with what's present, um, so really resonate with that and really appreciate hearing, you didn't say shapeshifting, but you were talking about like navigating between all these different roles.

And I heard shapeshifting in that and definitely can imagine that being willing and open and able to let things from beyond you come through you probably helps that. Like, if you have to change, if you're gonna do all those 3 roles, even just like within an hour,

[00:37:08] **Melissa Reyes:** Silence.

[00:37:09] **Lawrence Barriner:** it probably really helps if you're there.

Open enough to let that stuff move through.

[00:37:15] **Melissa Reyes:** Yeah, I love that I won. I, I have not claimed myself as a shape shifter, but I, I like it. I aspire

[00:37:27] **Lawrence Barriner:** don't know. You said it, you said you were doing all those things. I just, you know, anyways, okay. That's neither here nor there. Well, speaking of shape shifting or just all of the thing, all the roles that you were talking about, let's get over to the practice.

[00:37:44] **Justin:** Last night I read theory Today, I put it into practice Trying to see where I'm a going next on my atlas Hope that truth don't put me in a casket Still, that's better than when I try to mask it

[00:37:53] **Lawrence Barriner:** So what are you practicing these days? And. I do want to note that earlier you said you were finding your own deep practice. I'm curious what you meant by that if you care to share.

[00:38:09] **Melissa Reyes:** I do not remember when I said that earlier, so I don't know what I was talking about.

[00:38:15] **Lawrence Barriner:** Yeah, totally fine. Let it go.

[00:38:23] **Melissa Reyes:** So I am practicing. Well, I brought this up earlier with the, you know, stitch, which is, but it's like I am practicing being creative and understanding and recognizing that when I allow that time and space into my life, it actually Feeds all around, like it helps and supports that energy to be present in all areas of my life.

So my commitment to like, hang out with a circle of friends for a couple hours on a Monday night and embroider and talk and laugh actually, like, gets an energy moving that I bring. To my next session with a client, or that I bring to, some task that I'm doing, right, just like, so being in the practice of being creative and just allowing that energy, even have specific times where I'm like cultivating and nurturing that, and then also realizing, recognizing, like, How that energy shows up all around.

So that is a commitment that I have to be in that practice. I am practicing deep self compassion and forgiveness. Also connected to some of the things that I, we have touched on a little bit already. But like. What does it look and feel like to allow myself to really lovingly say, like, you did the best you could, and notice

[00:40:15] **Lawrence Barriner:** Silence.

[00:40:15] **Melissa Reyes:** the more that I do that for myself, kind of like I was saying before, the more that I feel able to extend that to other people, right?

[00:40:23] **Lawrence Barriner:** You're practicing creativity, you're practicing self compassion. I'd love to know for either one of those, like, how did you come to that as something to practice? Hmm.

[00:40:33] **Melissa Reyes:** Hmm, kind of out of necessity.

[00:40:40] **Lawrence Barriner:** Mm hmm.

[00:40:43] **Melissa Reyes:** I think the creativity was in part has been in part fueled by, um, pandemic life, honestly, in the last couple of years, and kind of reorganizing, you know, the reorganizing restructuring of the day to day and relationships and, um, and so, like, I started out the pandemic single and living alone. And so I was like, Thank you.

Okay, what are we going to do, you know, and like, so yeah, so it was like some, some, I found myself turning more and more to creative practices, which I've. I've loved and had in my life over the years, um, but I would say the energy, like the commitment to it right now, I think started, came out of necessity in this time.

and the self compassion, I think I've had a practice. I had an elder once led a circle, was on a new moon and They led this guided meditation circle that was inviting us to like, look at and connect with our little one, right? Some people use the language like inner child or are, um, I like to use the phrase little one.

And so it was deep and that actually there was a couple of years and I come back to this, you know, I'm not. When I'm at my best in terms of like daily practice and ritual and routine. I have done this every morning. Um, but this practice of like sitting with sitting with myself and like tuning into that little person.

And

that has actually helped facilitate my practice of self compassion because what I notice happens is when I tune in, like if I sit and I close my eyes and I kind of have a whole ritual around breath work and, and, um, usually I use, move my body a little bit first, sit, do some breath work and kind of tune in.

And it's so deep because I noticed that when I tune in to her, I can actually really witness and feel how I'm feeling in a way that's like, it's just deep. It's a little bit different than like sometimes how that shows up in daily life is like, I might wake up in the morning and I'm not really be aware of how I'm feeling and I start doing stuff going about my day.

And then if I pause and I do this practice, I'll tune into her and all of a sudden see or feel that like. Oh, she's really sad right now, actually,

[00:43:51] **Lawrence Barriner:** Hmm.

[00:43:53] **Melissa Reyes:** and then it'll like. It hit me and I'm like, Oh, I feel sad, like I, but I didn't even realize it, right?

[00:44:00] **Lawrence Barriner:** Yeah.

[00:44:01] **Melissa Reyes:** So it's so deep. And so it's like something about me tuning in and like seeing that part of myself allows me to one tune in did like what's really present for me and to like have compassion for it because I look at her as like, Oh, you're this little person who's like hurting right now.

Whereas I can have all sorts of judgment on myself and be really hard on myself or like, be like, I, I can't deal with that right now. Like, I need to work or do X, Y, and Z thing or like, get over it. Or, but, you know, when I put it, when I see it as when I see myself as her. It feels, I feel this sense of like self compassion come up and yeah, I had a friend the other day who I was talking about this practice and she was like, Oh, sounds like your little one is kind of this barometer for you.

Like where you can also like, I can actually drop in with her and be like, how do I really feel about this situation or this person or this thing that happened? And it gets me out of my head and more into that heart space, I think is part of what it is.

[00:45:10] **Lawrence Barriner:** Super profound. Not that you were trying to be profound, but yeah, like, your younger self as barometer for how you actually are. Brilliant. Thank you for sharing. Wow, thank you so much. Reminds me a lot of internal family systems therapy. Which is like, you know, some white man was like, here's a thing to try.

Which is fine, you know. Appreciate the naming. Glad I made it more accessible to some people. And like, you know, it's probably been around for a while as a practice. Generally speaking. Um, but I appreciate the way that you were. Yeah, naming how you tap into a part of yourself and it just can give you like a little shortcut.

Oh, that's what's happening here. Great. Now I know. Now I can do. Or tent. Now I can tent.

[00:46:14] **Melissa Reyes:** Yeah,

[00:46:18] **Lawrence Barriner:** Okay. So this last question, it's actually a bit of a game in that you have to choose and I'll just give you what the final three questions are. And I would love for you to just pick one of them.

[00:47:07] **Melissa Reyes:** Okay,

[00:47:08] **Lawrence Barriner:** Um, so final three questions are, what are you doing these days that you would love to give a shameless plug for?

Or, who else should I be talking to on this show about practice? Or, what's something that you're consuming? A book, piece of audio, poem, snack.

[00:47:33] **Melissa Reyes:** I'm ready

[00:47:35] **Lawrence Barriner:** Great, what are you going to choose?

[00:47:38] **Melissa Reyes:** option one.

[00:47:40] **Lawrence Barriner:** Great,

[00:47:40] **Melissa Reyes:** Um, I would like to give a seamless plug for this project that I had, um, that I mentioned that I'm working on with a friend of mine, um, and it is end of life planning and services for, uh, QTBIPOC, queer, trans, um, Black indigenous people of color and dying allies and the project is getting started.

It's like such a journey of, I mean, yeah, all the things, right. Like reclaiming that, that the end of life can actually be a deeply healing process for people. Um,

[00:49:38] **Lawrence Barriner:** yes.

[00:49:39] **Melissa Reyes:** let's be prepared enough to. Get the kind of care that we need and want. Let's be prepared enough to be celebrated and honored in the way that we ways that we need and watch. Let's be prepared enough to know who to to have the conversations that we need to have to clear up the things that that are ready to be cleared to be at peace with those things that aren't right.

Like, let's do the work because that's how we. Yeah, that's how we become the ancestors that, that we, we want and deserve to be, you know, is kind of taking care of business when we're, while we're still on the side. So we clean all that stuff up. So it's not left for those that come after, right, or that are surviving.

So deep in that process.

[00:50:36] **Lawrence Barriner:** Ashe, Ashe, Ashe, that. Thank you. Thank you, Maylisa.

[00:50:49] **Melissa Reyes:** You're welcome.

[00:50:51] **Lawrence Barriner:** So grateful to have this time to be present together.

[00:50:57] **Melissa Reyes:** Likewise, me too. It's always sweet to be in company with you, Lawrence, and yeah, to hear your deep questions, what's inspiring you, what you are in practice with. Thank you.

[00:51:20] **Lawrence Barriner:** Honored to hear that and all right. Thank you.

[00:52:00] **Justin:** What do that change look like for you? What kinda change in your life would do? How many changes with the change Won't change how you like it too? What kinda change are you fighting through? Huh? What? What do that change look like for you? What kinda change in your life would do? How many changes with the change Won't change how you like it too?

What kinda change are you fighting through? Huh? What?