00;00;00;00 - 00;00;22;00
Pascale Diverlus
What's up everybody? My name is Pascale Diverlus. Writer, educator, founder of Living Practices Consulting. And one half of your hosting team. For this limited podcast series.

00;00;22;02 - 00;00;30;11
Rodney Diverlus
Hello, I'm Rodney Diverlus, an artist and changemaker with an interest in the most transformative ideas.

00;00;30;13 - 00;01;04;15
Pascale Diverlus
This episode really got me thinking about body work and body involvement. How in line or in alignment you may know yourself to be with your body. I don't think I understood my relation to body work or the impact of my body until I realized I'm an athlete. Like I think as you're talking about your practice, your dance practice. I was like, oh yeah, like, I definitely am actively having to be in my body, as an athlete, but I don't always think about what repair with my body looks like after doing things that are so aggressive.

00;01;04;17 - 00;01;27;13
Rodney Diverlus
Well, I think we know what we do with our bodies when there's something to do with it, right? Like when there's, like a vehicle. Like riding a bike. Like doing sports. But, most of us are detached from our bodies just being. And I think that this conversation really brought into that, like just existing. What happens when, like, your boss is crappy with you or like, something triggers you, or you've been on zoom all day, every day?

00;01;27;13 - 00;01;27;24
Pascale Diverlus
Oh my goodness.

00;01;28;12 - 00;01;43;24
Rodney Diverlus
Or you have to have a tough conversation with somebody that you love, like the ways that our body holds a lot of that. And most people just disassociate from, that I fine disassociate from their bodies and even myself returning back to my body. Has always been an uphill battle sometimes.

00;01;43;27 - 00;02;20;24
Pascale Diverlus
I'm curious as you talk about this too. I'm like, oh, I wonder what if there were studies or any kind of like, knowledge building as to what collectively our relationship with our bodies would have looked like pre and post pandemic. Less of kind of the worldly impact, but more so like

what happened when you were out on the road versus like for me, for instance, I was commuting an hour of my life to work already really stressful on my body, and then drastically, I went to being in front of a desk for eight hours a day, and I have not been able to separate from that process, so I'm like, oh, I wonder even

00;02;20;24 - 00;02;34;23
Pascale Diverlus
if I know the impact of that on my body. Yes. And on one hand, I'm more active now. I'm able to find time to go to the gym in ways I wasn't before, but I can say I can feel a disconnect more in the body because I'm at a desk.

00;02;34;28 - 00;02;53;05
Rodney Diverlus
I mean, it's ironic because even as you talk about the commuting, I can even imagine when I commuted in the past, it was a time to like, daydream, and it was a time to kind of just like disconnect and kind of disassociate for a little bit and, get it in another alternate state that I don't know if people are doing.

00;02;53;08 - 00;03;34;02
Rodney Diverlus
Now that it's like, turn on, zoom, turn off, zoom, go sit on the couch. Cook meal, watch TV, go to bed, turn on zoom. Do it again. Vice versa, like, we don't even do errands and shopping anymore in person. So I do think that that's something that I think about a lot in this conversation is like, the way that we reflect a lot, like the movement work and just like the amount of trauma that activism brings and reignites, but also like being in community and living in this life and how, I mean, I what I really took from it is Prentice's approach to like embodied healing and what's possible with it.

00;03;34;18 - 00;03;59;27
Pascale Diverlus
Yeah, absolutely. I think, you know, in movement work, we talk about healing just is, when we talk about it kind of very abstractly, like it's so meta in the way that we talk about it. And even if there are dedicated spaces to unpack it further or give people avenues to just quote, unquote, heal, whatever that means, it's still very disconnected from the actual toll.

00;04;01;11 - 00;04;25;12
Rodney Diverlus
Well, how do you find movement work? Healing is just always like putting it in a container. So like if we're going to do like a whole conference, we're going to have a healing justice hour. We should do something somatic. And like that's where healing happens, rather than like our heated meetings or making decisions or on the streets themselves, or when the tough call has to be done, like how those processes seem to always be devoid of healing.

00;04;26;15 - 00;04;46;11
Rodney Diverlus
You never actually connect the two. It's kind of like when you like, work a stressful job and you go for a massage and you're like, well, the massage is great. Massage is a short term. It's not like you're going to feel good. You're going to have a short term relief. And then if there's stressors in your job that trigger that back, they're going to come right back right after that.

00;04;46;11 - 00;04;48;24
Pascale Diverlus
It's your boss bringing in pizza.

00;04;48;27 - 00;04;58;15
Rodney Diverlus
That part or vacation, which I know we love. I'm here for a vacation, but like, you come back from vacation and you're like, okay, I'm the thing that made me tired is still tiring.

00;04;58;17 - 00;05;16;24
Pascale Diverlus
Is still here. It is still here. I'm not going to hold you when you're talking about commuting and being in a different headspace. I'm like, man, I really slept through that entire hour and a half. Like, that's a really I really thought I was going to like, oh my god, I'm going to read. I'm going to do so much, girl, I slept for the entire hour and half both ways.

00;05;16;27 - 00;05;19;13
Rodney Diverlus
That’s a nap though, not napping.

00;05;19;16 - 00;05;20;16
Pascale Diverlus
Are you saying that now I'm not napping?

00;05;23;01 - 00;05;40;28
Rodney Diverlus
I just think sometimes it's like in the go, go, go. There weren't that many moments in which we were kind of just forced when you're commuting, you're forced to just be. Obviously, when you're driving, it's very different. Obviously, you're to drive the driver if there's a particular level like physical and cognitive alertness that's required.

00;05;40;28 - 00;05;46;07
Rodney Diverlus
But to me, like when you're just sitting in transit, some of my best ideas come on transit.

00;05;47;27 - 00;06;18;23

Rodney Diverlus
I know for me, I'm just like, I'm always buzzing. Being forced, literally forced to be still has, like, negative has, an upside to it as well. And I think that for sure all that we're talking about is stationary, but life beyond stationary. And one thing I reflected from this conversation is the importance of actually just getting back in our bodies, refolding back, getting reacquainted with our bodies, moving, moving, moving, moving, moving.

00;06;18;23 - 00;06;41;18
Pascale Diverlus
And bringing that to movement and organizing, to discuss the topic of embodiment. Feeling deeper into our bodies, understanding how we can heal and take guidance from our bodies. We had Prentis Hemphill, who is the author of the best seller “What It Takes to Heal”. Prentis is also the founder of the Embodiment Institute and a leading voice in embodied leadership and collective healing.

00;06;41;20 - 00;06;53;19
Pascale Diverlus
This episode of Speak, Unspoken is brought to you by Across Boundaries with support from Ontario Health. And now Prentis Hemphill.

00;06;53;21 - 00;06;55;06
Rodney Diverlus
Does it feel weird hearing your bio?

00;06;55;09 - 00;07;01;17
Prentis Hemphill
You know, I think, you know, when I imagine what hell might be, it is someone reading your bio over and over again.

00;07;08;04 - 00;07;15;28
Pascale Diverlus
You know what that is fair, cause what do you do? Do you smile? Do you clap?

00;07;16;00 - 00;07;27;13
Rodney Diverlus
You did that. I'm not gonna lie. I have a Bios doc at home, and every time I will hear my bio, I like self edit. And I go back and just one sentence. So there's 900 versions of my bio.

00;07;29;17 - 00;07;31;20
Rodney Diverlus
Based on like, oh wait, no, I shouldn't be saying this.

00;07;31;23 - 00;07;33;24

Prentis Hemphill
Right? That sounds terrible.

00;07;33;27 - 00;07;42;28
Rodney Diverlus
And on a real note, it's collectively rad. It's for myself. It's how you describe yourself. And anyways, we're very happy to have a conversation with you.

00;07;43;05 - 00;07;45;00
Prentis Hemphill
I'm really happy to be with you too.

00;07;45;02 - 00;08;05;07
Rodney Diverlus
I mean, for the listeners, for the folks that are listening, we've used the word embodied, or embodiment a number of times in your bio, and it shows up in your work a lot. And I think for a lot of people that that word theoretically makes sense, but they might not have a practical application for it.

00;08;05;09 - 00;08;14;22
Rodney Diverlus
From your words and through your perspective, can you speak to what embodiment means to you? And why is it a crucial aspect of healing?

00;08;14;24 - 00;08;35;11
Prentis Hemphill
And it's one of these funny words that is, it's actually once you get into it, it's so simple. But it's kind of hard to describe, but what I usually say is that embodiment is a couple things. It's like the awareness of what it is you do, the behaviors, the habits, and even the beliefs that motivate those behaviors and habits.

00;08;35;14 - 00;09;04;10
Prentis Hemphill
To become embodied is to become more aware of what those are. And to become embodied means that you are also, in a way, re-sensitizing yourself to your own experience, because a lot of us are trained out of paying attention to how we feel, what sensations are happening in our own bodies, and really valuing that information and embodiment is about coming back to your own body in your own felt sense, because there's a lot of important information there.

00;09;04;13 - 00;09;34;16
Prentis Hemphill
And it's critical, you know, for healing because, you know, a lot of Western psychology has, I certainly wouldn't throw all of it out at all. But what it does, kind of significantly often, is ignore

the body. It's like talk therapy. Your ideas, your mind. It's all like valuing thinking, cognition, the mind over the body, feeling, all of that other stuff that makes us alive.

00;09;34;18 - 00;09;55;03
Prentis Hemphill
And so when we talk about healing, a lot of times people are like, I'm gonna think my way out of it. But that's why we can think something, know something, and not be able to do it. It's because our bodies are actually doing something different, trained to do something different. You know, if you've ever. I used to always joke, if you've ever been with someone, it's like, I'm never going to date that kind of person again.

00;09;55;06 - 00;10;11;05
Prentis Hemphill
But then a year later, you find yourself gravitating towards them. It's because you're trying to heal on the level of thoughts, and not in a way that actually includes your body, which might, for whatever reason, actually be drawn to those kinds of encounters. So, that's what I mean by embodiment.

00;10;11;08 - 00;10;31;29
Rodney Diverlus
Yeah. And as I mean as a movement practitioner and a dancer, I connect with that on a literal molecular level. And I feel like more and more we live in a world that aims to disconnect us from our bodies, and so much is stored and is held, and it's literally what carries us forward.

00;10;31;29 - 00;10;56;03
Prentis Hemphill
If you think about like, if you're disconnected from your body, what you could do to yourself and to other people, if you can't feel when you talk about like why we get pulled away from our bodies, to me that's why it's like if you're distracted, if you're not feeling, you'll tend towards overwork, you'll be more available in a way for exploitation.

00;10;56;05 - 00;11;11;11
Prentis Hemphill
You won't feel the impact you have on other relationships in other bodies in the world. To be separated from your feelings allows a lot of things to happen. And that's why I'm like, we have to reconnect because I think it brings us into the right relationship.

00;11;11;13 - 00;11;13;11
Rodney Diverlus
It could all be so simple.

00;11;13;13 - 00;11;14;09
Prentis Hemphill

Like, you know what I'm saying?

00;11;16;26 - 00;11;38;29
Pascale Diverlus
I'm very curious, even just like how the transition from being a therapist, you know, reading your book and talking about that kind of being, where you started, to moving into talking about embodiment. How did that transition happen for you? Why did you see gaps within talk therapy or therapy generally that led to the kind of natural transitions of that.

00;11;39;01 - 00;12;05;06
Prentis Hemphill
Yeah, it's a great question. Yeah. I came, you know, actually through movement first and then what I saw was like, there's something here that we're not talking about. And, you know, I found a word for it, which is trauma. And then I started pursuing that path of therapy. And when I, you know, since. So then when I started doing therapy, I got there and I was like, oh, y'all are really separated from the world, and you don't want it here.

00;12;05;08 - 00;12;39;12
Prentis Hemphill
You think it's actually dangerous to have the world here. And so I felt that tension. And, you know, a lot of it was, was I mean, this is around 2012, 2013, that time when a lot of things are kicking off and black movement in the US in particular. And, I could feel that tension between, the trauma that we feel in our bodies and the trauma that's kind of perpetuated by the world and wanting to bring together and make meaning of those connections.

00;12;39;12 - 00;12;46;23
Prentis Hemphill
So I sought out training. I sought out teachers that helped me make meaning of that, of that interconnection.

00;12;46;25 - 00;12;48;09
Pascale Diverlus
Understandable, super understandable.

00;12;48;09 - 00;13;04;28
Rodney Diverlus
Prentis, in the opening chapter of your book, you write, we come into this world with meaning. I'm very curious for you from your perspective, what are ways that we can find our meaning? And what happens when we neglect the search for our meaning?

00;13;05;00 - 00;13;36;24
Prentis Hemphill
I think so much about how we get co-opted into other people's ideas of the world. And we get

coerced. We get forced, we get seduced, and we get distracted into all these visions for how the world could be, should be. And, you know, a lot of us, because of pressure, because of conditions, because of things we have to do, and then also because of habit, we end up not taking time to listen to what we long for.

00;13;36;26 - 00;14;01;27
Prentis Hemphill
You know what our gift is? What is kind of unique? You know what I'm saying? Like what it is that we bring to the world. That's what I'm really interested in, because I actually think the world that we are looking for, a lot of us is actually there. It's in that place where if we listen to what we're here to do, if we listen to what we long for, something else could be created from that.

00;14;01;27 - 00;14;13;14
Prentis Hemphill
So I just find it's so important for a life well-lived for us to listen closely to those visions. Because somebody, somebody is listening to this, there are visions here in the world.

00;14;14;03 - 00;14;44;16
Prentis Hemphill
We are contending with some actually mighty and destructive visions. You know what I'm saying? And I think I can understand people trying to organize around them or feeling fearful about what those visions will mean for our lives. But I think what we're looking for is actually found in our own visions and cultivating what it is that we see and long for, and getting less and less seduced and coerced by these visions and end up being imposed on us.

00;14;44;19 - 00;15;09;13
Rodney Diverlus
I just feel like there's such a direct connection then, to the embodied. One of the things we often say in dance is literally the term that you're out of your body, in your body. So one of the things we do when we come back to a practice after a while, where we get into a space event, the first thing we do often you'll see before, let's say, rehearsals go, people are, you know, the artists are in for like an hour before on their own, getting inside their bodies.

00;15;09;16 - 00;15;28;05
Rodney Diverlus
And part of that is to kind of reconnect to your deepest like your fascia and your limbs, and all the cells that sort of keep you going to get you out of your mind. Because the mind is where we'll get our anxieties. The mind is where you'll get your overthinking. The mind is where you'll get your doubts.

00;15;28;05 - 00;15;51;14
Rodney Diverlus
And all of the things. And for me, I've noticed a deep connection. If I can really feel what is

happening at the cellular level with my body and being plugged into that? But the answers to issues that I might have or the answers to, what is it that I do today?

00;15;51;14 - 00;15;57;28
Rodney Diverlus
Or what are the bigger philosophical questions in life that come easier? Because I kind of know the answer is.

00;15;58;00 - 00;15;58;22
Pascale Diverlus
That's right.

00;15;58;22 - 00;16;15;01
Rodney Diverlus
And it's when you talk about getting out of your own way, almost like getting out of our heads and knowing that we, our ancestors, have imprinted on us some answers, but we also know ourselves too deeply. If you get right in there.

00;16;15;03 - 00;16;33;17
Prentis Hemphill
Yeah, that's right. I love that you're bringing dance into it because, you know, I was trained in what they call somatics, which is like the kind of official study of all this stuff. But I use the word embodiment more because I feel like it's more inclusive of what we already know how to do, what we've already done, dance.

00;16;33;17 - 00;16;51;12
Prentis Hemphill
And I think about dance. I'm like, this has to be one of the first quote unquote embodiment practices. It's like the original technology to me for how we connect with ourselves, how we communicate with each other, how we align our nervous systems with each other. We do it through dance now.

00;16;51;14 - 00;17;11;06
Pascale Diverlus
Yeah. I think it also allows folks who may not have access to, you know, people that help them to feel more in their body. Really go back to kind of intrinsic ways of being, ways that they find themselves. Or so forth. And so, I think that opens up a door for people to also think about, how could I do this on my own?

00;17;11;06 - 00;17;30;10
Pascale Diverlus
Yeah. I think it speaks to the ways folks can find that embodiment, even with themselves outside of exactly seeking or going. And so what other forms for, you know, listeners who were thinking

about this and thinking about, oh, I do spend a lot of time intellectualizing what I'm feeling or speaking about it, but not actually doing.

00;17;30;14 - 00;17;37;27
Pascale Diverlus
What are some other mechanisms, some resources, some tools that may be easier to access to feel a little bit more in their bodies?

00;17;37;29 - 00;18;02;03
Prentis Hemphill
I love that question. Yeah, dance. I will just say dance is a huge one. I, as the embodiment practitioner, I dance, I dance, and when I don't dance, I can feel the difference in my life. So dance is so, so important. Dancing together, dancing alone. I also, you know, I sit, I meditate, which allows me to, you know, there's different ways of meditating.

00;18;02;03 - 00;18;21;02
Prentis Hemphill
But for me, I use it mostly to be with my kind of emotional body, to let things move, to give some room for them without running away from them and letting them process through. So I do that morning and night, to just become, in a way, more congruent in my body. So I know what's here, you know what I'm saying?

00;18;21;04 - 00;18;40;18
Pascale Diverlus
Can I just add something just to that too? Like even the act of, I think there's something that's so powerful about hearing that I'm like, just sitting with the emotions, like not necessarily wanting to do anything with them, but just allowing them to be able to kind of flow in. And I don't also know if a lot of folks are in this room.

00;18;41;06 - 00;18;58;16
Pascale Diverlus
I find even for myself, speaking for myself, allowing myself to be like, just have this emotion, girl. I got to do that with it. Just to have it. I think that is such a difference from giving the chance to just feel the emotion fully without actually trying to do something with that emotion.

00;18;58;18 - 00;19;19;20
Rodney Diverlus
Well, I mean, I think what you're saying, Pascal, is giving yourself to the emotion and then relinquishing yourself to it. I mean, it's interesting because the point that also what I'm hearing you, Prentis, talk about is the balance, which is kinetic, is still and from both ends. They're both to me. I see meditation as a form of movement as well, but it's like internal movement.

00;19;19;20 - 00;19;20;05

Pascale Diverlus
Yeah.

00;19;20;09 - 00;19;49;08
Rodney Diverlus
And through finding stillness, there's whatever's happening in there. I mean, on my end, I am moving about. Stillness is very difficult for me, but I find that as an overthinker, as an over intellectualizer or as a, catastrophizer for the lack of a better word, that the stillness is what allows the like, baby, you're okay.

00;19;49;10 - 00;19;58;14
Rodney Diverlus
Like, it's okay. You know the answer. You know the thing. Why, why are you freaking out? Like girl, Come on.

00;19;58;16 - 00;19;59;05
Prentis Hemphill
That's right.

00;19;59;06 - 00;20;06;03
Rodney Diverlus
Like it's gentle. It's like the most firm and gentle way that I can be. Come on.

00;20;06;03 - 00;20;25;10
Prentis Hemphill
Yeah, because you're, like, giving to me. It's like I give room in my body for what is actually happening in me. And so I let it move. I let it bounce around. I let it tighten up. I mean, I bring my attention there, but it's like you find that part of you that is the mature part of you that goes, it's all right.

00;20;25;20 - 00;20;42;15
Prentis Hemphill
You can feel that. It's okay. You know, it's cultivating to me the mature self that isn't mature because it suppresses movement and all of that is mature because it can hold that and say it's okay.

00;20;43;11 - 00;21;18;22
Rodney Diverlus
I mean in a world of notifications and fragmented attention, I mean we literally have forces that spend a lot of money to try to get us to not be still. And to give them like bzzt bzzt bzzt bzzt and buzzing. And, we were talking earlier today that I started this practice and, I mean, I'm not an expert on this, so I'm not going to be touting it, you know, I'm not I'm not proselytizing it, but I found this practice of an hour in the morning I start with no phone.

00;21;21;11 - 00;21;23;11
Prentis Hemphill
Yes, yes, yes.

00;21;23;11 - 00;21;47;10
Rodney Diverlus
Oh, it was very difficult, but now it's actually quite. I find that if I don't do it, I'm like, what? What's happening? And no phone and I just go through life like the regular, I like, wash the dishes from the night before and I will sit and kind of just become a little bit of a zombie and just give myself a runway before the day of.

00;21;47;11 - 00;22;01;11
Rodney Diverlus
Almost that silence, that stillness, that sense of, like, not rushing to go do anything. And I've noticed a massive difference. And it's wild to imagine that, you know, these clink clink clink.

00;22;01;13 - 00;22;02;21
Prentis Hemphill
Yeah, yeah, yeah.

00;22;02;24 - 00;22;07;25
Rodney Diverlus
Is itself a tool to get ourselves out of our own embodied experience.

00;22;07;27 - 00;22;37;01
Prentis Hemphill
Absolutely, absolutely. I mean, it's again, to me that is, the cultivation of the mature self, which is something I've been thinking about a lot, like having that person lead your day rather than the person that is fragmented by, you know, all the things that are trying to fragment you. Our phones are definitely designed to break up our attention, which breaks up our ability to process which, and it breaks up our ability to be present, to sense, to choose.

00;22;37;03 - 00;23;01;06
Prentis Hemphill
There's so much. I'm not anti-phone, obviously, but it does those things. It isn't really intentional. You know, they study how to do that. I notice when I sit and meditate after scrolling my thoughts are like that. It's like playing pinball. They're just jumping around and there's a part of me that goes, okay, this is what this is what the mind is like after scrolling.

00;23;03;14 - 00;23;06;17
Prentis Hemphill
Just witnessing the mind after scrolling. This is what happens.

00;23;06;17 - 00;23;11;21
Pascale Diverlus
It's a little terrifying.

00;23;11;23 - 00;23;31;28
Pascale Diverlus
One of my favorite chapters in the book is the chapter of visions. I think that it gave me so much to think about. One of the biggest questions that you ask, what are you longing for? I sat with that for so long. There's actually a Jamaican song called longing for that. I kept playing again and again and again.

00;23;32;00 - 00;23;43;29
Pascale Diverlus
When listening to it. Because what are you longing for. Okay, let me stop. This is for a different kind of podcast.

00;23;44;02 - 00;24;06;00
Pascale Diverlus
But it had me really, really, really thinking and kind of like pondering. And there's a quote here that I want to say really quickly. And you speak of envisioning different futures, to conjure something that sits outside of your time and circumstance while being firmly rooted in the moment to listen for the calls of what is not yet here, but waiting in the wings.

00;24;06;00 - 00;24;08;09
Pascale Diverlus
One of my favorite lines throughout the entire book.

00;24;08;10 - 00;24;09;05
Prentis Hemphill
Thank you.

00;24;09;07 - 00;24;39;26
Pascale Diverlus
Yes, absolutely. It was. So it really had me thinking about how it is that we can think about a future, but to be right here and enjoy right here at the same time, I think you really put it together in a way that really hits close to my heart. It did have me thinking though, like for folks who are, you know, trying to just navigate every single day that are dealing with the brunt of what is happening right now in this world, how do we continue to build, create or dream of a future when it seems so far away?

00;24;40;01 - 00;24;42;11
Pascale Diverlus

Or for some, it may not even seem possible?

00;24;44;03 - 00;24;50;27
Prentis Hemphill
Yeah. I mean I was writing to those people.

00;24;52;14 - 00;25;21;01
Prentis Hemphill
And you know, I was writing not to say that you won't despair or I won't feel impossible at times, but that, you know, part of the vision in articulating the vision is actually exactly for those moments of despair, of when it grows very dark and you're not sure which way to go. That's why we cultivate the vision and, you know, it is a little bit of a practice of faithfulness in a way not to scare people off.

00;25;21;01 - 00;25;52;01
Prentis Hemphill
But that's kind of what I'm talking about there. Is listening, listening below the noise, listening to something that continues persists. And if nothing else, you know, sometimes I just when I feel my most despairing, I just listen to the truth that everything changes, you know, eventually everything eventually changes. And that gives me enough faith sometimes.

00;25;52;01 - 00;26;16;28
Prentis Hemphill
And when I'm very, very lost to stay close to my own longings about, you know, I think it's like carving out your little space of freedom to let yourself have a vision in this moment. And there always is a little space of freedom, even if the choices are bad, even if it's like, I think I wrote it in someplace in the book, like between a Rock and a hard place is no place to live.

00;26;16;28 - 00;26;43;09
Prentis Hemphill
Like sometimes those choices are hard, but we're still choosing, we're still staying in our agency. We're still staying in the possibility and making choices even when it's hard. And you know, I can't make it all rainbows and nice and sweet because sometimes, you know, life is hard, sometimes it's just hard, and that's what's real. But there is a faithfulness still that I think is available to us even in those moments.

00;26;43;12 - 00;26;52;05
Pascale Diverlus
I also think life is hard. And also there are a lot of people trying to make it harder. There are a lot of systems really trying to make it a lot harder for people.

00;26;52;07 - 00;27;00;24
Prentis Hemphill

And we gotta say they're doing a good job. Like if you're really just honest about it, sometimes I had to sit back and go, wow, that you know what though?

00;27;00;24 - 00;27;06;03
Prentis Hemphill
Y’all did that. Y’all really did that.

00;27;06;06 - 00;27;07;04
Rodney Diverlus
They’re organized. They’re quite organized.

00;27;07;07 - 00;27;08;00
Prentis Hemphill
Yeah.

00;27;09;10 - 00;27;45;09
Rodney Diverlus
I mean I think that we're all here experiencing this organization on their end and they are doing a good job. And I think that there are tactics and solidarity tactics of community, tactics of belonging. That I see the capital they are experiencing. I think a lot of people, even when we talk about podcasts, like the ways that this tool, the idea of this podcast, and this very tool that is meant to in many ways just be a communication tool has become a platform to create belonging and space.

00;27;46;02 - 00;27;57;23
Rodney Diverlus
For a lot of people, who’s worldviews are not what we're talking about whatsoever, and in a world that hasn't created space for them, they found space through talking heads.

00;27;57;23 - 00;27;59;16
Prentis Hemphill
That’s amazing.

00;27;59;18 - 00;28;06;01
Rodney Diverlus
And so, I mean, speaking, I want to bring back a question, and this is going to take us back, back, back. We're going to go back.

00;28;06;01 - 00;28;11;10
Pascale Diverlus
Are we going there? Okay.

00;28;11;12 - 00;28;17;15

Rodney Diverlus
So for those who are listening, Prentis and I have met doing movement work.

00;28;17;18 - 00;28;19;04
Prentis Hemphill
Coworkers, we're coworkers.

00;28;19;04 - 00;28;45;29
Rodney Diverlus
We were doing movement work across borders. And I want to bring back to, you know, that the 2010s, with Ferguson specifically and that was really my entryway into the Black Lives Matter movement. It was the Freedom Riots, the Ferguson Freedom Riots. There was all the uprising that was happening. And, you know, in my lifetime, it was the moment of our lives.

00;28;45;29 - 00;28;51;29
Rodney Diverlus
And it was to make a decision. Where are you going to go? Go left or right.

00;28;51;29 - 00;28;52;28
Prentis Hemphill
That's right.

00;28;53;01 - 00;29;19;18
Rodney Diverlus
One of the things that I really loved, actually, is all of the different healing tactics and strategies that were being experimented on at the time. Could you speak, on the importance of sort of providing the pop up clinics in Ferguson during uprisings? And. Yeah, just gives our audience a little bit of a taste of what those interventions were like and why they were implemented.

00;29;20;24 - 00;29;37;11
Prentis Hemphill
Yeah, I can definitely talk to that. And I will say, you know, the things that I was a part of are not all the things that were happening in Ferguson. I remember there were like, you know, youth groups that are out in the streets and like dance tents and, you know, people were given signs, there was everything happening out in the streets.

00;29;37;11 - 00;30;05;14
Prentis Hemphill
So I just want to also name all those different kinds of interventions that were happening and talking to each other and some not talking to each other. And one of the ones that I was a part of was, doing a kind of pop up, I was doing bodywork, somatic bodywork for a lot of the organizers there in the basement of St. John's Church, which was a kind of hub there.

00;30;05;14 - 00;30;33;10
Prentis Hemphill
So, you know, we'd gather and just be open for people that wanted to come in and receive services and some of those sessions were people just crying or some of those people, you know, for some of the organizers. And I think that's probably true for a lot of us, just like you're showing up in Ferguson for Michael Brown, for Michael Brown's family, and you're also showing up for people whose names people don't know.

00;30;33;12 - 00;30;48;01
Prentis Hemphill
You know, stories that people don't know. And I found that to be true for a lot of the people I was working with. It was like there were tears that spanned across different lives, and generations. And so, you know, we offered that space.

00;30;51;12 - 00;31;12;06
Prentis Hemphill
We also offered a. It's hard to say what it was. It sort of was like a somatic training and embodiment kind of healing training in the middle of it. Again at St. John's Church, we came back and did that. But people were actively organizing. So people were moving in and out of the space. I'd be down at the precinct and then coming back or, you know, we'd go out with them at night to support them.

00;31;12;06 - 00;31;33;26
Prentis Hemphill
And, you know, there was just a lot of it was important, I think, for people to reconnect with themselves and also to reconnect to each other because, you know, in those moments, how much tension there can be, how much pressure there is, how much fear there is. And having a space to process that I think is just so important and reconnect to again, vision and purpose.

00;31;33;26 - 00;31;56;26
Prentis Hemphill
Why? Why struggle in this relationship with each other? Why, why keep moving? Why, why keep doing this? And connecting to your love is so important. So a lot of people were doing a lot of interventions and I'm grateful that I got to support in that way because yeah, I mean, the intensity, the beauty, the pain of that moment is like no other.

00;31;56;28 - 00;32;26;13
Rodney Diverlus
I think that, you know, now that I'm a bit older, looking back, I was very young during the time when our movement was nascent in recent years. I was in my mid 20s, 24 at the time. And when I look back to that version of myself, I feel like one of my coping strategies was to disassociate, was to literally like, you know, my fire and my passion was there.

00;32;26;13 - 00;32;45;13
Rodney Diverlus
I knew exactly what the purpose was there. I was quite rooted in why I'm here and why this is important. And I felt a sort of call that was beyond myself. But, when I think about it, even when we were up here, we did our tent city, we did our actions or occupations as well.

00;32;45;13 - 00;33;15;21
Rodney Diverlus
And there were a number of interventions similar to those that were very exciting to be a part of organizing or creating space for people to come, whether it's morning movement classes that Raven would lead during our tent city in the winter, frozen or like, you know, like we would have also healing areas and, art and movement and all of these interventions that as a movement leader, I did not participate in.

00;33;15;21 - 00;33;48;15
Rodney Diverlus
I would put myself in like the planning meetings or would be in the van or in the tent doing press releases or doing interviews and these additional things that actually pulled me away further away from my body, and the older me is looking back and realizing just how, you know, I was crafting and creating spaces for people to engage in these sort of ways to find healing for themselves while actively disassociating from self as a way of continuing on.

00;33;48;15 - 00;33;49;21
Prentis Hemphill
Absolutely.

00;33;50;12 - 00;33;53;23
Prentis Hemphill
I got there too Rodney. I got there too at some point, it was too much.

00;33;53;29 - 00;34;16;18
Rodney Diverlus
It's too much, it's too much. And I think that and the point that you said around that again, we were going back to the embodied fact that the body knows that ultimately we can tell ourselves lies and tell ourselves things and tell ourselves fallacies. But our body ultimately knows. And it will always come back.

00;34;16;18 - 00;34;22;00
Rodney Diverlus
It'll always come back to you and be like, no, I'm still here. You got to come back.

00;34;22;02 - 00;34;41;04
Prentis Hemphill

Yeah. I would tell you back then I had a great therapist I was working with and she would just coach me to, you know, because we were traveling so much. I was like everywhere, every week. But she would just be like, take your little blender, like a bullet blender. So I always had a nasty little smoothie because that blender was no good.

00;34;41;06 - 00;35;01;06
Prentis Hemphill
I took it everywhere. She'd say, everywhere you go, just put your body in warm water. Everywhere you go, take a walk. So I was completely over capacity, over all my edges. But I did those basic things to care for myself. And, you know, I came through in a way that whole experience shaved years off my life.

00;35;07;19 - 00;35;10;19
Prentis Hemphill
I'll be living a little less long than I was intended to.

00;35;10;23 - 00;35;23;19
Prentis Hemphill
But I did keep something, you know, it's like, what? What are the things I can do to signal to my body? Like, even in this, I'm going to try to care for you. And, I'm grateful that I did those things.

00;35;24;26 - 00;35;27;00
Prentis Hemphill
It kept something steady in me at that time.

00;35;27;00 - 00;35;34;24
Pascale Diverlus
Yeah, absolutely. I think like in organizing people who are leading, organizing specifically, we are the first people to go when we forget things.

00;35;34;25 - 00;35;35;10
Prentis Hemphill
Come on.

00;35;35;12 - 00;35;58;06
Pascale Diverlus
We forget ourselves the quickest. And so I'm wondering if you could actually just speak to like just the necessity, especially for like those who are leading movements, in front of movements, who are in the very front lines, who are the people kind of holding the antis together, walking the people home, like how necessary is it that we are incorporating healing justice within our movements, in our organizing spaces?

00;35;58;08 - 00;36;48;27

Prentis Hemphill
It's so, so, so, so necessary. And it's necessary. I mean, I think about it in a dimensional necessity, and that when we do it to the point of our own depletion, then it does damage our own bodies and beings. There's that piece. But what it shows about what it means to do this work, I think we can't overstate what the example is, what it shows, what it asks of other people to, you know. I was in conversation with Angela Davis just after the election, the US election results and she was saying.

00;36;48;27 - 00;37;09;17
Prentis Hemphill
Like, how can we act more like an organism so that some can rest while some lead and some others can, like we can move in a kind of wave because the constant overextension is the same logic that we're fighting.

00;37;09;20 - 00;37;10;15
Pascale Diverlus
Absolutely.

00;37;10;15 - 00;37;14;12
Prentis Hemphill
And so when we talk about master's tools, I'm like, overextension.

00;37;14;17 - 00;37;15;05
Rodney Diverlus
Absolutely.

00;37;15;05 - 00;37;43;15
Prentis Hemphill
Your body is a master's tool. So, yeah, I think it's the thing that I'm trying to bring forward now, and I think what we're all trying to do is like how what we do matters so much, and it ripples out through relationships. It ripples out across your life. The how of what we do, how we organize, how we talk to people, how we talk to each other, how we treat ourselves inside of all those moments of the how is what we're looking for.

00;37;43;15 - 00;38;00;27
Prentis Hemphill
Those are the little pockets of freedom that then can replicate. But if we bring the same energy, the same self dominating energy to those moments, that too will replicate. And I just want us to pay attention to that loving, compassionate attention to it, but attention to it still, you know.

00;38;01;03 - 00;38;24;07
Pascale Diverlus
Absolutely. Like I find that, you know, especially in my time at the very forefront, like I felt that

there was and I see it even with the, you know, the younger folks who are kind of coming up in this work that they feel a particular demand to sacrifice themselves, and they think of it as integral to movements and organizing.

00;38;24;21 - 00;38;28;28
Pascale Diverlus
And it is such a, it's one of those things I'm like, please learn.

00;38;28;28 - 00;38;32;28
Pascale Diverlus
From us, learn from antis, learn from everybody who's come before. Please.

00;38;32;28 - 00;38;50;13
Pascale Diverlus
Love is not something that is sustainable. And so I keep going back in my head of like, how do we have how do we have these conversations with folks who are coming up in our movements, who are leading our movements? We're doing really great work and necessary work that they can't forget themselves. How do we have those conversations?

00;38;50;15 - 00;39;03;03
Prentis Hemphill
Because it's not just about how much you do to me. It's also what I've learned as I've gotten older because I'm much older than I was when I started teaching. At this big age. It's, I'm understanding that it's also the potency of what you do.

00;39;04;19 - 00;39;24;24
Prentis Hemphill
We think it's the quantity. Some of it is the potency, the power, the presence that you bring to what you do. Like, if I do something with most of myself here, what that thing will do, how it will move in the world is different than if I bring a fraction of what I have to it and do ten things.

00;39;25;00 - 00;39;25;05
Pascale Diverlus
Absolutely.

00;39;25;14 - 00;39;32;05
Prentis Hemphill
I'm really interested in this time. And like what? How can I be my most potent in the work that I do? You know what I’m saying?

00;39;33;01 - 00;39;53;10
Rodney Diverlus
Absolutely. And when I hear potency, I think of intention. It's intentional, it's more present as

well. It's more realistic and holistic. Dare I say it. And sustainable. I think that at this moment, right now that we find ourselves in, in 2025 is teaching anything, is that I really think about this wave, right?

00;39;53;10 - 00;40;11;16
Rodney Diverlus
When I first heard it, this idea of like, you know, things ebb and flow. I know things ebb and flow, like, because we are organisms in real life. We see it. We see the ocean ebbing and flowing, the moon, the tides. Ultimately, things in our lives come and go.

00;40;11;16 - 00;40;20;03
Rodney Diverlus
And I knew deep in my heart that we were going to find ourselves in this moment, this sort of pendulum swing.

00;40;20;06 - 00;40;20;14
Prentis Hemphill
Yeah.

00;40;20;15 - 00;40;48;24
Rodney Diverlus
But for some reason, because I think a lot of us may have felt it that we feel like this, we have to do everything now because this is the moment. This is the watershed moment. Everyone's telling us to take advantage of the things, accept all the things, go do the things, speak all the things, and I think when you're talking about the potency or when I think back to the times that I felt like things have been really potent, have been times in which I suspended myself from all of those realities.

00;40;48;24 - 00;41;08;13
Rodney Diverlus
It's all of those pressures, and we're asking the real question of what is my contribution right now, and how do I both balance the contribution to the self, the contribution to the people in my life and this bigger movement. Because there is another thing, too, about neglecting the people in our lives too, and that sort of forgetting.

00;41;08;14 - 00;41;09;20
Pascale Diverlus
Oh.

00;41;09;22 - 00;41;19;14
Rodney Diverlus
Forgetting that we also have relationships to nurture. And that's part of doing our ancestors work is also friendships, lovers, family, cousins.

00;41;19;16 - 00;41;20;11
Prentis Hemphill
Yeah.

00;41;20;13 - 00;41;40;29
Prentis Hemphill
I had a kid in this last period. I have a three and a half years old. And you know, at the time that we were working together, Rodney, my partner was like, I'm not going to do parenting with you in this state. We're not going to do it. And so I had to go, okay, okay. You know, and I'm grateful that she has that kind of boundary and clarity.

00;41;41;02 - 00;41;57;12
Prentis Hemphill
She's like, I can tell you what it will look like and it's not going to be good. So we have to find alignment if we're going to do this parenting thing. And so I was like, okay, I have to restructure. I have to think about my life differently if that's what I really want.

00;41;57;14 - 00;42;17;26
Prentis Hemphill
You know, I can't do the same things, I can't do everything. I can only do some things. So yeah, relationships are absolutely, they should be a metric. You know, it's like, how well are relationships to me, that's really the definition of well-being or healing is like, what are our relationships doing.

00;42;17;27 - 00;42;36;01
Pascale Diverlus
Right? How they are impacted by it is wild to think that we could be doing groundbreaking liberatory work, but our relationships and our relationship to self is sacrificing. I don't know if a liberated world means like, what is it going to be like if we can't be there and we can't be there with our kin?

00;42;36;03 - 00;42;40;13
Prentis Hemphill
Isolated, unfeeling, you know, it's like, are we free?

00;42;40;13 - 00;42;41;26
Pascale Diverlus
Real question, are we free?

00;42;41;26 - 00;42;49;02
Rodney Diverlus
Are we free? The big questions and who are we fighting freedom for? If it's not for our kid and a

kin.

00;42;49;05 - 00;42;50;05
Prentis Hemphill
Exactly.

00;42;50;08 - 00;43;15;16
Pascale Diverlus
To end, it's close, not really quickly. You know, we are doing this podcast and collaboration with a mental health organization. And so we are talking about mental health broadly. You're talking about it, you know, in all of the different ways that it finds us, like we find it. And I'm curious from your perspective, if you can speak to, you know, there's been a lot of advancements or growth in talking about mental health disparities and how mental health impacts us all differently.

00;43;15;16 - 00;43;30;04
Pascale Diverlus
But there's still such big gaps that exist for black folks, for queer folks or trans folks, for low income folks. And so I'm wondering if you can actually just speak to that in the ways that we need to see this sector really transform, to actually meet the needs that we have?

00;43;30;06 - 00;43;42;26
Prentis Hemphill
Well, I think it's also beyond the sector, because in a way, a lot of what mental health is telling us is pointing to social and economic indicators too.

00;43;44;01 - 00;44;06;29
Prentis Hemphill
And that’s what therapy has tried to or therapy has kind of stood in to separate those things out. But I think a lot of what we talk about in mental health for black folks, mental health for so many people are also in that what's being understood is like the context that we are living in is leading to our own wellness in so many ways.

00;44;06;29 - 00;44;28;29
Prentis Hemphill
And there are things we can do. It's not solely a contextual thing, because we get in our habits and our patterns, and we have to break out of the habits and the patterns. It's like sometimes there's love in our life, but we're not actually available to it because we're responding to a story from the past. So we have to be able to be present enough to feel the love, the connection, the healing that's possible for us in real time.

00;44;29;05 - 00;44;53;02
Prentis Hemphill
And things have to change in order for us to feel that more consistently, without as much

pressure and pressure to disconnect from each other in ourselves. So, I think that's one big indicator for me is like, it's beautiful to me that we're starting to pay attention to those things, and it has to, you know, these conditions create it over and over again.

00;44;53;04 - 00;45;30;21
Prentis Hemphill
And I think what I really, you know, long for, for us in particular is, just, remembering. That, you know, it's relational. It's cultural. Our well-being is found in our relationships with each other. Our transformation, our healing is available through our relationships with each other through practices that we do. We've been, you know, in oppression, very disconnected from the things that feed us.

00;45;30;21 - 00;45;56;04
Prentis Hemphill
We still do them, but it just creates more and more space apart from them. And so, you know I'm really interested in our healing, not just mimicking some kind of therapeutic practice, but being communal, being embodied. Because that's what we do, that's what we do. And I think that, well, you know, I'm like, what are the ceremonies actually that transform us?

00;45;56;04 - 00;46;10;09
Prentis Hemphill
What are the ceremonies? One of the practices, the communal ceremonies and practices that, you know, I think it's a little hard for us sometimes. I go to individual therapy, and when I talk to my family, they're like, what? It's like sitting on a stage and talking about all the bad things.

00;46;12;05 - 00;46;28;14
Prentis Hemphill
I get it, I do it and I'm grateful for it, but also I long for something bigger that can hold us and see our process, our beauty, our pain, our joy, our grief that can mix it all together.

00;46;30;08 - 00;46;37;05
Prentis Hemphill
I think that’s to me, that’s a Black centered response to what we're going through and how big it is and how big it is, how deep.

00;46;37;07 - 00;46;59;01
Pascale Diverlus
If I can connect it to the relational piece as well, it is also teachings that come from First Nations meeting in Inuit communities and found really across the globe. And so understanding also that, you know, some of these knowledge are also passed ancestrally, generationally too. And we don't have to be necessarily the first to always do something.

00;46;59;03 - 00;47;13;15

Pascale Diverlus
Thank you so much for sharing space with us Prentis. If you have not gotten a copy of “What it Takes to Heal: How Transforming Ourselves Can Change the World”, grab your copy. You can also listen to it through audio on Spotify.

00;47;15;02 - 00;47;16;11
Prentis Hemphill
Yeah, people seem to like that.

00;47;16;14 - 00;47;21;09
Pascale Diverlus
I loved it, that's how I did it. I was like, yeah, I was driving like, yes, speak.

00;47;22;28 - 00;47;26;06
Rodney Diverlus
I'm old school, I have a paperback and I need to do that, you know.

00;47;26;06 - 00;47;35;14
Prentis Hemphill
I'm like that too. I'm like that too. But I, I'm so glad that people are enjoying it and I hope that I get up to Toronto, trying to put together some kind of practice space up there.

00;47;35;20 - 00;47;36;14
Pascale Diverlus
Okay.

00;47;36;21 - 00;47;38;00
Prentis Hemphill
I'll let y'all know.

00;47;38;03 - 00;47;39;15
Rodney Diverlus
We love you so much, Prentis.

00;47;39;15 - 00;47;40;05
Prentis Hemphill
I love you too.

00;47;40;06 - 00;47;41;14
Prentis Hemphill
It's really good to see you.

00;47;41;16 - 00;47;45;09

Pascale Diverlus
Let our followers also know where they can find you. Drop the @.

00;47;45;16 - 00;47;48;21
Prentis Hemphill
Yeah, yeah. I mean, really, I can be found at the house, but, when I come out.

00;47;55;17 - 00;48;03;10
Prentis Hemphill
But when I do make an appearance in the world, you can find me on Instagram at Prentis Hemphill. You can go to my website: prentishemphill.com.

00;48;04;09 - 00;48;26;14
Pascale Diverlus
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