



Embodied Activism: How Do We Embody Activism and Create Social Transformation?



Enjoy the rich discussion between embodied activist leaders and community participants, in a thoughtful and personal exploration of how we can embody activism to create social transformation.

TOP EMBODIMENT TIPS: **Prentis:** Breathe. **Rae:** Pay attention. Be kind.

Marisela: Get back into nature. **Leo:** Presence and gratitude are inexorably linked.

[Prentis Hemphill](#): **Somatics practitioner, movement facilitator, founder and leader of the Black Embodiment Initiative and host of the [Finding Our Way Podcast](#)**

- Prentis (they/them) was the Healing Justice Director at Black Lives Matter Global Network and continues to do work that supports healing and transformation in the fight for racial equality. Prentis is committed to asking the big questions as we orient ourselves in this moment of collective dysregulation, determining how we move together in a more grounded, connected and more liberatory way. They are interested in the connection between politics and healing, rather than posing them in opposition.

[Rae Johnson](#): **Queer-identified scholar/researcher, social worker and somatic movement therapist working at the intersection of somatic studies and social justice**

- Rae (they/them) brings their embodied experience of oppression and activism to academia, in order to emulate the principles of justice, fairness, and equity. In doing so, they work actively against reproducing- what for many- is an oppressive social institution. Rae's research focus on embodied oppression is informed by their own experience of living in a queer body and mind. Their experiences working with a diverse range of people highlighted the commonality of damage, pain, and disembodiment. This encouraged them to bring their experience as a movement educator and somatic psychotherapist to both their practise and their teaching.

[Marisela Gomez](#): **Community activist, mindfulness practitioner, and author of [Race, Class, Power and Organizing in East Baltimore](#).**

- As a scholar, activist, public health practitioner and healer, Marisela's work focuses on intentionally rebuilding fragmented communities. Not only are our cities purposely divided, but that physical segregation is mapped on our bodies and reflected in our understanding of who we are. Marisela uses the practice of mindfulness to help understand, transform, reconnect, recollect and heal this fragmentation internally as well as externally.



[Leo Mufasa Murray](#): **Changemaker, sustainability consultant, [blog writer](#), activist and visionary thought leader in Aotearoa.**

- Leo (he/his) is a recovering, disembodied activist who graduated with 3 degrees in “how fucked up the world is and no solutions.” His journey for solutions led him to the umbrella of permaculture as a permaculture teacher and designer, with a sustainability consultancy that specializes in waste minimization. He uses the waste platform to draw attention to causes, not symptoms, and utilises workshops as well as storytelling to create change. Leo references [Deep Ecology and the Work that Reconnects](#) as a way that he is learning to inform his activism, from a place of embodiment.

Questions Explored in the Discussion:

- When did you notice that your body or your ideas did not meet a societal norm or belief, and when did you find the language for it in your journey as an activist?
- How do you balance self-care, and growing within the context of the work that you are doing?
- What advice can you give to experienced and developing activists to take up space- both in embodiment practices and in the world, in order to be amazing individuals?
- How do you feel in your body when you are ready to take on activist work, versus how do you feel when you need self-care?
- How do we institute self-care and embodiment as a norm, not just a practice for the self as an individual?
- What is your culture? What does your culture serve and center? Does it serve life? Do your politics serve the wellbeing of all?

Resources

❖ **Website:** [Healing Racism through Waking Up with Marisela Gomez](#); [Baltimore Mindfulness Community](#)

❖ **Recommended Books:**

- *Pleasure Activism: the politics of feeling good* by Adrienne Maree Brown
- *My Grandmother's Hands: Racialized trauma and the pathway to mending our hearts and bodies* by Resmaa Menakem
- *The Queer and Transgender Resilience Workbook: Skills for navigating sexual orientation and gender expression* by Anneliese A. Singh
- *Embodied Resistance: Challenging the norms, breaking the rules* by Chris Bobel and Samantha Kwan
- *Diverse Bodies, Diverse Practices: Toward an inclusive somatics* by Don Hanlon Johnson
- *Oppression and the Body: Roots, resistance, and resolutions* by Christine Caldwell and Lucia Bennett Leighton
- *The Body is Not an Apology* by Sonya Renee Taylor
- *Body Wars: Making peace with women's bodies (an activist's guide)* by Margo Maine
- *Care Work: Dreaming disability justice* by Leah Lakshmi
- *Embodied Social Justice* by Rae Johnson



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