

Ep #251: Understanding and changing prejudice and racism through the body with Luis Mojica and team

Full Episode Transcript



With Your Host

Simone Grace Seol

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Hey, I'm Simone Seol, and *I Am Your Korean Mom*. This podcast is going to offer you unconventional marketing wisdom, and I'm going to push you to be more authentic and uncensored. And, guess what? It's all going to be a ton of fun. Let's go.

Hey, friends. Recently, I was invited to my dear friend Luis Mojica's podcast to talk about something that I haven't spoken about a lot on this podcast, although I have a little bit the past, which is about racism, and how our bodies carry it and how we can somatically engage ourselves to change it.

And I want to invite you to listen to this episode, which was originally published in Luis' podcast, just called *Holistic Life Navigation*; highly recommend. And I kind of want to read his invitation, verbatim, that he posted, because I was like, I can't say it better.

So, Luis says, "Anti racism without the body may be futile because it's just a concept, a performance, an identity. I can claim to not be racist. I can want to not be racist. But what about my body? Over-couplings are somatic and unconscious. We don't even know they're there until we become embodied to them. We have to feel for them.

Healing racism through a somatic lens is potent and takes you directly to the root of, you know, which is what's the story your body tells about another body because of their color or features? When my body braces because of your skin tone, eye shape, hair texture, or other physical characteristics, there is an over-coupling associated with bodies of your culture. That doesn't make you a racist, it's the nature of having a body.

And if we only speak about being racist, without also identifying parts of our bodies that hold bias against people, we'll be going in circles for generations. So, Simone," he's referring to me, "Posted about the offense of telling someone that you don't 'see' color. I wanted to go deeper into the subject and explore over-couplings, so I invite her onto the podcast to discuss this with me and my team.

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I see your color. I see your difference. I see your beauty, and I can feel parts of my body responding to you based on developmental programming, my own experiences, and even what I inherited from my ancestors. That's not mine, but it lives in me and may affect how I relate to you. The shame of bias often prevents us from healing and releasing racist tendencies, beliefs and actions.

So, come listen so you can learn how to have big conversations like this, while staying rooted in love and connecting around the shared desire to release anything inside of us that prevents us from connecting with another person.”

Luis Mojica: Okay, everybody, really happy to welcome back to the show, Simone Grace Seol. Thank you for being here, my friend.

Simone Seol: I'm so happy to be back. Thank you.

Luis: And this is the first time that the *HLN* team podcast has a guest, so it's also really cool. We have Camille and Marika here, as well.

Simone: Honored.

Luis: Yeah, really, really happy for this. So, this came about like a lot of things in my life, where I'll read something someone writes, or something they do with their work and I get inspired, I reach out to the person, and a dialogue is created. And if there's more nuance that he needs to happen we do a podcast.

So, Simone was talking about this, the phrase, the statement, “I don't see color”, and how that can be, I know, extremely offensive to people. And I'm always curious, like, what propels the statement? Where does it come from? What does it mean? And I played with the statement myself and a lot of different ways throughout my life.

And I've come to learn so much about race and prejudice and racism itself through the lens of over-couplings, which we're going to talk about in a

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moment. And Camille and I have wanted to talk more about this publicly and teach it but it just hasn't happened till now. So, thank you for the post Simone, to kind of like, inspire me. Because I wrote to Simone, I commented. I said, "Oh, yeah, I totally see color. It's the over-couplings that I'm aware of now."

And you were like, "I've no idea what you're talking about." And I said, "Awesome, let's do a podcast." You just dove in and we got you on the schedule really quick. So, that's what we're going to start with. I thought, well, we could start, by doing first, Camille, you and I could riff just some education around over-coupling, racism, prejudice, first.

So, people listening kind of even understand what that term means. So, Simone understands what that means. And then we can all have a conversation about our experience with the statement, this this term, however we want to go with that. So, I'll actually let you start, and then I'll add to it.

Camille Leak: Yeah. So, when I think about over-couplings as it relates to race is with my work, within diversity, equity, inclusion. And a lot of it's related to bias, bias training. And I find a lot of people don't want to understand their biases. So, they're like, "What? I'm not racist, I can't possibly have biases."

And it's because a lot of us conflate bias, prejudice, and discrimination into being one thing. Now, those three things are absolutely related, but they're different. And in my opinion, it's important that we understand the difference.

Biases are, in my opinion, over-couplings. These are the automatic associations we have related either to race or other forms of identity. Just things that we have been conditioned with. Doesn't make us good or bad, right or wrong, it's just the way our minds work.

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And then the way I think about prejudice is the rationalization or the justification of those biases. And then discrimination is when we act on those. That's the preferential treatment that we give to others based on the prejudice that's rooted in those biases. So, that's how I think about over-couplings, again, as it relates, not just to race, but just all forms of identities. The automatic associations we have related to them.

Simone: When you say over-coupling, you mean the coupling between ideas and identities, or ideas and maybe appearance. Like, certain things unconsciously get coupled with and anchored into the unconscious mind with other ideas and things. That's what you mean?

Luis: I'm looking at Camille.

Camille: Yes. So, somatically, when we talk about over-couplings, the way I like to describe it is automatic associations. The things we reflexively associate with something. In this case, we're talking specifically about identities, but it could be anything.

Like, I could have a physical reaction to the smell of cinnamon, because something happened in my life when cinnamon was present. So, now, my body always responds as if there's threat present when cinnamon is there.

So, that's just over-couplings, in general. But yeah, we absolutely have over-couplings related to identities, a whole bunch of them that come from different places.

Simone: In my world, we call them “unconscious anchors”. Same thing. I now get that we're talking about the same thing. Yeah, got it.

Luis: That's right. And I think what's so important about if we hear unconscious anchor and over-coupling... Over-coupling's a somatic term, particularly. Because the understanding of the subconscious through somatic lens is the subconscious is the body. So, even when you have that

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term “unconscious anchor”, we can notice, oh, there's an anchor, it goes into a place, right?

And that's what's so important about this discussion, that I think makes the recovery work with racism so difficult, is it becomes so cognitive. And if we understand exactly what you just said, Camille, if we see bias as a somatic experience, then what we get is, oh, through my development, even what I inherited from my lineage, there's a felt sense, a felt constriction, that happens when a certain person is in front of me. That's huge.

Because your mind might be like, “I know that person's safe”. And your body might be having a constriction to them, and then you behave from that constriction. That's where things like, performative allyship and saying things like, “I don't see color,” reflexively.

Marika, you've given me examples of some people that you've seen it, in spaces. All that gets birthed from those somatic... Places in the bones that are bracing against an individual because of unconscious bias, or over-coupling.

I think if we kind of start with that piece, of how different that is from actually being racist, that feels very important to me. Because most people won't even enter this territory of discussing these things, like you said, Camille, because they're so afraid if they find an unconscious bias, or an over-coupling, in response to another race, or color, or sex, or whatever it is, that they're automatically this horrible, terrible person.

They don't even know they're doing it. So, if we create space there, there's so much more we can accomplish with actually laying them out.

Simone: Everything that you said is so fucking important, and so true. And you don't even have to be an expert in somatic stuff to affirm that this is literally true. So, many research studies have proven, time and time and again, that these over-couplings exist. Or whatever, I'm going to keep calling them anchors, because it's confusing to my brain.

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But people of color have over-couplings that are negative towards their people of their own color, because it's the programming that we're fed again and again. And so, if you think that you're immune from this, then it's something to just think about.

[0:09:40.7 Camille:] There're some research studies you can go look up, because ain't nobody immune. Right?

Luis: Well, that's the humanity of it, right there. It's like you said, no one's immune to it. There's an innocence to unconscious bias that actually, if you can tap into that, you can so deeply work with what's in your body in response to other people. Without the shame that would have you fawn or do performative allyship, and whatever else.

Simone: I think when you double down on your innocence, there's a point where I think it becomes malicious.

Luis: Tell me what that means to you. What would that look like?

Simone: Innocence is obviously innocent. I think when you want to keep defending your innocence, when presented with the opportunity to think differently about it. And I think it's 100% connected to what you're saying, which is that it is a really hard thing, cognitively, for people to wrestle with the threat of 'am I a bad person?' Right? And so, I get it. I get that defensiveness.

And I have seen so many people just be on a campaign to prove that their innocence is innocent, and that they don't want to look at, 'oh, that wasn't my intention,' but what's happening there, anyways.

Luis: That's my point. I think for me, and I'm curious what everyone else think, the innocence is like a vehicle to not have the shame that would keep you from going there. And then when you're there, you can actually bring these things out and unfurl them, and bring them to the surface and work with them consciously.

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Simone: That's a beautiful way to put it.

Luis: But if there's a double innocence piece, if the innocence is used to justify behavior, we're talking about a different thing.

Simone: Innocence is used as a justification to not get curious about your blind spot.

Luis: Correct. Correct, that's different.

Simone: Which so many people hide behind. I'm going to put my own fucking family on the line and say, I have exasperating conversations with my own husband, who is in so many ways very aware and a very intelligent person, but who keeps having these fucking debates with me about how women are basically equal to men, and they have nothing to complain about in society.

I mean, I said it kind of in an exaggerated way, he doesn't say it quite like that. But basically, women's rights are now equal to men's rights. And he comes tumbling down. First of all, why would you not just fucking listen to what I have to say? Because I'm a woman, and you're fucking not. I just get so angry about it.

And so, that's where I think you're kind of being an asshole if you're not just like, "Okay, let me listen to you. Because I have no idea what it's like to be a woman." You know what I mean? I have a somatic expression to him.

Luis: Well, I swear, I wish he was here because I would be so curious. Like, what happens in your body when you're telling Simone she's wrong? I get so curious. What's the bracing? What's the expression that makes him not want to go there to hear your experience? Right?

Simone: He's not going to answer that question because he's a Capricorn and he doesn't... It's going to fundamentally violate his sense of being...

Luis: And he doesn't feel those things.

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Simone: Feel into his body. Which is part of the problem.

Luis: I'm curious, Marika, because of your experience being adopted into a white family, where are you going with all this?

Marika Malea: I probably won't be throwing them under the bus, but it's definitely... A lot of the over-couplings that I had are ones that I think white people have. That I had to unlearn as an adult. Not that in my family it was like diversity was wrong, there just wasn't any. There wasn't any in the town that I lived in, the school that I lived in, like the friends, the family of boyfriends, teachers.

And so, I had to really build capacity for difference, basically. And that was not with my family. Do you know what I mean? They're open and loving people. But diversity and the "I don't see color" stuff was very present growing up, from a lot of people. Because that was sort of the 'I'm not racist', at the time. In the 80s, that's what you said. You didn't say, "I'm not racist," it was like, "I don't see color. We're just the same." Even though maybe you aren't being treated the same. Right?

It was interesting to grow up and then go out into the world and see how the world worked, actually worked. And thinking and feeling more comfortable in White spaces than I did... And feeling really uncomfortable and non-White spaces. Which, it's hard to find around here, but I did find them. This is a very much a lifelong journey of learning.

And yeah, I think I did have a very binary sort of outlook on that, where it's like people of color can't be racist. That type of thing. Like, in my mind. And then I went in the world and I met people. And it was like, "Oh, I have prejudices. I have biases. I reflexively think things when I see a certain type of person." I have more tools now; I'd be curious about where that came from.

I'm glad that we have practices where we actually get to uncouple, so that doesn't have to happen anymore. It's been a journey.

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Luis: I'd love that you're giving the experience, like Simone said it earlier too, that people of color have it against people of color. I'm glad you're bringing that experience because I just find that really important. Coming from Puerto Rican family, it was the same thing. One side of the family where people of color, one side were what we would call "White".

And so, they often would remove themselves from other darker Puerto Ricans or ones that weren't as assimilated. Even within that Latino community, there was still this bias and over-coupling based on what they inherited about their own lineage, their own bloodlines.

I think that's why I love bringing it through a somatic lens. Because we start to lose identity, and we start to notice everybody is really vulnerable to an over-coupling. Based on how they're developed and what they see in the culture they bathe in.

So, I get really curious about, again, we're talking about race, specifically, and that's what inspired me with Simone's post. But if we bring the somatic piece in, how does that shift our ability to sit with these conversations in ourselves and with each other?

Simone: The first thing that I think is so powerful about it is, I think, for a lot of people, it gives them a way to interact with it without shame, right? And it's not personalized. It's not an attack on who I am, on my character, my values. "Oh, if it's just a somatic thing that's happening in my body, it got over-coupled in my unconscious mind through all these systemic issues. I can deal with that."

That's different from saying, "You're a racist. You're a bad person. So, I think the more that you're talking, and I'm listening to you, the more I'm realizing, wow, this frame is so important. So, that people can start to divide one thing from another. And do something so difficult, which is to talk about this without shame getting in the way, every single step of the way.

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Which just makes everything so slow, and is counterproductive because it gets people arguing when we could be learning from each other. Right? I think that piece is really big.

Luis: Yeah, I just want to feel that. I want to kind of repeat it back for the listeners and for us. Just to hear that, I love the difference between when you identify with the state in your body, and especially when it's a state you don't want, like a bias against somebody or a racial bias against someone that's in your body, you identify with that, and there's instant shame.

And it's from that mechanism of shame that people double down and justify things and try to not touch it. Or, again, the performative allyship, which is really just fawning. They fawn their way.

Simone: You're right, I'm so sorry. I'm such a terrible person. What can I do to do?

Luis: Exactly. Exactly. They're like, "I suck. I'm White. I'm disgusting." That doesn't make people feel better.

Simone: "I'm going to get on my knees." Yeah.

Luis: Marika has said many times how uncomfortable that is for her. And so, it's good for people to hear that because telling someone you hate yourself and you're filled with shame doesn't make them feel better about what they're experiencing, from you or the world. It's about, as Simone just said, without the shame, you can actually...

I mean, I've sat in front of so many people of color in these conversations and told them things like, when I lived in New York City, and I was on the subway and a certain kind of Black man came on the subway train, my body constricted. My mind loved that person, my body constricted.

I grew up with a television that was on 12 hours a day, and in the 90s, that particular looking Black man was constantly on a television set with the word "criminal". And so, my body reflexively does that. I don't feel shame

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about that because I didn't invent that. I'm not upholding that. I don't justify it. I understand where it comes from, then I let it kind of die in me. Which feels really good; as much as it's able to.

And then on the contrary, I'll see a guy, a Black man, get on the subway and I'll feel openhearted because I dated a Black guy. So, that's another over-coupling. And so, there's positive over-coupling with this kind of looking man.

So, it's like you start to lose even race at a certain point, because you're understanding it's this visual imprinted into my nervous system; conditioning, systemic racism, these things that really have been passed on to us.

Simone: At some level, it's almost so simple as to be Pavlovian, right?

Luis: That's exactly what it is.

Simone: right. There has also has been research studies; the same ones that prove that we all have unconscious racist over-couplings; that said if you take the same person, it could be a person of color, who was just shown in a study that they, themselves, have unconscious bias against people with the same skin color.

And if you were to show them images of super successful, admired people of color again and again, just like flashing in front of them, "Here's Obama. Here's Oprah. Here's Beyonce. Here's this scientist." Then they take the same test three minutes later, they will show a different... Their over-coupling in the brain has gotten rejiggled.

Luis: What we actually call it now, is actually a new over-coupling. So, there's the traumatic over-coupling, which is when you brace against. And you're talking about, they're "rewired" with a positive over-coupling now.

Simone: You don't call it rejiggling?

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Luis: No, I love that, though.

Simone: That's not the scientific term?

Luis: I do think the brain is rejigging. But that's important. That's important for people to hear.

Simone: Which is why we talk about representation matters. And I'm going to be honest, for a long time, I didn't get that. I was like, "We should all be a meritocracy." I was stupid. And I at some point, I was like, "Oh, wait, that's not a thing." And then I realized, "Oh, this is what representation..." Because it literally changes people's brain wiring and body wiring.

Luis: Literally, yeah.

Simone: Just depending on what we fucking see.

Luis: It's literally that simple. That's amazing. What do you thinking over there, Camille? I see some "Camilling" going on.

Camille: Oh, just lots of things. But gosh, what am I thinking? Oh, we're actually going to drop into the body. But what am I feeling, right now? It really is, at least for me, this idea that a critical part of this work is many of us constrict around talking about over-couplings related to identities or bias.

Because eventually, we're going to be talking about systems of oppression, racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, whatever. And those are forms of trauma. And most of us don't have the capacity to be with trauma, other people's trauma. But we really don't even have the capacity to deal with our own trauma.

So, if I don't have the capacity to be with my own trauma, if I constrict or become overwhelmed with my own either personal trauma, my generational trauma, my community trauma, I certainly can't have space for either your personal trauma or your generational trauma or your community trauma.

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And I think that's a part a lot of us don't talk about. Like, when we talked about with somatics during this conversation, it's about capacity. Do I first have the capacity to be with my own trauma? So, I can't do for somebody else, but I can do it for myself.

Luis: See, that's so important to me. Because, again, like you said, another reason why somatics are kind of like... I don't even know. To me, it's required, as dictatorial as that sounds. It feels like it has to be required in these conversations.

Because if I'm in my mind, trying to figure all this out, I'm going to dissociate from this body. So, I want to be an ally or I want to be someone that's helpful or I want to expunge my own internal landscapes that I'm not aware of. And if I don't have the capacity, I'm going to burn out. I'm not going to be able to go there.

So, I kind of wonder, for any of you, a personal answer. What has it been like to be in a situation where you're trying to do some kind of work around discrimination of any kind, and you notice you don't have capacity for it? How do you hold that space without ignoring it completely forever, and honoring where your body is and not feeling shame for it? If you do. I'm curious.

Simone: I just explode at my husband. I just scream at him.

Luis: Marika is like me too. Is that true for you, Marika? Is that how you handle it?

Marika: I mean, I don't scream, but that's just because I live with my in-laws. I'm so lucky. My reflexive person that I firehose at is definitely him.

Luis: How does he absorb that? How does he handle that?

Marika: He goes and plays video games for 18 hours.

Luis: That's his reflexive person?

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Simone: Oh wow, is this [0:23:30.0 word?], my husband.

Marika: Right, exactly. They're probably playing the same thing together. All the husbands are at night, right?

Luis: They're all going to autoregulate and find safety in the video game, after you two exploded on them.

Marika: Yeah, exactly. "Oh, you've got a fight response lady, too?" "Yeah, yeah."

Luis: Hey, Camille, bring me some Virgo vibes. Let's the Virgo ground this at bit. How do you hold this when you're like, "In my mind, I believe that person matters. I love them. My body's not there, yet?" Because that's a really controversial idea to bring up, right? The body's not where the mind wants to be, yet.

Camille: For me, that's even slightly different than not having capacity. So, let me answer that part first. What do I do when my mind loves this person, but my body's not there, yet? I can have unconditional love for a being, and I don't have to be in relationship with that being. And I'm perfectly okay with that. I guess the sort of the corny way to say it is like, let's agree to disagree.

And I'm in a place where I'm perfectly fine walking away from a relationship because we're just not in alignment, we're not in capacity. It has been really, really supportive for me to transition from a space of needing to convince or persuade, to just observe.

And then with that observation, I can decide or assess the dynamics of our relationship. And whether that's a person I'm talking to face to face or a company I'm engaging with or who I'm watching on TV, that's how I approach it in that situation.

But if I am in a situation where I feel myself getting overwhelmed when engaging across difference, it really is helpful... I mean, I'd probably

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describe it more as a flight response. I go straight into, "That's interesting, say more," sort of in a passive aggressive way. I think that's my natural response. "That's interesting, say more," to the point where I know it begins to annoy them.

Luis: You exhaust them with questioning.

Camille: Yes, that's usually my approach in those situations.

Luis: It's interesting. As I'm hearing all this input, this question arises, and so I'm going to give us like an example. Especially, because we were originally centering race here. So, let's say there is a White person and a Black person. Let's make this super simple, okay?

And the White person's like, "I have to get over my unconscious bias so I can be in relationship with this person," this Black person, right? That's their goal. They work together, they live together, whatever the situation is. Two things come to mind. One, is it okay just to realize you never will? Can we go there? Let's go there, first.

Camille: Boom, already there. I tell people in my bias training, like we were talking about earlier, let's take a stigma away. I've got biases, a whole bunch of them. And guess what, y'all? I'm not really trying to put any energy into getting rid of them. Instead, I'm putting energy into being aware of them. And I don't always have to act on them.

Could I uncouple all my biases? Yes, or I could just be aware of them. Because there are actual situations where my biases don't negatively impact somebody. And it's perfectly fine to have my biases and my over-couplings.

And there are situations where if I were to act on my biases, or my over-couplings, they could negatively impact people. So, that's why I want to have the awareness. So, I can distinguish between the two situations.

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Luis: So, yours is redirect the energy of trying to exorcise this from your body. You direct from that, which might never happen in this lifetime, to the awareness. Because what you just said was beautiful. I can have the bias and I don't have to act on it, which means it's not going to hurt you if I have the awareness coming out.

And if I don't have the awareness, what I'm also hearing is, if I'm aware that I have them, and then I do something that rubs against someone the wrong way or hurts their feelings, I'm not going to be defensive or shocked that I hurt your feelings. I'm going to be like, "Oh, yeah, they're in there. It just came out. I'm so sorry that came out. Let's talk about it."

Camille: Yes, yes.

Luis: Yeah, I love that. What about you, Simone?

Simone: I think a part of that, that I observe, is that a lot of it, the effort to eradicate your own biases, to scrub your consciousness and body clean of these responses, I think it might be coming from a kind of a fawning place. Where it's like, "I want everyone around me to be comfortable and like me and think that I'm a good person."

Which kind of kind of ignores a reality in which we actually are all very different from each other. And of course, we have so much in common as humans, everything. But I think it's a paradox. We are just as different from each other as we have things in common.

And every single person in this room is never going to really understand what it's like to be fully Korean. And I will never understand fully what it's like to be Puerto Rican. I'm sorry, I don't know where the rest of y'all from. You know what I mean? And it's okay.

I think I am personally way more stressed out by someone else of a different cultural background who feels the need to constantly affirm that they're bias free and they get me. That's a lot more stressful than someone

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who's saying, "You know what? I'm never going to fully understand your experience. I might say things that are off sometimes."

It's not like, "Well, deal with." You can be like, "Yeah, I'm sorry about that. And also, I respect that we have different experiences and that we might rub up against each other."

Luis: I love this. I love that. Because we had this podcast a while back about safe spaces, and how triggering goes. Marika was saying, if she's in a space where someone's like, "This is a safe space," she immediately has this feeling in her body like, 'ooh, what are we not allowed to say? What are we supposed to say? How are we supposed to act?'

And really, what you're saying, it's like really a puritanical... Funny enough, it's really a colonial expression of this puritanical nature of, 'I've expunged all the sin me and I'm completely clean now.'

Simone: It's very Christian, right?

Luis: Yeah, it's very Christian. It's just never going to happen. I like that we're hearing, and people listening to this, that if you go up to someone, again, you fill in the blank with whatever the discrimination is of your choice at the moment. But if we're biased, I'll say.

When you go up to someone and you have a bias with them, it's okay that that bias is there. What's not okay, is if you're throwing it on them and then you're defending it. That's what I hear us saying. Which I think is new for a lot of people to hear, because they think to do really good work, social justice work, to be in a right relationship, they have to just exorcise all this unconscious stuff from their body. And it's really just not even possible. It's like a pyramid scheme.

Camille: I think that's why, to sort of take it back to the original comment, "I don't see color. I don't see race," can be so triggering. Yes, you do. You know how I know you see race and color? Because I see race and color.

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I'm not asking you not to see race and color. I'm asking you to see, that you see race and color.

And when you see it and you're starting to act on it, just pause and question, would I still be acting this way if this person was a different color or a different race? Again, going back to that curiosity.

I was doing a session and a person really generously shared, after we were doing some bias training, "Oh, I realized that if there's a White person," and this is a White man, "If there's a White person walking around my neighborhood that I don't know, I don't really respond. If it's a Black person walking around my neighborhood that I don't know, there is this sort of reflex in my body. Now, it's never been to the point where I've questioned them or called the police. But I can understand the origins of that."

So, now that he has that awareness, it'll probably never get to that point, because he's willing to acknowledge it. It's not about trying to 'I should never have that reaction when I see a Black person I don't know in my neighborhood. But because I can witness that, I can stop myself from acting on it and getting to a point where it can actually cause that person some harm.

Luis: See, what you said is important. Because, again, "I don't see color," okay. "No, I see color," then part two, what's over-coupled with the color I see? And that's what I never hear being discussed in any of these conversations. What are the unconscious meanings at physical, somatic, reflexive, and associations, with this color, with this face shape, with this sexuality? Whatever the expression is.

That's what lights me up about this conversation. Because like Simone said earlier, when you realize it's something your body's doing, it's not like you're intentionally doing it, it takes the shame away so you can go there. Not take the shame away so you can ignore it and be like, "I'm free of it."

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But it takes the shame away so you have the capacity to even touch into a part of yourself that would do something that would even appall you. And I think that's the humility there. "There are parts of me that would appall me if they come out, or do when they come out. And that's part of me having an unconscious. That's part of being human."

So, can we build capacity for these rubs, if we're conscious of them and not defending them? I think that's the difference.

Simone: Luis has taught me so much about somatics, just from me being in his world. But the first person who even taught me that this exists, and the first person who got me to open my eyes to it, was Resmaa Menakem. Whose book I read, *My Grandmother's Hands*, a while ago. And one thing that he said in the book that really stayed with me, is that when you have these unconscious over-couplings...

I guess that's redundant, because over-coupling is unconscious. Anyways, whenever you have these over-couplings, and let's say you're a White person and you have certain ideas about what Black people are like. If your body is automatically reacting in a way that is reflective of seeing another human being as a little bit more dehumanized than you, then you can't have that in your body without you also dehumanizing a piece of yourself. Right?

So, I probably butchered his words, but that's how I understood it. And that's why this is a lot less about 'you versus me', this people against that people, than it is about reconciling our own humanity within ourselves. And when you learn to see people of other genders, other races, other whatever, as humans, you don't even hold your own unconscious biases as a pronouncement of how evil and bad and sinful you are.

That creates more human connection with yourself, with your body, which, by extension, automatically creates more human connection with others. I think that's a really important piece.

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Luis: That is spot on. One of the questions I wrote down that I want to ask everyone was, who are we doing this for? And you just answered it with that. I want to hear what Marika says after I say this. Because I think when we go into this from a fawning place, from like you said, Simone, "I want to be liked by everybody," which is really a codependent place.

If we're going to that codependent place, I'm doing it for you. I want you to know that I'm curious. So, you know I'm not racist, or whatever it is. But when you're doing it for yourself, can I humanize myself by being with all these differences in me? Then, when I see the difference in you, I'm not as startled by it. I've been working with that from me.

So, there's the idea, cognitively, I'm doing this for the other people. I'm doing this for marginalized people. I personally don't think that's a good way to show up to it from. Because if it's for them, I'm also posturing them as needing me to do it.

Whereas, they're already free in my eyes, in their own body. I don't know what they're going through. I'm not free if I'm the one constricted by the prejudice and bias. I want to free myself, and then I'll show up to you without all that burden that I'm going to end up throwing on you, somehow.

Where do you go with that part, Marika? I'm curious, because you and I talk about those kind of things a lot.

Marika: I totally agree. What was coming up for me was how, especially since you'd said fawning, was all the tap dancing I did for white folks so that I could fit in. And then got out into the world and all the tap dancing I did for people of color so that I could fit in. And not ever feeling like I belonged in either camp.

And the more work that I do... Most of mine was my own biases and accepting my own humanity. The more it is like 'I'm freeing myself, so I can belong to myself.' And I don't have to think about belonging to those other things. I just get to be.

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Luis: That's just so powerful to me. Like, "So I can belong to myself," that's so gorgeous.

Marika: I also wanted to ask everybody... I would say this space with Luis and Camille and Evan, and our guests, my husband, and my best friend, are the only people I feel comfortable talking to about this type of stuff. In my progressive group of friends this would not get talked about. Because we wouldn't want to have to shine light on the dark parts, right?

And so, I'm wondering how we can encourage people to create sort of a... I don't know if it's a group or if it's like... Who do you guys talk to? And how can we encourage people to have these conversations, with people they're safe with or they feel safe with?

Luis: I think that's a great thing for us to play with. Because people listening might be getting really inspired, and they're like, "But where do I do this?" And one thing I saw happen a lot in 2020, was people suddenly going into other cultures they never really cared about to try to do this. And then, those other cultures were like, "Get away. We don't need you here suddenly."

So, how do I, if I want to be in a diverse group of people, I want to play with this, how do I do that where everyone's consenting and excited to do that? And I'm curious what y'all think about that. For people listening, in particular, who don't have access to a group.

Simone: I would join Luis's community.

Luis: That is a really good answer.

Simone: This is why people love me. I just go around and market on everybody's behalf.

Marika: Insert membership, ding.

Luis: Ding, ding, ding. [HolisticLifeNavigation.com](https://www.HolisticLifeNavigation.com).

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Simone: But listen, there's a kernel of seriousness in that. Which is that, listen, if you want to get better at this, invest in it. That's one of the ways you take leadership, and being a locus of change in the communities that you're in. I

t's awesome to consume things for free and to get as much out of it for free as possible. But also, it's worth investing in. I want to say the burden of this falls more heavily on the leaders than the others. So, right now, as a leader of a sizable community, I'm thinking how... It's funny, it started as a joke, very recently, on Facebook.

Very recently, I posted, "Guys, I am now a new convert to cold showers. I'm really into cold showers. And I used to hate them, but they make me feel so amazing." And all of these people in my little Facebook community were like, "I'm going to take cold showers, too. Simone is a cold shower influencer." It became a joke, like, now I'm an influencer.

But anyways, you probably are an influencer in whatever community you are. Right? And especially so, if you run programs and courses. I think the burden on those of you, those of us, who are leaders, it's larger. And so, if you want to lead, invest in this education.

You will meet like-minded people. You will meet teachers who will point to better ways of understanding ourselves and relating to each other from the somatic lens, which is so valuable. I think I know enough to appreciate it deeply. I'm not an expert, and I want to learn more too. And I am going to invest. And the ripple out effects from #influencers, it's real.

Luis: I want to piggyback on that. That's really important for me, especially with the somatic piece. Because when your body, when you have an attunement to your body... We go into this world and we're all little tuning forks. So, the way I'm vibrating out, it hits the tuning fork of the body next to me.

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And so, I loved what you said. Everywhere you go you're an influencer; it's really true. You ride the elevator with someone. That 30-second elevator ride, your body is telling a story to those bodies and vice versa. So, when Marika said, "I belong to myself, in myself," that amount of subtleness and awareness is so good to stand next to in a grocery store line.

You don't have to be an entrepreneur or a therapist or running a large group like we do. You can literally just be going to the store. And the person you look at, who's checking you out, he's checking out your groceries, the transference that happens, body to body, is like medicine.

And I've seen that happen so many times in my life, that I've experienced from others, that I've been able to gift to others just by being present to what's coming up in my body. So, I love that. What would you say, Camille? Where would you go with the question Marika posed?

Camille: Argh, I swear. It can be difficult. So, I'm going to answer this in somewhat of a roundabout way. When you go somewhere and you're asking these questions and you get shut down, don't stop. Because it's probably going to be, more likely, you're going to be in spaces that don't have capacity for this kind of discourse than spaces that do.

But use that as a learning opportunity. Begin to witness, "Oh, this person's past capacity. Not good or bad, but this person's past capacity. They don't have capacity for this question. Or they may not even have capacity for my presence."

Because I think, or at least what I've experienced or witnessed in a lot of people, they'll say things like, "But I want to learn. I went to this one thing, and I got shot down. And so, then I guess I have to stop." So, that would be my recommendation. Instead of stopping, use it as a learning opportunity.

And know that not one person or one organization is the end-all be-all for everything. Go to another one, try again. And just like anything and everything, I always tell people to start from the beginning. Google it. You

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don't even have to interact with people first. I mean, during COVID, how many of us learned how to make sourdough bread? Not because we asked anybody about it, but because we watched a YouTube video.

So, watch a video, read a book, watch a movie. If you haven't seen *Malcolm X* before, watch that. Watch *RuPaul's Drag Race*. Listen to those conversations. You can even start there and begin to witness some of these incubator spaces. You don't have to make it too complicated.

Luis: I love all that. And I wrote down "they don't have capacity for my presence." I love that. That's like, when people hear the word compassion, sometimes they think it means being a doormat. How much power is in that statement, "They don't have capacity for my presence?" So much more powerful than, "You should accept me." It's gorgeous, I love that.

You win. You win, big time every time you can hold that. It's so good. I want people to really hear that because this is, again, why I love somatics. Marika, when you're saying there's this very small circle that you feel safe doing this with, I'm hearing, I'm assuming, you tell me, it's probably because it's an embodied circle. There's heart connection; you're in your body. Is that what you experienced with that?

Marika: Yes, absolutely.

Luis: And that's so important to me, because one of the greatest, most powerful tools of colonization was the invention of race. And the invention of race is a dissociative invention. It removes body from place and makes an identity based on color. It's a dissociative concept that literally rips people from their bodies; literally and metaphorically.

So, it's interesting to talk about something that is rooted in dissociation, dissociates. To be able to feel into your body, to be body to body with the other, I guess what I'm saying is it paces itself. Because you notice your capacity. You feel when the activation's coming up. You know, "Oh, there's

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my bias. I learned that from 10 years watching the news. I get why don't want to hear this person talk right now.”

There's a different language and different way of connecting through the bodies, than if you're in your head trying to get to the ultimate goal of absolving yourself.

Simone: I think it's also a very, what I would call white supremacist, capitalist, industrialist, way of approaching this. As, “Okay, we have identified this problem. Let's analyze it and work really hard and hustle to solve it as fast as possible.” Whereas bodies have a different rhythm. And bodies know how to find that rhythm on their own, if we would stop interfering with our minds.

Luis: It's so true. It's so true. It's funny, it's amazing, because a lot of the intentions of trying to eradicate racism are colonial expressions, like what you just said. The people that are like, “We need to get rid of this. This is horrible. We're horrible.” It's such a dominant expression. It's not about the slowness. It's not about the capacity.

Simone: When you say, “It's so horrible,” it's really saying, “It's sinful, and we need to go be best friends, and we're all Puritans all over again.”

Luis: That's right. And I'm so pagan at heart, and so I'm always thinking, the compost is where it's at. It all exists, and it all gets really fertile from allowing it to exist in you. We have a couple minutes left. Camille, you were going to say something?

Camille: I was just going to say two things. One, when we do that, we swing from one end of the pendulum to the other. We go from saying or doing really sexist, racist, homophobic things to just saying, “You can't say or do that. Okay, so I won't say or do it.”

But the underlying sensation or motivation or whatever was feeding that behavior, it's still there. It's just being suppressed. But it's still coming out in

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ways. “But I'm not saying and doing those things anymore. So, it doesn't exist, right?” But if we can stay in that place of nuanced curiosity and slowness, we can really begin to tease that apart.

The other thing I was going to say, I really appreciate it, Luis, that you said the word “funny”. Because again, we say things like trauma healing can be fun. For me, noticing my biases can be really funny. There are situations where I'm dropping my kids off at school and another parent comes up and says, “Joe is having a birthday party, do you want to come?” Joey's parents are White, and I'm like, “I don't know.”

And then I find out, oh, you're queer. And I can literally feel my body go yeah, that'll be okay. Even though, cognitively, I know that I could still experience microaggressions or whatever, just because they're white and queer. But I can witness, in my body, go they're queer, they're probably going to be cool. It's all right. So, you can just begin to laugh at yourself.

Luis: It's so funny. I agree. The positive ones are funny, the negative ones can be funny, it can be such a joke because it's an invention and it's not real. You don't know the person in front of you. You don't know what it's going to be like. Yet, the body's like, I know, I know. I know. Because it really wants predictability.

And it's funny, when we go to a restaurant and you see a two-year-old, and they're like, “Umph, umph.” You're kind of laughing because you know nothing's actually going wrong, it's just their body's having a big reaction. That's what these over-couplings are. When we're in relationship with them, they don't become violence, When we're not in relationship with them, they can.

Simone: If you'll allow me, I just want to add one note that I think is maybe a little bit more sobering. Which I don't think this conversation would be complete, at least for me, without mentioning that there is an innocence to all of our innocence; it is our bodies doing things.

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But the status quo of our all of our bodies reacting in the ways that bodies should to the same systems, does harm more people than others. It inflict more violence on certain bodies and others. And I think, if you're on the end of benefiting from all of our unconscious over-couplings, by and large, although we all exist in intersections, I do think you have a greater responsibility to really think about this. And to be really good to really be curious.

Because our innocence has a cost, and it has real human cost every single day. And so, I think we can hold a paradox of seeing ourselves all as deserving of this kind of grace and unshamed way of looking at how our bodies do things. And also, the other end of the paradox, which is, and it all has a real cost so how do I become part of the change?

Luis: I wanted to highlight “responsibility”, because we've talked about this before, too. That that word can be so triggering for people because they think it means, I created this. what I love though, about responsibility, is literally the word suggests, my ability to respond to it.

It's incredible to think, “Okay, I didn't create this, I inherited it. It lives in my bones. Even if I'm benefiting from it, if I'm on the spectrum where it benefits me more, I inherited the system that helps me benefit. How do I respond to that?” That's where, to me, the power comes in. Like what you're saying.

Because as you're speaking I saw this incredible vision. It's like mycelium, a connection across the forest, of all these innocent, loving people with good intentions, that are recreating and reenacting trauma patterns that hurt other people every day, in direct relational ways. And in indirect ways, even from like, where they shop and what they buy.

And I think when I hear you, that's what I hear about this innocent piece, it is innocent in the body because you're unconscious to it. The result can be really hurtful or damaging or harmful to people. So, if you feel into that responsibility, and again, ability and capacity we can bring together, what's my capacity to respond to what I inherited?

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To me, that's very powerful and very practical for people. And so, the burden that a lot of people will feel when they hear that of, 'I have changed the whole thing myself? I don't know what... I don't know where...' No, you don't. You just have to do what you have the capacity to start responding to right now, based on your life and your experience.

Thank you, Simone, for being so open hearted. Having no idea what we're talking about, but actually knowing everything we were talking about. It was just different language.

Simone: What is an over-coupling? Is that a snack? I love it. I learned so much from you, thank you so much.

Luis: Oh, there's so much here. Y'all are amazing. Okay, my friends, y'all take care. Good to see you.

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