

HEALING IS OUR INHERITANCE

A guide for healing ourselves
and healing our movements



*16 Days Of Activism
December, 2022*

"I TOUCH MY OWN SKIN, AND IT TELLS ME
THAT BEFORE THERE WAS ANY HARM, THERE
WAS A MIRACLE."

- ADRIENNE MAREE BROWN

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Litany for Healing

By Carolyn Afroetry

Out of the depths of despair
I awake and rise like steam.
No longer broken like ceramic
Floor tiles.

No longer casting my face
Down like a shadow
No longer tripping in a
Puddle of tears.

I emerge from the depths of
A shattered history.
With gifts of contrition and
freedom.

Freedom to be who I want
to be.

Freedom to bask in the aura
of my femininity.

I lay down my weapons and
Shed this old skin.

I scrape the name, trauma from
The ruins and rewrite my story.

I hold the oracle of my sisters
stuck in the past tense and
chant healing songs
Embalm my skin with
nature's Shea butter and
Bask in this peace.

I draw visible and invisible
Lines of protection.

Burn impeding chaos and
Claim my feminine power.

I am not broken.

I am free

I am a woman!

INTRODUCTION

Why a healing guide for the African feminist?

The path of feminist activism has required a serious investment of our energies and yet for many women and gender-expansive persons, this has been and will be the only logical path. This path, the feminist activist's path, has seen countless warriors, in haste, carrying those who wish to save themselves and save others from a life of oppression. The same path has also belonged to dreamers who have glimpsed an existence that is better than the present, hurrying off to create or meet the worlds they have only touched in their daydreams.

This road that requires many of us to be our own saviors or the savior of communities constantly challenges us to a duel with systems and cultures that have been established for no other purpose but to subdue if not perish the longing to choose our own existence.

Being a feminist means constantly being locked in an ideological battle with age-old systems of power and oppression whose sole purpose is to fling us off the path to freedom.

This state of being in constant struggle with a violent white supremacist-hetero-sexist-capitalist patriarchy, to reclaim our human dignity, for many of us culminates into a breaking down of our bodies and spirits.

This is a reminder that we need times and places to heal. We need to tend to ourselves and to each other. We need sources of nourishment to refill the places from which we

constantly pour.

The feminist healing guide is Akina Mama wa Afrika's love offering for this year's 16 Days of Activism, a global campaign against Gender-Based Violence.

Filled with heart to heart stories of feminist activists that have healed themselves or work on healing others, this guide will be one of the wells from which you can draw, to fill your own pot.

We hope that it always reminds you, dear reader, that the ultimate goal of our beautiful activism is to transform ourselves and the world and that this, is not possible without healing justice.

We must heal individually and collectively. This is the priceless inheritance we would like to share with you and pass on to those who will come after us.

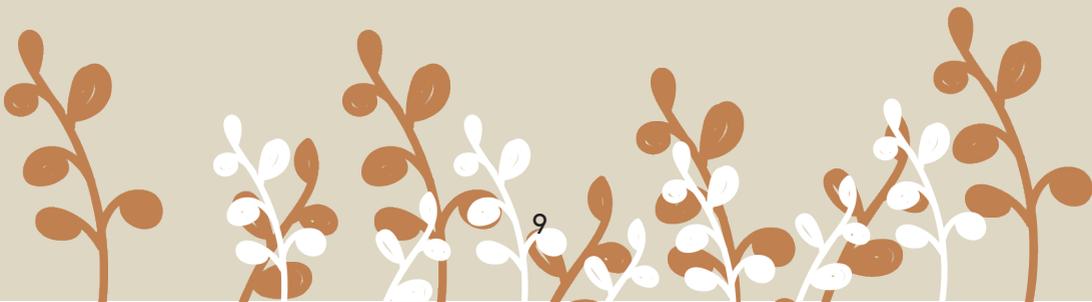
Stay. here.

Pause. Breathe.

Here, you will see that the revolution was intended to bring us healing and justice.

ABOUT AKINA MAMA WA AFRIKA

Akina Mama wa Afrika (AMwA) is a feminist Pan-African leadership development organization with headquarters in Kampala, Uganda. Our work is rooted in feminist principles and beliefs guided by the Charter of Feminist Principles for African Feminists which defines our leadership development program and movement-building activities. We envision a world in which African women are politically, economically, and socially autonomous and are champions of change in their lives and society. Our thematic areas of focus include; Women's Political Leadership, Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights, and Economic Justice and Climate Action. The organization's work is advanced through feminist and transformational leadership development, feminist research and knowledge building, and policy influence and movement building. AMwA provides strategic direction in key Pan-African networks including NGO CSW Africa, Solidarity for African Women's Rights, and the Gender Is My Agenda Campaign. AMwA also has consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council.



AUDRE LORDE'S QUESTIONNAIRE TO ONE'S SELF

Our feminist ancestor, Audre Lorde left us a gift. In her gift she challenges us to search for the parts of ourselves that have been mutilated and stolen by the systems and structures around us; our voices, our truth, our lived experiences and reclaim them.

Here is a questionnaire she left us to start us off.



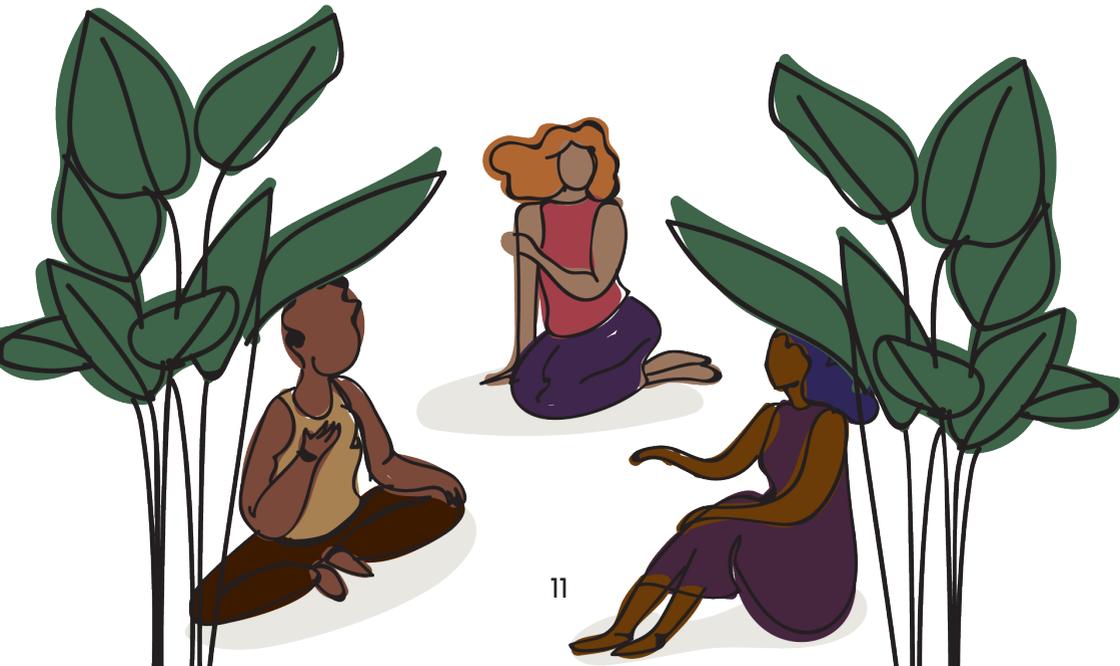
Adapted From "The Transformation of Silence into Language and Action," collected in The Cancer Journals and Sister Outsider and Other Essays.

2. STORIES

Here, we want to continue in the ageless tradition of our people on the African continent who connect and pass on wisdom through storytelling. These stories of healing are shared in the tradition of our mothers, grandmothers, aunties, friends, and gender non-binary persons who imparted wisdom and empathy through the weaving of beautiful stories, folktales, parables and proverbs that remain unforgettable and whose lessons transcend time.

This healing toolkit contains a compilation of stories and reflections that can serve as a guide to those who seek healing.

We hope that the stories you read here make you feel less lonely in your own struggles. We hope that the triumphs of our storytellers wake the victor in you and we hope that the wisdom that they impart, is an eternal light for your own path.



2.1 FEMINIST ACTIVISTS SHARE SHORT STORIES ON THEIR OWN HEALING

Acceptance As a Healing Practice

ROSE, KENYA

I grew up in a poor background and experienced ups and downs to complete high school. I loved school and my mum too loved school but she could not pay my school fees. I met this campus guy, an acquaintance since childhood. We became friends. He told me that he had a job and that if I accepted his advances he would clear my school fees. I accepted. Two months into the relationship, I got pregnant and became sick. As soon as this happened, the guy disappeared. I still went to school while pregnant and because I was among the top students, I had to register for my forthcoming final high school exams. I faced discrimination while at school from both some teachers and fellow students, I become an example of a bad mannered girl that was not well-bred. Worst of all I realized I now have a permanent condition to live permanently with. I lost my confidence and self esteem and saw myself as worthless.

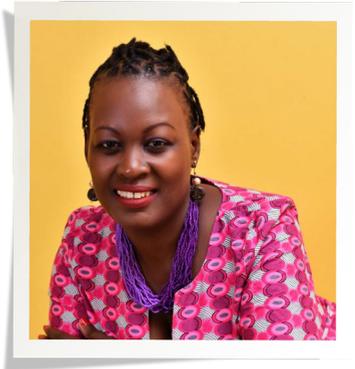
My healing story is accepting my condition, going over all that trauma and gaining my confidence and self esteem back for a long period of time. For me, it is something worth celebrating.



*Healing takes time, healing
requires being resolute*

EUNICE MUSIIME, UGANDA

The phrase comfort eating rang true for me especially during and post Covid -19. Burnout is real, and 2020 for me was the year I experienced extreme burn out. I turned to over eating to shake off unpleasant feelings of sadness and despair. Eating is an easy way to boost your mood because comfort food activates the reward centers of the brain. This prompts you to eat more of the pleasurable food, even if you're not hungry. Needless to say, the kilos were reflected. A mentor and friend proposed to me an ayurveda weight management programme. I signed up for the initial boot camp but also began to reorient my mind towards holistic healing. Reversing years of comfort eating takes time, so I am still on a healing journey, but more resolute.



*"Something has tried to kill
me and has failed"*

BUKY WILLIAMS, NIGERIA

I never understood the importance of healing as a feminist because I thought healing meant the fire, the anger that drove me, would die. I assumed I needed



that fire and that rage to keep me going. However, as I grow in my feminist journey, I realized from reading, learning and listening that building the kind of world I would like to see required centering my healing and the healing of others. And lo and behold the fire hasn't died, and I am learning to channel the rage to the right places.

The world and the systems of oppression keep us in a loop of pain, hurt, hunger, rage, and bitterness. These emotions wear on our bodies and our souls. And for those like me who have lost religion for many reasons, finding strength and solace became another journey. Healing justice reminded me that I needed to connect the unlearning with the journey back to self and love. My activism is also the path to giving and finding love in radical ways. To find and cultivate community. Healing individually and communally means we realize we aren't difficult to love. We are learning and relearning how to love ourselves and each other wholly and fully.

Healing means I am able to cultivate pockets of the world I want to see, and what a blessing that is. It makes the path easier because joy, rest, pleasure, rage and self-discovery become part of resisting the patriarchy and other systems of oppression. And that way, freedom lies.



*The Mind is an Extension of
the Body. Tend to Both with
Love*

MUBEEZI TENDA, UGANDA

At times, I feel that I am the muse for the popular TV show, "A series of unfortunate events." Naturally, during these times, my appetite for the pleasures of life will reduce and my will to live may only dangle



between my fingernails.

Having lived through many episodes and survived, these periods of trial have left a mantra in my mouth, "This too shall pass" plus some lessons of course.

The first is that we must practice constant mental hygiene as part of the care we extend to the body. We must care to nourish our minds on a diet balanced with fresh perspectives or dreams, if you may. As we stretch and exercise our bodies, we must not forget to put our minds through agility exercises to keep it in good shape. Just as we care to ensure that the wounds on our bodies receive ointments and protection so as not to fester from neglect, we must do the same to our mental wounds. We must take care of the mind as we do our bodies.

The second is the importance of self awareness, beyond knowing the what of who we are, we must further understand the "why" and "how" of who we are.

Lastly and most importantly, I have learned the importance of self compassion. Extending to myself the love, kindness, thoughtfulness and patience I am quick to extend to others.

My healing process now consists of rituals that I have formed over time. Solitude for a few hours while nursing a mug of herbal teas. Losing myself in a book to fill my mind with new thoughts and fresh perspectives or starting a new art project to expand my imagination.



Healing is Being Free

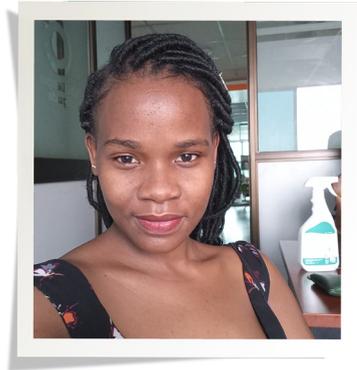
CLAIRE NAKATO, UGANDA

I like to believe that I am a natural feminist. My mindset and values had always been different since I was a kid. I have subconsciously opposed the patriarchy.

Coming from a conservative family with a “see me, my child is the best” mom, the patriarchal system is still embedded in me – I feel the cultural whispers saying, “but a man is the man, you have to bend”.

In my healing journey, I have had to accept myself and my beliefs first but of course after being hurt.

For me, healing is when something makes you so comfortable you have the biggest urge to listen and grow. Healing is accepting who you are, where you are and where you’re going. Healing is loving yourself, your race, your culture. Healing is living authentically. Healing is being free!



2.2 HEALING RESOURCES FOR YOU

MUST READS

- **The Vagina Monologues**– *Eve Ensler*
- **Self-Care for Black Women: 150 Ways to Radically Accept & Prioritize Your Mind, Body, & Soul** – *Oludara Adeeyo*
- **Wild Imperfections: An Anthology of Womanist Poems**– *Compiled and edited by Natalia Molebatsi*
- **Rest Is Resistance: A Manifesto** – *Tricia Hersey*

- **Bless the Daughter Raised by a Voice in Her Head: Poems** – *Book by Warsan Shire*
- **I'm Telling the Truth But I'm Lying'** – *Bassey Ikpi*
- **'Unapologetic: A Black, Queer, And Feminist Mandate for Radical Movements'**
- **The Sex Lives of African Women** by *Nana Darkoa Sekyiamah*
- **Adventures from the Bedrooms of African Women**

WELLNESS CONTENT WE LOVE

- **Yoga: Bright and Salted Yoga** *on Youtube*
- **Quick Therapy: School of Life** *on Youtube*
- **Journal: Daylee**
- **Podcast: Another Way** – *Twasiima Bigirwa*
- **Podcast: Black, No Sugar**
- **Podcast: Africana Woman**
- **I Like Girls, Nigeria**
- **Feministing While Malawian**



MUSIC FOR YOU

- **Know that you are loved**– *Cleo Sol*
- **Hey Queen**– *Beautiful Chorus*
- **Messages from Her**– *Sabrina Claudio*



QUOTES TO LIVE BY

"...love without being destroyed..."
June Jordan

3. CONVERSATIONS AND REFLECTIONS FROM THE WELLNESS ACTIVISTS

In this section we sit down with feminists who have supported Akina Mama wa Afrika spaces as providers of wellness and care services.

We believe that as healers who have worked with feminists and activists providing wellness services, they have an insight into the minds of activists, their challenges, needs and resources they could use to cope and thrive as they do their work.



We bring you stories on their own personal healing journeys that involve the causes of their pain, the process of healing and their progress so far.

In conversation with us, they share what they believe are the causes of psychological pain to feminists, what healing practices feminists can take up and what healing looks like.



MILDRED APENYO

YOGI, GARDENER, DANCER,
FEMINIST, WELLNESS ACTIVIST AND
FOUNDER OF FITQLIQUE AFRICA

Apenyo's healing journey

Mildred's healing journey begins where many healing journeys of women begin, at the point of rage. At 20 years old, a traumatic event struck close to home. Mildred's friend was sexually violated by an acquaintance. As a witness to her friend's pain, Mildred chose to avenge her friend by inflicting pain on the man who raped her.

For days Mildred stalked the rapist until she cornered him and gave him a thorough beating. Currents of bottled rage found their outlet through her hands as she swung them to beat the fear of the Goddess into his soul and deliver justice for her friend. As the person to whom her anger was directed, writhed in pain from the blows administered to his person. Mildred, says that she felt a sense of satisfaction and joy at the turning of tables, the hunter being hunted, the victimiser turning victim. This was the first time she came face to face with her own rage and she began a thorough examination of it. She saw her potential to harm and realized that her energy needed to be harnessed towards healing otherwise it would turn her into someone she wouldn't like.

This reflection turned her towards the earth from which she sought grounding and cleansing. She poured her energies into learning about healing which brought forth the idea of the first women's gym, Fitclique Africa.

Since then she often checks with herself whether she is healing or scorching the earth.

Years later, Mildred says, "I can look into the eyes of the 20 year old and say I like how we channel our energies and rage against injustice."

The causes of soul-injuries to feminist activists

The weight of knowing

"Do you remember when you first realized that the things that happen to women do not have to happen to them?" Apenyo asks.

That first moment when you learn that the world doesn't like you and the ways in which it shows this for any person is often traumatising.

The injustice, the violence, the oppression, the intimidation the first moment we realize this... really wounds us.

The weight of responsibility

Feminists take a lot of responsibility on their shoulders for ending injustice in the world, the result is a wear and tear from carrying what one cannot bear alone.

The harshness we reserve for each other

As a residue of dealing with the violent patriarchy everyday, many feminists usually end up being harsh to themselves and to each other. We must hold space to examine and address these things so as to make it out of this toxic stew.

Apenyo's tips on healing and thriving

The answer is in nature

I look at my garden and see the lavender growing, the hibiscus, my herbs and I realize that authentic healing has to be cultivated like plants.

Try to bring healing as close to home



as you can. Bring nature into it. Use your five senses to experience nature. Smell some flowers, Watch over a new plant, touch the earth, hear the sounds of nature. It sounds frivolous but be frivolous.

Why nature?

When you touch things that are alive, that are making a conscious effort to live, it grounds you into life. Go on and surround yourself with plants. Take suggestions from a butterfly fluttering carelessly about or a bird singing for no one and for everyone. Be inspired by the flower adorned in the brightest colors everyday of its life.

Tips to protect the activist's soul from injury

Have boundaries and respect your own boundaries, it will save you a lot of pain.

What healing looks like from Apenyo's perspective

Respect and honor for the earth and life. If you are not working to heal the earth, you are not doing anything. In healing yourself you heal the earth and in healing the earth you heal yourself.

HEALING RESOURCES FOR YOU

A BOOK YOU MUST READ

- **The Women who Run with Wolves**– *Clarissa Pinkola Estoy*
- **The Secret** – *Rhonda Byrne*
- **Bless the Daughter Raised by a Voice in her Head**– *Warsan Shire*



SONGS FOR YOU

- **Best Part**– *Daniel Caesar*
- **River**– *Ibeyi*
- **Strength Courage, Wisdom**– *India Arie*
- **Heart full of Love** – *Cleo Sol*
- **Being of Love**– *Beautiful Chorus*



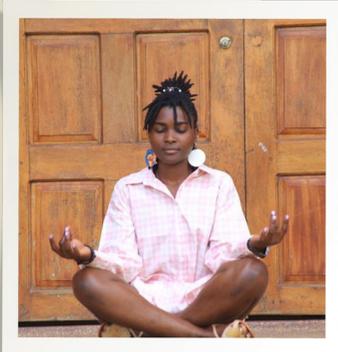
A QUOTE TO LIVE BY

“Healing is a constant rocking. Back and forth. Forgive yourself for the backward motion. Give thanks for the courage to hinge forward, anyway” – Titilope Sonuga

SELF CARE PROMPT

- Do 10 Kegels right now
- Create something
- Go to bed early tonight
- Go out and see some scenery
- Take an impulsive road trip
- Tell them how you really feel





JOYCE CHRISTINE NAKIWALA

YOGI, DANCER, MOTHER

*Healing is a river, long
and winding and never
straight*

“My healing journey is a river and it has many streams. I visualize my journey this way because just like a river I can see where my journey starts, where it is going and the different points at which it has branched off.”

A certified yogi working with individuals and communities to heal through yoga and meditation, Nakiwala exudes an aura of one who is grounded and at one with the world. However, Nakiwala too, had to do the necessary work to get to this place from wounded, to being healed and lastly to one doing healing work.

In looking at where her healing journey begins which means the place at which her wounding starts, Nakiwala says that she traces it all back to childhood where she was a victim of child labor at the tender age of eight. This experience dictated who she would later become. At the moment, Nakiwala continues to work towards balance within her masculine and feminine energies and constantly interrogates why she does the work she does.

On the causes of our psychological wounds.

The conflict between our past and the present

The tension between what we believe when contrasted against a changing world results into wounding for a lot of feminists. Nakiwala encourages us to find a delicate balance between our belief systems and life as we know it. To flow and be flexible and open ourselves to new possibilities and the now.

New technologies that distort our sense of reality

New technologies that refuse people from being authentic have also caused a lot of harm. It is important to rebel against the push towards these technology enabled masks, Nakiwala says. Taking inspiration from children before they are forced to conform to the world, she advises us to show up as we are, let our healing journeys be as authentically human as we are.

What resources can feminist activists tap into?

The first and final resource is one's self Nakiwala, argues. Before making one's way to a yoga mat or in a spiritual center to meditate, one must first see one's self, know one's self and accept one's self.

It is from this point of acceptance that the body and the mind will set on the path to healing.

Even when one engages in acts in which they have received instruction or actions that come with tradition, like praying, Nakiwala believes that even prayer must be done according to one's own personality and true self as opposed to crammed formats.

How can we protect our minds better?

Recognising and acknowledging harm... We must know when something wrong is happening and we must acknowledge it and put an end to it. This can be removing ourselves from situations, confronting those hurting us or seeking support.

Addressing hurt and pain in the moment and not procrastinating dealing with it. Unresolved things will always follow you.

Living in the present and not worrying about bridges that are yet to be crossed. Many people live either in the past or in the far future causing a lot of needless anxiety and missing out on the current



joys of life.

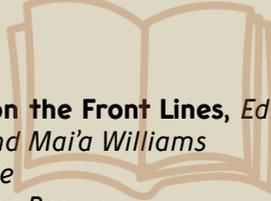
Honoring and revisiting traditional practices of wellness

Nakiwala encourages us to look within these for wisdom and the healing within. Perhaps we shall experience calmness while weaving a grass mat or find something therapeutic about shaving off one's hair in mourning. Discovering within this practice reserved for the bereaved, the encouragement to not only express grief but to let go of it and start anew.

Let our healing not be isolated but true, holistic and intergenerational, the yoga teacher says.

HEALING RESOURCES FOR YOU

A BOOK YOU MUST READ



Revolutionary Mothering: Love on the Front Lines, Edited by Alexis Pauline Gumbs, China Martens, and Mai'a Williams

The Cancer Journals– Audre Lorde

Pleasure Activism–Adrienne Maree Brown

SONGS FOR YOU

- **Natural Hair**– Naomi
- **Girl**– The internet
- **Londrelle** – A Beautiful Mess (Ft Naomi The Goddess x Prod. x Visions)
- **Londrelle** – The Healer
- **I am light**– Indie Arie



A QUOTE TO LIVE BY

“There is no way to repress pleasure and expect liberation, satisfaction, or joy.”

Adrienne Maree Brown, Pleasure Activism: The Politics of Feeling Good

APPS WE LOVE

- *Best for Meditation:* **Heads Space**
- *Best for Anxiety:* **iBreathe**
- *Best for Sleep:* **Calm**
- *Best for Happy vibes:* **Happify**
- *Best for Sobriety:* **I am sober**

SELF CARE PROMPTS

- Set a standard with them
- Make your living space cozy
- Do something to make future you, happy
- Enjoy your food
- Do not entertain that disrespect again



MAKGATI MOKWENA

Makgati Mokwena is a pilgrim and companion of healers. Her goal is to liberate herself and others from the constraints of the programming characteristic of our societies. She is on a journey of unveiling untruths and truths about who she is. She is a trained expressive arts therapist and lives in South Africa.



Even the healer has sought healing before . . .

“I am a pilgrim, and thus I am still on a journey”, Makgati says.

Her pilgrimage began in childhood when she, an often melancholic child, felt mostly alienated even while surrounded by a loving family. She says these were markers of developing depression that would manifest later in her adult life alongside a complicated relationship with her body. These issues could be seen through rejection and ambivalence towards her body.

As part of her healing process, Makgati says that journaling is one of the most fundamental aspects of healing.

“The journal is a companion that receives all thoughts and emotions and their complexities without judgment,” Makgati says. She adds that having journaled from a young age, she can now look back and see the bird’s eye view of her journey, seeing the constant patterns and themes of her life. In this, she sees how her depression indicated a longing for something that transcended herself, and since then, she has embarked on a journey to connect with this grand entity. Today she practices Psycho Spiritual Therapy.

What wounds the activist?

“A lot of people I have encountered, dedicate themselves to serving others, ironically, are often in desperate need of the same service they

are rendering to others,”

Makgati says that often, we are so outwardly focused on what must be done in the outside world that we neglect to address the wounds and needs that we have sustained along the journeys of our lives and yet only when we address these needs do we then impact the world better.

She counsels that because we often project onto the world, what we need for ourselves and thus, whenever we see what is lacking in the world, we must look inside of ourselves and ask what hunger within us is reflected in what we are giving to the world.

We must not forget ourselves, we must honor our own healing because self-healing is part of activism.

What does healing look like?

“First, I want you to know, that as long as we are here on earth, there will be always work to be done on ourselves because life, is a process”
-Makgati

Knowing then that the work of healing is always ongoing, Makgati says that these are the signs that we are on a journey to healing.

The intensity of the pain diminishes

Pain always returns, but when we are on the healing journey, it stings less and less each time it returns. We are able to cope better than when it last showed up and we feel more and more empowered.

Our fears start to shrink

When healing comes, we are able to embrace the wound to stare it in the face without cowering or flying into a rage. We make room for our wounds



and integrate them as opposed to cutting them off.

We are less intense about things

We forgive quickly even the things we would not have found easy to forgive. We laugh again and have joy in our lives.

We commune with friends again and dance once more. We recognise how profound this human life is, as we begin to enjoy the small joys.

Healing allows us to taste the sweet nectar of life once again through the bitterness. Healing gives us permission to be ourselves once again.

How do we sow the seeds of healing in our lives then?

Radical self attention

We can begin by tuning into who you are as a person and ask questions, what makes you, you? What are the things that contribute to who you are?

What are your responses to different situations, what are the patterns?

What works and what can you do differently?

Examining relationships

Does this relationship make me feel alive, full?

When I am injured, can I express it? When I create injury can I ask for forgiveness?

We must live by these; Radical Self Examination, Radical Self Forgiveness and Radical Self Love.

Meditation

The world is loud and often our thoughts and voices get drowned in the din, however meditation brings us back to the center. We all have a deep still center that we can return to for replenishment, for centering, for grounding.

Stay in touch with your feelings...

As activists we want to serve from a place of feeling and not numbness. Because we are alive, life demands that we stay awake to life. That we fully experience joy and sadness. We must not give in to numbness, we must want to more than cope, we must desire to thrive. By staying awake to our emotional selves, our actions are constantly inspired and they have the breath of divinity in them.

To stay awake to life, we must indulge in things that we love while resisting the trap of overconsumption of goods or materials because it is not a true expression of self love.

Continuously reclaiming our sovereignty

The world is filled with experiences that cast us in the role of victim but we must always come back to reclaim our sovereignty. Refuse to be cast into a victim's role permanently.

Reclaim your own sovereignty even when the world is hell bent on never letting you see it, touch it or even imagine it.

Forgiveness

Forgiveness is the radical act of releasing oneself from the untruths of life that want to victimize us. Forgiveness recognises what has happened but seeks to restore equilibrium. Forgiveness releases us from being shackled to the perpetrator and the unintentional relationship with the one who has injured us. It means that we are removing ourselves from that energy so that we can attend to our own healing because we are worthy of healing.

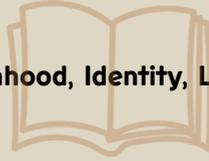
One of the radical ways we can change the world is by creating activism that is centered around forgiveness so that we don't perpetuate the pain that is around the world.



3.1 HEALING RESOURCES FOR YOU

A BOOK YOU MUST READ

Redefining Realness: My Path to Womanhood, Identity, Love & So Much More *Kindle Edition by Janet Mock*



SONGS FOR YOU

- **Beautiful Chorus** – *I am feat Indie Arie*
- **Don't let it get to your head**– *Cleo Sol*
- **Energy**– *Sampa the Great*
- **Goddess**– *Lizzy Jeff*
- **Violet**– *Daniel Caesar*



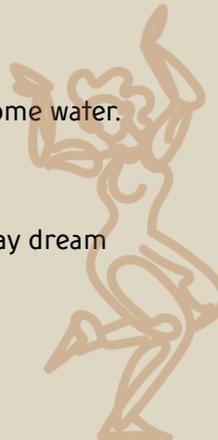
A QUOTE TO LIVE BY

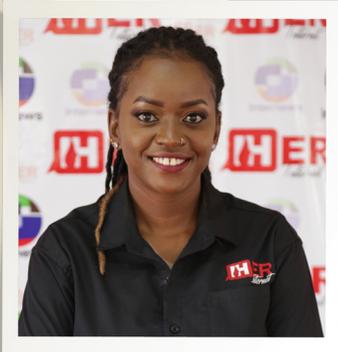
“The doors to the world of the wild Self are few but precious. If you have a deep scar, that is a door, if you have an old, old story, that is a door. If you love the sky and the water so much you almost cannot bear it, that is a door. If you yearn for a deeper life, a full life, a sane life, that is a door.”

Clarissa Pinkola Estés, Women who run with the wolves.

SELF CARE PROMPT

- Show your liver some love, drink some water.
- Slow down
- Choose ease
- Leave that whatsapp group
- Take time off to do nothing, but day dream





SANDRA KWIKIRIZA (RIZA)

QUEER FEMINIST, DIGITAL RIGHTS SPECIALIST, FOUNDER AND DIRECTOR HER INTERNET, AN ORGANISATION PROMOTING RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS FROM STRUCTURALLY MARGINALISED COMMUNITIES OF WOMEN.

Healing begins with centering ourselves

Riza's active efforts towards healing started a couple of years ago following the realization that she was not prioritizing herself. This cut across in relationships, at work and with family where she cared for everyone but herself.

On digging deeper into the source of this neglect, she found that a combination of disappointments in life were responsible for this self neglect.

Riza resolved to step back and take stock of her life and work on it to become better. Alongside her introspection, during her retreat, Riza indulged in meditation and music to return balance to her life.

The result was the birth of an authentic self that she has come to treasure and prioritize.

Collective healing comes with community

Riza says that to heal we must find our tribe with whom we share our joys, sorrows and dreams. People to keep us grounded and on the course.

While keeping in touch with the community is important, Riza says that it is important to know when to unplug especially from online communities.

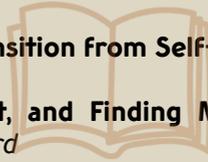
“As a feminist activist, you are already attuned to a lot of injustices occurring in the world, when you are always online, it amplifies every issue” Riza says, before she emphasizes the need to dedicate offline time.

To Riza, healing looks like joy and staying true to oneself.

3.3 HEALING RESOURCES FOR YOU

BOOKS YOU MUST READ

- **Yes, You Are Trans Enough: My Transition from Self-Loathing to Self-Love** by Mia Violet
- **Sorted: Growing Up, Coming Out, and Finding My Place (A Transgender Memoir)** - Jackson Bird



SONGS FOR YOU

- **Take up space Sis**- Toni Jones
- **Peng Black Girls**- Enny
- **Goodnight Moon Child**- Beautiful Chorus
- **It is what it is**- Adekunle Gold
- **We need you**- Cleo Sol

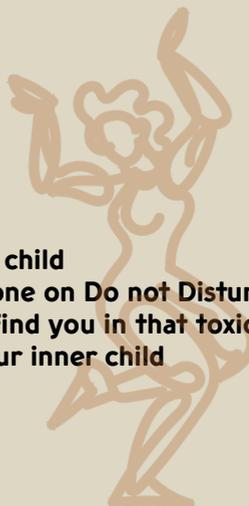


A QUOTE TO LIVE BY

Black Rest is Reparations

SELF CARE PROMPT

- **Draw some boundaries**
- **Do something to please your inner child**
- **Close your laptop and put your phone on Do not Disturb**
- **Make sure the next email doesn't find you in that toxic place**
- **Write something comforting to your inner child**





YVONNE ZABU

PSYCHOTHERAPIST

"I am devoted to helping people begin their healing journey and to heal in the direction that they want to heal."- Zabu

Zabu's Healing Journey

In 2015, when Zabu signed up to pursue her Master's in clinical psychology she did not know that her own mental wellness would be put through a test. First, her grandmother, the cornerstone of her family, transcended this plane after a brave battle with cancer. Shortly, her dad got a stroke and transitioned as well.

This grief lay heavy on her heart, taking away her joy and motivation for life. From a self-assured, happy person, Zabu found herself sad, irritable and lacking in motivation which she always had in plenty.

As part of her university requirements for a clinical psychology student, Zabu had to go for therapy as part of the learning process. Through this process, Zabu was able to process her grief in a healthy manner.

A long holiday of rest in Nairobi after her degree spent taking care of herself and playing with her nieces and nephews did her lots of good.

Since then, it has been a paced healing journey where once again she has set out to figure out everything that had been lost to that season of grief.

The African feminist is an eternally flowing gourd with very few people to fill it.

After providing psychotherapy to many feminist activists, from her

experience Zabú believes that the psychological wounds that feminist activists obtain are from a career of fighting against oppressive systems with very minimal support. Every waking hour, the average feminist wants to create a new world that is just and accommodating to the people that have been historically marginalised. This often means that they give a lot without getting much in return. Eventually emptying themselves completely, they began to morph into the proverbial cold and bitter feminist.

Zabú's healing tips to the African Feminist

Whatever the question is, Therapy is always the answer. Therapy will go a long way in processing the things that happen to someone. Through therapy, one is able to tell what is wounding them and how to counteract it. One is able to know oneself well enough to understand what is nourishing or draining them and eventually set healthy boundaries.

Journaling

This is a beautiful and easy way to empty one's mind, process thoughts, record joys and sorrows and understand oneself. Zabú recommends journaling in a book or using voice notes or video diaries where you can speak out loud to yourself, get things off your chest or even simply have introspection.

Exercising

Because it does wonders for the mind. Exercise releases endorphins which are basically happy and positive chemicals manufactured in your brain. These chemicals can change how you experience life.

Social media Algorithms can make or break you

Zabú counsels that while social media is the best thing since sliced bread because of how resourceful it is, to protect our mental health we need to be deliberate about what we consume,



especially feminists.

Because we are mostly immersed in work that deals with social evils, it is easy to remain face down in the most soul crushing news 24/7 which constantly leaves us angry, disoriented and depressed.

Have a social media platform that is for nothing but joyful news. Happy memes, pets, babies, comedy, art, anything that can make you smile, hopeful, or laugh heartily Zabu advises.

Take time for yourself

Even if it is just an hour a day, do what makes you happy or peaceful. Being an activist requires you to constantly detox and reset, and be intentional about it.

When you find healing, this is what it will look like...

It will look like acceptance.

It will look like peace.

It will look like balance.

It will look like joy.

Stay in pursuit of it all, Zabu encourages.

HEALING RESOURCES FOR YOU

READS WE LOVE

- **On Africa's feminist frontlines, we need accessible care practices to sustain our movements** *by Jessica Horn*
- **Healing Justice: Building Power, Transforming Movements**
- **ACKNOWLEDGE. HEAL. REIMAGINE**
- **Reclaiming and Reimagining the Politics of Collective Care as an Act of Radical Existence** *by Mugabekazi (Gloria) Mugasha*

SONGS FOR YOU

- **In defense of my own happiness** - *Joy Oladokun*

- **Platinumb Heart Beating** – *Msaki*
- **Sonocardiogram** – *Dayme Arocena*
- **Azeb** – *Mereba*



A QUOTE TO LIVE BY

“though we have all encountered our share of grief and troubles, we can still hold the line of beauty, form, and beat – no small accomplishment in a world as challenging as this one. Hard times require furious dancing. Each of us is the proof.”

Alice Walker

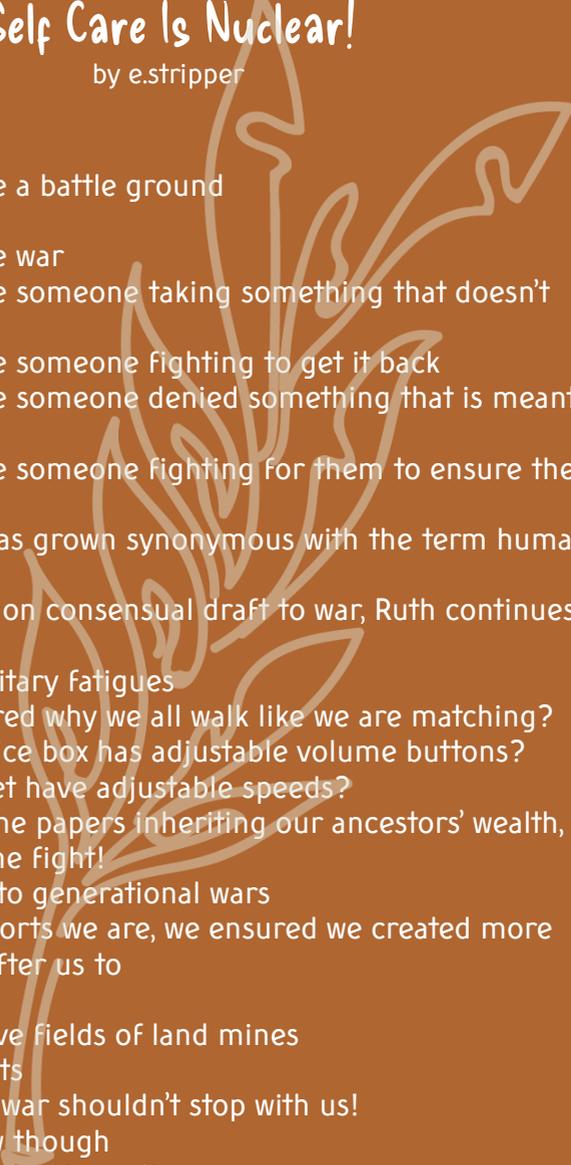
SELF CARE PROMPTS

- **Open up to someone**
- **Cancel the plans, stay in**
- **Have compassion for yourself**
- **Make your muscles happy, do some stretches**
- **Rest, that too is resistance**



Self Care Is Nuclear!

by e.stripper



There will always be a battle ground
I hear Ruth say
There will always be war
There will always be someone taking something that doesn't
belong to them
There will always be someone fighting to get it back
There will always be someone denied something that is meant
for them
There will always be someone fighting for them to ensure they
get it
The term warrior has grown synonymous with the term human
being
Each creation is a non consensual draft to war, Ruth continues
to tell me
These skins are military fatigues
Haven't you wondered why we all walk like we are matching?
Why the human voice box has adjustable volume buttons?
Why the human feet have adjustable speeds?
Before we signed the papers inheriting our ancestors' wealth,
we had to inherit the fight!
We were drafted into generational wars
And as the good sports we are, we ensured we created more
wars for anybody after us to
inherit
We intended to leave fields of land mines
Grannaries of bullets
The generations of war shouldn't stop with us!
We have learnt now though
That there are weapons in resting
They're are guns in closing your eyes and letting your mind
wander off to flower gardens
There are land mines of peace hidden in the land of healing

There are bullets in hugs that don't miss targets
To dare to self care is nuclear
The biggest weapon in the arsenal
Ruth looks at me and says, I hope your submarine comes on
time!





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