

THRIVE  
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A year of skill-shares by and for people  
impacted by domestic + sexual violence.

**force**

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# ABOUT THRIVE

Launched in 2017, Thrive created a space for people impacted by sexual and domestic violence to grow, learn, and heal as a community. This zine catalogues the phenomenal facilitators who led one year of workshops. The series was organized by Gather Together, FORCE's Baltimore based collective of survivors committed to fostering a network of people building a city where rape no longer exists. Gather Together was born out of FORCE's commitment to affirming and centering survivor voices.

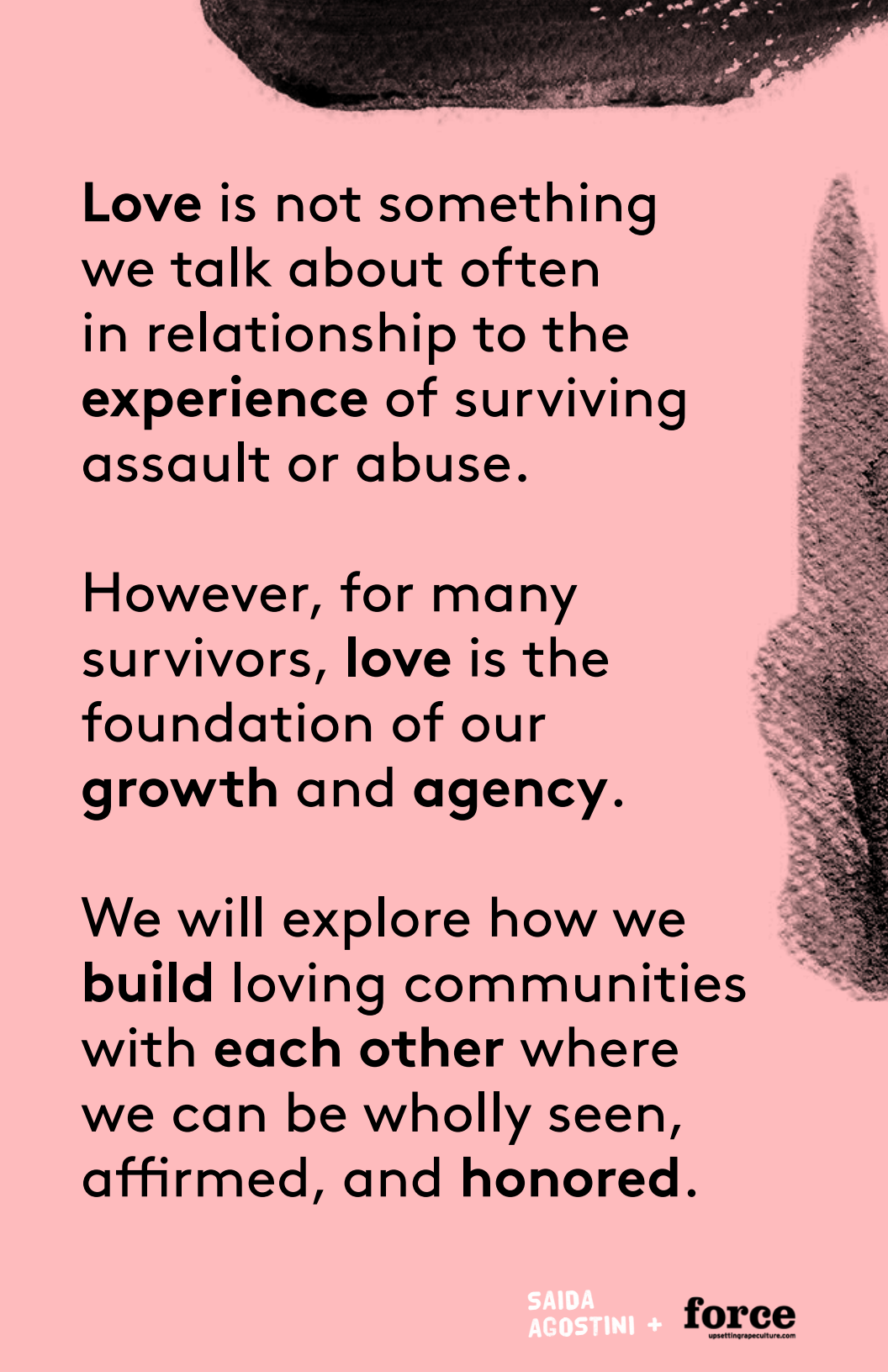
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# FINDING OUR PEOPLE: LOVE AS AN ACT OF RESISTANCE

**SAIDA AGOSTINI**

## **ABOUT SAIDA**

Saida Agostini is a poet, advocate and movement builder. She is the Chief Operating Officer for FORCE: Upsetting Rape Culture, a survivor artist collective dedicated to resisting rape culture. Saida brings with her over a decade of experience in program management, clinical work, and policy advocacy with communities of color, LGBTQ folks, and survivors of violence.



**Love** is not something  
we talk about often  
in relationship to the  
**experience** of surviving  
assault or abuse.

However, for many  
survivors, **love** is the  
foundation of our  
**growth** and **agency**.

We will explore how we  
**build** loving communities  
with **each other** where  
we can be wholly seen,  
affirmed, and **honored**.



We need to **find** our people, our **community** who will lift **us** up and **support** us. Let's talk about the **transformative** relationships in our lives.

How do we **feel** connected?

How do we build loving **relationships**?

In this activity, you will make a **map** of the **people** in your life who have loved and **supported** you.

## **MATERIALS**

**Blank pieces of paper, marker and/or pen.**

## **STEPS**

- 1. Think of the people in your life who have had your back. Write down their names on a piece of paper.**
- 2. What do these people bring into your life? What do you bring into theirs? Write this down near their names.**
- 3. How did these people come into your life? How has the support of these people helped you to get where you are now? Draw paths from one person to another, from one word to another.**

**We need to honor the connections in our life. This map you have created is just one way to remind yourself of the positive connections in your life.**

# **QIGONG TO HONOR OUR BODIES**

**SHAWNA MURRAY-BROWNE**

## **ABOUT SHAWNA**

Shawna Murray-Browne, LCSW-C is the owner of Kindred Wellness, LLC, an integrative practice dedicated to honoring culture, expanding mindfulness, and holding safe space that empowers professionals & families to heal themselves. She holds a Masters degree in Social Work from the University of Maryland, Baltimore and a Bachelor of Science in Criminology and Family Science from the University of Maryland, College Park. Shawna completed the Advanced level training in Mind-Body Medicine at The Center for Mind-Body Medicine , headquartered in Washington, D.C.



## ABOUT SHAWNA (CONT.)

She is a Licensed Certified Social Worker-Clinical (LCSW-C), a Certified QiGong Instructor, Speaker and Mind-Body Medicine Practitioner. She has over 9 years experience serving children and families in the human services field including, working with victims of sex abuse, children and adolescents in foster care, juvenile detention centers, after-school programs, public schools and residential treatment centers. She provides personalized, culturally-affirming integrative psychotherapy, workshops and Mind-Body Skills groups that honor the healing power of art, movement, breath and connection to nature. Shawna enjoys holding safe space for parents, children and human service professionals. *ShawnaMurrayBrowne.com*

Our bodies are **filled**  
with **messages**; some we  
should hold close and  
others we should **release**.



This activity will allow  
**safe space for listening**  
to our body's messages,  
**exploring simple QiGong**  
**Movements, Mindfulness**  
**Meditations** and ancient  
healing sounds for  
**healing ourselves gently.**

**QiGong** (pronounced  
Chi gong) is an ancient  
**Chinese healing modality**  
that **integrates** gentle  
movements, breathing  
techniques and **intention.**

Over **2,500** years old,  
these exercises have been  
known to **improve** posture,  
**support** relaxation, prevent  
illness, improve **sleep** and  
nourish your organs!

## MATERIALS

Quiet room, sturdy chair.

## STEPS

1. Sit upright in a chair, feet touching the ground with your hands just below your belly button.
2. Get comfortable in your position and begin breathing in through the nose, filling your belly (lower dantien with air).
3. Exhale all the way out, through your nose, to clear the lungs. Your belly should be flat once again. Then, inhale down into the lower abdomen so that the belly expands once again.

## **STEPS (CONT.)**

- 4. Exhale and release the air from the abdomen (be sure to do this slowly, taking pauses between each breath in a way that is most comfortable for you).**
- 5. Continue this pattern over and over, focusing on the rise of the belly and the fall during each inhalation and exhalation. Keep your chest relaxed throughout this sequence.**
- 6. Now on your next inhalation, visualize a golden ball of light energy, just like the sun filling your lower dantien. As you continue breathing this light gets larger and expands throughout your entire body.**
- 7. Continue this for 3 or 9 minutes, and notice the calm and centeredness that overcomes you.**

# **PAINTING FOR LIFE**

## **NOELLE IMPARATO**

### **ABOUT NOELLE**

Born in France, Noelle was trained in architecture and film-editing before moving to Los Angeles in 1973. After working in Hollywood for 15 years, Noelle returned to school and earned a PhD in Mythological studies with an emphasis in Depth Psychology. At the same time she took a number of workshops at Esalen Institute in Big Sur, CA where she learned the art-therapy approach to painting that would become her signature style. Noelle also practiced meditation for 30 years with some of the most respected American Buddhist teachers. Since then she has facilitated painting workshops and meditation sessions wherever she lives: Los Angeles, France, Spain and now Baltimore.

In this activity you will be asked to **calm** your mind, **let go** of control, and learn to work without **knowing** what you are going to do.

In this way you invite **unconscious** materials, shadow materials that we don't **usually** want to see, to come up to the **surface**.

The idea is that **healing** **requires** bringing the dark into the light in order for us to **become** able to embrace it and become **whole**.

## MATERIALS

White poster paper, tempera paint,  
and a few good Japanese style brushes.

## STEPS

1. Preferably tape your paper onto a wall and work like the true artist that you are, standing up.
2. Calm your mind and paint intuitively, without trying to control the outcome.
3. If you paint in this way regularly, at least once a week, for an hour or so, you will most likely experience a loosening of old memories and traumas, which may resurface in a way that is both surprising and manageable.
4. Keep your paintings private. Tend them like dreams and the healing process will follow its own path.

# LOVE LETTERS TO MY BODY

MONICA YORKMAN

## ABOUT MONICA

Monica Yorkman is a 63 year-old African American Transgender woman who was born and raised in Baltimore. Monica transitioned in 2002 after several starts and stops during her life journey with the help of her good friend and mentor, Ms. Lauren Stokeling. It was after several murders of young transwomen in 2005 and 2006 and the lack of response by law enforcement, the media, and even members of the LGB community that ignited the passion for activism that drives her. In 2012 Monica founded Sistās of the "t" an advocacy, education, and outreach organization. Sistās of the "t" is a project based on self directed client centered solutions.



## ABOUT MONICA (CONT.)

Today, Sistas of the “t” is helping to reshape the image of the GLCCB where Ms. Yorkman helps by mentoring young transgender women as they navigate their journey to womanhood. Ms. Yorkman is currently employed as a research assistant at the Johns Hopkins School of Public Health with the SAPPHIRE Study. She also serves on the police commissioner’s LGBT advisory board. She is also a consultant to the Free State Justice Community Mediation Project and is a member of Baltimore’s Transgender Response Team and Transgender Action Group.

Monica is a published poet and short story writer whose work is found in several publications and has performed at various poetry venues around the city. She is a member of the Rooted Collective, a group of black, queer artists who perform locally. She has been known to show up on stage with her djembe “Mahalia”, her guitar, “Betty”, or just her latest poem.

In this activity you will **unravel** the **myths** that we each **carry** inside.

Put them down on paper in the **form** of stories, **poetry**, affirmations, whatever **inspiration** takes to you, and take a step along your journey to **wholeness**.

### **MATERIALS**

Blank pieces of paper, marker and/or pen.

### **STEPS**

1. Begin by writing affirmations to specific areas of your body.
2. Place these notes around your home.  
You will be surrounded by affirmative, positive quotes and messages.

# **AFFIRMATIONS: THE POWER OF HEALING WORDS**

**ALANAH DAVIS**

## **ABOUT ALANAH**

Alanah Nichole, a transplant to Baltimore of The Bronx, NY, is a vibrant, bubbly and at the nougat big-heart, belly and booty having community driven mother, organizer & friend to all. Whether you have or haven't come into contact with her yet, don't worry, she'll probably invite you in first with her two very deep and envy worthy dimples and second her arms made strong from the adventures with her two beautiful daughters Blair (5) & Harper (3). Her intentions will be made clear to you in spirit, truth or her articulate & carefully organized words. With a voice as smooth as Nutella on toast she is sure to wow you with her tone & unconventional meditative healing properties.

## **ABOUT ALANAH (CONT.)**

Alanah is the Founder and Host of Much More than an Open Mic that happens at Tightfisted Fashion in the heart of Station North Arts District every 2nd and 4th Wednesday at 7:07pm, Social Media Manager at Impact Hub Baltimore, House Manager at Baltimore's historic Everyman Theater and the list goes on! Alanah has made her mission clear through her impeccable works, her catchy yet pivotal affirmations, workshops and endless event curation.

**Affirmation** is traditionally defined as an **emotional support** or encouragement.

Oftentimes, we don't **give** this to **ourselves** we are constantly battling negative **self talk**.

To negate that, you will come up with your **favorite phrase** (applicable to what you go through) and you will **repeat** it daily.

Whether that be in the **mirror**, before **bed**, or while you brush your teeth in the **morning**.

You will **begin** to see a **shift** within **yourself** and in your relationships with other **people** when you intentionally love **yourself**.

## MATERIALS

Blank pieces of paper, marker and/or pen, compact mirror, permanent marker.

## STEPS

1. Take your paper and write as many affirmations to yourself as you like.
2. Choose your favorite affirmation and inscribe it on the inside of your compact mirror with your permanent marker.
3. Carry your compact mirror with you as a constant reminder that your affirmation knows no bounds.

# **NAVIGATING INTIMACY AFTER SURVIVAL**

**JORDANNAH ELIZABETH**

## **ABOUT JORDANNAH**

Jordannah Elizabeth is a widely published feminist writer. Her work has appeared in Ms. Magazine, Bitch Media, Cosmopolitan and LA Weekly.

Jordannah writes and lectures about survivorhood and the intersections of race and gender. She is the founder of the literary arts org, Publik/Private.

**Creative writing allows  
you to take back power  
and receiving healing.**

**Practice verbalizing your  
feelings and concerns in  
intimate situations.**

### **MATERIALS**

**Notebook, pen and/or pencil.**

### **STEPS**

- 1. Set aside time for yourself to record your thoughts each day.**
- 2. Practice verbalizing your feelings and concerns in intimate situations.**
- 3. Treat your notebook as a sacred space and resource for nonviolent communication.**



# **CALLING IN REIKI ENERGY**

**SHANTI FLAGG**

## **ABOUT SHANTI**

Shanti Flagg is the Studio Director at FORCE. She is a biracial (Indian & white) gender non-conforming lesbian artist, and a Reiki master. Shanti's artistic, energy, and social justice practices continuously inform each other. She is an independent and critical thinker and cares about figuring out the most responsible path for herself in the world, rather than following what others tell me is right. She envisions and demonstrates different worlds. Shanti is a questioner. On an energetic level, she is a care-taker and a creator.

Reiki is an **Indian energy healing practice** that encompasses a person's entire being rather than just the body or just the mind.

Reiki works through the channel of the practitioner to bring **universe energy** to the receiver. All things give off and accept energy.

Living beings are complex **networks of energy channels** that **need care and attention**.

Reiki helps **connect** all parts of who you are so you can realize your **fully integrated** self. Reiki is a powerful **self healing skill** you can carry with you for your entire life.

This **workshop** will **introduce** you to how Reiki works and how you can **practice** it yourself.

#### **MATERIALS**

A comfortable place

#### **THE IMPACT**

Reiki will help you feel connected to your body and can reduce anxiety, negative thoughts, and pain. You may feel warmth, tingling, or buzzing in your hands or elsewhere in your body.

## **STEPS**

**Try calling Reiki energy to yourself with this technique!**

- 1. Get comfortable.**
- 2. Clasp your hands in front of you like you're praying and close your eyes. Breathe deeply and call up gratitude for the world and for Reiki, the energy of the universe.**
- 3. Request (out loud or in thought) that Reiki energy come to your hands.**
- 4. Rest your hands in front of you palms up, as if you were waiting for water to pour into them. Continue calling Reiki.**
- 5. When you feel you want to stop, clasp your hands again in thanks.**
- 6. Shake off your hands to get rid of excess energy.**

**Once you're done, consider journaling about what you experienced.**

# HEALING THROUGH SEWING FOR SURVIVORS

AAYESHA AIJAZ

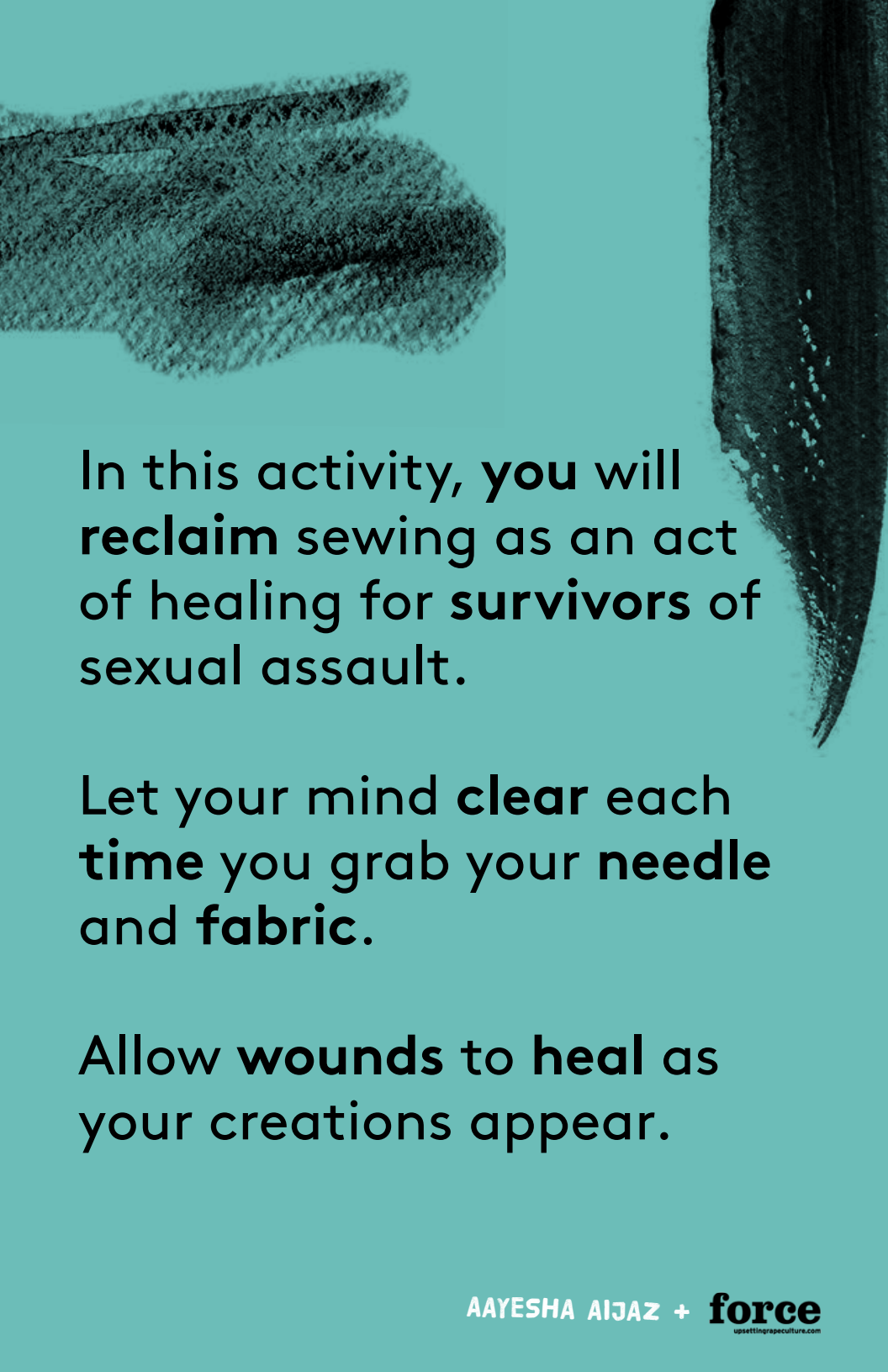
## ABOUT AAYESHA

Aayesha is an instinctual artist, healer and storyteller born in DC, raised in Baltimore. She is the first born of immigrant parents, a woman of color, and a muslim. When she's not indulging in conversations or teaching workshops, she spends her time advocating for survivors of sexual assault, victims of police brutality, and others in needs. Her current medium of healing, art making, and storytelling are through henna, sewing, cooking, painting, writing, and facilitating conversations between strangers.

## **ABOUT AAYESHA (CONT.)**

**She is the founder of strvng encounters, a fluid online and in person platform that creates space for and with communities of color to creatively bring awareness to stigmatized issues through a wide variety of perspectives. Making it a mission to find multiple avenues and skills to address issues of trauma, sexual assault and domestic violence, healing, self-love, community accountability, and more through various informal, creative workshops and events. Aayesha is always searching for and finding ways to bring creative and interactive ideas to life!**

**Aayesha is currently pursuing a masters of clinical mental health counseling at JHU.**



In this activity, **you** will  
**reclaim** sewing as an act  
of healing for **survivors** of  
sexual assault.

Let your mind **clear** each  
**time** you grab your **needle**  
and **fabric**.

Allow **wounds** to heal as  
your creations appear.



## **MATERIALS**

**(2)12"x12" cloth, scissors, thread, old rolled up socks, paper, pen, buttons and/or lace, essential oils (optional).**

## **STEPS**

- 1. Feel the immense strength you have within yourself to carry on living. Feel the power of your being coursing through your veins, your connection to this world. Meditate with these thoughts for 15-20 minutes.**
- 2. Write yourself a love note. Read it out loud, take a picture of it, or write it down somewhere else.**
- 3. Sew up three sides of your square cloth, flip it inside out.**
- 4. Stuff it with old socks and your love note.**
- 5. Sew up the fourth edge. Add buttons, lace or anything that feels nice for you!**
- 6. You now have a pillow of love that you can carry with you wherever your journey on this earth takes you.**
- 7. Dab essential oils on the fabric for aromatherapy, repeat steps when the scent fades. ▀**



# **TAPPING FOR HEALING**

## **RHONDA ROBINSON**

### **ABOUT RHONDA**

Rhonda Robinson is a jazz vocalist, flutist, bandleader, and actress performing throughout the Mid-Atlantic region at clubs, festivals, concert series, schools, museums and special events. Since 2003, she has also been a serious student/practitioner of Emotional Freedom Techniques (EFT) Tapping, a healing technique utilizing tapping with one's fingertips on acupressure points.

## ABOUT RHONDA (CONT.)

Due to her inspiring results, a film crew from The Tapping Solution came to Baltimore and Rhonda shared some of her life challenges and results with Tapping, including a 60 pound weight loss. She has been repeatedly recognized by the administrators and membership of the Tapping Solution's private Facebook groups as a leader in sharing her journey and supporting fellow members with insights and healing tips.

Whether tapping alone, tapping along with videos/audios online, or with a friend or a professional EFT practitioner, Tapping can potentially accelerate our healing from traumatic events and their aftereffects. Life can be more enjoyable!

*RhondaRobinsonMusic.com*



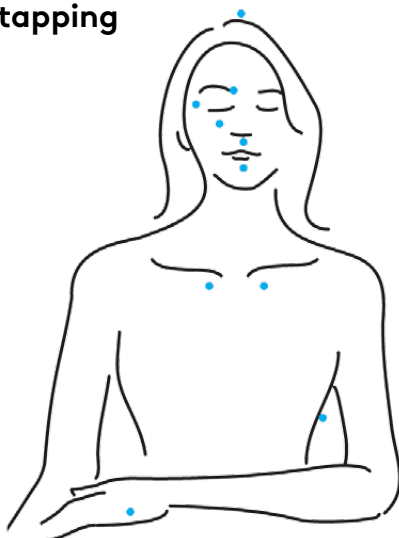
EFT Tapping is a form  
of **psychological**  
acupressure that uses a  
**gentle fingertip tapping**  
technique to stimulate  
**traditional Chinese**  
acupuncture points.

Restoring the balance  
of the **energy** system  
allows the body and mind  
to resume their **natural**  
healing abilities.

## MATERIALS

Your body! The main tapping points include:

- Karate Chop Point  
(Side of Hand)
- Eye Brow
- Side of the Eye
- Under the Eye
- Under the Nose
- Chin
- Collarbone
- Under the Arm
- Top of Head



## STEPS

1. Learn the EFT Tapping procedure by visiting [emofree.com](http://emofree.com) or [thetappingsolution.com](http://thetappingsolution.com).
2. Tap gently with the tips of your fingers on each point. Memorize the Tapping points.
3. Tap 5 minutes per day.
4. Tap in the morning just after you wake up.
5. Tap just as you are going to bed.
6. Tap in the bathroom.
7. Tap in the car.
8. Tap on the points in your mind's eye.
9. Tap when you are already crying, upset, angry, etc.
10. Tap w/o talking-just feel the feelings.

11. Tap along to online videos and audios.  
There are MANY on YouTube.
12. Tap while you gripe!!
13. Tap to any song, TV show or movie  
segment that triggers some negative  
emotions.
14. Keep a tapping notebook about what  
issues you tapped on and record your  
before and after emotions.
15. Focus on a specific memory, the earlier  
the better. Go piece by piece (small  
bites!!).
16. When a session has been particularly  
draining, soothe yourself in a way that  
suits you, like a bath or a shower.
17. Schedule sessions with an EFT  
practitioner. Don't try to do the big  
stuff alone. You deserve support!!
18. Find a trustworthy Tapping buddy  
(phone or video chat can work great!)

# **EVOLUTION OF “THE TALK” IGNACIO G RIVERA**

## **ABOUT IGNACIO**

Ignacio G Rivera is a Black Boricua Taíno, transgender, healer, artist, activist, mother and self-identified magical Unicorn. They are the founder and Director of The HEAL Project. THP is working towards a cultural shift in how we talk about sex(uality) with our children and young people. The projects platform, is that comprehensive sex(uality) education is a major tool in addressing and interrupting child sexual abuse.

## ABOUT IGNACIO (CONT.)

Their daughter, Amanda Rivera, is a toddler-whisperer, assistant teacher, diva, bruja and self identified mermaid. Together they co-host Pure Love. Pure Love is a collaboration of love and is an offspring of The HEAL Project. They attempt to go beyond theory, to practice in how we navigate the broad topic(s) of sex(uality) with our children and young people.

**Sexuality education is a comprehensive look at sex, sexuality, sexual health, body image, boundary setting, negotiation, communication, rape culture, feminism, patriarchy, procreation, self love, and much more.**

It is not based in fear  
but is **celebratory**.  
Sexuality education is  
a **lifeskill** that enables  
us to have **healthy  
relationships** with  
ourselves and others—  
whether sexually,  
romantically, spiritually  
or otherwise.

When we stop focusing  
on just the act of sex,  
then we **open** up a  
**pathway** to talk to  
younger children about  
sexuality.



The more **children** understand their **bodies**, **understand boundaries**, and have a **healthy** understanding of **sexuality**, the harder it would be for harm-doers to groom them and or sexually shame them into secrecy.

### SEXUALITY TALK TIPS

1. Avoid announcing that you are about to have “the talk.” The talk is never one conversation, but many.
2. Talk *with* your children. Avoid talking at your children from a top down perspective.
3. Talk about sexuality as often as you can. Use media— movies, music, books and social media to talk with them about sex.
4. Ask them questions!

## **SEXUALITY TALK TIPS (CONT.)**

- 5. Share stories and humanize yourself.**
- 6. Never shame, use fear tactics or shut down a conversation about sex, no matter how uncomfortable you feel.**
- 7. Never yuck anyones yum— don't speak ill about sexual practices or sexual orientation.**
- 8. Teach from many perspectives, so your child learns to have a critical mind on sex.**
- 9. If you don't know information about a particular topic, research it together or look it up and share the information with your children.**
- 10. Talk about sex matter-of-factly. Remember, this is natural.**

## **MATERIALS**

Open mind, curiosity, and media

## **STEPS**

1. **Our bodies, consent and boundary setting —**  
Teach your children the proper names for their body parts. Make it fun. Do regular boundary and consent exercise with them and model behavior.
2. **Communication by proxy—**  
Discuss love, dating, rape culture, homophobia, sexism and lots more, by proxy. Have a deep conversation with your friend in front of your children.  
Your children are always listening so make sure to talk from different perspectives and state the issue clearly.
3. **Teachable Media —**  
Have a movie night with your child and afterwards get desert and talk it over. Ask questions and engage. Every movie has a teachable moment about friendship, love, sex or violence.

