

Redefining Health & Wellness

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Featured this episode: Shohreh Davoodi & Lindo Bacon

Shohreh Davoodi: You are listening to episode # 72 of the Redefining Health & Wellness podcast. Today's guest is the esteemed Dr. Lindo Bacon—author, researcher, and former professor. Lindo's brand new book was recently released titled, *Radical Belonging: How to Survive and Thrive in an Unjust World (While Transforming it for the Better)*. We talked all about themes from the book, including identity, authenticity, connection, trauma-informed analysis, and more. To access the show notes and a full transcript of this episode, head to shohrehdavoodi.com/72. That's shohrehdavoodi.com/72.

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However you choose to invest in the podcast, thank you for believing in me and tuning in each week.

[Music plays]

Welcome to the Redefining Health & Wellness podcast. I'm your host and resident rainbow glitter bomb, Shohreh Davoodi. I started this project because I saw how black-and-white messaging about health harms everyone, and I wanted to paint a more honest and vibrant picture. This

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podcast is a space where we can reimagine health together by confronting limiting misconceptions, delving into aspects of well-being that are often ignored, and prioritizing conversations with marginalized individuals. I encourage you to take what you need and leave behind what you don't. Are you ready for this? Let's fucking go!

Lindo, it is such an honor to have you on the show. How are holding up in these very strange times?

Lindo Bacon: Ugh, god, that's such a loaded question!

Shohreh: [Laughs] I know!

Lindo: I don't know when people are going to be listening to this, but it is October right now and we're in the midst of the pandemic, and I don't know whether to say "great" or "not so good." I suppose the "not so good" is that I am just so raw and vulnerable all the time and just on edge. Like I feel things so deeply.

But the reason I wanna say that I'm doing great is because I think that's kind of a normal reaction to these hard and challenging times when there's just so much pain and suffering out there and so much uncertainty. And I'm learning to just ride out all of these emotions, and I'm feeling somewhat proud of myself for being able to do that. To sit with the difficult times sometimes and to feel the flipside. Like, as much as I feel a lot of pain and fear for our world, I'm also feeling such deep love and connection for humanity and for individual people in my life as well, and I think those things go hand-in-hand.

So, wow. That was a rather long response to the "how are you" question, but I think it demands it in these times. How are you?

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Shohreh: You know, I would say that my answer is similarly nuanced to yours. I definitely wake up with some daily dread, especially with the election that is coming up very soon and the never-ending pandemic. And at the same time, I have some really exciting things happening in life and in business. Getting to interview you is one of them! So, you know, it's a mixed bag. I feel like that's the case for most of us most of the time.

Lindo: Yeah, and I imagine the secret is we just have to appreciate the moment. So let me just say that now. It's lovely to finally meet you. You are doing such important work in the world, and I'm honored that my work is valuable and meaningful for you too. And yeah, it's fun to just dive right into being here with you.

Shohreh: Thank you so much. Yeah, I'm excited. I mean, you're the author of *Health At Every Size*, you're the co-author of *Body Respect*, and by the time this episode airs, your brand new book, *Radical Belonging*, is going to be out in the world. So how does it feel to finally have the book completed?

Lindo: Oh man. Your questions seem so innocent and yet, are so loaded [laughter]. Again, it's just so nuanced. On the one hand, I feel like a book is never finished. I'm still going back to it and I'm thinking, wow, there's ways I should have developed on that point just a little bit more so that people really could dive into that one deeper. So I feel like there will never be a point where I release something in the world and then feel satisfied.

And I think that's particularly true when I look back at my two previous books, that I would write so, so differently today. And it's hard for me to have books out there which are these static things that people are coming to when I feel like they now have some mistakes in them and I see the world a little bit differently now.

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And, on the other hand, I am tremendously excited to have this book out in the world. It feels so, so important. Especially now in this time where it's so heightened, where people are feeling this sense of how we treat people so differently in the world. Some people have tremendous opportunity and others have tremendous disadvantages that get in the way of them succeeding. Not only financially, but just feeling love, and acceptance, and value in the world. And I'm so happy to be able to contribute to that in some way.

And also, the book is intensely personal. It speaks to my own sense of unbelonging in the world, and it's also kind of a coming out. Just asserting to the world, this is the part of me that few people see, but I need for you to see this and to treat me differently. So it's both thrilling to be demanding that the world see me for who I am, and a little bit scary going forward too.

Shohreh:

And in the book you actually tell a story from college about accidentally ending up in a lecture being given by Audre Lorde where she tells you to stand up and asks you to identify yourself, and in that moment, you struggled to answer beyond saying that you're a Caucasian woman. So today, with all the wisdom you've gained between that lecture and now, I wanted to give you the opportunity to identify yourself again. So how do you identify, Lindo?

Lindo:

Huh! It's interesting 'cause I think there's this hope that all of these identities I have would just proudly roll off of my tongue and that I would love this opportunity. And yet, I felt myself kind of freeze for a moment and wonder, what do I want to announce to the world right now? How much do I want to reveal? And it's interesting to me to see that guarding. But to buy myself a little bit of time, though, is it okay if I just tell the story that you read in the book? 'Cause I think that that will help to put this into context.

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Shohreh: Yes, please!

Lindo: Okay. So the story is going back a few decades, and it was a time that I was in college. And I was awfully awkward back in those days. And I remember that there were these people that I really admired. They just had a social ease about them. And I always felt like I wanted to be like them and be accepted in their little peer group. And they were taking some of the same classes as me so I was around them a lot, but I never really felt like I belonged.

And the particular night in question that you're referring to was a time that I was wandering around campus and I was on my way back to my dorm room where I was just going to go to be alone and to study, and I saw a group of them wandering around. And I just got curious, and so, I guess I was a bit of a stalker [laughs] and just wondered, so what is it that everybody else does on a Friday night when you're cool? And I followed them around to see where they were headed, and they ended up going into a lecture hall. And I had no idea what was going on in that lecture hall, but I saw that there was a lot of action and interest there. Ordinarily, you know, on a Friday night, that usually means that there's something special going on. It's not a regular class and it's usually anybody can attend. And seeing that they were just about to close the doors, I just walked in and thought I'd see what the cool kids do.

And it was hard to find a seat. There was just a few left. And unfortunately, there was one that was right in the very front, kind of dead center. So that's where I sit down. And a woman walks in who I'd never heard of at the time, and as you mentioned, it turned out to be Audre Lorde, who I now know today has got quite a bit of fame now. And the first thing she says is something like, "I'm a Black, lesbian, female poet."

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And as soon as I heard the word “lesbian,” I remember just like freezing because at that point I hadn’t thought of myself as a lesbian. And yet, as soon as I heard the word, I knew that there was something in there that was right about that. And it’s not how I identify today, but at the moment I recognized that yeah, I was attracted to women, and it was a part of myself that I had never really acknowledged or tapped into until I heard her say that.

So there was a sense of panic that came on because I was wondering, oh no, here I came to what could be a lesbian event, does that mean that everybody around me is lesbian or gay? Are they gonna think that I am too? And I suddenly felt really, really uncomfortable being there.

And then it got worse because Audre scans the room, and the first thing she does is she points to me and she says, “You! Identify yourself. Who are you?” And it was horrible. I was like, sinking into my seat trying to figure out how can I be inconspicuous and not be seen, and here she’s calling on me in this group of people to come forward. And is she asking me to say that I’m a lesbian right now? And it was horrible.

I remember in the moment that the best thing that I could come up with was saying something like, “Well, I’m a Caucasian woman.” And she said, “Is that all?” And I said, “Well, I don’t want to put myself into boxes, you know? That’s enough.” And Audre at that moment was not very compassionate to me as an individual, but in the long run I take it as a very compassionate act.

What she instead did was she started asking other people, but this time it was people who chose to offer themselves as opposed to those who were forced into the situation. And one by one, people are standing up and they’re owning all of these stigmatized identities, and people are calling

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themselves queer, and one guy called himself a faggot.” And it was just amazing to me to be in this audience where people are just like taking these stigmatized words and identities and just proudly owning them.

And what I didn’t realize at the time, at the time all I felt was shame, was that what Audre was really trying to do was saying, you have power over your identity. Like, the outside world is taking these identities and saying that there’s shame attached to them or there’s something wrong with it, but you can come to a place where you own who you are and you proudly exhibit that in the world. And that’s what everybody else was doing. But it certainly wasn’t something I could do at the time.

And in retrospect, it’s taught me a lot of understanding that our culture does define certain identities as shameful, wrong, or bad, and when we accept that and we feel shame, I mean the culture gets inside us. But we have power over that. And Audre’s point, I think, is really true, that we can learn to recognize that those cultural values, they’re toxic, they’re damaging. They don’t include or respect the whole spectrum of all of the ways in which we are different and magnificent. And that part of my journey is in finding and owning my own magnificence.

And it’s an ongoing process. It took me a while. And for a while I was able, eventually, to be able to own the word lesbian, to feel pride in it. And then later I changed it because the word lesbian no longer felt right to me, and I started to identify more as queer in terms of my sexual orientation. And to this day, I feel like I’m getting further and further in being able to own my stigmatized identities.

And one of the things that I did in the book was I went further in terms of taking a step of owning a stigmatized identity. And that’s that I started to use the word trans to identify myself. Trans is a subset of kind of a larger

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umbrella term to talk about people whose gender identity doesn't match the identity that they were assigned at birth. But more specifically, I use the term genderqueer to describe myself, which means that I don't identify with either woman or man, but it's this non-binary place that feels most comfortable, and right, and appropriate for me.

So I think that might be one of the identities that I named in the book, and of course, I have many other identities that people see more readily in me and may take for granted. Things like being white, for example, or slender, for example. But those are some of the identities that I claim today.

Shohreh:

And I think your hesitation initially to identify yourself actually fits really well with some of these overarching themes of the book. And in particular I'm thinking about authenticity, which is a word that has definitely become a buzzword. But in the book, you talk about how it's not as simple as just deciding that you're going to be your authentic self and how we actually have to strike a balance between authenticity and vulnerability on the one hand, and then conforming as a form of survival in a world that will not accept our authentic selves on the other hand. So I'm wondering what can that balancing act look like in real life and how can people decide what choice to make in different situations?

Lindo:

Right. Well, part of the issue is that the more marginalized you are in the world, the less safe it is to publicly own your identities. For example, trans Black women are getting killed these days because there's a culture that says there's something wrong with that and people feel permission to show their hatred and violence against people. So there's a reason why many of us don't fully show our authentic selves, and that's because we're taught at a very young age that who we are isn't always valued.

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And there's degrees of this, but certainly when we think about gender identity, every single one of us has an experience of feeling like we don't completely measure up to societal expectations and we're gonna get judged for it and sometimes judged negatively for it. For example, many people who were socialized as girls are told that their power comes from being slender. And if they don't conform to that, then they don't get treated as well. So that sets up girls to be on a lifelong journey to try to be slender, to present this self to the world so that they'll get appreciation and acceptance. And it also makes it really hard for people of all body sizes, particularly for people who are larger. It's gonna be a lot harder for them to get cultural acceptance for their body. They don't see bodies like theirs reflected back positively in media. They're subject to a lot of discrimination that makes life harder. It makes sense that we're gonna want an easier life for ourselves.

So on those things that we can change, many people try to develop an inauthentic self. You know, a way of hiding that from others so that we can fit in and get love and acceptance, or what we perceive as love and acceptance from other people. And that we learn to feel shame for those ways we don't conform. And also we learn to feel shame for those ways in which we visibly don't conform to those people that do feel more of a sense of belonging.

So, for example, if you have black skin, you're less likely to be given opportunity, more likely to be treated poorly in the world. And it makes sense that you would develop a sense of shame or inadequacy about who you are when you're not treated as well and those are the cultural messages that you get. Or to blame yourself when it's hard for you to succeed financially when a large part of the issue may be, well, that's because of racism and because you're not given opportunity.

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So it can be really challenging to live in a world that sets many of us up for unbelonging. And I guess I started this answer to this question to mention that all of us have some ways in which we don't fit into the assigned gender that we were taught. Or the roles that we're taught to play to be that gender well don't work for us. You know, you think about the many boys who are denied access to the full range of emotions because they're told that boys aren't supposed to cry or be vulnerable. So all of us experience ways in which we just don't fit in and feel shame for it and may feel as if we have to hide aspects of ourselves or not develop aspects of ourselves because the culture doesn't make room for treating us with respect.

So I got off on a little tangent here. It seems like I'm doing a really good job of getting off on tangents [laughter] and answering a lot more than you're asking. But I suppose what this sets us up for is that we all need to learn skills to figure out what it is that we're gonna show to the world. What's safe? Because the more we show to the world, well, that's our only opportunity for actually experiencing love and belonging, right? If people can't see us, then what we're getting isn't really love and belonging. So the goal should be, like, the more we can show ourselves and be vulnerable, the more opportunity we have to feel love and belonging.

And yet it's also in our best interest to figure out when it's gonna be safe to do it and when we want to do that because it's dangerous not to. So it makes sense that we're all gonna be a little bit scared of showing up in the world and that we need to protect ourselves. And it's an ongoing skill to figure out how much of myself can I show? Where is it going to be safe? How can I create those places of love and belonging and find those people where it's gonna be safer for me to really exhibit myself? And that's an ongoing journey that I think we're all negotiating.

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Shohreh: That gets to much of the wisdom in this book which is grounded in the importance of connection, and community, and how we as humans need each other quite literally for our health and well-being. But connection can also be hard to come by, especially the more marginalized you are, as you just mentioned. So why does connection matter so much and how do we get some of that meaningful connection in our lives that we're seeking?

Lindo: Connection, I think, is the reason that we're put on this planet, and the need for human connection is biologically wired into us. When we feel rejected by people, there are biological things that happen in us. There's places in our brain that get triggered. In fact, they're the same places in our brain that get triggered when we experience physical pain. So we need this connection. It's as essential to us as things like food and water. And when we experience connection it can calm us and make us feel good, and it also triggers our neurologic system to experience pleasure. So, as difficult as it is, it's also essential to not just happiness but to survival.

I think one of the easiest paths to getting more connection is creating more safety and refuge for other people to be themselves and to allow you into their world. The more you do that, the more that people are gonna want to see you and are gonna value you and let you into their world. So, one of the skills that you can be developing is your skills for seeing people and making space for them, which is not always an easy thing. We're not taught to make space, to see everybody else.

And if I could go back to the issue we were talking about in the very beginning around gender and my experience of unbelonging, I was on a Zoom call yesterday with five people that I was just meeting for the first time. We were doing some work together and the moderator of the group

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at one point said, “Ladies, thanks for all coming together.” And as soon as she said that, it was like getting kicked in the gut because it was this feeling that, oh, she’s seeing me as a woman right now and that’s how she’s actually trying to help us to bond together is on this shared idea of “woman.”

And immediately I felt this disconnect, like I’m not being seen. Do I have to step up right now and tell her, no, I’m non-binary, I’m genderqueer? And then that’s distraction from the work that we’re trying to do together. But if I don’t distract, then the rest of the meeting I’m probably gonna feel that sense of unbelonging.

So anyway, this was because she had this sense that she could just look at me and know what my gender is. And in fact, you can’t ever know somebody’s gender without asking them. There’s this whole myth out there that there are these two types of people, men and women, and that there’s ways of categorizing them and we can automatically identify which box somebody goes in. And instead, what we can all recognize is that’s just not true. It’s commonly accepted these days among scientists, whether you’re a social scientist or a biological scientist, that sex and gender aren’t binary categories. That even if you know something about somebody’s biology, that doesn’t mean you know anything about their gender. But yet, we make all these assumptions all of the time.

So if that person wanted to connect more, they could start to challenge their own assumptions and recognize how they’re shutting people out of the world. And instead they can learn to be open to seeing people’s gender and they could instead have started the meeting by asking people to offer up their gender pronouns. Or something else to make it safer for

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all of us to see one another and to feel included in that meeting before it began.

So I think that all of us can learn a little bit more about the ways in which we've been taught to see the world and make assumptions about people that don't make space to treat everybody with respect and to see one another so we can grow as people, whether it's learning to challenge racial stereotypes or gender stereotypes, and create more of a sense of refuge and safety for other people. And then they'll show up, our worlds get expanded and it gives us more opportunity to also be seen.

Shohreh: That meeting problem could have been resolved if everyone used the Texas gender-neutral of "y'all," which is my personal favorite.

Lindo: Exactly. We can be more expansive. Instead of referring to men and women, we can be talking about people of all genders. So we can look at our everyday vocabulary and see ways in which we can be working on creating a more inclusive world.

Shohreh: A really beautiful thing that you said in the book was about how when we do this, when we actually learn more about other people and find ways to be more inclusive, it actually makes our own lives more vibrant and it's helpful for everybody.

Lindo: Exactly. Right now we don't see all the richness in the world because we're too busy kind of putting people into these ideas that we already have. So we don't know too much about all of the amazing cultural diversity and the ways of being in the world. We've been very limited because there's limited representation in media and in our social lives. But the more that we open up, we can find that there is so much out there that we just don't

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know about that is so exciting and that can expand our world so much. And the world just becomes so much richer the more than we do this.

Shohreh:

It also allows us so much more grace and compassion for others and for ourselves. Throughout the book you discuss the importance of understanding how we as individuals fit into society at large and how we can't fully understand our actions without also having awareness of our environment and the traumas we've experienced. And I'm thinking about right now, we're in a very traumatic time. We've already mentioned the coronavirus, the presidential election is 20 days away here in the U.S. So how can we bring this more trauma-informed lens to our understanding of our own choices and the choices of other people?

Lindo:

Yeah. Well, one of the things that's most important, I think, when we're trying to use a trauma-informed lens, and when we're talking about that, what we're saying is that we've all had hard experiences in the world. Of course, some to a much greater degree than others. And it's traumatizing to live in a world where you're not treated well and you're not seen. So we're expanding the word trauma to talk about our subjective experience in the world. Like, it's not just about having an event, like experiencing a war or a fire. But it's also about those daily experiences of being treated as less than that build on you and turn into trauma on your body. Like each time you have those bad experiences, there's a stress response in your body, and repeated stress responses build up over time so that your body has a trauma response. And all of this stuff contributes to making you a little bit more vigilant and fearful in the world, a little bit more reactive when things happen because you're more protective.

So when we're having a hard time in the world, you know, like, let's say you're watching your kid go through a hard time connecting on the

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internet in school and feeling bad about themselves, and immediately you want to be reactive and angry at the teacher for setting up these conditions or at yourself because you don't have a stronger internet connection, or better computer equipment to support your kid, or whatever is going on. Instead of focusing in on your immediate reactivity, a trauma-informed lens requires that we go back and say, you know like, what happened to put us into these circumstances?

And then you could start to recognize that, well you know, this isn't a fair world, you know, that we just don't have the money to create conditions to really best support our kids. And we're going to keep running into the ways in which that's going to make our kids' lives harder and they're going to experience pain. And that can help us to develop a lot more compassion for ourselves. It's not our fault, it's not our kids' fault that they ended up in these circumstances. And we have to be compassionate for the fact that this is hard. And with that compassion we can then go back and find other ways of managing the pain of our circumstances.

Shohreh: So some of this, especially when we're thinking about other people, is trying to get past our initial emotional response of anger, frustration or whatever it may be, and stepping back enough to look at what that's couched in, right. What are the circumstances of why things went down the way that they did.

Lindo: Right, that there's always reasons why people do the things that they do. And people often do bad things but yet they're good people, and we're often doing it out of a sense of protectiveness or their body is just wired for reactivity and their defenses are overwhelmed. And so that's why they reacted in an angry, unproductive way in the moment.

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And I also think that there's something that's much broader here, and that's to recognize too that we don't always know what somebody's experience is and our judgments about them may not be true. And we may not even know what our bias is that we're projecting onto the circumstance. So for example, when people misgender me, it's not because they're bad or malicious people, it's not because things went wrong in their life. It's because they were taught certain messages about gender that it never even occurred to them to question. Like, the gender binary's worked much better for them than for me, so knowing that I might have this experience of pain and getting kicked in the gut every time someone misgenders them is just not something that would ever even occur to them or be part of their experience.

And what we're recognizing now is that there are a lot of people that are having experiences in the world that we just didn't know about. So for example, I'm thinking right now about all of the white people who are shocked to learn about how many Black men are scared to get into a car because they know that they're more likely to just get pulled over for being Black, and powerless against this system that grants cops a certain power over their bodies. It's not as if that kind of racism is new to this age. It's always been there. But a lot of white people didn't have to see that before.

And there's a lot that's going on in other people's experience that we just don't know because they're not represented, or seen, or valued in our culture. So this is a time where we're recognizing that we all need to challenge ourselves to make this a more fair and equitable world where we all belong. That not going out of our way to create refuge and pockets of inclusion means that we're likely to be contributing to the problem.

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Shohreh: Yeah, and that's a conversation I often have with clients as well, where some of these things are starting to come into their conscience and there's a lot of feelings of guilt and shame that they tend to get mired in, in starting to understand some of these things, especially about race or about gender. And I always talk with them about the fact that you didn't get a choice in the society that you grew up in and in the messaging that was given to you. You can't change that. We can't go back and make the world different and have the messages that were instilled in you be something else. But now that you know that information, now you can take steps going forward to start working towards that more inclusive world that's important to you and start deprogramming some of these thoughts and ideas that you're now learning are very wrong. And that's where our agency is, that's where our power is.

Lindo: Right. And I want to go back to that whole idea about how we're trying to change the question. Instead of thinking what's wrong with us or what's wrong with other people, we're asking the question about what happened to you and reexamining all of those stories with a much more compassionate light.

So I was thinking recently about how a friend of mine felt really ashamed that their house was just so messy all the time and didn't want anybody to see that. It took a lot to kind of prepare for a Zoom call to get to a room where you couldn't see a background that they were ashamed of. And they had always experienced their messy house as feeling like they're lazy and it's their problem, but it's not about laziness. Like someone I know who works so hard, has to hustle so much to just kind of get by, they're so busy surviving it makes sense that they're not gonna want to put a lot of time to taking care of their home. They've got so many other priorities. So house

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cleaning is going to take on different meaning for them than for someone else.

And instead of just seeing themselves as lazy or there's something wrong with themselves, they can have a little bit more compassion for why their house is messy. Now that doesn't mean that they don't clean the house, but it can help them to kind of figure out how to manage it and make time for cleaning if they can be more compassionate for why they do the things that they do.

Shohreh: Something that I've noticed people struggle with when adopting this more compassionate world view is that some people feel like it lets others off the hook for harm that they cause, or like, that their own hurt that someone else caused them isn't valid if they take on this more compassionate approach. What would you say to that?

Lindo: I think that one thing that's important is that we all want to feel better about ourselves. And it's true that other people may hurt you again and again and do mean and nasty things. And you can't change that other person. You can choose, if possible, to walk away or to change your attitude to how they hurt you, but you may never be able to make them the person that you want them to be. You may never get them to be able to, in your mind, take responsibility for their actions. And I think that's a really hard thing to let go of, is the kind of power you have over other people's lives. But what you can do is you can just keep working harder and harder to try to create the conditions that might make it easier for that person to take responsibility and change.

Shohreh: In the book you actually mentioned when you get spacey and are looking off in another direction how your partner will kind of very gently bring you back to the present moment. And as someone with ADHD who tends to

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get very spacey, I really appreciated that and I was like, wow, I wonder what it would be like to have a partner who had that kind of understanding and instead of getting, you know, angry that I'm spacing out, has this more gentle approach. So I think that's a really beautiful example of creating that environment.

Lindo:

Yeah, thank you for bringing that up. It is a wonderful example of how my partner just excels at that, at making me feel safe, even for the stuff about me that's not so likeable. That she still invites that in and is kind to that. And it's that openness that allows me to make change. But if she instead just got angry because I wasn't present with her, it would have been less effective. Which is not to say that that's not valuable at times because sometimes that's the only thing that is gonna allow someone else to hear something, right, is by seeing your anger.

So I think that there's always room for a lot of different expressions of this, but I think on a broader level, the more that we can just make space for all of the ways in which we're not so good in the world, you know, like for others' bad behavior. But I also want to get back to the fact that that doesn't mean we don't hold other people accountable. We do. But in order to have that conversation, we can make it safer for people to feel like it's okay to be accountable.

Shohreh:

Right, so that instead of the current situation where a lot of times when people are being held accountable for their hurt, their response is, you know, extreme defensiveness, shutting down, trying to turn it back on the other person. If we can create safer environments for accountability to happen, then people are more likely to hear it when people have critiques for them.

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Lindo:

Right, but I also just really want to make another point here that might contradict what we're just saying because I think it's important that we kind of make space for a lot of nuance here. And sometimes, for example, I see, like right now, racial injustice is front and center in the news these days. And Black people are rightfully angry when they see these repeated acts of racism happening. And I think angry responses are totally appropriate because first off, it's a natural expression of what you're feeling, and I think that's important that we have space to do that. And it also is valuable for the other person because it helps other people to hear.

So I think that we all have to figure out what's going to be most valuable for us in the moment, and I think that it's valuable at the same time that some people are expressing anger, other people are helping those white people to sit with the fact that they unintentionally might have done something racist, that doesn't mean they're a bad person, and here's what they can do to take responsibility and see if they can undo some of the damage and understand why they hurt that other person.

So I think that there's room for all kinds of reactions to this, and ultimately, we're looking for a world where we make it safe for everyone to be who they are. And to get to that place, we have to allow for a lot of different reactions to make that happen. So it may be that in the outer world you're met with a range of reactions, one of them being anger, another being compassion, and that you can take those feelings and go to a safe place, like an affinity group with other white people, where you can learn to process the damage that you did. And then come back into the outer world and figure out how to incorporate that so that you're no longer as much of a part of the problem, but that you're working towards anti-oppression.

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Shohreh: Thank you for saying that and talking about the nuance there. I think that's really important, and also to state that tone policing marginalized folx is not an okay thing for us to do. And I think that point you made at the end is really great too, which is that some of this comes down to our own communities.

Like you said, if you are a white person, that means doing this work among white people where you're not going to cause the same kind of harm as if you're doing this amongst marginalized folx who, if you're not quite at a point where you're ready to, be able to hear those feelings or handle those feelings, you and your own community need to create the space where you have the resilience to be able to do that. That's not the responsibility of marginalized folx to soften their message or be kinder to you, it's on some part a personal responsibility and community responsibility to learn about those harms and figure out resilience for addressing them.

So yeah, I think that nuance is really important.

Lindo: Yeah, very well said. Thank you.

Shohreh: If you could leave listeners with one final thought about radical belonging, what would you want them to know?

Lindo: I suppose one of the most important things that I want people to know is, you know, we all feel beaten down by the world and we all feel pain and shame, and that's what bonds us together. That's our humanity. And I would love to see us move more towards honoring and valuing our vulnerability and making space for that.

So the big point there is that you're no different than anybody else in wanting to be liked, and respected, and appreciated. So I just want to like

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honor you for how hard that is to be human sometimes, and how much I love that about you and me too. You know, that's our beauty. And I see that vulnerability in you and how hard it is, and I just want to say, you're human. Me too. I get that. I see you. And the more we can just kind of be there with that, well, that's how we create this world of love for all of us.

I want to thank you because I feel like in this interview, we've had this really beautiful opportunity to kind of connect and be there and I've also felt the listeners too. And this is what we need for this world, is just more pockets of vulnerability and making space for it. So thank you.

And just to add a last sentence to what I was just saying is that in this conversation I have felt like I've really shown my authentic self and been present. And it feels good. And this is what I hope for all of us, is that we have the opportunity to feel like we can just show ourselves and show up in the world and have the confidence to know that some people will make space for that.

Shohreh: Thank you so much. That's a really beautiful thought to leave listeners with.

Alright, so our final question which I ask to all of my guests is, how do you define health and wellness for yourself at this moment in your life?

Lindo: At this moment in my life I define health and wellness as my ability to just kind of show up. To just be present and not know what's gonna happen and have the confidence to just kind of do it anyway. I mean, the reason I feel like this is so important is because I have a past history of being scared and turning to things like food, or drugs, or alcohol as a way of kind of avoiding the discomfort. But now I'm really kind of valuing the fact that

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I'm dipping into my discomfort and accepting it, and it's really not so bad. It feels really quite freeing to be able to do this.

Shohreh: Mmm, I like that. So this element of accepting that discomfort is a part of life and that if we embrace it rather than trying to run from it all the time, that it can actually make things not so terrible.

Lindo: Exactly.

Shohreh: Thank you so much for being here, Lindo. This was wonderful. How can people find you and get their hands on your book?

Lindo: Okay, well, my name is Lindo Bacon and it's pretty easy to find lindobacon.com, and that will direct you anywhere else you want to go to find out about the work that I do. And my book, *Radical Belonging*, can be found at all the usual places that books can be found. You can also link to places to purchase the book through my website as well.

I've been building a *Radical Belonging* community, which is a place where people can come together on the internet in a private space and talk about these issues that are meaningful for our lives. It's called *The Radical Belonging Community*, and I invite people to join me there.

Shohreh: Wonderful. I will make sure to include a link to that in the show notes and a link to everything else that you've mentioned so that people can easily find you. Everyone, go get Lindo's new book, *Radical Belonging*, there'll be links in the show notes for you. I have read it and it's wonderful, and thank you again, Lindo, for making time for this. I know how busy your schedule is, so I really appreciate it.

Lindo: Thank you. It's been great.

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Shohreh:

And that's our show for today! If this podcast has taught you anything or helped you in any way, I hope you'll consider supporting me in my effort to keep it going. You can join my Patreon community and receive members-only perks by going to shohrehdavoodi.com/Patreon, or you can tip me for my work through the payment links located at the bottom of the show notes for each episode. I would also encourage you to subscribe and submit a rating and review through your podcast provider of choice. I love hearing from listeners, so feel free to screenshot from your podcast player, post on social media, and tag me. Finally, if you're looking for more information on what I'm all about and how to work with me directly, head over to shohrehdavoodi.com. Hope to see you for the next episode.