



Episode 25: Welcome to Season 3! A Conversation with Roxy and Sarah

Transcript *(lightly edited for readability)*

Roxy Manning 00:00:00

Hi, I'm Roxy Manning.

Sarah Peyton 00:00:18

And I'm Sarah Peyton. Welcome to Fierce Compassion as we launch into our exciting third season.

Roxy Manning 00:00:26

To kick off this new chapter, we're bringing you a special episode that bridges our journey so far with our vision for the conversations to come. We'll explore the challenges we faced in practicing compassion, especially in today's politically charged climate, sharing insights that will set the tone for our upcoming discussions with this season's wonderful lineup of guests.

Sarah Peyton 00:00:49

You'll hear about our experiences as authors of [How to Have Antiracist Conversations](#) and [The Antiracist Heart](#), and how creating and working with these books has shaped our own lives and work. As we approach a critical election year, we'll discuss what it means to practice fierce compassion in these challenging times. We'll touch on the importance of self-care and rejuvenation in sustaining long term commitment to anti-racism work.

Roxy Manning 00:01:17

And we'll reflect on the powerful insights our past guests have shared and give you a taste of the inspiring dialogues to come, all centered around the intersection of compassion, anti-racism and social change. Sarah and I will also be offering a limited number of live, one-on-one coaching sessions, which will be shared on the podcast. If you would be interested in participating in a coaching session or want to find out more, follow the link in the show notes or visit our website, antiracistconversations.com.

Sarah Peyton 00:01:51

As we embark on this third season, we invite you to join us in this ongoing journey of growth, reflection, and action towards creating a more just and compassionate world.

Roxy Manning 00:02:03

Welcome to Season 3 of Fierce Compassion.

Roxy Manning 00:02:29

Hi, Sarah! It's so lovely to be here as we're about to launch the third season of Fierce Compassion!

Sarah Peyton 00:02:37

I'm excited. I'm excited to be with you, Roxy! We're so often interviewing guests and we don't so often just get to hang out together.

Roxy Manning 00:02:37

Yes, and I love the idea. Our delightful podcast manager said, "People would love to hear from both of you, like what's this journey been like," and so here we are.

Sarah Peyton 00:02:49

It's amazing to have done this podcast and one of the questions that we always ask our guests, as you, our beloved listeners know, is how do you define self-compassion? So Roxy, what is your today's definition of how you describe or define self-compassion today?

Roxy Manning 00:03:13

I think self-compassion... today especially, the word grace comes to mind. So self-compassion is holding myself with the same grace that I hold other people with. The understanding that I'm not going to be perfect, I'm not going to get it right, and how can I wrap myself in a loving embrace when I don't show up or I don't move through the world in the way that I would really want.

And what that means for me often is taking time to both acknowledge that, oh my gosh, I just did not do something I like, but also then to, and this is new for me, giving myself space to grieve, to really sit with the sadness of both whatever needs were not met in the very specific thing, but also just the gap between how I want to be in the world and how I showed up.

And when I can hold myself in that grief, then I can give myself permission to be human, to make mistakes and then to keep trying to keep showing up. And so, yeah, being in a state of grace with myself is part of my definition of self-compassion.

Sarah Peyton 00:04:16

You said it was something new today. What did it used to be like? How, what's the journey been like a little bit?

Roxy Manning 00:04:23

Yeah, so initially when I first was thinking about self-compassion, it was a very intellectual thing, right? I'd been studying Nonviolent Communication for many, many years. And a lot of times it was around, Oh, I'm having these negative self-thoughts, let me like pull out my feelings and needs list and try to empathize with myself.

But it was almost formulaic. It wasn't this really sitting in the grief, sitting in the sadness and telling myself, like... Back then I think I would say, you're just wallowing, pull up those big girl panties and move on. And now I give myself permission to slow down and actually be with the grief.

Sarah Peyton 00:05:02

Oh, this really meets my need for beauty.

Roxy Manning 00:05:09

Thank you. And I'm actually curious for you. What's your definition of self-compassion these days and how has that changed over time?

Sarah Peyton 00:05:18

Yeah, I'm going to start with where it used to be and then go to how I define it today because God knows what I will say. But it used... I used to snort, you know, when people would say self-compassion. Yeah, right. You know, that kind of response of, uh huh, in an alternate universe, maybe. And gradually working with the relational neuroscience, the study of the brain and the effects of trauma on the brain, I started to be able to have, to develop what's so key for me now in self-compassion.

It was... something you hinted at is warmth, is self-warmth, is like actually liking myself, is so different and lets there be room for me to kind of have a Big Self that wraps around me and says, yeah, sweetheart, of course, of course this is hard. And sometimes that just gets washed away. This big voice that can hold me gets washed away and I get into imposter syndrome and I'm like... Oh, where's solid ground? And then I can reach out to community and say, I'm in trouble folks. Give me some help here. And then sometimes people send me little love notes and I cry. And then the self-compassion gets to come back. So even self-compassion to me now is starting to feel like a community and self kind of interwoven experience.

Roxy Manning 00:06:54

I love this. I had this image as you were talking of this big mama Sarah, just wrapping little Sarah in these warm, loving hands, and I think it's so important for us to all have a way to parent ourselves, to nurture ourselves when we need it.

Sarah Peyton 00:07:10

Yeah.

Roxy Manning 00:07:12

Yeah. And the other thing I just want to really lift up is you're talking about community, right? For me, it's so hard to do this 100 percent on my own. Sometimes I need to recognize like, okay, I just don't got it today. You know, I do need to reach out to people who love me, who can see me in the ways that I can't see myself in the moment. Yeah.

Well, I'm actually also curious, like, we had an interview with [Kazu Haga](#) last season. And one of the things he talked about was, you know, sometimes you're really challenged and sometimes you just want to push some, punch somebody in the mouth, right? And I love the fierceness of that because we all, we've all been there. And so when I think about self-compassion, I'm thinking about compassion. I think about the challenge about extending it outwards. So I'm wondering if you have had challenges in the past or over the years... the past year where you really struggled to find...

Sarah Peyton 00:08:04

So many challenges, so many challenges! I remember that when you and I put on, and it was - there's so many places where Kazu intersects with this for me - Several years ago, Roxanne put on during the Trump presidency, Roxy and I put on an integration class for Martin Luther King Jr.'s work and Nonviolent Communication and how those two can come together, how to be a Nonviolent Communications practitioner with this eye to Martin Luther King and Beloved Community.

So, Kazu Haga's book was of incredible importance to me and really allowed me to do - his first book - and allowed me to do a turnaround to begin to really work on the ways that I had zero compassion for the folks who had... who were taking us down this different political road than I prefer.

And I worked on that and what really allowed me to begin to change was a differentiation that Kazu offered, which was the differentiation between who someone is and what they do. And so this year I've been challenged again with the revelations of the Supreme Court Justices taking what, for me, are very clearly money that influenced their rulings on the Supreme Court, which completely for me destroys my faith in the Supreme Court, which was something I loved.

I loved that about America. So to have that tarnished by this has a number of different levels of pain and betrayal and grieving for me. And again, to come back, as I come back and I separate those folks from what their action is, what I start to see is something that I'm just beginning to glimpse in my sort of neophyte learning and teaching of anti-racism and anti-oppression, which is the way that people get confused about the systemic and the individual, the way in which, like for me, here I am, I've got them entangled, the systemic and the individual, but as I start to pull it apart for myself, I can see that, for example, a Justice that acts in this is not tapping into the systemic.

A Justice who takes money that allows their vote to be influenced in one of the most primary and beautiful organs of democracy that we have is not in touch, like there's now a different kind of an ache for people not being in touch with the sweetnesses of possibility of Beloved Community in a really big way.

Roxy Manning 00:11:22

I want to make sure I'm understanding. So there's some sense that when a Justice does this, it's not that you're saying that this act isn't, in some ways, another embodiment of some of the systemic challenges that we're facing, but that this act, in some ways, breaks the faith, breaks the... the Justice itself has lost... or themselves has lost trust.

Sarah Peyton 00:11:51

Yes, that's my sense. And has lost that vision. Has lost access to, or never had access to, a sense of the beauty of Beloved Community, of everybody's... of all the women's bodies being protected and cared for, of all the black bodies being protected and cared for, of all the indigenous bodies being protected and cared for, that there can be such a deep thoughtfulness about systems that comes into play when people can touch their dream instead of having it be out of reach.

Roxy Manning 00:12:38

That's interesting. As I think about this question and where I struggle, and especially when I think about it with the political challenges that we're facing, I realized that it is still a place where I've been struggling to find compassion. Like, as we're recording this right now, we just had another school shooting. Two young folks have died, and two teachers have died, and a 14-year-old child is now in jail, probably for the rest of his life. His father's arrested. And that's the kind of thing that makes me furious, because I'm still hearing the rhetoric that's like, "Oh, we're going to individualize this. This was a bad actor" versus "No, this is this whole systemic BS. The whole systemic BS that's supporting the gun lobby and the money that they bring." And putting lives at risk.

And it's hard for me, even now I get it, you know, I get why some people find it hard to look at that big picture and to make different choices. And I don't have patience for it anymore. And I think it's maybe one of the things that I've been learning on the show is the difference between holding compassion, because I can have a lot of compassion and it doesn't mean I have to tolerate it. I don't have to tolerate it. I don't have to put up with it. I can still say, yeah, that is still not working for me and we need to find other strategies.

And so I think, yeah, nowadays I'm much more willing to speak up and to be fierce in my speaking out and to still do it from a place of seeing the person as a person who is still deserving of belonging and is still a member of my community.

Sarah Peyton 00:14:34

And it's with the heartache of the struggle.

Roxy Manning 00:14:41

I was crying as I was watching, just reading the accounts of the young people who sat through that shooting and imagining being a parent, not having my child come home. So compassion is really hard sometimes. And I think it's important to recognize, to acknowledge that our show is not about hiding this grief or making it go away. It's about being fully, fiercely in the fire and holding compassion, self-compassion for everything that comes up in the face of these challenges.

Sarah Peyton 00:15:14

No kidding. And here we are, it's been a year since your book, *How to Have Antiracist Conversations*, and our book, *The Antiracist Heart*, were published. What has it been like for you to have books out? What's most surprised or moved or challenged you with these books being in the world?

Roxy Manning 00:15:37

It's still kind of a big dream for me. I still feel surprised when I think like, I'm an author! I'm an author of two books! Wow! So it's been really, really sweet. And I think one of the things that I've been loving is, you know, writing a book - we just interviewed Kit Miller for our third season and she has a new book coming out. And one of the things that she said was, you know, if I had known what it was like, there's no way I would have done it. And that was my experience of writing our books. I said yes to something without any idea what I was saying yes to.

And it was almost this kind of, like, I was so immersed in the writing of it that I never stepped back to say, what did I actually create? It's like, I'm writing it, I'm pouring everything out, but in some ways I didn't have a sense of the big picture. And in the past year, I've been talking to a lot of

people who've been reading the book and who've been deeply moved and inspired by it, who, you know - I've been talking with people at universities who are saying, we're now implementing this in how we're working with residents' lives and our students who are coming in, or business folks who are using it in their work, and even people who are saying... I think one of the most moving things was our editor kind of saying, I was crying as I read this.

Another guest who we interviewed last year, I just remember when she was talking about how as she was narrating the book that she and the sound engineer had to stop and they were crying and talking about the content of the book. And so I think that's the thing that most surprised me; that it's really resonating with people and speaking to them on so many different levels.

There are people who are saying like, I'm finally seeing some of my stories reflected in what you've written. And other people who are saying it's so helpful to have a book that talks about what makes this work hard, right? Why it's so hard to be fiercely committed to anti-racism and still show up in ways that don't reflect that fierce commitment.

So that's definitely the thing that's been really deeply meaningful for me. And the thing that's been challenging is I think I'm still surprised that, and this is like a really, in some ways it feels very business-like, but how hard it is to get this work into people's hands. I hear a lot of people telling me how much they love the books, how much they're excited about it, but the way the publishing industry is set up, it's really hard to get it out there, to get it to the people who really would benefit from reading it.

So I keep having this dream that one day Oprah will read it or like my, some of my big heroes, LeVar Burton or Isabel Wilkerson. I'm like, how will I get it to them? 'Cause I want them to see this book that was so inspired by how they're moving through the world. But it's really about how do I get it into as many hands as possible so that people can benefit from what we've done. It's probably been the most challenging thing.

What about you?

Sarah Peyton 00:18:45

Well, there's a couple of things. One is that grappling with - this is something I continue to grapple with after having written the book and continue to work to refine and discover - pathways through people's defenses to their hearts. As I am a white person and I am educating from a standpoint of having privilege and having power and having collective responsibility for, especially in the United States, this system of systemic racism. And on a global level, the experience of being an American citizen with a huge carbon footprint in a time that's a climate crisis.

As I just claim my collective responsibility, it makes my heart hurt. My body wishes for that not to be true in some way. And so I find my own longings for this not to be true and then discover, okay, what are my contracts that stop me from being able to really be with this and what happens if I offer the unconscious contract release work to others who are in this struggle.

Interestingly enough, I was doing this work very recently with a group of people, about a hundred people, and it was mostly white people. And not just white people, but it was a global audience, so there were folks who were privileged from other societies as well as North America. And there was a lot of that crunchiness of that, “yes, but I.. don't you see me... I, I, I...”. And the listing of the credentials; “I've been doing this work for 35 years!” and the regular kinds of crunchiness that we run into with privileged fragility. And what really changed things in the room was the work with the contract, “I will not have any power.”

And so when the people went in and released whatever version they had of the contract, “I will not have any power,” or “I will believe that power equals harm,” then the room changed. The atmosphere in the room changed. People started to breathe, their bodies settled. It took me... I had it in my curriculum and it took me the first half a day to get to it. And I'm sure there was a lot of setup that had to happen to get us there. But I was so relieved and delighted. And then I was also so interested that we have a resistance to even acknowledging the very most basic precept that we need to acknowledge in order to be able to move forward with anti-racism and anti oppression; that we actually are in a position of power, much so we may hate it. Whatever position of power we have, whatever skin color we have, there's some way that we have more privilege than someone else and can work with it. But the more we have, the more crunchy we become. So I'm still in this discovery process that started really with the book, or started before the book, when I was imagining writing it with you. And I was like, what would happen if we really sank into this? So this is my world of exploration and delight in relationship to the book.

Roxy Manning 00:22:25

As I hear you speak about this, you're also reminding me of one of the things that has been surprising for me about seeing people engage with the work. I just completed a class also. And it was a class very specific about the book, with let's actually practice having the dialogues. And so we did different kinds of the dialogues. People went through the model and then we got to the point when it was like, okay, let's actually practice.

And the place where people kept having the most surprise, and it's very related to what you were saying, was this recognition that, “Oh my gosh. I need to do my inner work before I can actually have these dialogues.” They kept coming across, coming up, no matter what their race or ethnicity

was, they kept coming up with, "I need to have clarity about what it is that I'm actually wanting to say, why I'm wanting to speak. I need to work with my fears." And so this dance between how do I create the space to do the inner work, but still make myself available for the conversation in a timely manner seems to be one of the places that I'm so surprised that it's the hardest dance for people to work with.

Sarah Peyton 00:23:38

Well, here we are, and we've done this podcast for two seasons and we've spoken with over two dozen activists, artists, scientists, therapists, politicians, and change makers. What most stands out for you, Roxy? And how has speaking with these folks changed you and your sense of your place and your work in this movement for anti-oppression?

Roxy Manning 00:24:07

I love this question. And just off the top of my head, there are two things that immediately come to mind. One is that I remember doing a keynote address for Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day at a college before we wrote the book. And after I did the address, there was a young person, one of the college students who was the emcee for this big event. And she was kind of closing the speech. And she said something like, "I used to think that I wasn't able to do anything, that I loved Dr. King's work, but it's like, you have to be a Dr. King to be able to be an anti-racist, and, you know, I'm just little me. There's nothing I can do. And now I feel inspired. Now I feel that it's possible."

And I think that's one of the things that really stands out for me when I look at the people that we've interviewed. Because we've interviewed people from a huge variety, a huge breadth of life experiences, talents, capacities, education levels, so many different ways where people were just saying, "I found this one thing that I was passionate about and that I was willing to move forward and say I've got this, I'm going to speak about this thing and I'm going to take that risk."

And when they did that, it had an impact. And so there's something that was so inspiring for me around recognizing that as I look at all of these guests, that we each have impact and we have a deep impact in so many different ways that the person who's, you know, I think it was [Philip Miller](#) who did the cry, who recorded the wail of a mother caring about the atrocities that her child experienced in South Africa. And he made that something that would move thousands and thousands of people. And that that was just as impactful as the librarian who said, "I am going to resist book banning."

And so it's like, we can all have an impact. That is probably the message that stands out the most for me about this work. And that really helps me position myself and what I'm doing. Because I

sometimes think, okay, I'm writing a book. What's the big deal about that, right? I'm having this little podcast, like my kid would say, just silly little podcast. But this is actually something that also is having an impact is also... you know, if we each did whatever we could, what a change we would have in this world. So yeah, that's my experience of this.

What has been standing out for you as you've been talking with all of our guests?

Sarah Peyton 00:26:48

Well, as we started to envision and dream the podcast into being, my greatest desire was that we would have this broad spectrum of unusual action that was being taken so that every person who listened to the podcast could maybe find someone who inspired them, like there would be a sense of commonality and individuality and uniqueness and the inspiration for folks to find their own best way to move forward, to let the work move them.

Not necessarily... I always think of the French Revolution and the barricades in Paris and the Paris Commune and the big marches on Washington, D.C. And that's like the epitome of action and activism. Like if I were really a good activist, I would be out on the street! I would not be sitting at home on Zoom and on my computer typing! And what I really love is the way that we have been able to do this, that we have spoken to a filmmaker, that we have spoken to a voiceover artist and actor, that we've spoken to people who are more traditionally socially active in activist groups, that we've really covered a lot of bases in terms of inspiration and possibility and who we are has anti-racism and anti-oppression embedded in it.

That each of our individual beings as we begin to become who we really are, we have this longing for Beloved Community and this love that wants to be expressed in its own way.

Now we'll come to Beloved Community. I keep talking about it, but do you want to just say a few words? I think people who've been listening to the podcast will know what it is, but people who maybe are drawn to you and me talking won't have really listened to the whole podcast. So maybe you'd say a few words about what is Beloved Community and tell us if anything has shifted for you and your experience of it as we've been working.

Roxy Manning 00:28:46

In the book I write about Beloved Community, which I'm drawing heavily on Dr. King's formulation of it, that I think about it as family. And I think about it as kind of like the crunchy, gnarly families that many of us have, not this super idealistic sitcom family. For me, Beloved Community means that I see everyone as part of my family, and there's some people that I'm like, "Oh my gosh, you are on my last nerve, but I still want your well-being."

It's like, I can be annoyed with you, I'm going to tell you why I'm annoyed with you, but I'm still trying to find a way that you're going to thrive and I'm going to thrive. And that's what Beloved Community is about, that we're able to speak fierce, honest, compassionate to each other and work together so that we all... the family is really thriving.

And when I think about that idea of Beloved Community, I think there are a couple of people who've... that we've interviewed who've talked about it. It's this combination of Beloved Community, like I have a handout that I created a couple of years ago with one of our guests, [Mike Tinoco](#). And in the handout, we kind of talk about Beloved Community as the ultimate goal, right? That's where we want to be. And so this idea of Beloved Community being something that's far in the future, it's one that I still think is true. Like I want to be realistic. We are not there yet. It's going to take a long time for us to get there.

But I remember one of our guests really talking about, and it's also in what we do in every single moment. And so for me, that's what shifted in my sense of Beloved Community. That I can both hold the aspirational nature of it, and I can hold that every single thing that I do in this moment is actually a manifestation of Beloved Community. I can continue to live from that place. And that gives me so much more hope. It fuels me. Because it's not like I'm doing this for seven generations from now. I'm doing it for me. I'm doing it like I'm creating Beloved Community in this moment. And it's an imperfect Beloved Community, just like our families are imperfect. But I love it.

Sarah Peyton 00:31:31

So we're talking about these beautiful dreams. We've been touching into them, we've been chewing on them, we've been describing them, but let's come now to obstacles. What are the most common obstacles you see people coming up against as they seek to stir up anti-racist conversations and practice fierce compassion?

Roxy Manning 00:31:52

Oh, well, I think one that comes up a lot for people is, in the books we talk about this kind of either-or, right-wrong, binary kind of thinking, and it's been really hard. People who say, "I'm committed to this work. I'm committed to having these conversations" are still getting stuck in the, "And I'm doing it because that person is wrong. That person is bad." You know, or if they're thinking about political work, it's like, "That group, those people are bad, evil, et cetera."

And so it's this idea of Beloved Community. The big obstacle is how do I truly hold that stance that you are doing something I don't like? And you mentioned this earlier today, right? That there's the

individual and I can still love the person and condemn the act and for people to be able to navigate that is the place where I find people tend to fall short.

That it almost feels like I'm selling out if I don't actually condemn the person and that there's a way that I'm letting someone off the hook or not holding them accountable. And I hear people using that word accountable a lot, right? How am I holding them accountable or how am I being too nice if I don't actually, you know, call them out or push them out of the family, out of the Beloved Community.

Sarah Peyton 00:33:17

That's a big obstacle.

Roxy Manning 00:33:21

Yeah, and I often tell people, like, when you face that, it's again, not to demonize ourselves. If that's where I am, if I've just listened to something happening on the news and the only thing that comes up in me is revulsion and disgust and a sense of get away, get that person away; just acknowledge that that's where you are because we are not alone. Like a lot of times we think I have to be perfect in order to do this. I'm like, no, this is when you go get empathy. When you go to your community and say, I need somebody who can hear me scream. I need somebody who can hear my grief and I'm going to do that and let somebody else be the person to engage with that person who needs to stop the actions that they're doing.

So if we can release ourselves from the idea that we have to be perfect, if we have to a hundred percent embody compassion before we can have the conversation, that we can actually do some of that inner work of getting support and call on the community for those moments when we can't, I think it gives us more possibilities.

You know, another obstacle that I think I've seen people experience, and I'd love for you to talk about it because it's one of the things that you are so... I want to say that you're an expert in, really! It's one of the reasons I wanted to write this book with you was the kind of expertise that you bring when we're talking about shame, right?

And every time we think about doing this work, we're going to run into our own shame or other people's shame, or even the kind of collective shame that many of us have. And that shame kind of gets in the way, prevents us from saying, you know what, yes, I have caused harm. I have done this action that's been hard. And when we experience that shame, it could actually be the catalyst for us to actually be violent, either towards ourselves or towards somebody else. So could you

share a bit about like how you navigate shame for yourself and also how you see it playing out in other people's lives as they start to approach this work?

Sarah Peyton 00:35:24

As I've been studying relational neuroscience, one of the kind of emblematic, representative elements of being human is that the neurochemicals that run when we're having stress, any kind of stress, are the same neurochemicals that run when we have alarmed aloneness, when we experience being separated from ourselves or others. And so I've really started to think about shame as the experience of being hopelessly separated from myself or others. In the moments where shame is really hard.

So, for example, when I was recently doing some teaching with this combination of anti-oppression and relational neuroscience, I was teaching to this same group that I've been talking about where there was some protest. There was some crunchiness. There were a lot of people who were very, everybody was very interested. Everyone was very willing, but they were up against the crunchiness, which I think is also shame. But I'll start with myself and being with others who have the protest brings me into shame. My body follows with them and I lose the sense of solid ground even though I have this incredible conviction and a deep rooting in a sense of what is most important to me is Beloved Community.

And so there's this experience now. Instead of being totally submerged in shame, which is where I began when I first started studying relational neuroscience and Nonviolent Communication, now some 15, 20 years later, here I am. And it's a bit like, when you're bobbing in water and your mouth comes up and you breathe and then you're going down again. And I can kind of feel myself moving through this river of shame. And when I'm above, when I'm above the water, I can feel those big arms around me, those big mama Sarah arms around me. And when I go under, I can't feel those arms anymore. I'm going to have to work on getting to feel those arms under the water. That's a lovely image, actually, a wonderful metaphor.

So that's a bit where I am with shame in my life is, is really, and really reaching out for help and community. Because of course if shame causes us to believe that we should not be in community, then the very remedy for our shame is going to be to be held with love.

And then, generally, when we start to think about others, I'm always looking for what'll unlock that. How have we left ourselves? How have we abandoned ourselves in, — as I am a white person, but folks of privilege trying to figure out how to become anti-racist and really live it — how the heck do we do that when the shame creeps crashing down... What can we do? Knowing what we know about empathy and Nonviolent Communication and relational neuroscience and

resonance, what can we do to really, really make the movement out of crunchiness into solid, grounded, committed acceptance happen?

You know, instead of it taking six years, for it to take six hours. Instead of it being unbearable, how can we find the joy? The joy in turning toward Beloved Community? And the lovely thing about it is that it is actually our most beautiful dream as humans. And just to broaden that for everybody, not just that the Beloved Community is every person, but the Beloved Community is like every cell of our planet and all the plants and the ecosystems and the animals.

And so as we're touching this, we're kind of moving towards not just shame, but also despair and overwhelm, what's your sense of seeing this in your work as you go through the world?

Roxy Manning 00:40:11

Yeah, well, one of the things that's been really helpful is that I think despair and overwhelm is getting a lot more acknowledgement within a lot of activist communities. People are recognizing that we just completed an interview with one of our guests, Jade Sasser, who talks about climate anxiety and the kind of despair and overwhelm that so many people are feeling. And there's also a clear recognition that we need to take care of ourselves. To kind of throw yourself in and burn yourself at the stake in order to create change, we're shifting away from that and recognizing that we need to move forward and be in these movements in the way that we're actually trying to create. So if I'm trying to create a world where people are thriving... If I'm trying to create the loving community where everyone is thriving, then I need to act in ways right now that would allow me to thrive.

Otherwise, I'm creating a role that doesn't include me. I'm creating a role that's built on my bones. And this movement to what's a bit more wholeness and balance, weaving in moments of joy, I'm seeing so many more activists saying, take time off for health, take time off, take time off, just like float in a wave in the hot springs and let your body be nourished by the earth. Because if we lose connection with those nourishing, nurturing experiences, we actually lose connection to what we're fighting for.

And so I definitely see... I see more awareness given to the need for circles, grieving circles, structures of empathy and support, but also for finding ways to explicitly replenish ourselves. And I got to say, I'm also doing that, like that has been one of the biggest changes for me since the book was published. Since the book was published, like literally a month after the book was published, I started doing a lot more work that was around how can I actually take care of this body? How can I take care of this heart and this spirit?

And in two days, I'm going to go, after we record this podcast, I'm going to go spend two weeks at a hot springs, taking care of myself and being offline and just saying, it's time to really rejuvenate myself, replenish myself so that I can continue to do the work. So I hope everyone listening to this says, what can you do? What are your strategies for self-care, for re-growth?

Sarah Peyton 00:43:51

Well, first of all, my hope is that the podcast will inspire people to see the spaces, the breathing spaces where they are reaching to use whatever power and influence they have, after they release their contracts not to have any power, to be able to find within themselves where does my love, where does my personal emergence... What, where does it carry me? If I love to do puzzles and I'm a competitive puzzle doer, how can that come into my anti-racism? How is that expressed? If I'm an artist, how is it expressed? If I'm a writer, how is it expressed? If I'm making podcasts, how is it expressed?

And so I'm hoping that there's like an inspiration for self-discovery and a sense of... I always love the image of feet finding purchase on the ground for running and moving and walking and dancing, the traction of us actually being engaged with the earth as it is.

Roxy Manning 00:45:00

Yes, as I hear you say that, there's even something like... I love this image of competitive puzzling. And also of feet finding purchase on the ground. Because I think, when I think about power and this question of power, it's also this recognition that we are inherently always using power. We are always taking action and our action can be like, if we're silent in the face of atrocities, if we're silent in the face of laws that we don't like, then we're in some ways explicitly choosing to give up our power, which is also an explicit act. It's an act. It's a way of engaging with power.

And so if we acknowledge that everything we do is making a statement about our willingness to use power and, or our willingness to let other people use power. Then I'm hoping that people will be inspired to say, I want to be the one to have choice. I want to be the one to make the decisions that are impacting me and that they see a lot of inspiration about the ways that they can do that, even if it's through competitive puzzle making.

Sarah Peyton 00:46:08

As we're talking about this, I'm thinking about the ways that we can sometimes use power to try to be safe. That we'll use our power to try to be invisible... That we'll kind of use our power to screw ourselves into the earth so we don't do or say anything that could bring down shame and humiliation and ridicule upon us.

And so there are other contracts that we can release, I think, that are important that are about letting go of the danger that we lived in when we were younger and moving into claiming whatever feels right to begin to claim as we release those restrictive agreements with ourselves. And I'm thinking also, Roxy, about the way that you speak about when do we want to confront others. And is it safe? And our safety matters. So just kind of bowing to this funny balance.

Roxy Manning 00:47:12

Yes, even people who have a clear sense of connection to their power can, and sometimes need to make choices that say, I'm going to choose to move backwards... I'm going to choose not to engage because I'm so clear that there are other needs that are just as important, that are vital, that I'm wanting to meet.

And so thinking about that is also an act of power, right? The person who's saying, "I'm not going to confront this person because I can actually have a greater impact if I stay in this job, if I don't let them push me out. If I stay as this visible person, that's everything that they don't want." It's like, that is an act of power and so many different ways that we can show up.

And I think our guests have really modeled that for us, many different ways of moving through the world and engaging, leveraging their power to have an impact.

Sarah Peyton 00:48:08

Yes, it's wonderful to acknowledge that and to feel into that as inspiration, compassionate inspiration, not just inspiration, but compassionate inspiration. And the invitation to see the big picture and the context and take everything into account.

Well here, speaking of taking everything into account, in this moment for me and Roxy, we're months away from a presidential election, which just makes me stop breathing. So I have to wait until I start breathing again. Where it seems like there's a lot at stake for our country and our world. What does it mean to practice fierce compassion and move towards Beloved Community at this time, when in so many areas, socially, politically, environmentally, economically, the issues are both urgent and existential.

Roxy Manning 00:49:08

Woo. I think for me, fierce compassion is so connected in this moment, especially when we're talking about the current political situation, is so connected to what we were just talking about with power. And for me, fierce compassion means that the kind of divisive us-versus-them politics that is pushed on us, that invites us to see other people as our enemy; that is not serving anybody.

And fierce compassion for me means being able to look at the person who is going to vote for the person I'm not going to vote for and think, how can I see that person's humanity? How can I speak to them and engage with them so that they can see mine? And how could I invite us to work together to find something that's going to truly work for us? Not these kind of false narratives around what's going to create false safety, false sense of entitlement, or all the different issues that are there.

And so it's really about... it's two-fold for me. One is about really continuing to fiercely commit to seeing the humanity of the people who are, quote, on the other side, and to not give up on them. Not go for solutions that are about, I'm going to thrive and they won't, because that is not building Beloved Community.

And it's also about taking every single possible action that we can take that uses our power to have an impact in the world. So, we've got this platform and I've got to say, we usually talk about this at the end of the podcast, what action do I want you to take? I'm going to say, go vote, make sure that whoever you vote for, just go out there and vote. And don't just vote. Grab your neighbor and go to your neighbor and say, "Hey neighbor, have you registered to vote? Would you like me to help you register? Would you like me to, if you live in a state where you can do this, I can take your ballot and drop it off for you?" I don't need you to vote a certain way. I just need you to vote. Let's get everybody engaged in whatever way that they can.

There are a lot of different things like, and I'm going to make a shameless political plug right now, but if you have not heard about the work of ActBlue, go find out about them. They're doing some really great work about trying to get resources to campaigns where it could make a huge difference.

There's so many things that we could be doing that is about leveraging our power, that's about practicing fierce compassion, not giving up on our needs on what's going to actually truly make our communities thrive and holding that vision without it being at the expense of another community. Because if we do things at the expense of another community, we're going to be locked into this either-or battle for generations to come.

If we can find strategies that make all of our communities alive, then we find a path for us to move forward.

Sarah Peyton 00:52:07

Yes, yes, yes. Doesn't matter what political orientation you have. We don't have to be enemies. I went to my beloved chiropractor the other day who has an opposite political view to mine. And I lay down on the table and he said, "I want to tell you a joke." And I said, "Okay." And he said, "I'm going to change the political parties in this joke because I know you have a different orientation than I have." And he told me this different, he told me the joke, but he changed the political parties. And it felt like an act of love. It just felt like, I know that you've got a different idea than me and I care about you and I want to give you this present.

And I just felt so much of what you just said about, like, don't let this drive us apart. Don't let us move us out of just plain loving each other and vote no matter what it is, just vote, vote, vote and feel your power as you vote.

Roxy Manning 00:53:12

There's something, as I just heard you speak, I connected it back to what you were speaking about with alarmed aloneness. This driving us apart is like every time we shame someone, every time we put them down because of their beliefs, we are engendering that sense of aloneness, of not belonging. And we know that that is not going to create safety or a sense of choice and possibility for people. So we need to do something different.

Sarah Peyton 00:53:44

I just want to say... I've been so excited by the candidacy of Kamala Harris. I wish we could have her on the podcast.

Roxy Manning 00:53:56

Oh my goodness! That would be pretty amazing! So if anybody on Kamala Harris's staff is listening to this, we would interview her. We'd be happy to let everyone hear about her work, her voice, and what she can do for our country.

Sarah Peyton 00:54:10

Yeah.

Roxy Manning 00:54:11

And if you're a listener who isn't excited about Kamala Harris, drop us a note and tell us, like, because it really is about not saying you're automatically bad, it's saying, what are you excited about? What is it that you want to see in the world? What is your vision? Because we'd want to include that, too.

Sarah Peyton 00:54:28

Yeah, yeah, absolutely. So that we can change our jokes for you.

Roxy Manning 00:54:34

Oh, Sarah, this has been such a fun conversation! And, we're coming to a close. That's one of the things we always say in the podcast. I'd love to know like other things that you're excited about as you think about this season beginning. What do you hope that this season will offer to our listeners?

Sarah Peyton 00:54:53

Well, I'm hoping... I have a sense of, as this podcast is maturing, that we're moving into a kind of a sparkling clarity about being a voice for hope and movement and contribution... being a place where we celebrate movement and contribution in all its forms. How about you, Roxy, what are you looking forward to us being able to explore?

Roxy Manning 00:55:28

Yeah, I think it's that I'm looking forward to. I'm hoping that everyone who listens to this podcast this season walks away feeling inspired to take one small action, whatever it is, just one small action to reconnect to their sense of power and to hold themselves with compassion if they're not able to, or if they have stories running in their head that this isn't big enough, this doesn't matter, it's not important enough. That you learn how to hold yourself with the kind of loving big mama arms around you that say, yes, baby, you matter and what you're doing is going to have an impact. Thank you. Thank you, Sarah. I'm so, so looking forward to the amazing guests we have lined up for the season and to doing this with you one more time.

And listeners, thank you for joining us. We look forward to hearing your thoughts about this conversation. Until next time!

Sarah Peyton 00:56:31

Thank you for being with us. If you enjoyed this episode and are finding value in these conversations, please help us spread fierce compassion by taking a moment to share this episode with a friend and rate and review the podcast on your podcast app. This helps others find us and helps make sure these conversations reach everyone who might benefit.

Roxy Manning 00:56:55

If you would like to receive live one-on-one coaching from Sarah or me on a special episode of the podcast, or you want to find out more, follow the link in the show notes or visit our website. You can find our books, *How to Have Antiracist Conversations* and *The Antiracist Heart*, and learn about our podcast guests and new classes on our website, antiracistconversations.com.

Sarah Peyton 00:57:21

And Roxy and I love teaching and we're always offering new classes, courses, and other opportunities for learning in our own individual work. You can visit us at roxannemanning.com and sarahpeyton.com to learn more about our individual offerings.

Roxy Manning 00:57:40

We hope to see you!