

Episode 4 Transcript - Rooted Wisdom



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0:01:00.7 Aileen: Hi there. I'm Aileen. Welcome to my kitchen. I just finished preparing a pot of adobo. Adobo is a dish of my people. It uses a colonial name for an indigenous technique that's deeply flavored with vinegar, garlic, and history. It's tangy, it's pungent and sometimes spicy, and for me, it's a vessel for home that's carried by our diaspora and by our families. Adobo is found made in kitchens across America's rural towns and big cities, and it adapts a place and whatever is available. It's the comfort of this dish that makes me think about how communities make home and survival. Which brings me to this topic that we're gonna learn about today, the resilience of urban communities in their fight for food access. So I brought together two leaders with deep wisdom on this topic. Erika Allen is a social change artist, healer and farmer, who works in vision and plans social and economic change objectives through food, agriculture and green energy. Mark Winston Griffith is a community organizer and journalist who works to build Black self-determination movements in Black Brooklyn. Settle in and enjoy the conversation.

[music]

0:02:17.6 Aileen: Erika, Mark, thank you for making time to connect today and gather and share stories. When I think about food access and food justice in urban communities, I felt like a conversation between the two of you offers so many first-hand stories and truth telling. So before we jump in, I want to invite us to center our minds with this question. When you're walking through the neighborhood that you love, what are the sounds that you hear, the smells that are coming from neighborhood kitchens, and what are some of the memories and emotions that come up for each of you? Erika, could you start us off and take us there?

0:02:54.6 Erika: Well, we're walking down many streets in Chicago, we're set up on the grid system, so it's lots of structures designed originally to keep things orderly, and we're a city in a garden, Urbs in Horto, that's our motto, and that's been the vision. How do we transform our environment to reflect our cultures and our ability to have food sovereignty and economic self-determination within the context of one of the birth places of redlining?

0:03:21.0 Aileen: And Mark, take us on a walk with you.

0:03:23.0 Mark: Alright, so I live in Crown Heights and I work in Bedford-Stuyvesant, and the two neighborhoods are connected and make up what we'll refer to as Central Brooklyn, which is Black Brooklyn. And where I live, Dean Street, I'm right off of something called Nostrand Avenue, which to me is like Main Street. It's an extremely colorful street. It's a commercial, mostly commercial street, where you have buildings that are say, maybe two, three, maybe four flights, and on the ground floor, you have storefronts. And when I say storefronts, I mean very sort of mom and pop-ish kind of stores. Groceries, bodegas, cleaners, bike shops, all sorts of fast food joints. And as you walk down or up Nostrand Avenue, what is most pronounced, I think, particularly for those of us who live in Crown Heights, is that it's a mostly Caribbean neighborhood, at least some parts of it are. You're gonna most likely hear some kind of reggae or dancehall. There gonna be a lot of people out on the street. You're gonna hear a lot of voices, you're gonna hear a lot of cars honking, and you're gonna smell mostly Caribbean food. You're gonna smell jerk chicken, curry chicken, oxtail, rice and peas. And for me, that's home. That makes me feel secure, it makes me feel happy, makes me feel alive, and it reminds me that this is a neighborhood of Black people.

0:04:43.7 Aileen: Alright y'all, I am hungry now, and I know we can't necessarily share food across

the air waves, but I wish we could. [chuckle] But thank you for taking us on that walk, and I know both of you have these incredibly deep roots and advocating with and for and on behalf of community work. I want to ask, what does food sovereignty mean to you in your homes, in your neighborhoods?

0:05:06.1 Erika: Now I'm like, "Okay, Chicago gotta represent our food culture too." [chuckle] So I'm like, "Wait a second."

0:05:12.9 Mark: Go for it.

0:05:13.9 Erika: This is a food town, Chicago. You hear about the deep dish, New York versus Chicago, which I think is a really cool paradigm, but really, I think we should talk about Chicago jerk, Mississippi style, or New York jerk, Caribbean, East coast style. The idea of immigrant cities representing the diaspora in all of the different ways that we're trying to weave together as we're reconnecting ourselves, spiritually, culturally, physically, economically, with our food pathways. And I think Black honor your tradition is all about just bringing all of those pieces together and all the cultural nuances of who we are as people and we're multicultural people, and just thinking about how that shifts depending on who we're in community with. And as we move with gentrification, pressures and structures, and even that migration within a city, because rent goes up, you're displaced and then you're in a new cultural community, a new country almost, because of the way that folks kind of recreate home communities as immigrants, most of us are new to this specific land, even those of us with indigenous ancestry, it's all been this sort of fusion, integration and survival. So all those come into mind in that very simple question, but it's a very complex narrative, and as we organize to find that balance, that reclamation, and that acknowledgment, I think is really important.

0:06:30.3 Mark: Yeah, that resonates with me. When you're talking about food, there are oftentimes distinctions made between urban environments and rural environments. And so talking about food sovereignty, I think has a different resonance and different implications in an urban setting. Central Brooklyn, for so many years, the term, food desert was used, and we always thought of our neighborhoods in this deficit model, and we saw the disappearance and the flight of chain supermarkets. And now through gentrification, what we've seen are the introduction of supermarkets and new restaurants and new access to food, but access that is not designed for the people who have been living here for generations. So when we talk about food sovereignty, we think of it really in terms of regaining control, right? So it's not just about bringing supermarkets back into the neighborhood, it's about, Okay, we're Black people, we've been here for generations, how do we not only create our own food sources, how do we actually control the food economy so that there's some semblance of a self-determining food economy that is reflected back on us?

0:07:37.7 Mark: So, it doesn't just mean that we control what we're eating, we're controlling who is selling the food, where the food is being sourced and everything in between, and making sure that as we're creating this food economy, everyone from farmer to consumer, to distributor, to people doing the packing are working together and somehow we're generating revenue and creating agency for local people to be able to stay here long beyond the gentrifiers.

0:08:08.0 Erika: Yeah, that resonates as well. And I think here in Chicago, there's just a lot of movement around the intersectionality between land access, the enclaves that developed just on

south lands that are rural, they're not even peri-urban that African American folks settled in, and were a pretty thriving farm community and there's a big movement to restore that and connect as we're looking at larger scales of production and hitting those same road blocks, how difficult it is to even purchase land in sunset towns. These are towns that if you're Black or brown, you could not stand after sunset or buy property in, and that makes it very difficult when you're trying to achieve economic sovereignty, even if you have the resources, how difficult it is to purchase and own land within the cities. If you don't go south, you don't even know. You think that everyone has the same things that you have in your community, which is why originally I was just glad that people could even have a visual of a desert to even understand that their reality, it was not the same as everyone else's reality.

0:09:10.0 Erika: And I think we're in that phase of implementers, policymakers, all the folks who are advocating and fighting for change and those who are building those constructs, all working together, it's starting to flow, which is exciting, but it's also even more urgent because of what's happening now with the COVID crisis and all of the other very clearly expressed manifestations of white supremacy.

0:09:33.0 Aileen: I wanted to pull a theme out here talking about power and control and organizing, what does it mean to you in your work in your community to be a community organizer?

0:09:43.8 Mark: Word. It's funny, I remember when Barack Obama was elected President, that's the first time I remember that the term community organizer really became well-known in popular culture, and in many ways, he was ridiculed for being a community organizer by the right because it really came out of a misunderstanding or failure to recognize the importance of organizing in creating the world that we have today, whether you're on the left or the right. Anything that we can look at as far as social, political, economic advancement has been as a result of some kind of organizing. When you think of what has to happen on the food front... I mean, look, I literally teach organizing, I teach community organizing on the graduate level, so I have a very well-defined sense of what it means, but I know that the average person does not. When you say organizing, people think in act of activism in loose terms, and this idea of bringing people together. And I think that's obviously a big part of it. But it goes so far beyond that.

0:10:47.4 Mark: I think there's a very well-defined practice of identifying problems, bringing people together, developing leadership around it, and developing a base of people who identify around these issues, and in over a period of time building campaigns that are going to bring about social change. So, that's the very discreet way in which I think of community organizing, but I think in today's world, we need to go a little bit beyond that, it requires understanding how power not only works, but how do you go about challenging it. And if you're an organizer, you have to know how to step up and then step back that you are not the center of the activity, it's people around you and people who are dispossessed, who have not yet recognized their power and their agency, them stepping up, understanding what it means to have a leaderful movement of people around you, and it's making sure that people who are Black, people of color, queer, trans folks, women, differently-abled immigrants, that they are centered in the work. And as an organizer who happens to be Black, but also happens to be a cis-gendered man, I am one of the people who is centered, and yet I know that I also have to step out of that and know that there are other people who need to be centered in this work as well.

0:12:05.7 Erika: Yeah, I resonate with that as well, and I remember when I first started, my organizing friends would say, "You're an organizer," and I'm like, "No, I'm not, 'cause I'm an implementer, I wanna do projects and I have a specific problem I'm trying to solve, not as an episodic component, but as a long-term, deeply rooted process because of the nature of food and food systems and agriculture as a construct to organize around." So I took that path and really have tried to insert that implementation into the process, and I think it's beginning to work with organizers who are beginning to deepen their roots in the work, 'cause we're seeing the cyclical nature of these issues that we respond to as being something that we just scaffold on the next... Okay, this issue's looming, let's organize around this in the different arms of the community, the mutual aid community, the emergent farming community, the culinary community, the emergency food community, just all of those pieces coming together, you start to also need to have conversations with folks who are organizing around de-funding the police, which is another pivot and transformational component around housing, around accessing financing for communities that have historically not had the collateral or the ability to even know where the levers are, let alone how to operate the levers.

0:13:22.2 Erika: So this is exciting, it's exciting to see the multidisciplinary approach and having more people who are the long-termers, farmers are often the last at the table, but everybody would be crying for farmers when there's no food on a table but are typically not part of the conversations and get the smallest percentage of that food dollar. So, we're trying to loop all of those pieces together to create real circular economic systems that really are reflective of indigenous market culture. You make a product, you sell it in your community, or trade it and barter it, and you're able to support so many people within that community supply chain. The idea of it not being a unilateral approach, but a multifaceted approach that's inclusive of everybody's talents, perspectives, time, and space. If you don't have a lot of time, there's some things you just can't participate in. Who has more time? So all of that requires relationships and communication and an understanding of what the realities are of the different people in our communities.

0:14:21.3 Mark: Yeah. I wanna lift up that term you used, relationships, because at the end of the day, that really is what community organizing is all about. It's building relationships and then leveraging those relationships, and it's really important to hear from Erika because so much of how we've come to understand community organizing was born in Chicago. When you think of the organizing that Saul Alinsky did, even when you think of Barack Obama, that's where he was doing his organizing. And a lot of organizing has gotten a bad rep because it's been done very transactionally, and ironically it's been done by white people who say they have a critique of capitalism and oppressive systems, but in their forms of organizing and of perpetuating the very forms of patriarchy, sexism, white supremacy, that they say that they're working against. And so I think what you've seen over the last few generations, particularly in something like the movement for Black lives, is a re-examination of what organizing is, and to shoot it through a filter of a different understanding of organizing that was not necessarily conceived of by white men, but is more reflective of communities of color, indigenous communities that are really looking to throw off that yoke of oppression that oftentimes comes with the missionary approaches to organizing that we've seen in the past.

0:15:40.1 Erika: Yeah, that's super on point.

0:15:45.4 Mark: Peace, y'all. I'm Mark Winston Griffith, an alumnus of The Castanea Fellowship

Program. As the Executive Director of the Brooklyn Movement Center, I was looking for a community of peers who also saw a world where food truly became a source of health, equity, and well-being for all. Castanea brought those very leaders together, and invested in us to make it happen. Since then, I've collaborated with a cadre of Castanea fellows on a national initiative to hold philanthropy accountable, and I've tapped into game-changing support from my food systems work here in Central Brooklyn. So I'm looking forward to what's ahead in my professional as well as my personal journey along with following the impact I know my friends in the program will continue to make. Learn how Castanea can support your journey. Visit castaneafellowship.org. That's C-A-S-T-A-N-E-A-F-E-L-L-O-W-S-H-I-P.org.

0:16:43.8 Aileen: Folks who have been in the work for a long time, or who have been keyed into this, have seen this work building for years and others, especially for younger folks, maybe they are coming to this political awakening or political conscious now, and I want to highlight around the movement for Black lives, and just to hear your take, knowing now that there is a very visible movement around eradicating white supremacy, building local power to intervene in violence inflicted on Black communities, and by creating space for Black imagination, Black joy and innovation, where do you see the discussions around food and what areas of this that you would wanna lift up, especially for young folks who are coming to a consciousness now?

0:17:20.1 Erika: One of the reasons I wanted to work in food as opposed to some of the other many pressing areas of interest and need is just that everyone eats. It's something that, globally, everyone can relate to regardless of language, literacy, most of us have the ability to consume food. And we can tell a story around that regardless of our ideological, political challenges, we celebrate with food. That's how all of our people survived hardship, we were able to find joy around that, and so it's just powerful. And I think the sort of understanding that the terror and the price that people of color pay for living in this society and being undervalued and abused by the food system, and how powerful it is to reclaim that and to transform it to be something that is not only nourishes us, our bodies, that we can actually economically evolve, because we've been held back in such strategic and well-organized manners by the powers that be.

0:18:20.2 Erika: So many people and entities are complicit on all sides, unless you go live in a cabin somewhere, we're all contributing to it and I think this is such an exciting time where we're seeing it being demystified. I started off like "We've got all this green space and these parks, Why can't we grow food?" And luckily, there's enough creatives and was like, "Yeah. Why can't you? It's landscape." I'm like, "Yeah. It's landscape, we have money for petunias. Can we just do that here and call that a garden? It can be beautiful." I mean, that audacity is so Chicago, it's like no one had a good enough way to argue that, and luckily, there is a visionary that just happened to be in the conversation that was willing to take that risk, and empires are won and lost because of food, and it's something that we are also have been exploited methodically because of food, so it just seems like food might be the thing for us to solve a lot of issues.

0:19:12.5 Mark: It's such an important point because I think it's so easy to come to this conversation about food acting like, we're all brand new, right? For instance, the term "food sovereignty" if you ask the average person walking on the street, what does that mean? That's not really gonna resonate with them, and so I do acknowledge that there is a sort of a new framing around this, but the issues have always been there and food has always been a part of movement building, 'cause, as Erika said, it's just a fundamental part of who we are and how we get by.

Revolutions start and can sometimes end because whether people can eat or not.

0:19:44.4 Erika: Tell them.

0:19:45.0 Mark: So I don't think there's anything too brand new here, but I do think that, at least in the movement spaces that I'm seeing is an integration and intersectionality with other issues. So for instance, I'm part of the National Black Food and Justice Alliance, I'm with the Movement for Black Lives in New York City, I'm part of their Cooperative Economics Alliance. And all of those different formations are sort of a movement recognitions of the role that food plays in building power and getting to liberation. There are now well-defined efforts around food that have evolved over the years that you may not have seen some years ago, and understanding that food can't be just something we take for granted. It can't just be operating in the background. Our liberation is tied into being very explicit that Black and brown people are actually controlling food systems, and we're not meant to own land, we're here to steward land as entrepreneurs and as farmers and everything in between.

0:20:47.2 Erika: I think it's really that indigenous understanding, an understanding who we are as Black, brown, people of color, we're talking about folks who have an intact cultural identity, and that we can see that manifest in the way that we even interact with the earth. I've been in this thing around, I get triggered a little bit by the land conversation, because even in the context of stewardings, it's still a power token as opposed to the earth and the understanding the earth is a living being that we have a responsibility towards, and it has a responsibility towards us, and it is very generous.

0:21:18.2 Mark: Preach.

0:21:19.3 Erika: We are bratty children, and we've had underdeveloped spiritual entities who don't understand that relationship, so sovereignty really comes out of the people who understand their place in historically, a pre-colonialized imperial manner that really have a relationship with the earth and spirituality, that deconstruction is important. It's an important thing to re-ground because then it becomes so easy to get caught up into the game, but the strategy around how we move through the system requires a moment of perspective to make sure we're not becoming that, 'cause it's so easy to get caught up in that and then you're like, "Oh, shoot, I didn't grow any food for myself," and then the winter's here, and being so distracted because we are disconnected from the earth. Slow down some of the visions that I think we collectively share around how we would love to live in community.

0:22:13.2 Erika: Dr. King's dream of the beloved community, the idea that what used to be cultural norms that we're craving at the genetic level, it's like an aching, like a bone marrow aching of wanting that reconnection and having to process that along with a tremendous amount run of anchor around displacement and terror that we're still psychologically and physically living through. It's something that is difficult to even contain in one conversation in your own mind, and it's important to almost be there on a consistent basis to keep the humanity alive while we shut ourselves down just to survive the pain of the things that are happening, and it's about processing that there were 15 people shot at a party over that began, like that reality, and I'm afraid that, Am I gonna make it? And that we're doing that work along with trying to figure out how to create community food supply chains, like that piece with land sovereignty, indigenous culture, trying to thrive and survive,

but that terror.

0:23:19.3 Mark: It's so important what you're saying because when you think of what Erika does and the relationship she has to the land in an urban environment, it's so important because we in urban environments, we get into the habit of being the extractors, of being on the far consumer end of the food system and being very detached from not only the land, but just the whole process of nurturing land, growing food and the humanity that gets interwoven into it. And so as I'm here in Crown Heights or Bed-Stuy, most of us just have no inkling of how the food is arriving on our plate. And so the food coop that we're organizing, for instance, it's a cooperative because we wanna be very intentional about re-imagining our relationship to food, more deeply appreciating the land and the resources that it takes to actually produce this food, and will make us, I think, more thoughtful people on this planet and really start to think of us as stewards as opposed to owners and takers, which is I think what the urban environment really breathes in you, it's like we're just here to take and really have literally no organic relationship to the environment around us.

0:24:33.0 Aileen: This work is so deeply personal, and then it's also so collective around these daily acts, these daily lives, as well as these centuries-long histories that we're all living through right now. You have your wider communities that call you at the break of dawn because there's that trust and relationship. I know you're both also parents and have a role in your families, knowing that there's this lineage of inheriting the work and wanting to reconnect to land and to food, what are some words that you have for your own children or for the young people in your lives?

0:25:03.3 Erika: I think that these issues are multigenerational. I believe that we can solve or at least have models that we're able to thrive in within our lifetime and within our children's lifetime, and I believe that we'll be able to have a multiplier effect once things are aligned. I'm seeing it with my son already, how all the things that have transpired since 2008, since he was born, and our children are having to live through some of the most challenging times, and also some of the most beautiful times of being able to be globally connected, to be able to really communicate our own narratives, and to grow our own food, it could take a step back as we're taking these huge technological steps forward, that balancing act, they're doing it. Let's try to get into this existing structure, which is a lot of the work that my dad was doing around scaling up and showing the magnificence of what could be if we had access to economic resources and inspiring a whole generation of folks to realize how it should be. I think our children will be able to see that and to see it in balance with the existing structures.

0:26:08.9 Mark: Yeah, I have children around the same age as Erika. I have a 17-year-old and a 13-year-old, two boys, and for me, I don't try to drill into their heads what they should think or what they should do. I think that they see me, they know that there's not a lot of separation between my work life and my home life, they know that I'm committed, and yet I don't demand that they follow my footsteps, but what I do ask of them is to be conscious and conscious in a way that's not obvious, in the sense that I think that what people are learning about social justice and power and politics is very performative.

0:26:47.6 Mark: It's a sense of saying the right things, showing up on protest lines, which are all extremely important, but I think it's all the things that you do in between, it's how you live your life day-to-day. So I don't necessarily expect my children to be running organizations and being on the front lines of social justice, but I do expect whatever they do with their lives, that's gonna be

consistent with social justice values, that they understand in their bones what patriarchy looks like and feels like, and really try to do their best not to perpetuate it, to have a deep understanding of how white supremacy shows up and how capitalism is a nasty and destructive practice and a way of being around the world, what I do for my children is less about my polemics or my propaganda, but how they see me spending my days and what I care about, and I can't tell you how many Zoom calls my children have been privy to. My 17-year-old asks me every day about this person and that person and the issues... It's amazing how much they're actually sucking up and absorbing, and so I just try to walk the walk and be the person who I think that they should respect and live the values that I feel like they should follow as well.

0:28:12.5 Aileen: As we come back to these reminders of daily practice, daily acts and ends, it's just very personal, visceral relationships to food, want to invite you to share, if there is a ingredient or a dish to you that is supporting you and your families in the re-imagination of what's possible. Just something that's close to your heart.

0:28:32.0 Erika: Ooh, that's such a good one. For me, it's amaranth, callaloo. It is one of the most resilient plants that has this complex array of amino acids and protein. You can eat it when it's little sprouts raw, and then you gotta cook it. It's got this velvety mouth feel. It absorbs all the flavors, the garlic, all the spices. It is to me the essence of resilience, 'cause it is just a prolific grain, you can make bread out of it and the seed grows everywhere. Our South Chicago farm is seven acres. It's a dynamic space, and it is the prevalent weed. It is the most glorious plant, you can survive on it. If that's all you eat, you're good to go. I love plants like that 'cause it really represents us, it represents people of the earth. And having that relationship with any plant, but a plant that is that perfect, that it is gonna come up when it's 50 to below, it shows up the next year. We kind of laugh hysterically when it's like this carpet of this beautiful kind of garnet red little haze, and it's like, "Oh, we did not do a good job of tilling that up." But it's also a delight because that's a bunch of food that we're gonna have to weed, but as we're weeding, we're filling our baskets to feed, to share, to sell. That fecundity, that generosity to me is what represents our cultures, all of our cultures.

0:29:54.3 Mark: Yeah, for me, it's not one ingredient, but it's a combination of them, and I would say jerk. Jerk is really important in my family. I cook jerk chicken and my kids... I'm just really amazed. I could cook jerk every single day, and they would still approach it like it was the first day they've ever tasted it. And I don't cook it inside the house, I have a grill outside and I cook it there. Sometimes it's on the regular grill, sometimes it's on wood and with a metal base that harkens back to how jerk chicken was originally cooked in a pit. And so not only does it represent good food to me, but it also connects them to their Jamaican heritage, my Jamaican heritage. And Erika used the term resilience. For me, jerk also is a representation of resilience. It goes back generations, if not centuries, in the Caribbean, and so for me it just represents the resilience of colonized people who've been able to, through it all, develop their own culture and their own strength. And I really celebrate when my children eat it because I feel like they are bringing that energy and culture into their lives as well.

0:31:04.1 Erika: It's such a creolized food, right? It's the spice trade, this whole idea that we weren't multicultural people before any Europeans started trying to dominate the world. We were all in relation already and you can see it in the food and the art, the expressions, the consistencies. And then callaloo, how we even plan that Mark? Callaloo and jerk? That's just like...

[laughter]

0:31:25.8 Mark: Exactly. Exactly.

0:31:26.5 Erika: 'Cause in those jerk flavors mixin' with them callaloo grains...

[laughter]

0:31:30.4 Mark: Exactly.

0:31:31.0 Erika: And then everyone has their own mix of jerk, right?

0:31:35.9 Mark: Yep, yep, yep.

0:31:36.9 Erika: It's so diverse and it's such a healthy competition, right? You want a certain kind, some of the sweet jerk or a fire-hot jerk and it changes based on the quality of the chicken, right? Which globally, if you say you're vegetarian, it doesn't include chicken, so you're good.

[laughter]

0:31:53.7 Mark: Right.

[laughter]

0:31:54.9 Erika: Chicken, fish. Oh, you're vegetarian? Oh, you eat chicken, right? Which is a hilarious joke.

0:31:58.9 Mark: Exactly. That's true. That's true.

0:32:00.8 Erika: Which is like a legit thing because...

0:32:02.8 Mark: That is so true.

0:32:03.7 Erika: It's not like, you're not grabbing a yard bird, and that's some work. It's a different relationship with nature. And I just love that, and that's how we learn and share a story and remember. I believe in genetic memory. I believe that smells, flavors just hit us at a visceral level that we can't even verbalize with this English we use. It doesn't resonate. It's hard to kind of articulate that connection.

0:32:29.4 Aileen: Well, we've got a future combo platter that I can't wait to have.

[laughter]

0:32:34.4 Aileen: Jerk, callaloo. Mark, Erika, it's just such a gift to gather with you on our kitchen table, and you've taken us on a journey that's touching the places that are home and back into themes of why relationship and remembering is so important in this work and that re-imagination that you're so committed to. And if you have some advice, one simple thing that each of us can do

that can make a huge difference in the places that we call home, share that with us.

0:32:59.4 Mark: I think I wanna speak specifically to urban dwellers and encourage us to just be more conscious, to be more thoughtful of what we're eating. Investigate where the food has come from, who has handled it, who grew it, what kind of conditions they labored under, how far the food has come, and just be very conscious of that and to take note of it as you're eating it and as you're preparing it. And I guess I wanna just also give a shout-out to people who identify as cisgendered men. One of the things when I was talking about preparing food for my sons, what is really important to me is they see fatherhood as an act of active nurturing and caretaking. And so when they see me cooking, they weave that into their own identity. And there's no more sacred and beautiful thing you can do for your family than to prepare food for them. And if you're able to not just buy it, but grow it and prepare it and cook it, I just think that you are transferring so much love, so much culture, so much history, so much understanding of who we are, literally into the bodies of your family, and so I wanna lift that up.

0:34:15.5 Erika: So I think the thing that I would like to share is the importance of cultural restoration, that the listener thinks about who they are, who their people are, and where they come from in the context of how to move through the world differently. How to connect with communities of color, with one another, so that we're all able to better see each other and have an empathetic connection. And through that lens, we can begin to, as a society, reprioritize how we invest our resources. Movements are built and sustained through relationships and community, and that if we're able to shore that up with aligned public resources that are well-coordinated and understood and transparent and rooted in love, we're all really yearning to leave this past era behind and move into a new Green era. Yeah, and I think that we need to remember that every day, that although selective editing helps us to survive, it's hard to live in the reality of what our people are struggling through, but it's the only way that we can hold ourselves responsible and extract ourselves from being complicit in the trauma that we have to inhabit every day. I just wanna see joy. I stay in that space of reality. I don't wanna cloud that, and let the little bit of privilege, that comfort I've been afforded, we all need that rest to go inward, but that we're able to continue to really stay in the reality so that we can keep moving things forward.

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