

Facilitators: Shirley Nelson and Laura Imbornoni
Saturday, April 10 | 11 am – 12:30 pm | Online Event |
Donations appreciated

For more than 400 years, our country has suffered due to racism and it continues to wreak havoc in the hearts and minds of the oppressed and the privileged. At the root of this issue is fear caused by our conscious and unconscious biases towards "the other".

In this heart-centered program, we invite all open hearts and minds as we seek to raise an awareness of our own prejudices and biases. We will begin with a guided meditation to create a safe space to share and discuss our experiences. Shirley Nelson and Laura Imbornoni will lead the discussion as we support each other in our understanding and self-awareness.

For more information and to register [click here](https://shirleyanelson.com).

COURAGE TO LOVE

The pandemic that you can easily see is not the real culprit but it definitely has our attention. Our quality of life is also impacted by the disease of hatred, racism and injustice and it is killing and crippling us in epic proportions. This pandemic has been with us for more years than we like to think about. I believe it's a heart condition and it's going to take all of us to do what we can to alleviate the suffering.



Our prejudices cause us to suffer. We classify those who don't look like us as "other" and we don't seem to realize that the blood that runs through their veins is no different than our own. Sometimes when I witness so much pain due to fear and ignorance I can only think that we have forgotten who we really are. [We Are ONE](#).

Love is the recognition of Oneness, of knowing yourself as other. The Oneness is love. —Eckhart Tolle

Having struggled with my own feelings of fear of the "other" and unmitigated anger, I came to understand that unless I changed my attitude, I would not have any kind of decent life. And that is when I began to consciously open my heart with the help of teachers like Eckhart Tolle.

Inner Evolution • A Quiet Revolution

As a child of the 60's, I have vivid images of the attacks on black and white people during the Civil Rights movement. I wish I could erase them, but that's not going to help anyone or change anything. I believe they will be a constant reminder of the work we have to do to create a world that works for all.

Believe it or not, that world starts with you and me. It starts by looking in the mirror and doing a check-up from the neck up. Anything you do that causes you to function at a higher capacity of love is helping the entire universe and adding to the peace, love, and joy that already exists.

Do you find it hard to acknowledge things about yourself that you consider negative? Or, even more interesting, how do you feel when someone else points something out that's not too favorable? Or, through self-discovery via experience, you come to realize that you still have some work to do on yourself in order to be the person you have imagined yourself to be.

You're not alone. We all have work to do. So take that stick out of your hand that you beat yourself up with. When we know better, we do better. It doesn't matter what your age, position, race, or financial status. We are all growing and evolving and some are choosing **LOVE** as their pathway to power within and without.

None of us are going to be around forever but I think most of us want to make the most of our time here on earth and that includes having the best life possible, a life that is rich with meaning and filled with integrity.

Who of us does not want to feel connected to other people, especially those whom you share intimacies? **Connection matters.**

Who of us does not want to give and receive love in a deep and meaningful way? For some, it's probably hard to even admit that because it has seemed so elusive, and I understand, and that's okay. But as long as you have breath, it's never too late to change your story. **Love matters.**



And what about your desire for authenticity? What about that need you have to be seen for who you really are? If you have never felt that way before, you may have spared yourself some needless suffering or you may be missing out on **abundant joy**. It's bitter sweet. It can be bitter when you are frustrated because you're trying to figure it out and you still haven't learned to love yourself in spite of it. But it is **Oh So Sweet** when you do learn to love yourself, warts and all, and can be unapologetically you. **Authenticity matters.**

[Ruth Bader Ginsburg](#) said "*Fight for the things you care about but do it in a way that leads others to join you!*"

What if the things you care about are as near to you as your breath but because we live in a society that constantly sends a message that "it's out there!" we look for the big kahuna and we fail to acknowledge that which is right under our nose like love, connection, authenticity? What you love and value most is inside of you.

What would happen if you started fighting for what you love and give attention to that, instead of fighting against what you hate or what causes you despair?

What if you fought for connection? Intimacy? Love? Authenticity? What would that fight look like, feel like, be like? What could you do that would lead others to join you? Think about it.

Think about the good fight. And, as John Lewis said, get yourself into some [good trouble](#).

In this time of political unrest and heightened racial tension, many are uncertain about where to place their energy and how to get involved. Not everyone is able to participate in protest marches and some are not interested in doing that, but they may practice other ways to express their passion for peace, love, and justice.

Some are known to say things like “politics is not my thing so I don’t get involved”. I’m one of those people. But when I heard [Renee Montgomery](#) comment about folks just like me, I knew I had been busted. She said (paraphrased) “People say I’m not into politics but they don’t understand that it’s not so simple. Politics are within us and there’s no escaping that.”

If you have been watching the TV series [Soul of a Nation](#), I am sure you can appreciate the glimpse we have been given into the hearts and souls of Black folks over the past few weeks. During a recent airing, I found myself resonating with WNBA champion and former Atlanta Dream player-turned-owner Renee Montgomery. Some of the things she said were familiar but she said them in a way that really inspired me. One phrase that I recall is “[Moments = Momentum](#)”. She also said, “It doesn’t necessarily take something big to make a difference. Small things matter”.

When she made those statements she was looking out the window of her home and could see hundreds of people who were marching in the streets protesting the death of George Floyd. Her

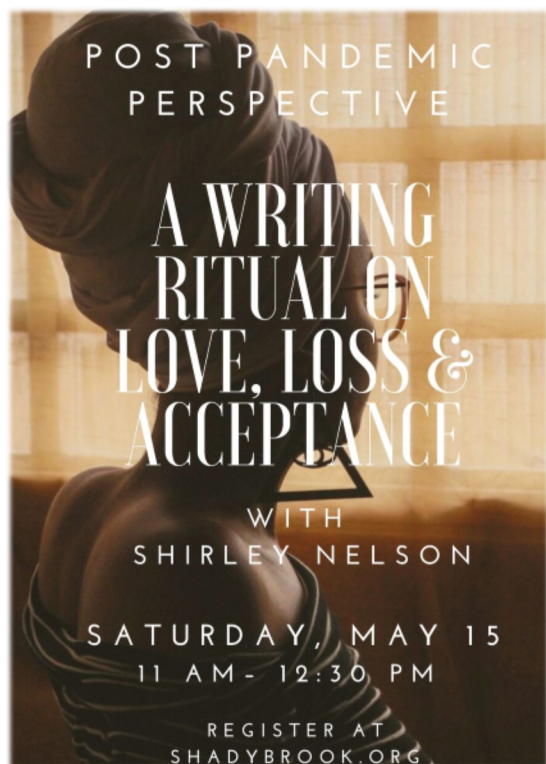
first thought was “What can I do to help?” And what she did was incredibly useful. She bought some bottled water and handed them out to the marchers.

Small things make a difference and we have been hearing story after story after story of the little things that people are doing to help both pandemics. I seem to be most drawn to stories about simple acts of kindness. Partly because they’re things that anyone can do without much effort, and they’re often heart opening experiences. Remember, there are many who came before us that contributed in big ways and little ways to move this world forward in the name of love. [Stand Up!](#) Do what you can, whenever you can, however you can.

“All it takes is a single **moment**, a single choice to create **momentum**. All you need is a second to change everything.”
– [Renee Montgomery](#)

*Psalms for Praying: An Invitation to Wholeness By
Nan C. Merrill—Psalm 125*

Those who put their trust in You
are like giant trees
standing firm and rooted deep.
As the trees grow strong in fertile
soil,
so we mature in the garden of
Love,
nourished by the Word of Life.
For the weeds of fear, the tares
of ignorance,
find no home here; they are
soon cast out.
As each flower in its uniqueness
blesses the garden,
the interconnectedness of all
brings it to fulfillment.
Those whose lives reflect goodness
and integrity,
become mirrors to Love’s way.
They are like fragrant blossoms that
bring joy to all around them,
like open invitations for others
to come.
Come! Enter the Garden of Love!



Post Pandemic Perspective – A Writing Ritual on
Love, Loss & Acceptance
Instructor: Shirley Nelson
Saturday, May 15 | 11 am– 12:30 pm Eastern |
Online | Donations appreciated

The past year has affected all of our lives in many profound ways. Most of us have experienced losses that even we are not aware of. As the pandemic comes to a close, many experts predict that a “new wave” of grief will emerge as we begin to process the effects of the past year.

This program offers attendees time to assess unconscious losses from Covid-19 by writing about their experiences. Shirley will gently guide attendees with compelling questions and stories to inspire creativity and reveal their personal healing path.

Join our safe, supportive space to:

- connect with self
- reveal unconscious grief
- begin the healing process

For more information and to register [click here](https://shadybrook.org)

Compassion Exercise

Objective: To increase the amount of compassion in the world.

Expected Result: A personal sense of peace.

Instructions: This exercise can be done anywhere that people congregate (airports, malls, parks, beaches, etc.). It should be done on strangers, unobtrusively, from some distance. Try to do all five steps on the same person.

With attention on the person, repeat to yourself:

“Just like me, this person is seeking some happiness for his/her life.”

With attention on the person, repeat to yourself:

“Just like me, this person is trying to avoid suffering in his/her life.”

With attention on the person, repeat to yourself:

“Just like me, this person has known sadness, loneliness, and despair.”

With attention on the person, repeat to yourself:

“Just like me, this person is seeking to fulfill his/her needs.”

With attention on the person, repeat to yourself:

“Just like me, this person is learning about life.”

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