



UNLEASH THE POWER WITHIN

WINTER/SPRING 2020
PROGRAM GUIDE

 **INPOWER**
Institute
A Center For Community
Healing & Optimal Living



Liberated Living
**INSIGHTS FROM
OUR FOUNDER**

2020 is the year of SATISFACTION! You read right – SATISFACTION! For far too long, many of us have been living lives that overflow with responsibility, but trickle with contentment. I'm not writing about what someone else told me, I'm sharing what I've experienced firsthand. There have been too many moments, days and years when I settled for "just enough" when what I really wanted was JOY.

How did this happen? I, like many others, became confused about the difference between primary and secondary satisfactions. The former, which most of us yearn for, are hard to come by in a society that lauds perpetual busy-ness, instant gratification, and surface connections. And the latter are poor substitutes that take the sting out of feeling empty and exploited. Let's explore these distinctions further.

Primary satisfactions are what make life worth living. While the forms they take vary from person to person, the underlying impulses are usually the same. Among them are feeling cared for and supported, contributing to something meaningful and worthwhile, being pleased with ourselves, and helping others, to name a few. When we don't experience these, because we dwell in toxic environments or lack time and energy, we reach for convenient placeholders. For example, we'll substitute entertainment for companionship, status for achievement, looking good for feeling good, and donating money for investing time. Now let me be clear, entertainment, status, good looks and money are fine, they're just not sufficient for a happy life.

The trap of secondary satisfactions also shows up in subtler ways. I often experience it in my eating habits. I reach for sugar when I long for pleasure, salt when I want flavor or excitement, and fat when I need comfort. The sad truth is that I'm not alone in my behavior. Millions of people are just like me, which is why it's no surprise that so many of us are living with chronic illness and disease.

We aren't to blame for our current state. After all, our culture and economy are built upon secondary satisfactions. Yet, if we ever want to be and live well, we are going to have to depart from the status quo to pursue what we really want in life. This takes courage because it requires authenticity and comes with no short cuts or quick fixes. To get the satisfaction that we really want and surely deserve, we have to risk being real with ourselves and with others. And this will cost us, our defenses, illusions and maybe even some relationships. But what we stand to gain from our audacity is priceless – more experiences of genuine fulfillment and unfettered joy.

2020 is our year of SATISFACTION. Let's claim it!

Primary satisfactions are what make life worth living.

*To get the satisfaction that we really want and surely deserve, we have to **risk being real** with ourselves and with others.*

Rebecca Bennett
Founder



TABLE OF CONTENTS

WELCOME TO INPOWER INSTITUTE	5
MEET THE TEAM	6
MONTHLY OVERVIEW	8
ABUNDANT LIVING BLOG & EVENTS	10
COMMUNITY & JUSTICE BLOG & EVENTS	12
CULTURAL ARTS & EXPRESSION BLOG & EVENTS	15
HARMONIOUS RELATIONSHIPS BLOG & EVENTS	16
HOLISTIC HEALING & HEALTH BLOG & EVENTS	18
SPIRITUAL GROWTH & DISCOVERY BLOG & EVENTS	21

WELCOME TO INPOWER INSTITUTE

We are delighted that you found us – we’ve been waiting for you! Your interests in healing and well-being have brought you to our community of healers, sages, seekers, teachers, change agents, activists, spirit workers, earth allies, artists, revolutionaries and blooming humans. Together, we work to advance wholeness and well-being for ourselves and our peoples.

While we follow many practices and paths, we are united by a shared purpose – to unleash the power within ourselves so that we and others heal from life’s traumas; activate our untapped potential; and cultivate the capacities needed to create a more just and vibrant world. As part of our work, we co-create community healing spaces that:

Tend to both
the core and the
conditions of our
peoples

Lovingly bear
witness to our truths

Affirm our power
and sufficiency
under all
circumstances

Inspire and
encourage our most
authentic self-
expressions

Provide platforms
for us to exercise
our purpose and our
power

Challenge beliefs,
structures and
systems that
endanger our lives

Bring us into right
relationship with
ourselves and others

Seed the
healed future
for succeeding
generations

Our reach is global, extending to all who endeavor to positively transform themselves and the human condition. Yet our roots are deeply embedded in the fertile ground of African diaspora families and cultures; black womanhood and sisterhood; ancestor reverence; indigenous wisdom traditions; liberation theology; and movements for LGBTQIA rights and racial, social and economic justice. Anchored by our roots, we call upon our courage, passions, resources, connections, skills and wisdom to help turn life’s messes into medicines that are not only capable of healing us, but also our communities.

MEET THE TEAM



Rebecca Bennett *Founder & Root Teacher*

Rebecca Bennett, InPower Institute's Founder & Root Teacher, is a highly regarded community healer, spiritual director and life coach. Her mission is to help people manifest the highest and best within themselves and create communities that sustain the best in us all. For more than 20 years, Rebecca has inspired, coached, trained and helped tens of thousands of people and hundreds of organizations achieve lasting breakthroughs that elevate human consciousness and transform human conditions.



Rev. Lorren Z. Buck, MDiv. *Executive Director & Minister*

As Executive Director & Minister, Lorren Buck brings deep experience and expertise in ministry, sexual education and executive non-profit management to the InPower team. Lorren oversees the Institute's mission advancement and operations and co-leads its spiritual growth and discovery offerings. She also serves as a theological companion to the Institute's affiliated seminarians and develops liberating programming that focuses on spirituality, sexuality and gender.



ēNiCōL *Team Member*

A master fitness trainer and practitioner of holistic wellness, ēNiCōL shares with InPower her keen passion for healthy living. For her, passion is purpose and includes co-creating healing spaces for marginalized populations, artistic expression and cooperative community development.



Cheeraz Gormon *Team Member*

Cheeraz Gormon has over 15-years of experience crafting compelling and culturally relevant stories that resonate with people in meaningful and impactful ways. As a visual storyteller, poet, author, award-winning advertising copywriter, and two-time TEDxGatewayArch speaker, Cheeraz brings a wealth of expertise to InPower. She uses the spoken and written word to give voice and visibility to the untold truths of individuals, organizations and communities.



Brittini Gray *Team Member*

Black freedom at any cost is a sentiment Brittini Gray holds true as a master strategist who creatively works to heal communities from trauma. A poet, healer and organizer, Brittini works at the intersections of art, healing, spirituality and justice. Beautifully blended, these passions are her life's work.



Jessireé Jenkins *Team Member*

Jessireé Jenkins supports InPower in maintaining meaningful connections with its community members. Her background as a library professional and her interests in technology, civic engagement, social justice and self-care make her a perfect fit for the bold work of the Institute.



Adande Lane *Team Member*

Adande Lane has over a decade of experience in character development and transformational coaching with individuals and organizations. She is passionately focused on partnering with others to imagine and realize their best selves in purpose, with purpose and on purpose. At InPower, Adande examines personal and collective spiritual stimulation and their impact on individual and communal transformation. Adande believes healing happens in collective spaces when we intentionally engage our highest selves and hold space for others to do the same.



Jamari Michael *Team Member*

As a healing artist, social worker, seminarian and human rights advocate, Jamari Michael contains the multitudes. He brings over 10 years of experience serving Black and queer communities through activism and advocacy, mental health counseling, social work, art and community development, education, research, and policy. His background and experiences breathe unconventional, holistic, and adaptive life into all that he touches.



Amanda Tello *Team Member*

Amanda Tello is an indigenious Latinx community organizer and blogger. Her activism is intersectional, focusing on the liberation of brown and black gente. She is a mother, a minimalist and a builder of intentional community. At InPower, Amanda examines how the choices people make enable them to be the principal agents in their liberation. She also explores how letting go can create the freedom people need to be their most authentic selves.



April Warren-Grice, PhD *Team Member*

A highly-regarded research-practitioner and educational equity visionary, Dr. April believes wellness is social justice and takes a holistic approach to the development of the mind, body, and spirit. She serves as a bridge of connection for advocates and practitioners wanting to move from theory to practice. In addition, she creates communities of practice among academics, educators, wellness practitioners and the people they serve.

MONTHLY OVERVIEW

JANUARY

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- 2 InPower-ed Meditation
- 4 Vision Boarding For Black Trans & Queer Liberation

- 5 Spirit Rising: A Salon for the Soul
- 9 InPower-ed Meditation
- 10 Black Healers Collective

- 12 Spirit Rising: A Salon for the Soul
- 15 Flower Boi, Gin & Jesus
- 16 InPower-ed Meditation

- 19 Spirit Rising: A Salon for the Soul, Bhakti Bhajans
- 21 Community Song Circle
- 22 Great Cosmic Mother - A Sexual & Spiritual Liberation Of Women & The Planet
- 23 InPower-ed Meditation
- 25 Black Game Night

- 26 Spirit Rising: A Salon for the Soul, Lewa Farbale
- 28 Power of the Pen
- 29 Gin & Jesus, Healing Touch
- 30 InPower-ed Meditation

FEBRUARY

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- 2 Spirit Rising: A Salon for the Soul
- 6 InPower-ed Meditation
- 8 In Between the Sheets: Love, Sex, & Intimacy, Black Game Night

- 9 Spirit Rising: A Salon for the Soul
- 13 InPower-ed Meditation
- 14 Black Healers Collective

- 16 Spirit Rising: A Salon for the Soul, Bhakti Bhajans
- 18 Community Song Circle
- 19 Flower Boi
- 20 InPower-ed Meditation
- 22 Yervas Y Cosas (Herbs & Things), Black Game Night

- 23 Spirit Rising: A Salon for the Soul, Lewa Farbale
- 25 Power of the Pen
- 26 Great Cosmic Mother - A Sexual & Spiritual Liberation Of Women & The Planet
- 27 InPower-ed Meditation

MARCH

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29	30	31				

- 1 Spirit Rising: A Salon for the Soul
- 5 InPower-ed Meditation
- 7 Privatization of Land and Body, **Black Game Night**

- 8 Spirit Rising: A Salon for the Soul
- 12 InPower-ed Meditation
- 13 Black Healers Collective

- 15 Spirit Rising: A Salon for the Soul
- 17 Community Song Circle
- 18 Flower Boi
- 19 InPower-ed Meditation
- 21 **Black Game Night**

- 22 Spirit Rising: A Salon for the Soul, Bhakti Bhajans
- 24 Power of the Pen
- 25 Great Cosmic Mother - A Sexual & Spiritual Liberation Of Women & The Planet
- 26 InPower-ed Meditation

- 29 Spirit Rising: A Salon for the Soul, Lewa Farbale

APRIL

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26	27	28	29	30		

- 2 Spirit Rising: A Salon for the Soul
- 4 Good Lovin': Making Marriage Work

- 5 Spirit Rising: A Salon for the Soul
- 9 InPower-ed Meditation
- 10 Black Healers Collective

- 12 Spirit Rising: A Salon for the Soul
- 15 Flower Boi
- 16 InPower-ed Meditation

- 19 Spirit Rising: A Salon for the Soul, Bhakti Bhajans
- 21 Community Song Circle
- 22 Great Cosmic Mother - A Sexual & Spiritual Liberation Of Women & The Planet
- 23 InPower-ed Meditation

- 26 Spirit Rising: A Salon for the Soul, Lewa Farbale
- 28 Power of the Pen
- 29 Healing Touch
- 30 InPower-ed Meditation

- ABUNDANT LIVING
- CULTURAL ARTS & EXPRESSION
- COMMUNITY & JUSTICE
- HARMONIOUS RELATIONSHIPS
- HOLISTIC HEALTH & HEALING
- SPIRITUAL GROWTH & DISCOVERY

*Please check www.InPowerInstitute.com for cancellations, additions or reschedules.

A photograph of two Black women smiling joyfully. The woman on the left has curly hair and is wearing a yellow top. The woman on the right has braided hair and is wearing a dark top. The image has a soft, reddish-pink overlay.

ABUNDANT LIVING

EXPERIENCE LIFE'S BOUNTY

There are sufficient resources all around to aid us along life's journey. We are best able to experience this bounty when we are open and expectant of its flow. **Abundant Living** is our most authentic state of being, but often feels elusive because of the deprivations and hardships many of us have known. The good news is that underneath our seemingly ever-present scarcity lies an overflow that is not only capable of meeting all of our needs, but can also fully resource our purpose, dreams and longings.

A LOVE THAT IS ENCHANTING

(AN EXCERPT FROM "LOVING BEYOND ENCHANTMENT")

BY JAMARI MICHAEL

How do we love beyond enchantment? We don't. When love is given permission to be free, love is enchanting, and the enchantment is the beyond. Love is the fairytale, the "happily ever after," the all-consuming affair, the eternal presence, and the unconditioned force we all secretly desire. In this way, it is not our belief in fairy tales that is wrong, but rather our belief that loving with such deep abandon is an impossibility.

In our disbelief, we turn love into a fixture, a limited being, a philosophy, or a fiction we project our deepest desires onto, instead of experiencing them. Our ability to love is therefore restricted by all the ways we refuse to believe it can exist. Somewhere, amid the disappointment, sadness, and desperation of our discontent and disillusionment, many of us have concluded that love simply isn't a fairytale. That love done practically and in the "real world" is sobering.

This is not false. Love is not without many potent challenges that require us to reevaluate life on the shore where the ground can be touched and the foundation is steady. But, this is also not the whole truth. We are surrounded by countless examples of the ways that love invites us into the deep and drowns us with its presence. The way the Earth provides nourishment with great abundance. The way the Sun shows up relentlessly every single day to smother our faces in kisses and its warm embrace. The way all of our Great Mothers have

broken themselves open to create new life and new beginnings.

If love were not at least in part a mysticism, a mystery outside of our control, an intoxication, a fire that burns wild, a wave without form, our very existence would cease. But belief in this kind of love has been destroyed by genocides of many kinds. Many of us have come to believe that there is nowhere safe outside the womb. Nowhere to be truly loved. That life itself is a trauma, and any conception of unconditional, enchanting love is a false mask for its triggers.

Our desire for this love, however, does not go away amid our disbelief and our fears. We do not forget what it is like to be created out of a cosmic magic that can only be described as love, regardless of the imminent details of our creation. As a result, many of us spend decades and lifetimes searching for synthetic and acceptable replacements for this love we will not allow ourselves to believe possible to recreate. We fall in love with the taste of exotic cuisine. We plunge deeply into our "purpose-driven careers." We sprint towards the next chemical or herbal high, searching for a love that is wild, free, unhinged, fulfilling, creative, nourishing, sexy, and smothering. Searching for a kind of love that reminds us of air, and warmth, and the unflinching, unconditioned gift of a mother's womb. A love that accepts us as we are, needing no understanding of who we are, what we will become, and what will be required of us to be in relationship with each other. A kind of love that pours over us relentlessly. A kind of love that says "Yes!" with all-consuming joy and excitement and childlike anticipation. A love that is enchanting.

ABUNDANT LIVING EVENTS

BLACK GAME NIGHT

FUBU!!! This event is for Black people who enjoy board games and other fun activities.. Allies may attend by invitation only and with the understanding that this is a night for US, and not for explaining US.

WEEK 1: Never Reneg & Black Card Revoked · **WEEK 2:** University of Dope & Uno

WEEK 3: Dominoes & Discretion · **WEEK 4:** Spades Tournament · **WEEK 5:** School Yard Games



SESSION LEADERS: ēNiCōL and Jessica Alsobrook
DATE: Sat: Jan. 25, Feb. 8, 22, March 7, 21
TIME: 7:30pm - 10:30pm
COST: \$5 and BYO-Drinks
PARTICIPANTS: Black people who are 21+ and invited allies
REGISTER: Cash App \$STLDrummer or pay onsite.

VISION BOARDING FOR BLACK TRANS & QUEER LIBERATION

We're interested in your 2020 visions for Black trans and queer, individual and communal success and liberation. Together, we will reflect, strategize and create. We will put into existence goals and dreams for ourselves and our community. Bring your calendars, journals, sketch pads and whatever else you may need to dive into the process. Vision boarding supplies will be provided.



SESSION LEADERS: Jae Shepherd and Adriana Darris
DATE: Saturday, January 4, 2020
TIME: 2:00 pm - 5:00 pm
COST: Donations appreciated!
PARTICIPANTS: Black Trans & Queer Community Members
REGISTER: Drop in.

YERBAS Y COSAS (HERBS & THINGS)

During this workshop we will explore the positive impacts herbs have on our ability to heal emotionally, physically and spiritually. We will learn ways to use herbs in teas, steam baths and oils, as well as ritual practices. We will only be working with a few herbs at this workshop, but feel free to bring any herb knowledge you have, or dried/fresh herbs you love to work with so that we can incorporate them into our practice.



SESSION LEADER: Amanda Tello
DATE: February 22, 2020
TIME: 2:00 pm - 5:00 pm
COST: Donations appreciated!
PARTICIPANTS: All are welcome.
REGISTER: Email: l.tello.amanda@gmail.com



INPOWER HEALING CIRCLE PODCAST

Pleasure is our birthright. But since the Middle Passage, the pleasure of black folx was replaced with violation. We've had 400 years of subjugating pleasure. Part of our healing, liberation and well-being is reclaiming what is rightfully ours. We deserve to feel good about ourselves and those we invite into ourselves. The Healing Circle Podcast is for feeling yourself, being yourself and choosing yourself. Season one commemorates 400 years since the first Africans arrived as captives. It's time to heal y'all. Listen to our episodes on our YouTube page or Facebook.



COMMUNITY & JUSTICE

CO-CREATE A BETTER WORLD

Living only to advance our personal well-being misses a fundamental truth – that while we are distinct, none of us are separate. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. captured this understanding beautifully when he wrote in his Letter from Birmingham Jail, “We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly.” We live, love and languish together. And because of this truth, we work to co-create a better world where **Community & Justice** are inextricably intertwined. This is the promise of Beloved Community and we fully commit ourselves to its fulfillment.

RECLAIMING INTENTIONAL LIVING

BY AMANDA TELLO

Mainstream ideas of “intentional living” fall short. It is not enough to be a “vegan,” with no understanding of food deserts and food inaccessibility. It is not enough to be a “minimalist,” if one neglects to acknowledge housing inequality and generational trauma among people of color. Living an intentional lifestyle is also living a socially conscious lifestyle.

For me, true intentional living includes all the ways I move through the world – everything from how I participate in capitalism, to how I eat, to how I manage waste. The most vital aspect is how my conscious living highlights and intersects with collective liberation.

“Intentional living” usually fails to identify those most directly impacted by the systems plaguing our land. I argue that living these lifestyles without considering colonialism, capitalism, structural hierarchies of race, class, gender, ability, and even citizenship status, is actually violent and contributes to the perpetuation of white supremacy.

We must all work to equip ourselves with the tools needed to deeply analyze the intersections of freedom. I believe it is our duty as a collective to rigorously unpack toxic ideology in order to gain liberation – which includes those who participate in “alternative” lifestyles, such as zero-wasters, vegans, minimalists, tiny-home owners, offgrid-ers, and so on.

COMMUNITY & JUSTICE EVENTS

BLACK HEALERS COLLECTIVE

This Collective is a community of change agents working to advance the healing and wholeness of African diaspora people. Our commitment to the well-being of black people, families and communities extends to all of humanity and life on Earth, yet is rooted in the deep and abiding love we have for ourselves and our culture. This love, and our recognition of our profound interdependence, bind us together across diverse backgrounds, traditions and healing arts, and compel us to align our efforts to heal ourselves and serve others. As a collective, we use the wisdom, skills and resources of our community to spread healing practices and programs both to those in our midst who are struggling to survive as well as those among us who are learning how to thrive. Black healers of all interests, practices and modalities are invited to attend our monthly meetings.



DATE: 2nd Fridays: January 10, February 14, March 13, April 10
TIME: 6:30 pm - 9:00 pm
COST: Potluck Dinner
PARTICIPANTS: Black Healers
REGISTER: Email: info@blackhealerscollective.com

PRIVATIZATION OF LAND AND BODY

This offering will explore the ways in which colonization and imperialism have been used to privatize land and ultimately bodies of color. We will discuss constructed concepts such as borders and citizenship and the ways in which they have been used to determine which bodies can and cannot occupy space.



SESSION LEADER: Amanda Tello
DATE: Saturday, March 7, 2020
TIME: 2:00 pm - 5:00 pm
COST: Donations appreciated!
PARTICIPANTS: All are welcome.
REGISTER: Email: l.tello.amanda@gmail.com



CULTURAL ARTS & EXPRESSION

PROCLAIM THE JOY OF BEING

Past, present and future converge through **Cultural Arts & Expression**. The cultural practices of our ancestors serve as the roots of our present-day creations. Likewise, the truths of our young ones stretch our imaginations, inviting us to engage the world more dynamically and authentically. These life forces come together within us, causing us to experience and express life in its fullness through music, movement, artistry, story, prayer and other forms of cultural magic. It's in giving ourselves to this magic that we ignite the real joys of being.

TO SIT BESIDE OUR ELDERS

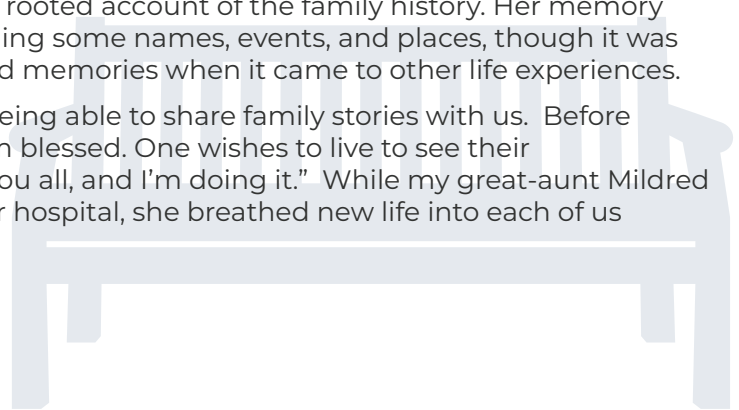
BY CHEERAZ GORMON

My great-aunt Mildred Philomena Maria was born, July 23, 1931 in St. Louis, MO, and doesn't know if she was born in a house or a hospital.

On September 5, 2019, my cousins and I sat in a circle underneath the late afternoon sun. At the head of the circle was Mildred, sharing family history and snapshots of her life, mixed with the type of jokes only one who has lived a lot of life can produce with ease, wit, and impeccable comedic timing. We listened attentively as each word, slow and deliberate, sprang from her mouth. The impromptu interview, captured by the voice note app on my phone, felt necessary, even urgent, after burying one of our dear cousins the day before.

As the oldest living member of my maternal grandmother's siblings, Aunt Mildred was one of the only people who could give us a more rooted account of the family history. Her memory was sharp as a tack when it came to recalling some names, events, and places, though it was clouded by time, distance, and not-so-fond memories when it came to other life experiences.

I asked Aunt Mildred how she felt about being able to share family stories with us. Before I could finish my question, she replied, "I'm blessed. One wishes to live to see their grandchildren and great-grandchildren, you all, and I'm doing it." While my great-aunt Mildred doesn't know if she was born in a house or hospital, she breathed new life into each of us underneath that late afternoon sun.



CULTURAL ARTS & EXPRESSION

EVENTS

BHAKTI BHAJANS (KIRTAN)

Kirtan is based on ancient chants. It has the ability to quiet the mind and bring your mind into your heart. Everyone experiences kirtan differently. You can think of it as a sing-along. People sit on the floor or in chairs. The wallah (leader) sings the mantra, and the audience sings it back as a call and response chant. A single chant can go on for up to ten to forty minutes. As you sing with each other you experience a deep connection with the musicians, the other members and yourself. When the music stops, your mind is quiet. Dress comfortably, bring a cushion, blanket or mat to sit on, and a shaker or two if you'd like.



SESSION LEADER: Jeffrey Hoffman
DATE: 3rd Sundays: January 19, February 16, March 15, April 19
TIME: 6:30pm - 8:30pm
COST: Offering of \$15 appreciated. No one is turned away due to lack of funds.
PARTICIPANTS: All are welcome.
REGISTER: Drop in.

BLACK WOMXN PLAYWRIGHT WORKSHOP

Black Womxn Playwright Workshop is 12-weeks intensive workshop for Black womxn playwrights of all levels. The workshop series is designed for all participants to gain a foundational understanding of playwriting. Each participant will be responsible for developing a 10 to 20-minute piece to be delivered before a live audience with real actors as their end of session project.



SESSION LEADERS: Cheeraz Gormon and Mariah Richardson
DATE: 3rd Sundays: January 19, February 16, March 15, April 19
TIME: Visit inpowerinstitute.com for date
COST: \$25 per session
PARTICIPANTS: Black womxn 18+-years old
REGISTER: Email: bwpwstl@gmail.com

COMMUNITY SONG CIRCLE

Music is medicine and song saves. Community Song Circle is a monthly communal space for simple songs to be sung, shared, and learned, and most importantly for them to do their healing magic. This is a voice-centered space, and instruments are welcome. Experienced drummers only, please. All are welcome.



SESSION LEADERS: Lizzie Salsich and rotating co-facilitators
DATE: 3rd Tuesdays: January 21, February 18, March 17, April 21
TIME: 7:00pm - 9:00pm
COST: Donations accepted, \$5-\$20
PARTICIPANTS: All are welcome.
REGISTER: Drop in.

POWER OF THE PEN

Attention poets/ essayists/ journalists/ novelists and other pen, paper and keyboard lovers: Do you need a little push, support, and camaraderie to write? Are you finishing a memoir, blog post, article, dissertation, screenplay, or spoken word piece? Come to this bi-monthly Tuesday evening writing circle. We will check in, meditate, listen to each other, and most importantly provide a space and time to write – away from outside distractions. Bring your paper, pen, laptop, drink, food, etc. Come fellowship with a writing collective!



SESSION LEADERS: Sweet-T and Robyhne Jewelle
DATE: 4th Tuesdays: January 28, February 25, March 31, April 28
TIME: 6:30pm - 8:30pm
COST: Donations appreciated!
PARTICIPANTS: All writers are welcome.
REGISTER: Drop in.



HARMONIOUS RELATIONSHIPS

NUTURE GOOD LOVE

We human beings live in relationship from our first breath to our last. It's our interdependence that funds our personal and collective existence. Our most meaningful relationships not only shape us, they also inform our world views and reality as we know it. The growth edge for many of us is to be in right relationship with one another so that we bring love and truth into all of our connections. This is how we create **Harmonious Relationships** and come to experience our highest and best selves.


THE RIGHT RELATIONSHIP

BY JESSIREE JENKINS

One day our mothers will ask
"Who do you love completely?"
May we grow to respond
"Ourselves. Ourselves. Our lovely selves"
-@BeingUpile

Relationships are a beautiful struggle. We are literally birthed into them. Families teach us the dynamics before we get out into the world, and mold us, for better or for worse. They teach us lessons, build bonds, break hearts, close gaps, foster communication, force growth, and have the ability to serve as a medium for time travel. Yes, you read that right, time travel.

All relationships, good, bad, or ugly, allow us to see ourselves at different points in our lives. Whether it's imagining who is sitting in that rocking chair next to us during our retirement years, or



remembering who was holding our hand as we learned how to cross the street, or who taught us that, "everything that glitters ain't gold," relationships are undeniably integral in our journeys. Relationships are also magical. The right relationships can heal, mend, and be a salve for the heart, mind, and soul.

While it can be easy to get swept away in building with others, do not neglect the relationship with self. Know that those ships we harbor can sail away, but the one we have with ourselves is anchored forever. Nurture and love on yourself and watch your love radiate to all those who cross your path.

Be love, y'all.

HARMONIOUS RELATIONSHIPS EVENTS

FLOWER BOI

Flower Boi is a peer support group for masculine centered (including but not limited to masculine of center women, cisgender men, gender-non-conforming, boi, trans masculine, androgynous) people of color to unlearn toxic masculinity in order to uplift and empower each other, as well as to better love and support the femmes in our lives. We meet and host vulnerable brave conversations on topics such as accountability, #MeToo, embracing femininity, and much more. For more info like & follow us on Facebook: @flowerboisupport and Instagram: @flowerboistl



SESSION LEADERS: Charles Buchanan and Jae Shepherd
DATE: 3rd Wednesdays
TIME: 7:00pm - 8:00pm
COST: Donations appreciated!
PARTICIPANTS: Masculine centered people of color
REGISTER: Drop in.

GOOD LOVIN': MAKING MARRIAGE WORK

There's not a soul on this planet who does not crave good lovin', but how many of us actually experience it? And if we've had it, how many of us have built lives of growth and gratitude from it? Join Rebeccah Bennett and guests as they share insights, lessons, challenges and emotional stretch marks from their marriages. Hear how couples have managed to stay together through commitment, forgiveness and grace. This session is for couples, singles and anyone who wants to move beyond the ideals of love to find out what it actually takes to make committed relationships work.



SESSION LEADER: Rebeccah Bennett
DATE: Saturday, April 4, 2020
TIME: 7:00pm - 9:00pm
COST: Donations appreciated
PARTICIPANTS: All are welcome.
REGISTER: Drop in.

IN BETWEEN THE SHEETS: LOVE, SEX & INTIMACY

At In Between the Sheets, self-care and personal intimacy meet the truth about kink and everything in between! If you missed it last year, you do not want to miss this. Empowerment expert Adande Lane dives into a discussion that brings your inner sexual energy to the forefront in a powerful and exploratory manner. Identify your personal intersections of love, sex and intimacy as you tune in and turn up your desires – all in time for Valentine's Day. Women, wine and wisdom. Come enjoy stimulating conversation.



SESSION LEADER: Adande Lane
DATE: Saturday, February 8, 2020
TIME: 3:00pm - 7:00pm
COST: \$15
PARTICIPANTS: Women over 21 years of age.
REGISTER: www.sheadande.com



HOLISTIC HEALTH & HEALING

EMBRACE WHOLENESS & RENEWAL

Many of the conditions of life can leave us hurting, fractured and fragmented. Through **Holistic Health & Healing** we are supported in embracing and ultimately expressing wholeness and renewal. These states of being are our birthrights, but often go unclaimed in the face of compounded distresses, which contaminate the sweet waters of life with dis-ease. We can, however, learn to realign to our core. It nourishes us by calling forth vital life force energy that helps to restore our bodies, minds and souls.

IS WORK YOUR GOD?

BY ēNiCōL

Americans have become known as the “workaholics of the world.” What does this mean for those of us whose backs have been the foundation upon which this country has been built? In a recent video feature for The Atlantic, Derek Thompson stated, “Work has become the centerpiece of our identity, the focal point of our lives.”

Thompson also made the argument that work has replaced traditional religion since people have begun seeking self-actualization through their careers instead of through their spirituality or meaningful relationships. To clarify, he didn't make his Atlantic video with the unique plight of people of color in mind. Through the imagery he chose, he clearly referred to the work production trends of white Americans and noted that, “The wealthy are the pioneers of working longer hours,” making the claim that the rich were the first people to grind. Nah, Bruh.

What the wealthy pioneered was forcing others, mainly lower-income people and people of color, to grind through long hours so that they could reap the benefits. These white Americans have also perpetually conditioned their offspring to do the same. However, aside from Thompspon's less-than-holistic view of the historical context around labor and production in this country, I agree with him that (paraphrasing) we need to stop and truly consider the immediate and long

term impact of constant grinding and striving for survival on our physical and mental health and ability to actualize re-liberation.

“It's a huge issue,” said Maya Rockeymore Cummings, CEO of Global Policy Solutions, a social-change strategy firm. “Over our working life we experience pay disparities, have little wealth in our families and often support others... I think the stress of racism, sexism, poverty and the grind of having to figure out how to make ends meet on a daily basis creates a confluence of pressures that are disproportionately borne by disadvantaged communities, especially communities of color.”

As grinding has increasingly become our main focus, we have continued the conditioning that was initially forced upon our ancestors. So, are we liberating ourselves by grinding or reinforcing the kitchen table legs of patriarchy and of white supremacy, believing that the food served on this table will get us the nutrients we need to free us “one day?” And what notions of “work” are we passing on to our children?

True, we must affirm our power and sufficiency under all circumstances, yet we must also remember that this includes the confidence and space to proclaim, “Helllll Nah!” in the true spirit of Ms. Sophia from *The Color Purple*. Let us also recognize that the “food” being served us has not been cooked with loving intent.

Think About It! How has work taken over your life? Challenge: Write down 5 small yet immediate steps you can take to ensure the work that you produce brings more resources to you and your community.

HOLISTIC HEALTH & HEALING EVENTS

BLACK WOMEN WITH ANXIETY

Black Women with Anxiety is a non-clinical peer support group for Black women who live with various forms of anxiety. Some sessions will include clinical and non-clinical guest speakers. This group is not a replacement for therapy or any physician ordered treatments.



SESSION LEADERS: Cameryn Davis, Alana Flowers, Cheeraz Gormon
DATE: Visit inpowerinstitute.com for dates
TIME: Visit inpowerinstitute.com for times
COST: Free
PARTICIPANTS: Black women 21+-years old
REGISTER: Email: cheerazgormon@gmail.com

HEALING TOUCH 101

Healing Touch 101 is a basic introduction to a relaxing, nurturing, heart centered, biofield energy therapy. Gentle, intentional touch assists in balancing physical, mental, emotional and spiritual well-being. Healing Touch assists in creating a balanced energy field that supports your ability to heal. It is safe for all ages and can be integrated with standard medical care. It can be performed on or off the body. This session is led by Eileen Wolfington, who has completed four of the five levels required to become certified. Eileen has been practicing this integrative approach since June of 2016. She is moved by the sense of calm and wholeness experienced by her clients. Come engage in some basic self-care techniques to reduce stress and promote relaxation.



SESSION LEADER: Eileen Wolfington
DATE: Wednesdays: January 29 & April 29, 2020
TIME: 7:00 pm – 8:30 pm
COST: Donations appreciated
PARTICIPANTS: All are welcome.
REGISTER: Email: SelfCareWithEileen@gmail.com or call 314-724-8576

MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID

Mental Health First Aid is an 8-hours skills-based training that teaches participants how to identify, understand, and respond to mental health, and substance use issues.



SESSION LEADERS: Lawson Calhoun, Dr. Brittany Conners, Cheeraz Gormon
DATE: Visit inpowerinstitute.com for dates
TIME: Visit inpowerinstitute.com for times
COST: \$50-\$170
PARTICIPANTS: People 18+ years old
REGISTER: Email: cheerazgormon@gmail.com

TRAUMA FIRST AID

This one hour, hands on class will give you the training and skills you need to help someone who is badly hurt and experiencing excessive bleeding and various forms of injury.



SESSION LEADERS: Dr. Laurie Punch
DATE: Visit inpowerinstitute.com for dates
TIME: Visit inpowerinstitute.com for times
COST: Donations accepted
PARTICIPANTS: People 18+ years old
REGISTER: Email: cheerazgormon@gmail.com

BELL INNER WELL COUNSELING

Help is available now. You have the capacity to make decisions about your life that will lead to healthy, long-term solutions to challenges. Know that making changes in life, working through emotional difficulties, developing new patterns and gaining insights require more than wishing. Therapy involves a commitment on your part in terms of time, money and energy. Working as a team with a trusted professional often leads to better relationships, solutions to specific problems and significant reductions in feelings of distress and limitation. I specialize in trauma healing, depression, anxiety, couples counseling and grief and loss. Some of my core values include courage, compassion, spirituality, honesty, love and social justice. I am currently accepting new clients.

PRACTITIONER: Velma Bell, MSW, L.C.S.W.
COST: \$100 for 55-minute session
PARTICIPANTS: All are welcome.
SET APPOINTMENT: www.bellinnerwellcounseling.com or call 314-308-0627

HEALING TOUCH

Healing Touch is an energy therapy in which practitioners consciously use their hands in a heart-centered and intentional way to facilitate physical, emotional, mental and spiritual health. Healing Touch uses light touch to influence the human energy system, specifically the energy field that surrounds the body. The goal of Healing Touch is to restore harmony in the energy system, placing you in a position to self-heal.

PRACTITIONER: Eileen Wolfington
COST: Donations appreciated!
PARTICIPANTS: All are welcome.
SET APPOINTMENT: Email: SelfCareWithEileen@gmail.com or call 314-724-8576



SPIRITUAL GROWTH & DISCOVERY

EXPLORE THE SACRED

The mysteries of the divine call us into the deepest waters of human consciousness. **Spiritual Growth & Discovery** answers this call by helping us explore what is most sacred to us individually and collectively. This exploration expands our understanding of ourselves, invites us to see beyond life's appearances and reinforces our connection to Life Source. We grow as a result, experiencing greater meaning in our lives and a deepened appreciation of life's many gifts and wonders.

MESSIAHS, MATRIARCHS AND MOTHERS

BY LORREN ZAKIYA BUCK

From plantation fields to the White House, Black women played important and active roles in the battle for freedom during the Civil War. These women were the chief sources of vital and strategic information. In fact, both free and enslaved black women who were operating as spies, scouts, couriers and guides were able to offer enormous support to Union military personnel and operations.

The activities of Harriet Tubman are a case in point. Tubman, a woman guided by her absolute faith and trust in the Holy Spirit, liberated herself and later returned to the South early in the Civil War. She would disguise and lead local Blacks in dangerous missions behind enemy lines to gather information on rebel troop location, movements and strength. She even accompanied, and by some accounts led, troops in daring raids into enemy territory which destroyed thousands of dollars' worth of southern property and liberated hundreds of Blacks from plantations.

Other intelligence work involved Black women domestics like Mary Elizabeth Bowser. This brilliant Black woman worked with a spy ring in the Confederate capital and was said to be part of the most productive espionage operation in the Civil War. Another free Black woman, Mary Touvestre, obtained a copy of Confederate engineering plans to inform the Union construction of its ironclad warship.

To be clear, these women, among others, did not pledge their loyalty to the Union out of a sense of patriotism. White Northerners still regarded Black people as objects, unworthy of respect and too unintelligent to participate in the public sphere. These emboldened Black women worked in service of their own self-interests and liberation in the midst of an uncertain war. For those who were enslaved, wartime service was a strategy to obtain freedom for themselves and their communities.

In a culture that promotes false images of Black women as vengeful, envious, spiteful, and hateful, let us reclaim the truth of our fierce heritage and reject degrading perceptions of Black womanhood. We have been, and will always be, forces of nature, whose faith, service, commitment and boldness not only transform culture, but also improve life for future generations.

SPIRITUAL GROWTH & DISCOVERY EVENTS

GIN & JESUS

This gathering is for lovers of God who desire a non-churchy way to explore their faith journey. This ain't ya mom's Bible study! Join us as we use a variety of sacred texts to examine real-life applications of faith and all the crap that comes with it. God talk has never been this interesting. Come get your spirit fed while sippin' on some spirits! Let's get into this Gin & Jesus!

SESSION 1: The Only Right Path is the One You're On! · **SESSION 2:** Letting Go in a Petty World



SESSION LEADER: Adande Lane
DATE: 3rd Saturdays - May 18, June 15, July 20 & August 17
TIME: 6:30pm - 8:00pm
COST: Favorite wine or spirit
PARTICIPANTS: All over 21 years of age.
REGISTER: Drop in!

GREAT COSMIC MOTHER - A SEXUAL & SPIRITUAL LIBERATION OF WOMEN STUDY GROUP

Join us for this intensive study of The Great Cosmic Mother: Rediscovering The Religion Of The Earth. Participants in this book club will explore the presence of the Goddess throughout time and around the world. As part of our study, we will reflect on the religious, cultural and archaeological sources that reveal the feminine underpinnings of humanity's heritage. We will also challenge conventional narratives about the role and place of women, especially women of color, and work together to co-create practices that support our sexual and spiritual liberation. There are no fees to join, but participants are asked to bring drinks and snacks to share.



SESSION LEADERS: Rebeccah Bennett and Lorren Z. Buck
DATE: 4th Wednesdays: January 22, February 26, March 25, April 22
TIME: 5:30pm – 8:00pm
COST: Donations Appreciated!
PARTICIPANTS: Anyone who identifies as a woman.
REGISTER: Email: info@inpowerinstitute.com

INPOWER-ED MEDITATION

This meditation practice group is dedicated to the liberation of our hearts and minds. We practice together to reclaim our power from within, through the cultivation of choice, wisdom and compassion. Each week will center on a guided meditation practice, teaching and mindful sharing sourced from a diversity of lineages. All journeyers on the path of spiritual awakening are fully welcomed here. This ongoing practice group will be led by Carolyn Griffeth and Jo Shin Pang. Jo is a practicing Buddhist and certified Mindfulness meditation teacher through the guidance of Jack Kornfield and Tara Brach. Carolyn Griffeth serves as a spiritual director, healer and teacher sourcing from Christian, Buddhist and Earth-based spiritual traditions. Please come join us in this experience of collective liberation and inpower-ment.



SESSION LEADERS: Jo Pang and Carolyn Griffeth
DATE: Thursdays, January 2 to April 30, 2020
TIME: 6:00pm - 7:00pm
COST: Sliding scale donations, up to \$20 per session.
PARTICIPANTS: All are welcome.
REGISTER: <https://www.culturewise.co/events>

LEWA FARABALE - A WOMANIST GATHERING

This gathering exists to create worship experiences that address social justice issues through womanist preaching and action. Womanist preaching is rooted in the African American female experience of seeking liberation, healing and restorative justice in the Bible. Our gathering involves reconstructing a spiritual and moral ethic that is aligned with the sacred essence within Black women.



SESSION LEADERS: Dietra Baker, Lorren Z. Buck, Brittini Gray
DATE: 4th Sundays: January 26, February 23, March 22, April 26
TIME: 1:00pm - 2:30pm
COST: Donations Appreciated!
PARTICIPANTS: Women of Color
REGISTER: Drop in.

SPIRIT RISING: A SALON FOR THE SOUL

Join us weekly for Spirit Rising – a gathering where life’s travelers meet up to share their discoveries, insights and yearnings. This salon is a rest stop, offering a departure from our focus on the management of life to attend more fully to the meaning of life. It is also a workshop where participants engage in rigorous soul searching around life’s most pressing questions and issues. Some of our salon topics have included: encounters with God, our greatest life lessons, courage, magic, spiritual miscarriage, who are we, good grief and the art of letting go.



DATE:	Every Sunday	1ST SUNDAYS:	Rebecca Bennett
TIME:	11:00 am - 12:30 pm	2ND SUNDAYS:	Carolyn Griffeth
COST:	Donations appreciated!	3RD SUNDAYS:	Lorren Z. Buck
PARTICIPANTS:	All are welcome.	4TH SUNDAYS:	Eurania Jackson
REGISTER:	Drop in!	5TH SUNDAYS:	Mary Elizabeth Grimes

BY APPOINTMENT ONLY

SPIRITUAL CARE

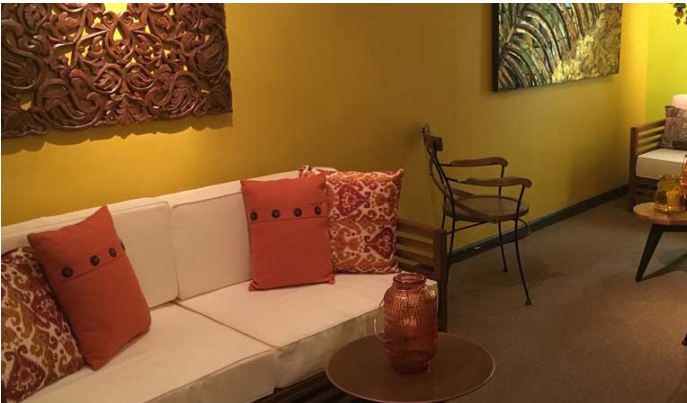
InPower Institute has a spiritual care team that compassionately provides supportive and crisis care and co-creates sacred methods for healing and transformation. Team members honor individual belief systems and cultural traditions when extending support to those in need. This contemplative-based care helps people to discover their own inner resources for well-being and wholeness. As spiritual care allies, we serve people facing life challenges, such as unexpected hardships, life-limiting illness, bereavement and loss. We greet people with compassion, mindful awareness and authentic presence. Whatever the circumstances, we recognize the communal nature of life’s journey and endeavor to provide care and support.

PRACTITIONERS: Spiritual Care Counsel
COST: \$50 an hour/negotiable. First consultation is free.
PARTICIPANTS: All are welcome.
SET APPOINTMENT: Email: info@inpowerinstitute.com.

SPIRITUAL DIRECTION: COMPANIONSHIP FOR THE SOUL’S JOURNEY

“Carolyn holds the hand of your Soul allowing it to go just where it needs to go.” This is how one client recently described my work. Struck by her words, I asked: “How do I do such?” She responded, “By using everything you’ve learned holding the hand of your own soul through so much fire!” Her words describe my work well: It is an honor to hold space for you as you tune towards Soul. Sometimes the first voice of Soul is grief; always there is a longing to transcend the smallness of limiting beliefs and oppressive conditioning to open to wider dimensions of faith and life! My tools are passionate prayer, body centered listening, cultivating consciousness, dream work, emotional release work, oppression awareness, grief work, and healing ceremony. Either one-on-one or in small groups, it is my pleasure to help you grow your spiritual wings.

PRACTITIONER: Carolyn Griffeth
COST: \$50 an hour/negotiable. First consultation is free.
PARTICIPANTS: All are welcome.
SET APPOINTMENT: Email: cdgriffeth@yahoo.com




GET IN TOUCH

Learn more about our events, healers, facilities and how you can offer a program or service:

CALL 314.832.1669

EMAIL info@inpowerinstitute.com

CONNECT   InPower Institute  @InPowerInstitute

VISIT 4125 Humphrey St., St. Louis, MO 63116

www.InPowerInstitute.com