

# UBG9- Development of Self + Inheritance of Trauma

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trauma, people, part, parents, talk, adoptees, genes, unconscious, emotions, child, idea, develop, life, personal, epigenetics, therapy, experience, behavior, world, feel

## SPEAKERS

McCall Bennett-Lawrence, Margot Schrader, Cherish Asha Bolton, Jessica Ferretti

### McCall Bennett-Lawrence 00:15

Hello friends, it's McCall with another episode of *UnBoxing "God"*. Last week we talked about the self, the soul, the psyche, all parts of the personal conscious, including things like our spirit, spirituality orientation, how we relate to other people outside of us-- if we're optimistic or pessimistic, our beliefs, our emotions, our thoughts and feelings and behavior-- all the things measured by those personality assessments that I admitted to liking so much.

Well, personal conscious, is only one of Carl Jung's *three* parts of what he proposed forms the entire self. The second part is our **personal unconscious**. In analytical psychology, this is Jung's term for the "Freudian unconscious", but Jung split Freud's idea into two: **personal**, that we will use as today's springboard, and also Jung presented the concept of the **collective unconscious**. That idea we will unbox in Episode 10, and we'll talk about archetypes and dreams and Tarot. Lots of fun! But today, I want to use the idea of personal unconscious to explore **trauma** and its effects.

[1:42] Jung often referred to the personal unconscious as "no man's land". It's located at the fringe of the consciousness between two worlds-- as he put it, the **exterior** (or spatial world) and the **interior** (or psychic objective world). At its most basic, personal unconsciousness refers to anything that's not present in our conscious, but technically could be. It's made up of essentially the contents which have, at one time, been conscious but have disappeared from conscious through having been forgotten or repressed. The personal unconscious is like most people's understanding of unconscious in that it includes both memories that are easily brought to mind as well as those that we've suppressed for whatever reason. Jung's theory of a personal unconscious, though, is quite similar to Freud's creation of a region containing a person's repressed, forgotten, or ignored experiences. But Jung considered the personal unconscious to be a more or less superficial layer of the unconscious. Within the personal unconscious is what he called feeling-toned complexes. He said that they constitute the personal and private sides of psychic life.

Now, if a trauma happens, and I don't just mean a horrific experience, but something like seeing your mom making the beast with two backs when you were a little kid-- anything that affected your emotions intensely in the moment and yet happened before your brain was quite mature enough to hold on to it as a memory that was retrievable as an adult-- it's likely that it becomes part of one's personal subconscious or unconscious. And it could lead to a fracturing of yourself. Whether that fracture manifests as just an irritating neuroses that we just can't shake or explain or full blown PTSD, maybe Dissociative Identity Disorder, Borderline Personality... There are all sorts of maladies from manageable to incapacitating that arise from trauma, which lives just below our most conscious surface.

[4:17] And since we're talking about childhood trauma, now's a great time to tell you about the ACE Quiz. It stands for Adverse Childhood Experiences. And it's just a simple short quiz of maybe 10 questions, asking if certain qualities or situations happened to you or you experienced before the age of 18. (P.S. I got a seven.) Well, children who have had several adverse childhood experiences in their life are really easy to spot, according to many psychologists. One, at Stanford University School of Medicine, Hilit Kletter, looks for signs of stress to understand what might have happened to these kids and how to best intervene. Some kids have nightmares or recurring thoughts of a stressful event, she says, or may re-enact the trauma through play, or the child may seem distracted or withdrawn. This will come out at school, Kletter says. Teachers will tell parents that their child seems to be in a "daze" in the classroom or not paying attention. Kletter says reactions to trauma are sometimes misdiagnosed as symptoms of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, for instance. Because kids are dealing with adverse experiences, they may be impulsive, acting out with anger or any other strong emotion. She goes on to explain that it's something very common in trauma, a difficulty regulating emotions and behaviors.

You know, speaking of trauma, I think now might be a good time to re-introduce you to our guests from episode eight. Cherish Asha Bolton. See she knows a lot about trauma, both professionally and personally.

**Cherish Asha Bolton 06:16**

My education is actually in history, and a lot of the work I did as an undergraduate and in my masters and my PhD were on identity formation, specifically colonial identity formation. And now a lot of the work that I do has to do with adoptees and adoption advocacy because I am, myself, an adoptee. And a lot of adoptees have different forms of mental illness, a lot of adoptees have been diagnosed with PTSD, and many of our issues seem to always come back to this idea of a fractured self. So a lot of us have done some extra reading on the ideas of the self. And so there has been a merging between the idea of identity formation and the psychological concept of the self.

**McCall Bennett-Lawrence 07:06**

For me, I've always thought that my experiences in some way split me apart, like, fractured my soul and created almost different people inside of me. One that had to be hyper-vigilant and taking care of everything. And the other that was just a broken child who felt like they could do nothing and required constant attention and care. So I asked Cherish what she thought about this. And here's what she said.

**Cherish Asha Bolton 07:37**

When you take a child, whether they're an infant, whether they're five, whether they're 15, and you take them from one environment into another-- you do that, there's going to be some fracturing of some kind. How all of that is handled during the process and after the process will also either help bring that self back together or spread it even further apart. For example, when you hear people say that "The child was an infant when they were adopted, how could they possibly have any problems?" That completely ignores the idea that the child had an existence, whether we're talking about in utero, whether we're talking about the delivery room, the nursery, however many days they spent with their parents or with the foster parents or something. However many days that was, even if it's just one day, that child has a self that existed prior to adoption. And until we can grapple with that reality, we're not going to have sufficient tools to help adoptees find those parts of themselves that they are basically being denied access to. The reason why we have such high rates of suicide, such high rates of substance abuse, high rates of mental illness in the adoptee population, is because we aren't having these conversations. If we're looking at the self as something that kind of always exists in the person, no matter whether it's pre-verbal or verbal, whether they're a toddler or 85, all of these things always exist. And the more you can be in tune with those parts of yourself, the easier it's going to be on your psyche, yourself, whatever, it is going to be easier.

**McCall Bennett-Lawrence 09:12**

One of the things in my life that was the cause of much of my personal trauma was my mom's battle with addiction. And I've done a lot of studying on the causes of addiction, as well as its genetic inheritability. I do have kids after all. However, I wonder, could the trauma of my ancestors actually have gotten passed down through our family tree somehow, along with a proclivity to escape into a bottle or drugs or work? See, I believe that if any human being anywhere shakes their family tree hard enough, alcoholics will start falling out. And alcoholism or any addiction is a family disease. That means the friends and the family of that addict are all affected by the disease as well. And many of us end up seeking recovery, treatment, therapy, 12-step programs, in some ways to find healing for ourselves and our dis-ease. And I think a lot of my own dis-ease came from my mom's disease, that somehow a part of myself was lost. So I asked Cherish what she thought of that.

**Cherish 10:28**

I don't think you can lose yourself. I don't think there is a loss of self. I think there is a fractured self. I think the self already always exists. I think there is either a self that is fractured or a self that is never developed. So for example, one of the things we again talk about in adoption is the idea that if you don't go through all of the proper stages of development in a way that allows you to develop those parts that are supposed to be developed at that time, you are going to struggle with those parts of yourself as an adult. That doesn't mean that you You can't develop those things, it just makes it infinitely harder because you learned behaviors, you learn different ways of coping, and all of these things from a version of yourself that didn't develop properly. So you have to kind of throw away those other parts that weren't right, and you have to refigure something new. You know, for example, if you have a parent that is neglectful, or a parent who's not supportive from the time you're a toddler playing dress up to the time, you're a teenager trying on all these different hats as to who you are, if you didn't have those experiences, that's why people maybe do outlandish things in their 20s. And if you don't have a nice neatly packaged, guided way through that, it might be a huge mess by the time you hit your 40s. And that's all built into trauma that's built into

the initial trauma of being neglected by your parents or not supported by your parents or something like that. And so my view is, is it's not that there's a loss of self per se, it's that there is A self that was never allowed to fully develop and it needs to continue developing no matter how difficult it might be once you're past a certain stage. On the other side of it, I think that there's a lot to say about trauma in terms of fracturing the self, and I'm willing to talk about this. When I was sexually assaulted a couple years ago, I personally have problems there were parts of myself that I feel like I lost. And then there's parts of myself that I feel like I gained after that process, but I personally am not okay with those losses and those changes, and there's nothing I can really do about it, because that's part of the self that got blown apart and I'm trying to bring it back together. And I have to learn to be okay with the idea that whatever I bring back together might be different than what I had before. And that's part of that larger idea of self is learning how to be okay. with creating, recreating changing the things that had been fractured, or whatever, I guess to answer your question, yeah, there are losses but then it also leads me to the question of whether they were truly losses, or whether they were underdeveloped parts of self that you are now developing. And I haven't quite figured out what I think about that yet. And I can talk more about that part. Like there's parts of myself that I lost that I think are good that I lost them, but I missed them at the same time, which is why I can't wrap my head around the question.

**McCall Bennett-Lawrence** 13:19

So great. Now cherish and I are both a little stymied by this question, time to bring on someone else to help us unbox this idea. I want to introduce you to mark out she and I were very close during our most rebellious punk rock stages in early High School. We reconnected recently because I found out that she is not only a patient, but she is studying this amazing new ish model of therapy called internal family systems model i f s. Now it's an integrative approach to individual psychotherapy. It was developed by Richard See Schwartz in the 80s, and a combined systems of thinking with the view that the mind is made up of relatively distinct sub personalities, each with their own unique viewpoint and qualities, and it is the sum of those parts that make up the whole self. Mark got Schrader, happy. Okay. Tell me a little bit about what you do who you are.

**Margot Schrader** 14:25

So I am a licensed clinical mental health counselor in the state of New Hampshire. Currently, I worked with children and families for about 12 years. Most of that time was spent in a residential setting with kids who were removed from their home by DCF or by Child Services, or they were in the court system and needed to be placed in order to continue school and to some improvements on things in their lives. So I dealt with a lot of kids that were traumatized. A lot of kids that was My biggest caseload, I also dealt with some children that survived sex trafficking, as well as the panic, cult, sexual stuff, hardcore, hardcore trauma. I'm not a fan of the term, fractured self or locked self. It's my involvement in the internal family systems model. That kind of changed my view of that. I believe trauma or not, we're whole people. It's just trying to find a way back to it.

**McCall Bennett-Lawrence** 15:31

I always bought into this idea of like, I must have a small amount of all of these things, including OCD and ADHD. An eye Fs seems to embrace this concept and run with it and heal with it.

**Margot Schrader** 15:47

Yeah, and it just makes me happy. It gets rid of the diagnostic stuff of the label of the pathologizing of clients, and trauma and it doesn't qualify things as Good or bad, and honestly isn't the most effective modality I have ever, ever participated in.

**McCall Bennett-Lawrence** 16:06

It's interesting that you brought up that there aren't good and bad right and wrong in ipfs.

**Margot Schrader** 16:13

By IAFF term, the self is that all knowing part that has everything it needs, and it can heal the rest of the part and it can bring the system back together.

**McCall Bennett-Lawrence** 16:26

Another thing that I discovered when I was looking up a little bit about ifms was the eight C's. The eight C's are considered qualities of inner strength, stability and resistance and they're as follows: calmness, clarity, curiosity, compassion, confidence, courage, creativity, and connectedness. So how do you use those in your own healing?

**Margot Schrader** 16:57

So all of those C's are present when you know You're in self. So working with part is a meditative state, you take breath, you get really in touch with your internal world and with your body. The therapist will ask you, if there's any place that you feel any kind of sensation. They'll ask you to describe that sensation. And then they'll ask you how you feel towards that. That's the process. And sometimes that process can be really long. If this is something that's really hard to get to, because anxiety can come up and then maybe anger will come up or another part that isn't ready for all of this to happen. So we need to take our time and be patient and be present with each of the parts that needs us as they need.

**McCall Bennett-Lawrence** 17:42

My anger is often a cloak of armor that my grief and sadness wears to give me enough energy to get through my day. Now, would those be different parts? Or is the part, the grieving part, that is just protected by the emotion of anger?

**Margot Schrader** 18:00

For everybody and that's part of you getting to know your part is figuring that out. Is that angry part actually angry or is it protecting a sad little girl? Is the anger there to protect a vulnerable exiled part, the exile part are the ones usually that need to be protected because they're not acceptable to our world.

**McCall**

Like what?

**Margot Schrader**

When I was growing up, I always felt like I was too much for people. I developed a protector that learned how to scan the people you were with to try to figure out if it was acceptable to be a little bit more read people's energy or their facial expressions. So I developed that protector to take care of that little girl.

**McCall Bennett-Lawrence** 18:43

I identify with your protector. I enter a room and like you survey it hypervigilantly, try to change who I am based upon what I think I'm seeing.

**Margot Schrader** 18:56

Yeah, absolutely. That hypervigilance is in effective trauma, I had to read my parents. I had to read my parents to know what was going on in the house, if I could go and ask for a hug, or if I could ask my mom for something or my dad was available. It was a gift that I received from the trauma is the ability to be able to read people, I really can. I really can, I can read people's energy, and it is the greatest gift you can have when you're a therapist.

**McCall Bennett-Lawrence** 19:25

For me being hyper aware and, you know, hyper vigilant about reading other people, takes me out of being in the moment.

**Margot Schrader** 19:34

It's the process to learn how to modulate that kind of a gift for sure. To learn when to apply it and when you need to just be in the moment not worry about so much, you know, trying to figure out what spaces are safe and which ones aren't is really difficult when you have a trauma history.

**McCall Bennett-Lawrence** 19:52

It makes sense that trauma affects trauma, right? I mean, I sure didn't attract the healthiest partners while in my acting out day. And the same would hold true for my ancestors and my family tree, right? So in some way, I really can picture that all that toxic behavior attracted other hurting souls, and somehow condensed and coalesced throughout the generations, a cycle of trauma and addiction, and harm to self and others. The idea that perhaps trauma can leave a chemical mark on a person's genes, which is then passed down to subsequent generations-- it's a fascinating one to me. The trauma leaves some flag without directly damaging the gene. I mean, there's no mutation. Rather, it affects how the gene expresses itself. The alteration isn't genetic per se. It's *epigenetic*. the trauma of one person is inherited as a particular chemical marker, epigenetic signature on their child's genes, and it can affect that child throughout their lives. There have been tons of studies in animals, mostly mice, specifically, that had been offered up as evidence for this kind of trauma transmission and also as a model for studying the mechanisms of it. The effects we found have been small, but remarkably consistent and significant,

says Moshe Schiff, a professor of pharmacology at McGill University, and also a really good TED Talk giver. In a series of studies in 2008, teen scientists at University of Maryland School of Medicine, led by Tracy Bale raised mice in quote, difficult environments. Basically, that means that all throughout the night and day they lifted and shook their cages and flashed the lights at them. Not nice, but it did shed light on epigenetics because this kind of upbringing mimicked a traumatic childhood and changed the behavior of those mice's genes in a way that altered how they managed the surges of stress hormones like cortisol. That change in turn is strongly associated with alterations in how their offspring handled the same stress hormones, namely the young mice that had not experienced the "difficult childhood environment" that their parents were subjected to. Those mice numbed out. They were less reactive to stress hormones compared to all other control animals. Now, this isn't something that their little mice bodies or brains learned, not from their own experience, at least, it was their parents' experience that hypothetically created this and it was a quality their genes learned from their parents traumatic rearing. These are clear consistent findings, said Dr. Bale. She's the director of the university's center for epigenetic research in child's health and brain development. Now all of this epigenetic stuff is quite debatable and very controversial. But I'm not interested in debating about this any more than I am about God or any other loaded concept. I am, however, very much more interested in UnBoxing the exploration, the wonder of it all. So, with an open mind, let's talk a little more about it. First with cherish.

**Cherish Asha Bolton** 23:31

I know epigenetics is a controversial conversation, but it is something that is fascinating especially when you do look at things like say the Holocaust or other genocides. And you look at people who are refugees or you know for is your country adoptees, sometimes we talk about that, especially say, Vietnamese adoptees, where they might have come from the Vietnam War, are there these things that got carried over over either from their childhood or from their parents into, you know, the war time or these genocidal or whatever kinds of traumas are brought into their lives. And so I think it's an interesting conversation for sure. And there is some science behind it. But I think what's also interesting about the idea of the self is it can never be fully divorced from the science of neurobiology. And, you know, if you look at trauma studies, if you look at people like Bessel van der Kolk, and his research on PTSD, or Gabor Mate, and their research, you will see lots of evidence that with trauma, there are changes in the neural transmitters. So even if, let's say you fully have dissociative state, and you can't remember your trauma, your brain remembers whether you consciously do or not, it's still there. So this larger part of the self has biological elements as much as it has environmental elements to it.

**McCall Bennett-Lawrence** 24:57

Okay, I feel like I'm off to a decent start of understanding. And a lot of it has to do with the fact that trauma seems psychological, but it's sure sounding biological to me. Which makes me wonder if negative experiences like trauma can affect my biology, my circuitry, my wiring, well, then doesn't it make sense that positive experiences and practices with healthy choices might also affect that same biological system, but in a positive way? Let's go back to Margot and see what she has to say about epigenetics.

Can you tell me a little bit about your story with trauma and or the inheritance of?

**Margot Schrader** 25:48

My father is a Holocaust survivor, and then he came to the US he was adopted see us when he was seven years old, so my father has no memories before the age of seven years old. In the trauma world, we know that that means that there is some horrific stuff that happened that his brain needed to pack away in order to allow him to function and survive. My mother also has a very horrific trauma history, abusive at every turn in every way that you can think of. My mom had lots of depression, she would spend days at a time in bed, and then all of a sudden, you know, wake up and be in the best mood and be jumping around. And I never really knew what to expect. What I did one day, the next day could engender rage. And my father just really had a hard time staying connected to reality, and would often make up pretty big stories and tell lies. He also went to prison for a period of time based on one of his lies. So as a result of that, I have lots of stuff about feeling responsible for people and their emotions and their outcomes and just always being concerned about other people because as a child, that was how I stayed safe. That was how I survived. So those are my parents. When I was between the ages of five and seven, I was sexually abused by three separate people. One of them, which is the most impactful, and the one that lasted for the longest time was an elder in the church. And when I told my parents, I was removed from the community completely, which was a big part of my life, and then shortly after that, we relocated from a place I loved Door County, a carver, Wisconsin to Manchester, New Hampshire. In my childlike brain, I blamed what happened to me and what I told them and my participation in my molestation. That was the reason why I lost all of these things. So it was all my fault. And

honestly, the work that I did for a long time, I feel like working with the most traumatized children that I could find was a way for me to minimize my own trauma.

**McCall Bennett-Lawrence** 27:59

I as an adult Child of an alcoholic growing up and not knowing stability. I used to say that I didn't have a magnetic north. Is she crazy? Am I crazy, there was just no stability. And that in and of itself is traumatic.

**Margot Schrader** 28:14

We call that boundaryless. You know, we don't know where our norms are. I definitely had the same thing.

**McCall Bennett-Lawrence** 28:19

And I think for me, I ricocheted into needing structure and order and dependability, but then I would have deep expectations and the rug would get pulled out from under me. So my journey for the past three to five years has been one of balance so that I can offer perspective because for me perspective is the key for my own contentment and happiness.

**Margot Schrader** 28:45

Yeah, I would agree with you. Yeah, those are all things that are very, very difficult to learn and also lessons that I've had to learn to deal with over my time as well. So epigenetics is a really interesting concept, the idea that the genes that Your parents have and all of the experiences and all of the environments that they have dealt with gets passed down to you through your genes. So it's nature and nurture. So there's a piece of it where it's the cell assignment and this cell is going to be skin cell, and this one's going to be a blood cell. And then there's another piece of it, where it's nurture where your environment actually has an impact on how your genes decide they want to be, and you can change them. That's the best part about epigenetics is that you can take action to change the way your genes are, so that you're not passing on to your offspring. So far, it's not a very precise science, because that's a lot of genes changing for this and genes changing for that. That's a lot of mapping of genes and trying to figure out what combinations create what, what we do know is that if you take the time to learn those techniques like mindfulness and meditation and you go to therapy and you learn how to process your own thoughts and to be able to stop and think before you act and you do all of these different things. It changes your genes, and then you're passing on better genes than you got from your parents.

**McCall Bennett-Lawrence** 30:16

My desire to stop the cycle of trauma for lack of a better word, inconsistency, dis-ease is how I refer to it that we say alcoholism is a family disease. And for me, it's dis-ease. So finding that ease in that a lot of the 12 step slogans of easy does it, keep it simple, silly, let go and let God that just not feeling so hyper vigilant. And in control is actually where I find my control my ability to control how I process my emotions, into feelings and then into appropriate action. So I really believe in this threefold, mental wellness that is about my thoughts in my brain and my mind processing, my heart, my feelings, gut reactions, desires, and my feet, which is my actions, my behavior, the service I do for other people. And it sounds very much like IFS uses all three of those parts with all of your individual parts of self, to make a more cohesive individual who experiences life in a happier way.

**Margot Schrader** 31:37

Absolutely, absolutely. So when you walk into that room and you're super hyper vigilant and you're scanning everything, that's a part. that is a part. If you were in self in that moment that you walked into that room, you would be mindful, you would be centered, you would be calm, you would not be hyper vigilant. So all of these reactions that We have the things during the day are part. But like you, McCall, I ended up going to therapy and starting on this whole journey as a result of having my daughter as well, I have a 22 year old, beautiful young lady, who I love very much. And she was the whole reason why I decided to get into therapy too. I didn't, I didn't know how to do it. I didn't know what to do. I just knew that I didn't want to do what my parents did. And I knew that I was doing do that unless I did something different. And so I started therapy when my daughter was born pretty much. I'm 24 and I got into therapy and I was really, really lucky to have some awesome mentors. When I went to college. I did a long stint to the community college and got really involved in the college life is not something I really did in high school. And I had some really amazing mentors that really, really guided me through this whole process and helped me to see things and essentially re parentid me in some parts of my life. And it's also where I became very, very hungry. for spiritual knowledge, spirituality to me was something that was really important. Because people told me it was, at first. I was like, Well, let me check this out. Everybody talks about it all the time. So I started to just search and that started me down my path, just the idea that everything is connected. And if you're calm, and you pay attention to what's

going on in your world, you're gonna see where you're supposed to go. You don't have to think so much. The self knows, itself knows. So you pay attention and you see what's happening in your life and what's coming to you and how it makes you feel. And that's how you go forward in life.

**McCall Bennett-Lawrence 33:36**

Okay, so the self knows. Well, you know, Who else knows? scientists and they've done experiments that prove beyond any reasonable doubt that even when a person makes a smile, their stress levels go down, their heart rate goes down, and they report actually being happier. So for me, this is very encouraging. Because it means even though I've experienced things in my life that most would call pretty traumatic, and which were largely beyond my control, at least in childhood. Now as an adult with an awareness of recovery and spirituality, even when it makes me uncomfortable, I have realized that I'm the one in charge of how I experience this world. And sometimes it means putting on a fake smile, just until it becomes real. I want to talk to Cherish a little bit more about this.

**Cherish 34:39**

The way that we help people get past whatever issue they have is that restructuring of self that finding the complete self. And the way that you do that is like you said, you fake it till you make it. There are parts of the self that you need to find and if you're struggling to find it, then you fake it till you make it. And I think it falls perfectly in line with the childhood development idea that three year olds, right, what makes them so frustrating is that they're trying to find parts of themselves and they can't express it. They don't have the gift of expression yet. They're still learning. And so they're trying to figure these things out. They're trying to play, they're trying to walk, they're trying to talk and they're just frustrated. And then we see that same thing happen in teenagers, right because they are trying to divorce themselves from their parents slowly and safely. But they do that by different hairstyles wanting to get a piercing wanting to do this and that listening to music, their parents hate, they're doing all of those things so they can push and pull and try to figure out these parts of themselves. And a lot of that is faking it till you make it.

**McCall Bennett-Lawrence 35:53**

So when I listen to Cherish talk about teenagers rebelling as a way to find themselves. I can't help but relate. I was that kid. I was the kid with the Mohawk at the tattoos at 14 pierced nose. And it wasn't just my teen years, I lived a defensive life of rebellion decades. And I really do believe now that a lot of my angst and anger and sorrow was all in service to protect some fragile inner part of myself. So recovery is not easy work takes a lot of rigorous self honesty. I go to a bunch of meetings, I'm of service every single day. But by far my favorite part of recovery is the exploration. So between cherish and Margot, I'm really starting to believe that I hold a lot of my emotions and even past historical trauma in my physical body and not just in my brain or my DNA and epigenetic markers. I'm talking about these sore shoulders, this crunched up back and the headaches that I wrestle with. So I decided to reach out to a real pro. I'm going to introduce you to Jessica Ferretti. She's the owner and lead therapist here in Los Angeles of a place called Meditation for Muscles. It's a holistic healing and bodywork practice, and it centers around shifting a patient's nervous system. Her training includes all kinds of modalities of massage, and she blends them all together with a nurturing and slow flow. That makes even deep work feel sedating and hypnotic. Her background is in social work, so it makes perfect sense that she would use cymatics and massage to help our minds and our emotions. Let me let her talk

**Jessica F 38:02**

Hi, McCall, thanks so much for having me on your awesome podcast. I love talking about trauma and somatic work. Besides creative work, it's just about the most important thing in my life personally and professionally. My own experience with family dysfunction and growing up with a mother with Borderline Personality Disorder therapy 12 step programs and other methods of trauma healing have been likely the only reason I'm thriving today, let alone alive. I was always drawn to healing and psychological work and my background in behavioral therapy in social work led me to bodywork I've always been fascinated by the idea that emotion is stored in the body. So somatics has been really a point of fascination and passion for me. And I started to really see this on my massage table years later, for example, I would touch the psoas muscle on a client. And they would start to cry or laugh even or both. And, you know, someone would also just get so relaxed, their nervous system would shift and they would start to sob and and apologize. Like I don't know why I'm crying right now. And the same thing has happened for me. My theory is that, you know, just based on research that I've done and books that I've read, and my own experience, you know, is that we all run around in some survival mode, busying ourselves, stress distracted by work, relationships, just everything it takes nowadays to do the baseline seems like so much on our systems and there's so little time to tune in and just feel just feel our feelings and sometimes I think it's a just a survival mechanism just busying

ourselves unconsciously, so that we don't have to feel a lot of the things that are that our body needs to feel so. So sometimes the body is just waiting for an opportunity when we slow down just enough and with the right kind of nurturing touch, you know, that makes us feel safe enough and then it just the waves start coming and yeah, so it became really important to me since my work centers around shifting the nervous system, and basically taking people out of their heads. where most of us feel really safe. You know, it's safe to be cerebral and rational. But then bringing people into their bodies where all the emotions and sensations of our emotions live. So to really do my research and become trauma informed was really important. So So books like waking the tiger by Peter Levine have been so groundbreaking and helpful and I can't wait to read the body keeps the score. That's one that I've really been wanting to get to. But right now I'm reading a really transformational and revolutionary book called my grandmother's hands by rasma metacam. He's a black Somatic Experiencing practitioner who talks about this concept of somatic abolitionism. It's social justice from the inside out healing racialized trauma using the body because, I mean, let's face it, we pass down our trauma. It changes our DNA. So the effects and trauma of white supremacy is in all of our bodies, and rasma gives us these body practice. Which are like sensing meditations to really connect with certain things in our body and help us heal and understand this trauma from a somatic perspective, which is where it really all starts. One of the first things to develop in utero is is our skin and our tissues. And, you know, we're we're definitely programmed with, with these things within our DNA. So it's just, I'm really looking forward to doing more and and learning more about the somatic abolitionism. The body practices are really really insightful and helpful and highly recommended. And if you have any questions for me, I can be reached at meditation for muscles@gmail.com and my website is meditation for muscles calm thanks So much

**McCall Bennett-Lawrence 43:01**

isn't Jessica cool? I think you'd like her even better if you met her in person. I can't wait until this pandemic is over and I can get closer than six feet away from her, maybe even get a massage. But for now, I think it's time to say goodbye. So in the meantime, I'll keep on keeping on and smiling so that you can see it in my eyes, since it can't see it through my mask. Thanks for hanging out with me. I appreciate you so much more than I can even say. And I really do hope you'll reach out and say hi back to me. I'd love to hear your ideas for new shows, topics questions you have or maybe even your own personal share on your experience with complex ideas like faith in God and higher power and recovery in the self. You can find unboxing God anywhere you listen to podcasts, and then some we just start At a YouTube channel, we've got our website up and running at UnBoxing, God podcast.com. And several of the shows even have full transcripts, there are links to every resource that any of us on the show mention as well as several others if you want to get deep. And finally, if for some reason you're in a blessed situation, and can afford to support the show financially, we're trying to up our game. And in order to do that, a lot of the tools cost money. I'm not working right now. So I'll wait and see what Waldo has in store. I'm really excited about next week, because we're going to get into Young's idea of the persona, which includes both our mask self, the one that we wear to navigate through this world and our shadow selves, which can cause a lot of problems in her lives if we don't face them. So once again, This is McCall signing off from UnBoxing God and longing for a massage. Have a great day guys. And if nothing else, fake it till you make it. Bye