



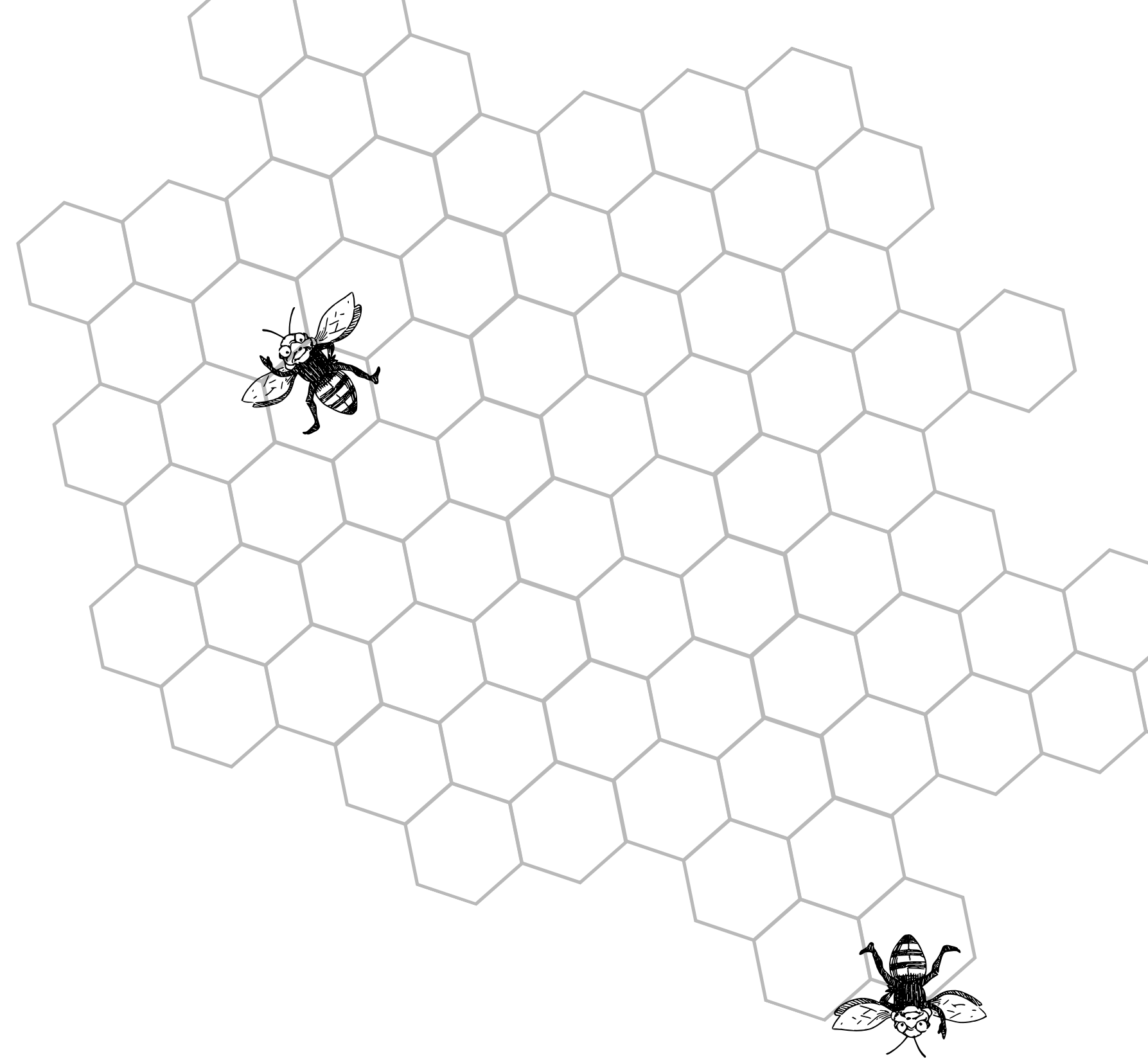
# HONEY ON THE WOUND

## *Syllabus*



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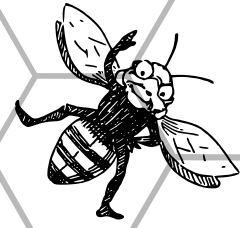
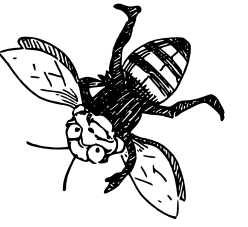
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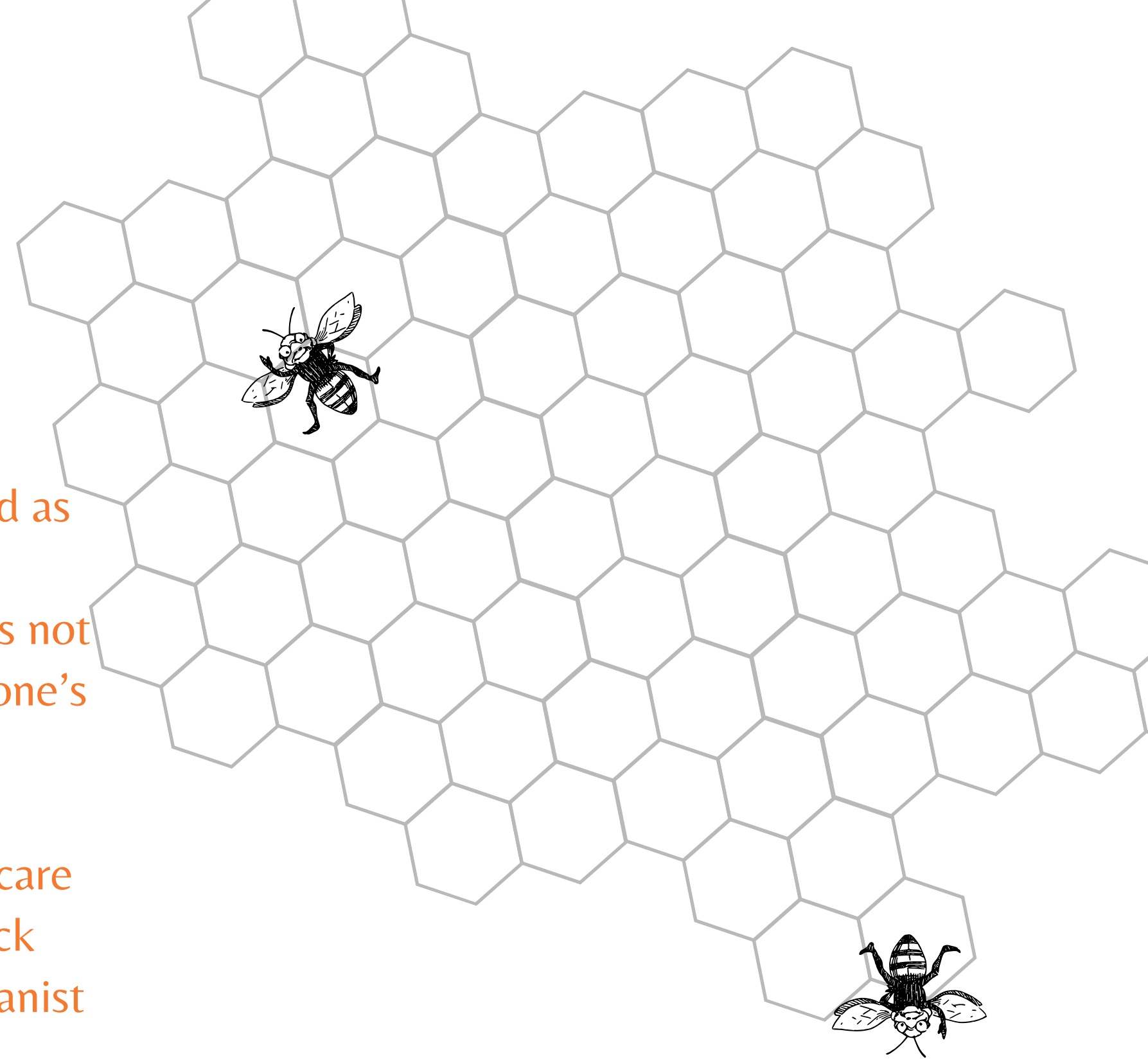
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# Mission Statement

In the modern Western world, spirituality is often understood as private, subjective, and individual, as one's primarily inward communion with what is seen as sacred, a communion that is not necessarily explicitly in relation to, or even connected with, one's more outward and public life.

This syllabus will draw awareness to the power of collective care as feminine, self-restoration through the examination of black ecowomanism, critical consciousness theory, and black womanist ideology.



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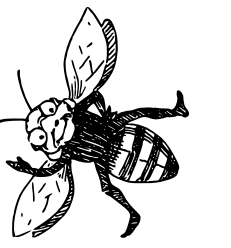
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upon request

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# REQUIRED

## Readings



Sisters of the Yam: black woman & self-recovery by bell hooks

Emergent Strategy by adrienne maree brown

The Color Purple by Alice Walker

Age, Race, Class, and Sex: Women Redefining

Difference by Audre Lorde

all about love by bell hooks

Ecowomanism: African American Women and Earth-Honoring Faiths by Melanie Harris

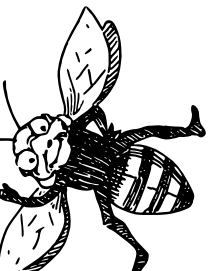
Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches by Audre Lorde

Salvation: black people and love by bell hooks

Pleasure Activism: The Politics of Feeling Good by adrienne maree brown

Communion: The Female Search for Love by bell hooks

Undrowned: Black Feminist Lessons from Marine Mammals by Alexis Pauline Gumbs



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# Soul Listening

"Listening to intuition is similar to watching the wind wiggle a pond. Allow the ripples to move you where you need to be."  
~Soul Dancer

"The Sacred + Liberatory Power of Rest" with Tricia Hersey of The Nap Ministry.

"A Life Worthy of Our Breath" with Ocean Vuong

"Imagination + Critical Connection" with adrienne maree brown

"A Seat at the Table" album by Solange

"HEAVN" album by Jamila Woods

"Strong Back, Soft Front, Wild Heart" with Brene Brown

"Women, Agency + Pleasure" by Therapy for Black Girls

"When I Get Home" album by Solange

"Telefone" album by Noname

"Who is Jill Scott? Words and Sounds Vol. 1" album by Jill Scott

"Perfect, Whole, Complete: Connecting Curious and Conscious Communication with Dr. Crystal Jones" by Black Girls in Om

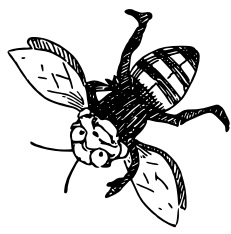
"Urban Flora" album by Alina Baraz + Galimatias

"Feeling like an Outsider Among Your Own Kin" by Morgan Jerkins

"Black Liberation Theology, in its Founder's Words

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# Sister Outsider: Essays + Speeches

## by Audre Lorde

### Summary

In this charged collection of fifteen essays and speeches, Lorde takes on sexism, racism, ageism, homophobia, and class, and propounds social difference as a vehicle for action and change. Her prose is incisive, unflinching, and lyrical, reflecting struggle but ultimately offering messages of hope.

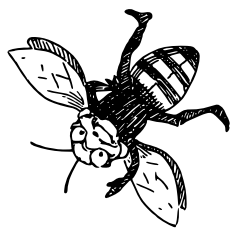


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# Sister Outsider: Essays + Speeches by Audre Lorde

## Guiding Questions

- What does Lorde mean by the use of the erotic and how is eroticism an important political tool?
- What does Lorde mean she when she says "the master's tools will never dismantle the master's house?" What have been the implications on Black women's self-recovery, self-esteem and collective capabilities?
- What is institutional dehumanization as defined by Lorde? What does this concept have to do with capitalism? How does this connect with racism, sexism and other forms of prejudice?
- Discuss rifts within the Black community as perceived by Lorde, including those between Black men and Black women, Black women and other Black women, and heterosexual Blacks and homosexual Blacks. Why are these rifts detrimental? What causes them?



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There are many kinds of power, use and unused, acknowledged or otherwise. The erotic is a resource within each of us that lives in a deeply female and spiritual plane, firmly rooted in the power of our unexpressed or unrecognized feeling ... is the erotic offers a wealth of replenishing and provocative force to the woman does not fear its revelation, nor come to the belief that sensation is enough.

-Audre Lorde



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# Notes + Reflections

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# Salvation: black people + love by bell hooks

## Summary

Acclaimed visionary and intellectual bell hooks began her exploration of the meaning of love in American culture with the bestselling *All About Love: New Visions*. Here she continues her love song to the nation in groundbreaking and soul-stirring *Salvation: Black People and Love*.

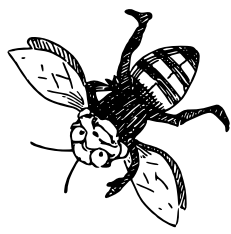
Whether talking about the legacy of slavery, relationships and marriage in Black life, the prose and poetry of our most revered artists and leaders, the liberation movements of the 1950s, '60s, and '70s, or hip-hop and gangsta rap culture, hooks lets us know what love's got to do with it. *Salvation* is work that helps us heal-- and show us how to create beloved American communities.



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# Salvation: black people + love by bell hooks

## Guiding Questions

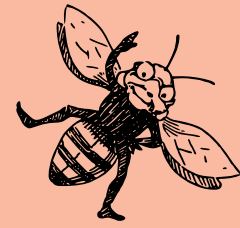
- "Love does not bring an end to difficulties, it gives us the strength to cope with difficulties in a constructive way (p.xvii). In what ways have you allowed love to lift you up?"
- How do you define "an ethics of love?"
- "Non-market values of communalism and sharing of resources, symbolized by the extended family household, were being replaced by liberal individualism (p. 12)." Would you define your sense of love self-serving or one rooted in communalism?
- What can you do to redefine love away from is transactional extractive connotative back to its spiritual center for healing and liberation?



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"Making the choice to heal our wounded spirits and our body politics.  
It is the deepest revolution, the turning away from the world as we  
know it, towards the world we must make if we are to be one with the  
planet--one healing heart giving and sustaining life. Love is our hope  
and our salvation."  
-bell hooks



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# Pleasure Activism: The Politics of Feeling Good by adrienne maree brown

## Summary

How do we make social justice the most pleasurable human experience? How can we awaken within ourselves desires that make it impossible to settle for anything less than a fulfilling life? Author and editor adrienne maree brown finds the answer in something she calls “pleasure activism,” a politics of healing and happiness that explodes the dour myth that changing the world is just another form of work. Drawing on the black feminist tradition, she challenges us to rethink the ground rules of activism. Her mindset-altering essays are interwoven with conversations and insights from other feminist thinkers, including Audre Lorde, Joan Morgan, Cara Page, Sonya Renee Taylor, and Alexis Pauline Gumbs. Together they cover a wide array of subjects—from sex work to climate change, from race and gender to sex and drugs—building new narratives about how politics can feel good and how what feels good always has a complex politics of its own.

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# Pleasure Activism: The Politics of Feeling Good by adrienne maree brown


## Guiding Questions

- What is pleasure to you?
- List all the ways you experience pleasure in your day to day life?
- How do you give pleasure to others?
- Do you feel safe in your body as it belongs to you?
- What are some barriers that prevent you from experiencing body agency and pleasure?
- What about your pleasure or lack of pleasure makes it a political act?
- How have you learned to engage in a decolonized version of pleasure?

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“I touch my own skin, and it  
tells me that before there was  
any harm, there was miracle.”  
-adrienne maree brown



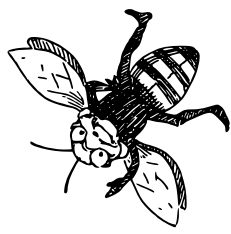
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# Communion: the female search for love by bell hooks

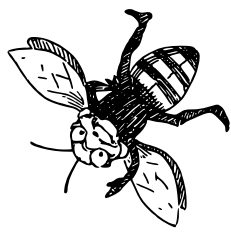
## Summary

Intimate, revealing, provocative, *Communion* challenges every female to courageously claim the search for love as the heroic journey we must all choose to be truly free. In her trademark commanding and lucid language, hooks explores the ways ideas about women and love were changed by feminist movement, by women's full participation in the workforce, and by the culture of self-help.



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# Communion: the female search for love by bell hooks

## Guiding Questions

- "Schooled to believe that we find ourselves in relation with others, women learn early to search for love in a world beyond our own hearts. We learn in childhood that the roots of love lie outside our capabilities, that to know love we must be loved by others (p. xiii)." What are non-commercial ways you show yourself love?
- Define love as a spiritual practice in your own words.
- How can Black women shift the negative expectations of love in the relationships we cultivate with men, in our families, in our workplaces, in our communities?



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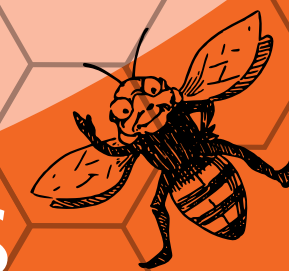
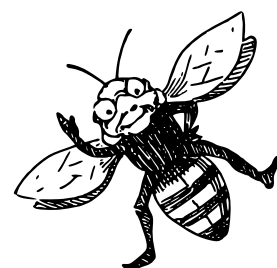
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“The time has come to tell the truth. Again. There is no love without justice. Men and women who cannot be just deny themselves and everyone they choose to be intimate with the freedom to know mutual love. If we remain unable to imagine a world where love can be recognized as a unifying principle that can lead us to seek and use power wisely, then we will remain wedded to a culture of domination that requires us to choose power over love.”

-bell hooks

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# Sisters of the Yam: black women and self-recovery by bell hooks

## Summary

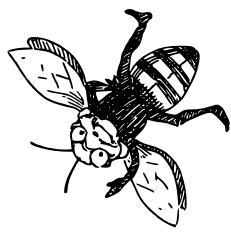
bell hooks addresses the inner well-being of black women and how their development is shaped by the daily assault of institutionalized structures of domination. Tackling such issues as addiction, truth-telling, work, grieving, spirituality, eroticism, reconciliation and forgiveness, community, and estrangement from nature, hooks shares numerous strategies for self-recovery that can heal individuals and empower effective struggle against racism, sexism, and consumer capitalism.



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# Sisters of the Yam: black women and self-recovery by bell hooks

## Guiding Questions

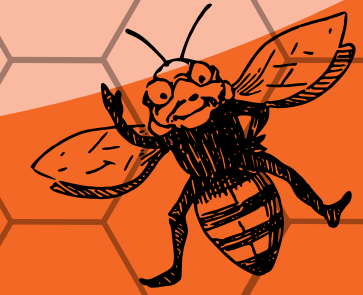
- "It is important that Black people talk to one another, that we talk with friends and allies, for the telling of our stories enables us to name our pain, our suffering, and to seek healing (p. 16-17)." When's the last time you were able to sit with your pain so that you could understand and explain it to others?
- "In self-healing, black women can identify that voice within ourselves and begin to replace it with a gentle, compassionate, caring voice (p. 40). Share one affirmation you speak when you're in a dark place.
- How do you define "soul work" and what are some examples you turn to during your process?



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“No level of individual self-actualization alone  
can sustain the marginalized and oppressed.  
We must be linked to collective struggle, to  
communities of resistance that move us  
outward, into the world.”  
-bell hooks



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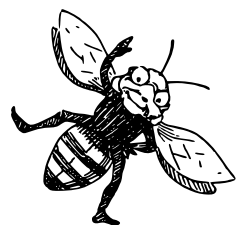
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# Emergent Strategy by adrienne maree brown

## Summary

"Emergent Strategy is radical self-help, society-help, and planet-help designed to shape the futures we want to live. Change is constant. The world is in a continual state of flux. It is a stream of ever-mutating, emergent pattern. Rather than steel ourselves against such change, this book invites us to feel, map, assess, and learn from the swirling patterns around us in order to better understand and influence them as they happen. This is a resolutely materialist "spirituality" based equally on science and science fiction, a visionary incantation to transform that which ultimately transforms us."



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# Emergent Strategy by adrienne maree brown

## Guiding Questions

- Are you a perfect living realization of your values and beliefs?
- What are you embodying in your daily life? In your work?
- What are you practicing? (Include anything you practice/repeat in your life, things you feel positive about, things you feel negative about--from meditation to burn-out, listening to interruptions, community accountability, to public takedowns, exercise, escaping, etc.)
- Are you living a life that honors all of your gifts?
- What are your individual resilience practices?



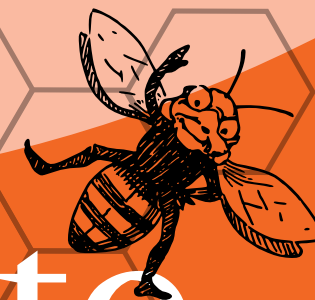
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"I think it is healing behavior, to look at something so broken and see the possibility and wholeness in it"

-adrienne maree brown



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# The Color Purple by Alice Walker

## Summary

A powerful, cultural touchstone of modern American literature, *The Color Purple* depicts the lives of African American women in rural Georgia. Through a series of letters spanning twenty years, first from Celie to God, and then from the sisters to each other, the novel draws readers into a rich and memorable portrayal of black women--their pain and struggle, companionship and growth, resilience and bravery.

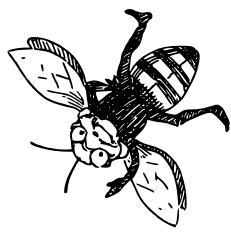
Deeply compassionate and beautifully imagined, *The Color Purple* breaks the silence around domestic and sexual abuse, and carries readers on an epic and spirit-affirming journey towards transformation, redemption, and love.



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# The Color Purple by Alice Walker

## Guiding Questions

- The Color Purple gives an account of the terrible ways in which poor black women were abused, both by society and in the context of their home lives. In what ways do you see this in your own lives or the lives of those around you?
- Where does Celie find the strength to survive the misery that is her life? Where do you find strength?
- Why does Celie, a victim of long-term abuse, recommend that Harpo beat Sofia? In what ways is the community complicit in the continuing of abusive narratives?
- Celie begins each of her letters with "Dear God," how has faith and spirituality influenced your paths towards healing?

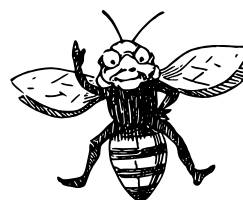


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"I am an expression of the divine, just like a peach is, just like a fish is. I have a right to be this way...I can't apologize for that, nor can I change it, nor do I want to...We will never have to be other than who we are in order to be successful...we realize that we are as ourselves unlimited and our experiences valid...it is for the rest of the world to recognize this, if they choose to"  
-Alice Walker



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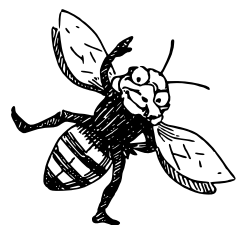
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# Age, Race, Class and Sex: Women Redefining Difference by Audre Lorde

## Summary

"Lorde takes on sexism, racism, ageism, homophobia, and class, and propounds social difference as a vehicle for action and change. These landmark writings are, in Lorde's own words, a call to “never close our eyes to the terror, to the chaos which is Black which is creative which is female which is dark which is rejected which is messy which is . . . .”



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# Age, Race, Class and Sex: Women Redefining Difference by Audre Lorde

## Guiding Questions

- What are parts of your identity that are categorized as dominant?
- What are parts of your identity that are categorized as inferior?
- "Institutionalized rejection of difference is an absolute necessity in a profit economy which needs outsiders as surplus people." In what ways have you profited from this system?
- In what ways have you been oppressed by it?
- How have you been complicit in maintaining the status quo?
- In what ways do you think your complicitness interrupts your healing?



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“We do not have to romanticize our past in order to be aware of how it seeds our present. We do not have to suffer the waste of an amnesia that robs us of the lessons of the past rather than permit us to read them with pride as well as deep understanding. We know what it is to be lied to, and we know how important it is not lie to ourselves. We are powerful because we have survived, and that is what it is all about—survival and growth.”

-Audre Lorde

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# All About Love by bell hooks

## Summary

"The word 'love' is most often defined as a noun, yet...we would all love better if we used it as a verb," writes bell hooks as she comes out fighting and on fire in All About Love. Here, at her most provocative and intensely personal, the renowned scholar, cultural critic, and feminist skewers our view of love as romance. In its place she offers a provocative new ethic for a people and a society bereft with lovelessness.



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# All About Love by bell hooks

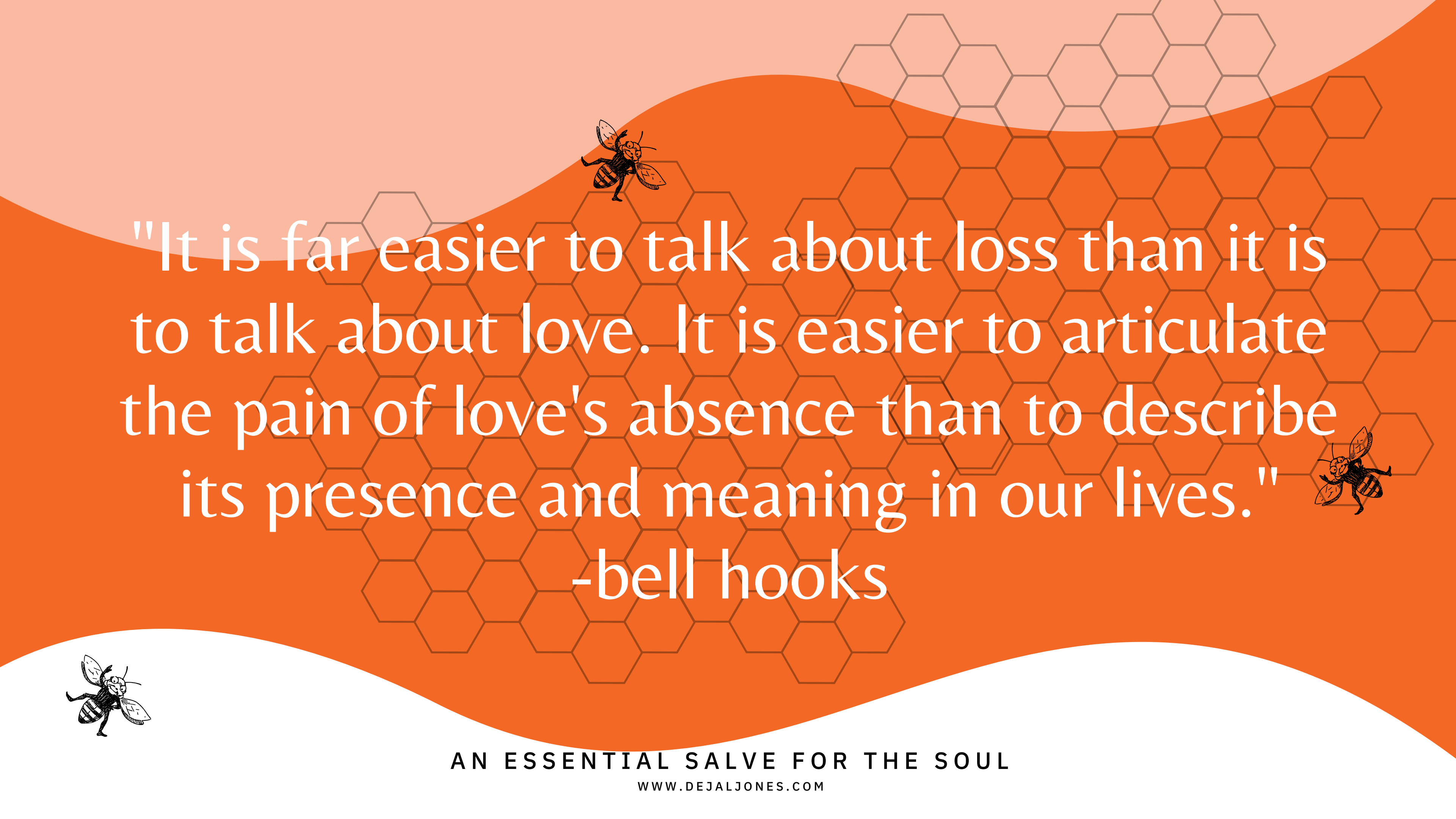
## Guiding Questions

- In the preface, hooks writes, "love returns us to the promise of everlasting life. When we love we can let our hearts speak." What does this mean?
- hooks describes the allure of lying in relations to the allure of power. What are the lies you tell to feel powerful? How do our concepts of power--born from the patriarchal culture we inhabit--keep us from love? What role does greed play and where does it come from?
- Why do we fear love? Are we more afraid of surrendering ourselves to love or of living without love? What sacrifice does love require? What relief and salve can love offer? Is it possible to be too damaged, too wounded to love?



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"It is far easier to talk about loss than it is to talk about love. It is easier to articulate the pain of love's absence than to describe its presence and meaning in our lives."

-bell hooks



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# Ecowomanism: African American Women and Earth-Honoring Faiths by Melanie L. Harris

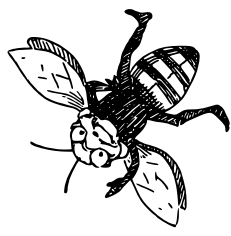
## Summary

Scholarship on African American history and culture has often neglected the tradition of African American women who engage in theological and religious reflection on their ethical and moral responsibility to care for the earth. Melanie Harris argues that African American women make distinctive contributions to the environmental justice movement in the ways that they theologize, theorize, practice spiritual activism, and come into religious understandings about our relationship with the earth. Incorporating elements of her family history to set the stage for her argument, Harris intersperses her academic reflections with her own personal stories and anecdotes.

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# Ecowomanism: African American Women and Earth-Honoring Faiths by Melanie L. Harris

## *Guiding Questions*

- How do you define spiritual activism?
- What makes ecowomanism and engaged spirituality important to the Black community?
- How are African and African American women's practices of ecowomanism spirituality and earth-honoring faiths illustrated in their religions and or religious commitments?
- How do these practices influence spiritual activism?



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"Love of the world (Earth) and a  
love of one another (humanity) are  
two foundations of spiritual  
activism"

-Melanie L. Harris



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# Undrowned: Black Feminist Lessons from Marine Mammals by Alexis Pauline Gumbs

## Summary

Undrowned is a book-length meditation for the human species, based on the subversive and transformative lessons of marine mammals. Alexis Pauline Gumbs has spend hundreds of hours watching our aquatic cousins. They are queer, fierce, protective of each other, complex, shaped by conflict, and struggling to survive the extractive and militarized conditions humans impose on the ocean.

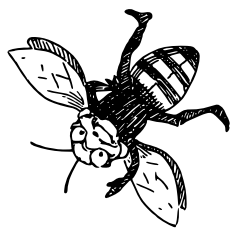
With a brilliant mix of poetic sensibility, naturalist observation, and Black feminist insights, she translates their submerged wisdom to reveal what they might teach us.

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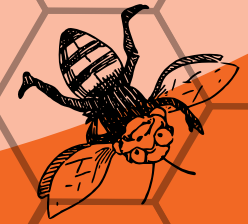
## *Guiding Questions*

- What a pivotal lesson in your life that's become a daily part of your meditation practices?
- How are you changing your relationship with capitalism and consumerism?
- Reflect on times you've practiced active listening. What did you notice? What did you learn?
- What has an experience with nature taught you about relationships with nature?



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"I wonder what our sensitive edges  
have to teach us. What do our  
morality and openness mean to the  
ecology we could surrender to  
together?"

-Alexis Pauline Gumbs



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# Notes + Reflections

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MAY THESE READINGS OFFER YOU TRANSFORMATION AS THEY'VE OFFERED ME

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