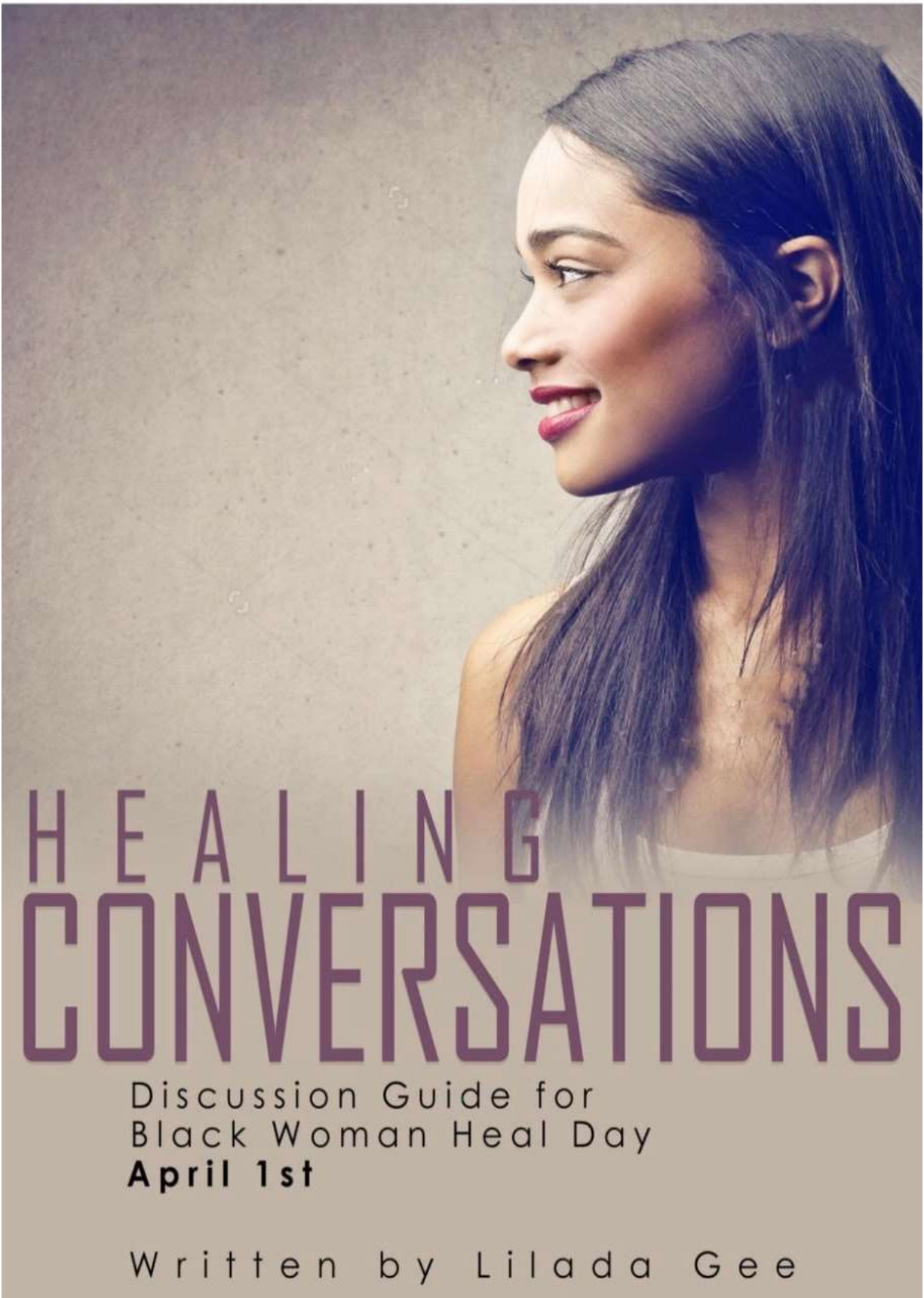


Seven (7) Healing Conversations



HEALING CONVERSATIONS

Discussion Guide for
Black Woman Heal Day
April 1st

Written by Lilada Gee

Healing Conversations

**Discussion Guide
for
Black Woman Heal Day
April 1st**

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The 7 discussion topics in this e-book are based upon responses from Black women worldwide to the question, "What is one word that comes to mind when you think of healing?"

Special thanks to Synclair Brown and Heather Chun for assistance with questions and editing.

Catch the vision of Black Woman Heal Day by watching a short video at www.vimeo.com/Lilada

For more information please visit our website at www.Lilada.org or email us at BlackWomanHeal@gmail.com

Livingroom Gathering

Connect. Share. Inspire.

Black Woman Heal Day was founded by Lilada Gee on April 1st, 2015. Each year on this day, we invite Black women throughout the African Diaspora to join our Healing Collective by creating healing spaces in their communities. This is a sacred day to pause and celebrate the strength of survivors, support those who are still traveling along their healing path, to increase awareness and explore new ways to prevent child abuse in our families and communities.

HOST A GATHERING. HEAL A LIFE

By inviting friends and family into your home or community spaces, you join Black women around the world in creating safe spaces for inspiring survivors and those impacted by sexual abuse to reclaim their spirits, minds and bodies. You create a vehicle for increasing awareness and prevention and you create a healing community.

Hosting a Livingroom Gathering is as easy as 1,2,3

- Step One** Register your Healing Gathering online at: www.tinyurl.com/BlackWomanHealDay2017
- Step Two** Create your guest list for your gathering and send out invitations
- Step Three** Prepare light refreshments for the gathering or go potluck style

Thank you for joining us on this healing journey!

DESERVE

“Love is or it ain't. Thin love ain't love at all.”

Toni Morrison

What do those of us on a healing journey deserve? And who do we deserve it from? It is very important that our expectations are aligned in a healthy way so that we do not end up expecting the right things from the wrong people or the wrong things from the right people. Misplaced expectations can leave us discouraged and cause us to stray far from our healing path.

We deserve to heal. And we deserve to heal in the ways that are most healing for our lives. What we need, how we need it and when we need it for our healing may be totally different from what someone else needs for their healing journey. Once we become comfortable with that truth, everyone else will have to, or move around so that we can get back to our healing.

From our family we deserve the space we need to forgive and move forward, by our own standards and on our own timeline. We deserve support if we decide to report or not to report. We deserve to not be subjected to accusatory questions or self-righteous lectures that add insult to injury. We deserve understanding when we don't want to share a turkey leg with the man that repeatedly assaulted us as a child, even if he is family. We deserve protection and love. And we deserve the time and space apart from folks, even if they are family, when their “love” hurts more than heals.

We deserve self-love. Self-love leads to self-care. Self-care leads to self-forgiveness. Self-forgiveness creates a gentle path for us to travel along our journey of healing. We are often our own worst enemy. We must create realistic personal expectations and learn to be kindhearted with ourselves when try and fail and fail again, along our healing journey. Most of us have never healed, so we are learning as we do this thing. We deserve the most generous amount of love that we can possibly give ourselves. Healing will never come from harsh words, judgement or shame. Healing can only emerge from love. And we truly deserve both!

Reflection

1. What do you believe that you deserve?
2. What do you believe that you do not deserve?
3. How have misplaced expectations of others gotten you off-track of your healing journey?
4. What are you doing, who are you with, where are you, when you feel the strongest power to heal?
5. What do you need or not need from your family right now to support your healing journey?
6. What is your definition of self-love? Why do you deserve your own love?
7. What does you actively loving yourself look like?

Take Action

Share ways to indulge yourself in self-love. Make a list of the things that resonate most with you and pull out your calendar to schedule self-love time for yourself.

PERSEVERE

“I didn’t have anybody, really, no foundation in life, so I had to make my own way. Always, from the start. I had to go out in the world and become strong, to discover my mission in life.”

Tina Turner

Persevere. My definition of preserve is the act of digging down deep within your spirit to find the strength to go on when everything inside of you strongly suggests that if you haven't already done so, right now might be the opportune time to give up!

How many times as survivors have we been at the point of giving up during our healing or, too often, our not healing journey? How many times? How many situations? How many unsatisfying relationships? How many disappointments that the same actions would not create a different result? How many self-sacrificing actions that only left us empty? How many of the same difficulties have we passed through, believing that each thing, each person, each mistake might be the one to take us out? Yet we remain!

Perseverance is the thing that EVERY survivor is made of! No matter how good, bad or ugly your survival journey has been, if you have survived, you survived! We survivors have the ability to keep going in the worst of situations. We can survive with our eyes blindfolded and one hand tied behind our backs, right? But now, as we commit to healing our lives, it's time to move beyond persevering into a sacred space where we don't just endure, but we grow forward!

Reflection

1. What has fortified you to preserve when everything within you wanted to give up?
2. What has been the biggest obstacle you have overcome in your life?
3. When you found yourself up against this obstacle what steps did you take to start the process of overcoming the challenge? Who or what did you turn to?
4. What have you continued to do in the past, expecting different results that you need to stop in order to grow?
5. Which of your relationships move to further away from healing? How might you renegotiate or create healthy distance in those relationships?
6. Which of your relationships move to closer to healing? How?
7. What steps do you need to take to move beyond enduring into growing forward?

Take Action

Make a mini-vision board of what you want your life to look like as you begin to grow forward, beyond surviving into truly living.

Materials needed: Magazines, glue sticks, scissors, a frame from the \$1 store to use for your board.

GROW

“It’s time for you to move, realizing that the thing you are seeking is also seeking you.”
Iyanla Vanzant

Knowing that we need to grow is one thing. Getting to growing, is another. How do we move into a space that allows for growth to occur? We grow when our expectations of others become less important than the expectations that we have for ourselves. We grow when we care less about what others think and focus more upon our own thoughts. We grow when we can scale the mountains of disappointments in our lives to make it to the summit of reflection, recognition and resolution. It is here we receive a seed to plant within our souls to grow something new in our lives.

Growth rarely comes in the best of circumstances; in fact it usually arrives in the worst of circumstances. Thankfully, I have never met a challenge, situation or mistake that didn't create an enlarged space in which I had the opportunity for growth. When we can move beyond the shock, embarrassment, fear, shame, and anger of the situation at hand, we can progress through to growth. Growth empowers us to shake off of that which has passed, to make space for that which might be, and might be better.

Reflection

Take a few minutes to ponder questions 1-3 and write down your answers to share:

1. What is a difficult situation that you have recently faced from which you can now see your growth?
2. In what ways do you feel you grew?
3. In which areas do you feel that you currently most need to grow in your life?
4. Is there anyone or anything that you can identify that might be hindering your growth?
5. What are some ways that you might be able to renegotiate those relationships that hinder you?
6. Who is a Black woman whom you admire? Share with the group why you admire her. This can be someone you know or a famous woman from the past or present.
7. Re-read the quote by Iyanla. What is the thing that you are seeking that is also be seeking you?

Take Action

Although growth often occurs in challenging times, we can become proactive in our personal growth process. In your journals, write down:

1. Your top area of priority for growth on the top of the page. I suggest only one area.
2. What is the growth that you would most like to occur? Creatively explore the impact of that growth—how would you feel, how would it better your life?
3. What is your motivation for that growth?
4. What is your plan—who or what can help you grow?
5. Share you plan with the group and pair up with one person from the group that will be your accountability partner. Exchange contact and set a date to check-in on your progress within the next 30 days.

Materials needed: Personal journals (bring your own), notebook paper, (fun) pens and easy listening music to play during journaling time.

Change

We must not, in trying to think about how we can make a big difference, ignore the small daily differences we can make which, over time, add up to big differences that we often cannot foresee.”

Marian Wright Edelman

Change. The mere word brings excitement along with terror, simultaneously. Sometimes change is a gentlemen. A choice. A well thought out strategy for which one is thoroughly prepared. Sometime change is a foe. It comes when you don't want it or didn't expect it; even when you resist it, it bursts through the doors of your life and takes over everything in its pathway.

And even when we desire change, that does not always make it easy for us to achieve. Change takes courage. You have to be willing, able, and ready to trust that what you cannot yet see, feel or anticipate, might be better than what you are currently experiencing. One can never know for sure. You can only hope that more is beyond the shore.

Leaving the shore is just the beginning. It's a huge step and it paves the way for many more to follow. The more that you try to control change, even change that you have orchestrated, the more you realize that change is under no one's control. She does what she wants, when she wants, how she wants, if she wants. We must be willing to flow in the current of change and trust the process.

We must change in order to change and be changed and make change. Are you ready to embrace change?

Reflection

1. What change have you most been resisting? Why?
2. What change do you most desire for your life? Why?
3. Have you decided what exactly needs to change and what you will need to give up in order to gain?
4. The shore represents our comfort zone and areas of complacency. What shore/s do you need to leave in order to move toward the change that you desire?
5. What obstacles stand in-between you and that change?
6. Who are the best supporters of your change?
7. How do you need to change in order to make the change/s that you desire? (Face your fears, take on new challenges, learn a new skill, secure a therapist or life coach, etc.)

Take Action

Rally up your girlfriends that both support and challenge you, to form a Girlfriends Group. This is a personal support group to help you move towards the change you desire.

Today:

1. Identify who would be in that group.

Within the next two weeks:

2. Set the date and invite your girls to the gathering.
3. Write a vision statement of what change you desire to share with your group.
4. Think through what role each of your girlfriends might play in supporting and challenging you, so you can ask them specifically what it is that you need from each of them.

Materials needed: Personal journals (bring your own) or notebook paper, pens.

COURAGE

You may not always have a comfortable life and you will not always be able to solve all of the world's problems at once but don't ever underestimate the importance you can have because history has shown us that courage can be contagious and hope can take on a life of its own."

Michelle Obama

I'm not completely convinced that as survivors, we truly understand the concept of courage. For if we did, we would realize courage is deeply engrained in each of us. It takes a tremendous amount of courage to survive what we have endured and remain with any amount of sanity still intact.

It takes a great deal of courage to tell. To report. To prosecute. To escape.... But it also takes an immense amount of courage, especially for a child, to get up EVERY damn day and endure the most deplorable atrocities one can image. This suffering is too often without hope, without help, and without healing.

Weakness is what we see and instead of embracing and celebrating our bravery, we become disheartened and make ourselves believe we are not what we really are: **courageous!**

Reflection

1. Name a Black woman that you believe is courageous? Why?
2. Do you see any similar qualities of courage in yourself and that you see in that courageous woman?
3. What qualities do you admire in her that you would like to express more of in yourself?
4. What is one of the most courageous things that you have ever done?
5. What or who gave you're the courage to do that?
6. What do you most need courage to face in your life today?
7. Who or what can help you tap into your courage?

Take Action

Are you willing to tap into your courage today by determining that you will face something that you have been avoiding out of fear? Identify one thing that you will address. Write down what your desired outcome and three courageous actions that you will take towards that end. Share what you have written with the group. Connect with an accountability partner who will check-in with you within the next two weeks to celebrate your progress.

Materials needed: Personal journals (bring your own) or notebook paper, pens.

CLARITY

“As you become more clear about who you really are, you'll be better able to decide what is best for you - the first time around.”
Oprah Winfrey

Clarity is like truth, only better. I believe that clarity is better because even in the presence of truth, one may still not understand this reality or how to respond to it. But when you have clarity, all non-essential information and all distractions have been removed. You know the truth and you know what to do about the truth.

There's a line of my poem "Where Can I Take My Shame?", where I say, "So many things distort my vision/ my true self I can no longer see." When we gain clarity, we begin to see our true selves. We begin to see the truth in our situations and we begin to see truth about others. All of these realizations can be very challenging, but all of them are very necessary on our healing journey.

Clarity brings with it a clear path upon which to strategize the next steps of your healing.

Reflection

1. What and/or who has distorted your vision and kept you from being able to see your true self?
2. What lies do you need to stop believing about yourself?
3. What truth do you need to start believing about yourself?
4. What truth do you need to embrace about others? The good, the bad and the ugly.
5. What truth do you now know and what do you need to do about it?
6. What is most important to you right now?
7. What do you desire to do more of?
8. What do you desire to do less of?
9. What do you need to make it happen?

Take Action!

Pull out your journals and pens and get ready to see yourself more clearly. Complete the following statement in your journals, "I am...". Keep writing until you have written at least 10 sentences that focus on everything that is wonderful about you. Share with the group.

Materials needed: Personal journals (bring your own) or notebook paper, pens.

Release

“Sometimes you’ve got to let everything go—purge yourself . . . whatever is bringing you down, get rid of it. Because you’ll find that when you’re free, your true creativity, your true self comes out.”

Tina Turner

Release. Letting go. Moving on.

Release of the false hope that the same things will be different. Release of the mindset that keeps making things the same. Release of expectations that will not be fulfilled. The release of what's not working and has never worked. Release of doing the same things expecting a different outcome. Release of excuses for not doing the things that will get you better. Release of the people that don't create the space for you to make your life better. Release from thinking someone other than you could, should or would make your life better.

Release comes when we understand that abundance does not come from holding on to what we have. It comes from trusting that we will always have access to enough, so we don't need to cling out of fear to what we have.

Tears sometimes accompany release, but just because it's hard to let go, doesn't mean that it's not necessary.

Release sometimes takes pulling a person, place or thing closer, close enough to evaluate it, close enough to question it, close enough to examine it, to see if it is what you continue to want, if it is what you continue to need, if it is what you can continue to maintain; and at the same time you open yourself for what's next.

Reflection

1. What is between you and what's next for you that you need to release in order to move forward?
2. Are you willing to release it? Why or why not?
3. What have you been holding on to out of fear?
4. What same actions have you been taking, expecting a different result?
5. What are you willing to do differently to get a different result?
6. What expectations of others have you been holding on to that you need to release?
7. In what ways have you been waiting on something or someone to make your life better? What do you need to do for yourself?

Take Action

One index cards provided by your hostess, write down at least 3 things that you are willing to release. Share these things with your group and why you want to release them and how you feel releasing them will positively impact your life. After you have shared them, tear them up and throw them away as a symbolic gesture of release.

Materials needed: Index cards, pens.



About the Author

Lilada Gee was six years old the first time her mother’s husband sexually abused her. Throughout the ensuing years, she struggled with challenging issues related to the abuse, including clinical depression, post-traumatic stress and low self-esteem. Now, as an adult, she is committed to helping girls and women who are victims of child sexual abuse heal.

Lilada’s Livingroom began in the living room of Gee’s home, after she publically shared her tumultuous journey of healing from childhood sexual abuse. Girls and women who were in the audience started showing up at her home, in her living room, to find a safe place to heal. Since that time, Gee has traveled from coast-to-coast and abroad, creating safe places for women and girls to rid themselves of the shame, secrets and stigma of abuse.

About Black Woman Heal Day

Lilada founded Black Woman Heal Day in 2015. It is celebrated each year on April 1st. On this day, we invite women of African descent throughout the African Diaspora to join us by creating healing spaces in their communities. These safe places provide the much needed opportunity and inspiration for us as Black women to emerge from the shadows that secrets have cast over our lives, as we bravely reclaim our Spirits, Minds and Bodies.

This day is an opportunity for us to pause and celebrate the strength of survivors, support those who are still traveling along their healing path, increase awareness and explore new ways to prevent child abuse in our families and communities. Learn more at Lilada.org.