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Black Healing Methods
Critical Approaches



Sharrell D. Lockett with Tia M. Shaffer
Foreword by Molefi Kete Asante

ROUTLEDGE 

Offering 11

Rituals, processes, methods

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Brown Paper Studio is the applied theatre process I created in 2002 while living in Cape Town, South Africa, and is now also practiced in the States. I codified my teaching, devising and directing into Brown Paper Studio basics; Be On Time, Gratitude, Safety, Circle, Breath, Eye Contact and Trust. Several of these are expressed in the opening rituals of class or rehearsal. Timeliness acknowledges respect of everyone's artistic dedication and gratitude brings spirit into the room, while physical and emotional safety establishes mutually respectful relationships.

When participating in Brown Paper Studio we stand in a circle with connected hands. The positioning of hands is significant; the right-hand faces down and the left hand faces up. This positioning provides a balanced flow of the giving and receiving of energy around the circle. While the hands are still touching we also stretch. As we stretch the company is instructed to vocally express how they feel using sounds. The sound literally and figuratively sets the tone for an atmosphere of genuine expressiveness. Breath is vital to opening the circle, and provides the foundation of fully embodied work. We send breath to release and expand tense areas of the body. Breath is the animator of the space and the more individual breath in the room the more collective inspiration is available. Once we are physically connected in the circle, activated with sound and grounded with breath, we then allow for the vulnerability of eye contact. We make eye contact with others in the room, with our hands still connected. I remind the actors that the circle always exists, even when an actor is alone on stage. And finally, cultivating trust in oneself is the key.

(Judyie Al-Bilali, University of Massachusetts/Amherst, Theatre Department and Commonwealth Honors College, Assistant Professor of Performance and Theatre for Social Change)

I usually cook a pot of greens and "Hoppin' John" on the night before I begin rehearsals to put my body, mind and spirit in the flow to receive inspiration from my ancestors. Sharing a meal with the cast is also very

circumstances as well as the character's relationship to her self and other characters that exist in the world of the play. Emotion will reveal itself in the process.

(Kym Moore, Brown University, Associate Professor, Department of Theatre Arts and Performance Studies, Artistic Director, AntiGravity Theatre Project)

Pursuing a career in acting means being a theatre-maker and being a theatre-maker is to be a cultivator of community. Cultivating community requires cooperation and collaboration rather than competition. This awareness is also rooted in the Pan-African aesthetic. Cooperation and collaboration are our way of life.

I want to affirm Black actors' magnificent role in the context of the African Diaspora; we are conduits for spirit, for the ancestors, for the forces of nature. The awareness and invocation of spirit in the creative process is our fundamental heritage as Black artists. Theatre is a magical, transformational, revelatory place. We enter into the dark together and we agree to make-believe. We agree to dream new worlds.

Self-care is vital to your success. Take care of your body, respect your instrument, eat well, rest well and exercise. Trust your body, your feelings, your voice, your impressions, your passion, your intelligence and your intuition. Trust your right to be an actor, to be an artist, to be a channel for the light. Trust yourself to realize your highest destiny.

Always look for the best in the work of your fellow artists. Be generous with your praise.

Training and expanding your skills are lifelong commitments. Visit art galleries and museums. Read widely and research deeply. Travel whenever possible.

Allow yourself the freedom to make mistakes, to make a mess and to fall down and get up again. This is your right as a creative human being.

(Judyie Al-Bilali, University of Massachusetts/Amherst, Theatre Department and Commonwealth Honors College, Assistant Professor of Performance and Theatre for Social Change)

Honor your ancestors by studying our history.

As you stand on the shoulders of those who have paved the way for you to tell our stories *be fearless!*

Don't limit yourself and don't be daunted by the limitations others may try to place on you.

Prepare yourself so when the door is open you are prepared to walk through it.

(Tim Bond, Syracuse Stage and SU Drama, Producing Artistic Director)

Do everything! Act so that you can make that you do not have

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(Nataki G)

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(Anita

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