

Jerry Colonna: Hi, Sid, how are you?

Sydney Mosely: I am good. How are you?

Jerry Colonna: Uh, I am good. I, you know, in the parlance of Reboot, we talk about red, yellow, green. Are we in the red? Are we in the yellow, the green? And today, I'm in the green. Um, the sky is crystal clear. I can see a mountain off to my left, which always makes my heart burst and sing. And, uh, I've actually been looking forward this conversation for a while, so.

Sydney Mosely: Oh, that's so exciting.

Jerry Colonna: Let's take a moment, let's get started. And, if you could take a moment and just introduce and identify yourself, however it feels right to you.

Sydney Mosely: Sure. Um, my name is Sydney L. Mosely. Uh, a lot of people ask me what the L stands for, it's Leanna, which my dad gave me after himself. He's Stanley Leon Mosely. And so, I'm Sydney Leanna, his firstborn. I am from, originally, Baltimore, Maryland, which feels very important to say. Both sides of my family are from Baltimore, and so have a deep family history there.

I got the bright idea that I wanted to dance in New York City. And so, at 18, moved to New York. And so now, I call New York City my other home.

Jerry Colonna: Mmm.

Sydney Mosely: And, I have actually almost lived in New York for as long as I lived growing up in Baltimore, so it's about, about even, at this point.

Jerry Colonna: Right.

Sydney Mosely: Uh, so I claim being a New Yorker now. (laughs).

Jerry Colonna: Mmm.

Sydney Mosely: Um, I am a dancer. I'm a choreographer. I am a teacher. I am a friend.

Jerry Colonna: Mmm.

Sydney Mosely: I am a sister. I am a daughter. I'm an auntie.

Jerry Colonna: Mmm.

Sydney Mosely: I'm a cousin. Um, I'm a niece. And, I really love to honor those parts of myself, because, uh, I don't exist as a single human-

Jerry Colonna: Mmm.

Sydney Mosely: ... in this world. Um, I'm a relational person. We are all relational beings. And so, it's important to, to, name the ways that we are connected, uh, in the world. I am a, uh, avid foodie.

Jerry Colonna: Mmm.

Sydney Mosely: I love to cook and I love to eat. I love to read.

Jerry Colonna: Mmm.

Sydney Mosely: Both fiction and nonfiction, both. I love music. I grew up in a house full of music. My mother, in her former life, was a singer and a recording artist. And my father, uh, was, had a co- had a college radio show.

Jerry Colonna: Hmm.

Sydney Mosely: Radio, Towson University Radio in Baltimore. So, there's the love of music that makes me who I am. And, I'm a mover. And even though that might be like a given to say, because I'm a dancer in my professional life, just naming that I'm a mover, I'm someone who is embodied-

Jerry Colonna: Mmm.

Sydney Mosely: ... feels really important. I would be, uh, embodied whether or not I was pursuing dance professionally, so yeah.

Jerry Colonna: Hmm. Thank you for that, and the fullness of that. And, um, I am fascinated by what I know to be true of your story.

Sydney Mosely: Hmm.

Jerry Colonna: And, um, what I've come to know about your story, uh, just through the lens of looking at some videos and things like that is a story of... Do we call it SLM Dances?

Sydney Mosely: Yes. Yes.

Jerry Colonna: So, SLM Dances is what? Tell us what SLM Dances is?

Sydney Mosely: SLM Dances is a collective of mostly women and nonbinary people who've come together to make art (laughs), to organize in communities using their art, um, specifically around issues of race and gender. Uh, the collective came together. It wasn't always a collective, you know, it wasn't always named as a collective.

Jerry Colonna: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Sydney Mosely: Um, but it started as a space for me to be an artist, and make my work, and put my work in the world about 10 years ago. And then, from there, evolved into a company, and from company evolved into collective. Uh, and we're standing really firmly in that space right now, and it feels so good.

Jerry Colonna: Mmm.

Sydney Mosely: It feels so good (laughs).

Jerry Colonna: Mmm. There are, there are moments in, in, producing this podcast where I just wish we were doing video, because-

Sydney Mosely: Mmm.

Jerry Colonna: ... if the world could see that smile that's on your face-

Sydney Mosely: (laughs).

Jerry Colonna: ... when you say it feels so good-

Sydney Mosely: [inaudible].

Jerry Colonna: ... it's like, it's hopeful, it's powerful, it's fierce, it's loving all at once, yeah.

Sydney Mosely: Yeah. Yeah.

Jerry Colonna: Mm-hmm (affirmative). Mm-hmm (affirmative). I was, uh, drawn to two particular aspects of what I've begun to discover about SLM Dances. And the first is, uh, the notion of using dance and, and, perhaps we'll use the phrase embodied art and expression, as a means to lean into and address racial injustice, racial and social injustice. And, uh, and so that's one area that, that, I would love to explore with you. And the other area was a tag line, which is, "feel human through dance." And, um, as I shared with you before we hit the record button, one of my foundational beliefs is that better humans make better leaders, and that our problem, many of our problems, stem from the fact that those of us who hold power, either by way of the meat bag, known as my white, cis gendered, straight body, or by role, which oftentimes is connected to one another. When those of us who hold power move away from humanity, we create problems in the world around us. When those of us move towards humanity, we create solutions and opportunity.

Sydney Mosely: Yeah.

Jerry Colonna: And so, anything that, uh, promises a movement toward humanity catches my eye, catches my attention. And, and, I am particularly fascinated by the notion of embodiment, uh, and what that means. So, maybe we'll use that as a jumping off point. You, you self-identified as, as, someone who is embodied and moves

through the world in that way. Can you, can you share a little bit more about what that means to you?

Sydney Mosely: Yeah, I think that I, just one of character traits is that I'm a very, uh, tactile, um, sensual person.

Jerry Colonna: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Sydney Mosely: Uh, I lead with, does it taste good? Does it smell good? Does it look good? Does it sa-

Jerry Colonna: Hmm.

Sydney Mosely: Like, are these things pleasing to my senses?

Jerry Colonna: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Sydney Mosely: And, I think that that is an entry point into our humanity. It is an entry point into, um, when you think about markers of culture, markers of culture are the foods that you eat. It is the music that is played. It is the dances that we do. And those markers of culture are how we get to the center of our humanity. You know, when you look at cultures all the around the world, the way that they do things might be different, but, you know, everyone has a creation story.

Jerry Colonna: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Sydney Mosely: Everyone has, you know, um, particular rituals around mourning, or birth, or celebrating life. Um, and so, it feels important to amplify those things.

Jerry Colonna: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Sydney Mosely: And for me, particularly as a Black woman, self-identified as a Black woman, lifting up those stories in that particular experience is really important. Um, you know, I'm at the intersection of a lot of both privileges and oppressions.

Jerry Colonna: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Sydney Mosely: And, what I hope to do with my work, and especially in my work with SLM Dances, is sort of leverage my privileges (laughs) to, to restore some balance for the parts of myself and the communities that I'm connected to that don't have those same privileges.

Jerry Colonna: Hmm.

Sydney Mosely: Um, and that feels really important and urgent to me. I know that, as the decedent of enslaved people in this country, that there have been a lot of sacrifices that my family and my ancestors have made on my behalf, so that I

can even dare have the audacity to say, "I'm going to be a dancer, and I'm going to make a life of that. I'm going to, uh, spend my time and my days bringing people together through movement, whether that's in a performance, whether that is in a class of sort of educational setting, uh, whether that is just being at a dance party and, you know, getting the party started," right? But the audacity that I'm going to say, "I'm going to spend my whole life, every day, moving and leading with this thing," um, feels important.

And it feels like fulfilling something that maybe my ancestors imagined, maybe not. I think that the self-determination in me deciding that I love moving so much, and I love the craft of choreographing, and the craft of presenting movement so much that I'm going to build a life around it, even if my ancestors had not necessarily imagined, like, "Oh, you know, my great, great, great (laughs)-

Jerry Colonna: (laughs).

Sydney Mosely: ... granddaughter is going to do this thing," but the fact that I'm in a practice of a self-determined life, that in, in and of itself, um, feel like, it feels like the thing. Right? It feels like, um, what I hope they would want for me.

Jerry Colonna: Oh, I, I, I'm sitting here and, and, my heart is just expanding and it's wide, because even as we begin talking, even when you started talking about Baltimore-

Sydney Mosely: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jerry Colonna: ... for whatever mystical reason, the word ancestors popped into my head.

Sydney Mosely: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jerry Colonna: And, and so, I, I am a-okay with being totally woo-woo and just pausing and acknowledging the arrival of your ancestors-

Sydney Mosely: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jerry Colonna: ... into this conversation.

Sydney Mosely: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jerry Colonna: And, uh, imagining, if you will, the, the pride that they, I have no doubt, feel.

Sydney Mosely: Mmm.

Jerry Colonna: And that their great, great, great granddaughter, living in Manhattan, living in New York, I presumed Manhattan, um, and is embodying, uh, a kind of the, that,

you know, to use the terms you used before, the pursuit of the markers of culture, audaciously.

Sydney Mosely: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jerry Colonna: With a, while acknowledging the, living at that intersection between privilege and oppression.

Sydney Mosely: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jerry Colonna: And, and, um, what I see, even through the magical ethers of, of, the intertubes and Zoom-

Sydney Mosely: Mmm.

Jerry Colonna: ... is a full catastrophe human being.

Sydney Mosely: Mmm.

Jerry Colonna: Just to like, "I am here," and you're nodding. (laughs) Yeah.

Sydney Mosely: (laughs) Yeah.

Jerry Colonna: Is this what it means to feel more human through dance?

Sydney Mosely: I hope so.

Jerry Colonna: That's a leading question. (laughs) You hope so.

Sydney Mosely: I hope so.

Jerry Colonna: Yeah.

Sydney Mosely: I talk about community in concentric circles.

Jerry Colonna: Mmm.

Sydney Mosely: So, I think of, you know, myself, and my relationship with myself as a community. I think about family, and friends, and kind of my deepest, personal, intimate relationships as a community. I think of SLM Dances as a community. I think of, you know, sort of the bigger, bigger, you know Harlem, the neighborhood that I live in and all of these things, um, as communities. And, as I interact with each of those circles, often I find myself modeling or asking folks to give themselves their own permission-

Jerry Colonna: Mmm.

Sydney Mosely: ... to, to show up, all of you.

Jerry Colonna: Mmm.

Sydney Mosely: To be in the practice of self-actualizing. To be in the practice of speaking up for yourself. To be in the practice of paying attention and listening to your body, so that you can do those things. To be in the practice of that, so that noticing, as well as that articulating.

Jerry Colonna: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Sydney Mosely: And, as I've got... I think there, that for me is a little bit of something I was born with-

Jerry Colonna: Mmm.

Sydney Mosely: ... a little bit of something that has been cultivated by, let's say, my dad, for instance, who very much taught me about speaking up for myself, advocating for myself, using my voice, how to just speak publicly-

Jerry Colonna: Mmm.

Sydney Mosely: ... and practice speaking out loud, um, and to be loud, right? So, there's a, there is a, a bit of, uh, nurture on top of that. And then, discovering for myself how to do that in my own way. And the dancing is how I do that in my own way. But what happens is, I show up in spaces and what is reflected back to me, quite honestly, people tell me, because you showed up in this way, it made me feel permission to be myself, to relax, to... I've had this, I've been on this campaign, um, in our COVID world with all of the Zooms, normalize wearing your hair bonnet on Zoom.

Jerry Colonna: (laughs)

Sydney Mosely: (laughs) You know, for Black women, having the hair scarf, hair bonnet, is a thing that is usually reserved for the intimacy and privacy of our homes, when we go to sleep at night to preserve our hairstyles. We are on Zoom, and because we're on Zoom, you are in my home.

Jerry Colonna: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Sydney Mosely: And so, you're going to see me at home. And that is seeing me in the fullness of my humanity.

Jerry Colonna: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Sydney Mosely: You know.

Jerry Colonna: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Sydney Mosely: I'm not outside actually.

Jerry Colonna: Right. Right. I'm inside, if you will.

Sydney Mosely: Yeah.

Jerry Colonna: That's right.

Sydney Mosely: Yeah.

Jerry Colonna: That's right. As a guest in your home.

Sydney Mosely: In my home. And I'm also in yours.

Jerry Colonna: Yeah.

Sydney Mosely: Right?

Jerry Colonna: Yeah.

Sydney Mosely: And so, how do we witness each other in-

Jerry Colonna: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Sydney Mosely: ... the fullness of that, and honor that, and reflect that to each other?

Jerry Colonna: Yes, amen, to that. I, you know, I feel you. I, I hear you. I see you. And, um, you know, Reboot generally, and my coaching specifically, can come across as a little bit of an oddity. Because, here we are in this sort of world of leadership, which seems so prefrontal cortex oriented, seems so outcome oriented. And so many folks that I work with are going to recognize, if they're listening to this, are going to recognize that the things that you said to them are the things that we, I and my fellow coaches, say all the time. That, what you're suggesting, is actually a mode of leadership that is, to harken back to what we were saying before, moving us towards humanity. It's that fullness of being human.

And so, you want to show up on a Zoom call with your hair in your bonnet, be my guest. Because, that's you. That's you. That's, that's the fullness of you. And, and, you know, so much of what we struggle with in our organizations, in our society is, as I said before, are not only do those who hold power... You know, it's one, on the one hand, we've got folks who hold power who are doing harm, active harm. And then there are the folks who enable the folks who do active harm. And I find that those who are enabling are less likely to be evil. They're more likely to be, to use a ph- a, a, a, a phrase that I think my, my partner, Ali, stole from some movie, mind bottled. They're so disconnected from their

experience of being human, from their bodies, that they can sense that there's something wrong, but they don't speak up. Not only for themselves, but for the, for justice, and for the world that needs to be born, needs to be midwifed into being. Am I resonating with you? Does this resonate with you?

Sydney Mosely: Absolutely. Absolutely. I feel like, um, (laughs)... Actually, a movie reference came up for me.

Jerry Colonna: Mmm.

Sydney Mosely: Uh, and I can't even remember the name of the movie. But, and I won't give any spoilers, even though you don't know the name of the movie. (laughs).

Jerry Colonna: (laughs).

Sydney Mosely: But, it, the movie was commenting on this exact trend that you're talking about, right?

Jerry Colonna: Mm-hmm (affirmative). Hmm.

Sydney Mosely: Like, there are people in power who are evil, and they do heinous things. But, it is not them that is the most worrisome. It is, it is the, the ones who prop them up and just let them do what they do, or enable them to do what they do, because they don't want to lose the little bit of power that they're getting by-

Jerry Colonna: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Sydney Mosely: ... being attached to this person.

Jerry Colonna: Mmm.

Sydney Mosely: They don't want to, um... They're worried more about appearances as opposed to what, you know, they are putting out into the world themselves. And there is... It's all at the expense of themselves, as well as the expense of people with less power than them.

Jerry Colonna: Yeah.

Sydney Mosely: Um, which is heartbreaking. It's heartbreaking. And if there's anything that I want to cultivate in this world, it is bringing those connections to self back together, and doing that in a multitude of ways, right?

Jerry Colonna: Mmm.

Sydney Mosely: Because, yes, people need to be just in the practice of being in their bodies. We are, our culture is so disembodied it drives me nuts.

Jerry Colonna: Mmm.

Sydney Mosely: Um, and so, just bringing people back into a sensory experience through a movement class, through a movement experience on the street. Like, let's just play a game and let's hopscotch, you know.

Jerry Colonna: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Sydney Mosely: But, just the joy of hopping (laughs) around.

Jerry Colonna: (laughs) Right.

Sydney Mosely: And like letting that bring you back to yourself. And then, on the more formal side, putting, uh, work on a stage, dance work on a stage, that requires people to participate, and to sit up, and to lean forward, and to break that fourth wall in performance. And almost always, my, my performers are breaking that fourth wall and going into the audience, and creating some kind of connection with individuals, right?

Jerry Colonna: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Sydney Mosely: So, it's never passive. It's always engaged.

Jerry Colonna: Mmm.

Sydney Mosely: Um, it's always keeping you on your toes. My, one of my collaborators calls me Sydney "Dances For The People" Mosely. (laughs).

Jerry Colonna: (laughs).

Sydney Mosely: Because, my question, whenever we're making some, where are the people? Where are the people? What are they doing? What are they feeling? How are they, you know, invested in this, at this particular moment, in this particular dramatic moment, as well as in this particular moment as they're grappling with what's happening? You know?

Jerry Colonna: Right.

Sydney Mosely: I want to know. Because, if we're not having that, that constant check-in, that constant, um, observation and feedback, like that's the practice. That's the good stuff.

Jerry Colonna: Yeah. They, and, and, and, and, uh, if I can build upon that.

Sydney Mosely: Yeah.

Jerry Colonna: So much of what I think is embedded in that better humans make better leaders is, is, really connected to what you're saying now.

Sydney Mosely: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jerry Colonna: Um, this notion of overcoming, because I think this is, this is what has happened to us, is overcoming the socialization towards disembodiment, the primacy of thought over feeling, the almost, um, a, a consequence of... You know, I often joke that, that, Descartes had it so wrong. He said, "I think, therefore I am." It's like, no, "I am, therefore I think," I exist, I am embodied. And one of the consequences of that is thought. But it's not thought that then creates our existence, right? It's the other way around. And when we, when we, when we can step into leadership, and, with that knowledge and awareness, and I, and I speak about leadership not as power, but as embodiment of purpose and belief systems. And, and I'm going to steal, I'll attribute it, but I'm going to steal from you, your choreographic instruction, which is, where are the people?

Sydney Mosely: (laughs) yes.

Jerry Colonna: Right? So much of leadership dialogue doesn't actually take into account, where are the people? Because, it's actually that interaction, which you did beautifully with your fingers, touching one another, that interaction between, in your case, those who have assigned themselves a role of performer and those who have assigned themselves the role of spectator, and that interaction blends into where there is no distinction between performer and spectator. There is no distinction between leader and led, leader and follower. There is just us collaboratively creating the community known as our organization, our society, our people. Well then, that all of a sudden becomes a joy producing experience, a love producing experience.

Sydney Mosely: Mm-hmm (affirmative). Mm-hmm (affirmative). Yeah. I am responding to you, because I know we have listeners, in what I call full bodied agreement. (laughs).

Jerry Colonna: Mm-hmm (affirmative). (laughs).

Sydney Mosely: And nod, and rocking back and forth. Uh, my whole self is in agreement with you.

Jerry Colonna: Mmm.

Sydney Mosely: And, something that is coming up for me is something that resonates from a racial justice training-

Jerry Colonna: Yeah.

Sydney Mosely: ... that I've done from the People's Institute of Survival and Beyond. And they lead a training called Understanding and Undoing Racism/Community Organizing.

Jerry Colonna: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Sydney Mosely: And in this training, one of the points that they press, which I believe in wholeheartedly, is that if you are really, um, organizing community, then that means that you are doing leadership training, right?

Jerry Colonna: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Sydney Mosely: And you are creating space for people to be empowered and to be in the fullness of themselves to take it and run.

Jerry Colonna: Mmm.

Sydney Mosely: And, uh, the ability to do that, when you are thinking about undoing racism..

Jerry Colonna: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Sydney Mosely: which is getting back to our humanity... (laughs).

Jerry Colonna: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Sydney Mosely: Right?

Jerry Colonna: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Sydney Mosely: And doing that, um, by continuing to lead. And it is one of my greatest, I think, points of pride within-

Jerry Colonna: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Sydney Mosely: ... the way that SLM Dances has manifested as a collective is that all these things we're talking about is kind of in the fabric of what goes on in our day-to-day work. And so, when artists, uh, transition from working with SLM Dances, and people have gone on to be... Go to, they go to grad school. They become full-time teachers, or, um, full-time leadership positions in other arts organizations, or what have you. But what I see in them is getting passionately... They were already passionately, um, connected to a particular issue, but it might be something about disability, or immigration, or what have you. And they take it and run, right? And so, maybe in the dances that we created in SLM Dances, it wasn't explicitly, you know, a disability justice moment, but then, when they went on to the next thing that they did, that came out. And so, it is such a point of pride for me to see-

Jerry Colonna: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Sydney Mosely: ... what has come out of this container.

Jerry Colonna: Mm-hmm (affirmative). Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Sydney Mosely: This smaller circle that we have been cultivating for a little bit of time. And it's exciting, right? Because, you think about the ripple effect, and, uh, the, you know, great, great, great, great, thinker, Adrienne Maree Brown-

Jerry Colonna: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Sydney Mosely: ... who has, um, a book and a process called Emergent Strategy.

Jerry Colonna: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Sydney Mosely: And one of the ways that she talks about change is, in fact, this ripple effect that happens.

Jerry Colonna: Mm-hmm (affirmative). Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Sydney Mosely: You know.

Jerry Colonna: Mm-hmm (affirmative)

Sydney Mosely: Uh, starting small.

Jerry Colonna: Mm-hmm (affirmative). Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Sydney Mosely: And then, from starting small, then we can see the bigger changes ripple out.

Jerry Colonna: Mmm. Mmm.

Sydney Mosely: Yeah. Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jerry Colonna: I'm beginning to see the deeper roots of how you perceived embodied movement in dance as a means and currency for moving towards racial justice. And what, if I'm, if I'm understanding you, it's the... If, if, it, it's not about me passively sitting in an audience watching a performance and "learning a lesson," it's about me experiencing, um, uh, the relationship. And dare I say that the disembodiment that we spoke about may be, uh, one of the ways in which white supremacy and patriarchy manifest themselves. Am I getting that right?

Sydney Mosely: Yes. Capital Y-E-S_! Bold font.

Jerry Colonna: Mm-hmm (affirmative). Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Sydney Mosely: (laughs) Yes.

Jerry Colonna: You know, it's, it's, it, I, I'll confess that I have a profound connection to this that goes beyond an intellectual curiosity. The intellectual curiosity's there. And, and the, and, and the values-based wish, I want to see the world be different. And I want to see it with my full body.

Sydney Mosely: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jerry Colonna: Before I die, I want to see the world move more closely to humanity. Humanity, I have to pronounce the H. I'm from Brooklyn. We don't normally do that. (laughs) Um, and the way I'm connecting what you're saying isn't just in a, on an intellectual basis. You know, um, many of the folks who listen to this, this, podcast, many of the folks who followed my work over the years, know that, uh, I have stepped more clearly into allowing the fullness of my own experiences to show up. I've talked about depression. I've talked about suicidal ideation. I've talked about experiences.

One of the things that, that, saved my life was dance. It saved my life. I had not spoken about this publicly. But, uh, I have talked about struggling with depression in my late 30s and feeling disconnected from the world, and feeling misalignment between the inner and the outer me. And one of the many forms of therapy that I indulged myself in, and I did a bunch of stuff, one of the things that I did was a form of dance therapy that would be me in relationship with a woman who was choreographer, but she was more than that. She was my guiding spirit. And I remember the first time I allowed myself... Notice the words that I use here. I overcame the oppressive socialization that I grew up with, which was do not embody your feelings. That the body is just a meat bag to carry around the head.

Sydney Mosely: Mmm.

Jerry Colonna: And I remember that first moment, where wordlessly, I allowed myself to move, and I wept for hours with relief. Because, I finally felt the freedom, a freedom that I had not remember since I climbed a climbing gym on the school playground when I was five or six years old. And I hung upside down, and the blood rushed to my head. And I didn't care what I looked like or who was judging me, or anything of those things. I just, I reconnected not only with my body but that five-year-old boy who just experienced the joy of running down the street so fast that you thought you could lift up and fly. I thought of that as I watched the videos on your site. I thought of that as I heard you, and I watched your dancers, and I watched the people, the guides that I see in SLM Dances in the collective. I thought of all that, and I remember all that experience.

Sydney Mosely: Yeah, thank you for sharing that. I appreciate hearing how powerful, hearing how necessary moving our bodies can be.

Jerry Colonna: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Sydney Mosely: It also... I'm, I'm thinking a lot of things. I'm thinking about what this experience of discovery is for people who have not been the practice of moving their bodies, generally speaking.

Sydney Mosely: And also thinking about how often dancers, trained dancers, have a same experience that you're describing.

Jerry Colonna: Mmm.

Sydney Mosely: How often ballet, modern, and a lot of, I would say, Eurocentric forms still teach that disembodiment-

Jerry Colonna: Hmm.

Sydney Mosely: ... as, you know, crazy as that might sound. (laughs).

Jerry Colonna: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Sydney Mosely: And a lot of times when young dancers come to me, we're having these same similar explorations-

Jerry Colonna: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Sydney Mosely: ... of just rediscovering the joy of moving for the sake of moving, and what it means to give ourselves permission. And this is actually a prompt in a work that we're doing now. What does it mean to give yourself permission in all the ways in your life? And how many ways we, not only are taking on what society has taught us or what our families have taught us, but then the self-policing that happens, and the layers of work. I, I, I think you sharing your story just made me think about how hard that, that, discovery and that exploration is even for people who are trained and practiced movers. And then that just lets us know how ingrained it is for us to be disconnected from our bodies.

Jerry Colonna: I think it's ingrained, because I think it's dangerous otherwise.

Sydney Mosely: Whoa.

Jerry Colonna: It's, it's dangerous to the power structures. You know, I, I think, I think that, you know, what happens... I, you know, reminds me of something a dear friend said to me when I was talking about, um, the practice of meditation. And she said, "You Bhuddists, you all sit around, and, you know, you all like try to get happy. Well, what's going to happen if we're all happy?" As if that's like a bad thing." (laughs).

Sydney Mosely: (laughs).

Jerry Colonna: And, you know, and, and in a sense, it's, it's, it's, it's, it's the danger of like, well, what's going to happen if we all fully occupy our bodies? What's going to happen if we all have permission to be ourselves? As if, somehow, we, as a collective society, are not going to produce food, not produce shelter, not produce clothing, not take care of ourselves. We'll somehow not discharge our duties and responsibilities because we're skipping down the street. What nonsense. What nonsense. Right?

Sydney Mosely: (laughs) Oh God. It is nonsense. And I truly believe that if everyone led from the place of their fullest joy, that everything we needed would be taken care of. People love to do the things. There are people who love sweeping. There are people who love cooking. There are people who love counting money. There are people who love, you know, like if everyone is moving from a space of love, and full embodiment, and full joy, and not doing things just because they think they have to.

Jerry Colonna: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Sydney Mosely: Something I've been thinking a lot about is what is ecosystem? And not necessarily in just, like, you know, trees, and air, and birds ecosystem, but, uh, the ecosystems of our communities as far as resources in the most broad sense, and how does everyone get what they need?

Jerry Colonna: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Sydney Mosely: And how... I think, in our most functioning societies, our most functioning communities, that, um, I had... I'm creating a circle with my hands and I'm-

Jerry Colonna: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Sydney Mosely: ... kind of moving them, creating this circle, and moving them around, because there's something about the, the, constant shifting of things to where they, to where the need to be, and the constant practice of balance. In dance, a lot of times we talk about balance is not a place to arrive at, uh, but balance is a practice. It is a journey. It is, um, even, you know, for us to be sitting in our chairs right now, there are multiple muscle groups in our bodies that are in conversation to create this sense of balance that we're sitting up in our chairs. Right?

And so, to bring this back to community ecosystems, there's something about all of us in those ecosystems leading from a place of joy, doing the things that need to get done, and everyone is doing their part, right, in the way that they can do their part, in the way that feel good to them, in a way that makes them feel valuable and valued, in a way that satisfies the various needs. And when we can be honest about, like, "Oh, this is my capacity and I can't do it today," that if we're all working in this together, that I could say, "Hey, Jerry, can you take that on?" Right?

And, and, someone listening to to this might be, like, "Oh, this is such a like utopian ideal," blah, blah blah. But, no. Actually, it's happening, right? Like, it's happening in SLM Dances collective. It's happening in other smaller communities that I'm a part of. And so, coming back to that idea of that, that, ripple effect, how are we continuing in, in, the ripple effect and the leadership that continues to flow out? And each person who's having this experience of being in this place, taking it to the next place. And so, I think your dream of seeing something, a happier society, a healthier society, before transitioning, is absolutely possible, if you're not seeing already.

I'm, honestly, this pandemic, I'm so grateful for it, because I'm seeing it. Although, I don't know what it's like in the communities where, where you're located, but all over New York City right now there's a community refrigerator movement happening.

Sydney Mosely:

The community refrigerator is, it's a refrigerator often, you know, powered by a local business, literally the electricity. Community members fill it with food, fresh food, veggies, bread, et cetera. Um, the food comes from local farms, local restaurants, that have excess at the end of the night, et cetera, et cetera. And it is stocked full. And whoever wants food or needs food can get food for free. And this is happening all over New York City as a result of the pandemic. And what has happened, the impact of that is there's actually less food scarcity, less people stealing from restaurants or things like that in the neighborhood, because they have access to what they need.

Jerry Colonna:

I will tell you that I am seeing that as well across different organizations. I'm seeing that, you know, they may be using different words for it. They may use words like flow. And they may be using words like, "Oh, there's a whole new remote work." Like, I was in conversation with a former client just the other day who's London-based business, you know, the employees are now diaspora, they're everywhere. They've gone back to homes. They have gone back to ancestral places. They are reconfiguring their lives. And he's sitting there saying, "I'm going to take the money that I would normally spend on commercial rent, and I'm going to pay for things like therapy for them. I'm going to pay for things that, like, manage their lives in a way." And we laughed.

And, you know, he, his ancestors were coal miners. Coal miners in Wales, right? And, the, he comes from community, where communities took care of one another. Right? Um, uh, where, where, we rolled up our sleeves and said, you know, "I have a neighbor who's in need. And so, I have [inaudible] and I will give." And, and, you know, my fervent wish is that, coming out of the dumpster fire that is 2020, that this spark turns into embers, which turns into a flame, which kinda heats and energizes the rest of us. Because, we need to be doing better across the board. Right?

You know, to be political for a moment, Joe Biden's campaign slogan, "Build back better," that's the piece that really makes sense to me. I don't want to return to what it was. I want to return to what I know what it can be. And what

it can be is far better than what it was. And that's the opportunity that's in front of us.

Sydney Mosely: Absolutely. Um, I will say that I'm political always. The personal is political. Everything about me is a politic. And the thing that I said at the top of this pandemic and I still say is, "What a time to be alive." What a time to be alive.

Jerry Colonna: (laughs).

Sydney Mosely: But it's so exciting to me. Yes. Th-this year has been disappointing. It has been full of grief. We have lost loved ones. We have lost jobs. It has been, felt scarce. And also it is an opportunity. It is the greatest opportunity, mass global opportunity, that we've had in, what, a century.

Jerry Colonna: Or more.

Sydney Mosely: Or more.

Sydney Mosely: And my deepest, deepest, wish is that people, A, notice what's happening. And in order to notice what's happening, you have to stop. You have to stop, get off the hamster wheel.

Sydney Mosely: Get off the hamster wheel, rest, notice, release. I'm, and I, and I want to name specifically, because I've been in this pedagogy for a few days recently, my friend Alegra Romeda has a practice called Functional Awareness. And so these are the steps of the practice that she has defined. Notice, release any judgment about what you notice. Decide, make a choice. Is this what I want to keep doing? Do I want to make a different choice? Recr- Maybe you need to recruit some new functions all toward, restored towards a balance. That's, that's the opportunity that we have right now. And I'm grateful to Alegra and actually her mother, Nancy Romeda, for co-developing that framework, co-naming that framework. Because, if we don't do that now, when?

Jerry Colonna: Amen.

Sydney Mosely: You know.

Jerry Colonna: We'll have missed the opportunity to live our lives fully. This is not the way we expected to receive permission to be ourselves. But nevertheless, here it is.

Sydney Mosely: Yes.

Jerry Colonna: Here it is.

Sydney Mosely: Yes.

Jerry Colonna: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Sydney Mosely: Yes. And, and, for better or for worse, I've, I know that I present as a very optimistic person. (laughs) And I know that, um, I tend to speak in an ideal and utopian terms. But I think it is important to name... I have been feeling the pain. And yet, I'm still excited. I'm still excited by what is possible. And, I hope that me, showing up in the fullness of my excitement (laughs)-

Jerry Colonna: Mmm.

Sydney Mosely: ... of what can be does inspire some other folks to think about what is possible, to pause, to rest, to go to sleep, to dream. Very literally go to sleep and dream about what else your life can be, how else you can be interacting in the world, how, you know, recognizing what the abundance of resources you have, money or not. What are the resources? Where do you need to shift those resources so that we all can have?

Jerry Colonna: Sydney, I can't thank you enough for opening up your heart and coming on the show and having this dialogue. Um, you know, this is part of a, a, a much broader movement towards that humanity. And, uh, uh, I am super excited to, to, to get the word out about SLM Dances. Um, I know that you're a nonprofit. And so, those folks who are moved to support, you know, be joining me in supporting SLM Dances. Um, I think that the work you do is incredibly important.

And so, I'll close out by just saying thank you. Um, it is just, you, you lifted my spirits, and you lifted my day. And it's just a delight. And thank you for becoming part of the Reboot family.

Sydney Mosely: Yeah. Thank you.

Jerry Colonna: Be well, dear. Take care.