

(Intro)

I'm Layla Saad, and my life is driven by one burning question: How can I become a good ancestor? How can I create a legacy of healing and liberation for those who are here in this lifetime and those who will come after I'm gone? In my pursuit to answer this question, I'm interviewing change-makers and culture-shapers who are also exploring that question themselves in the way that they live and lead their life. It's my intention that these conversations will help you find your own answers to that question too. Welcome to Good Ancestor Podcast.

Dr. Rocio Rosales Meza is a Chicana medicine woman, energy worker, decolonial healer, and Counseling Psychology PhD. Her work is at the intersections of decolonizing, spirituality, and wellness. She describes her work as often feeling too decolonial for the spiritual world and too spiritual for the decolonial world. Dr. Rosales deeply believes in dismantling the colonial capitalist patriarchy and oppressive systems that make us unwell. In this conversation, we talk about her journey from academia to reclaiming her own path, the influence of her familial and ideological ancestors on the work that she does today, and her belief in the importance of us doing the liberatory healing work within ourselves so that we can extend liberation and healing out into the world.

Hello, everybody, and welcome back to Good Ancestor Podcast. I'm your host, Layla Saad, and I'm here with Dr. Rocio Rosales Meza. Welcome, Dr. Rocio.

Dr. Rocio: Thank you. Thank you for having me. It's such an honor to be here with you.

Layla: It's an honor to be in conversation with you and it's actually been a really long time since I've had a guest whose work is in the spiritual realm, which is really interesting to me because that's actually where my work began —

Dr. Rocio: Yes.

Layla: — before, you know, my site was Layla Saad, it was Wild Mystic Woman.

Dr. Rocio: I remember.

Layla: You remember, right? I think we've been connected for quite some time and a lot of the conversations I was having was about the intersections of spirituality and white supremacy. So it's great to kind — I feel like I'm returning to some roots there for me —

Dr. Rocio: Yes.

Layla: — and interested to, you know, have this conversation, especially at the time that we're in right now where so many of us are personally going through a lot and then, of course, globally, collectively, societally, we're going through a lot and how do we, you know, navigate that and what things are presenting themselves for healing for us personally and collectively? So, I think this is going to be a great, great conversation. I'm excited to speak with you.

Dr. Rocio: Yes.

Layla: Okay. So our very first question, who are some of the ancestors, living or transitioned, familial or societal, who have influenced you on your journey?

Dr. Rocio: Thank you for calling up this energy. I've been — yeah, even just as you presented it, I'm feeling the energy coming in. I have to say that the most influential is my mom and my *abuelita* and they are very loving, nurturing women and also warrior women. I call them lionesses, because my mom and my *abuelita* would always say in Spanish, "*Somos leonas para nuestros hijos,*" which means we're lionesses for our children —

Layla: Yeah.

Dr. Rocio: — and so that very much is their energy of really loving and nurturing anyone who came to them, really, but also fighting against injustice and patriarchy. So, my parents immigrated to the US. I'm first generation here in the US. My *abuelita* was such a vocal woman in the 50s, 60s, 70s in Mexico, against men. She was not afraid to speak out and I can't even fathom — like I don't know that I would have the courage to do that, but that's who I come from. That's in my blood. And she was also the person in her village where if someone needed something, they would come to her. And so, my mom also continued that sort of legacy of nurturing here and also not putting up with the patriarchy and my dad left which was a really big deal at the time. She was the first in her village, in her extended family, to divorce. And so all of that, I think, has really influenced me to be very critical of systems and, at the same time, very loving and nurturing and so I feel like I carry those energies in my DNA. Those are my mother's who have been my example. So, that's running through my blood.

Layla: That's beautiful. That's beautiful and that lioness energy is, first of all, it's an energy that I resonate with very closely. I would definitely say my mother holds that lioness energy as well. She's like — she always says, "You can mess with the bear but you don't mess with the baby bear, because if you mess the

baby bear, like I'm coming for you," right? "You don't mess with my children," right? Like, "I'm coming for you."

Dr. Rocio: Yeah.

Layla: And though she uses the word "bear," I always think of it as lioness energy as well, like I will take care of the pack, right?

Dr. Rocio: Yes.

Layla: So that's beautiful. It's interesting, though, as well, because that lioness energy can be really fierce, like can be really, really scary, but your energy is this very calm energy and, at the same time, there is a lot of fierceness there. There is a lot of, you know, the things that you're talking about, you know, and we're going to talk about that in this conversation, decolonizing, helping people to break through their own colonialist mindsets, is work that, no matter which way you present it, like whether you say it with a very strong voice or a very quiet voice, it is perceived as an attack.

Dr. Rocio: Yes.

Layla: Yeah, so, I'm wondering about kind of like your journey in doing the work that you do. First of all, if you can tell us a little bit more about the work that you do, but then your journey in sort of finding your voice and maybe how that lioness energy comes in.

Dr. Rocio: Yeah. Well, so, my mother and my *abuelita*, I also have like Frantz Fanon, Malcolm X, Angela Davis, Stokely Carmichael, Bell Hooks, Berta Cáceres, Rigoberta Menchú, Los Zapatistas, Thích Nhất Hạnh, is also — so, I feel like all of those are my ancestors too, the revolutionaries, and also the spiritual people that that helped ground me.

Layla: Yeah.

Dr. Rocio: And so, for me, how I got here, it feels like such a big question. So, my work now is what I say to decolonizing your mind to liberate your spirit and so, really, it's unlearning the colonial programming that sort of has kept — and I specifically work with black, indigenous women and femmes of color, the colonial programming that has kept them in a prison, the colonial programming that has kept them small, that has kept them almost oppressing themselves without them even knowing it.

Layla: Right.

Dr. Rocio: And it's also this — what I think I want folks to understand is that colonization happens right at the macro level, I think people get that, right?

Layla: Yeah.

Dr. Rocio: But it's also at the micro level and this is the most insidious piece of like folks don't realize how maybe limited their world is according to this almost like agreed-upon reality. It's a way of seeing the world that, from a spiritual metaphysical lens, is really not the only reality, right? And is actually not the highest reality.

Layla: Oh, yes. Yeah. I love that you said that because that's — I mean, that's what white supremacy tells us, right? That that's the reality that we're supposed to strive towards, and in striving towards it and attaining it, whatever that means, that we reach a state of perfection, that we reach a state of being completely valid, now we are worthy, right now we deserve all of these things. So, I love that you said that.

Dr. Rocio: Yes. And so I think this is like I say lifelong work. It's an unlearning and I really believe that it's the work of our generation to really be freed from this and I don't know that I'm going to see the most benefits in my lifetime but I know that it's something that I — like I cannot not do. I've honestly tried to like — I don't want to do this, right? And I think you — I've heard you speak about this sometimes, because the work is hard.

Layla: Yeah.

Dr. Rocio: I tried not to do it but it keeps calling me back and, honestly, I also know that I wouldn't be happy if I wouldn't be doing it. It's in my soul, this work.

Layla: And that's the thing about a calling, right? That it's not necessarily that you hear that calling and, first of all, that you answer it immediately. A lot of times, we are like, "No, I don't want to do that. That's too hard," right? And we start doing it and we're like, "Yeah, it's really hard. Very, very hard. I don't know that I want to do it." But I think sometimes we confuse like finding your calling to reaching like some state of bliss where every day you, you know, show up for the work and it's easy and you love it every day, you know, and it's not like that.

Dr. Rocio: Yeah, and that's part of the programming too, right? Like the carrot that they dangle in front of you of like you will always be happy or you're gonna get all these material things and all this money and it really is about service and it really is about what is the way that you can use your gifts in a way that really serves humanity and humanity now but humanity in the future as well. And so, sometimes that's not going to feel good and it's going to be uncomfortable and that's all part of the journey. That's what even reveals our own gifts I think too. If

we were in a constant state of happiness, I don't know that that would even bring us ourselves as a people doing the work —

Layla: Right.

Dr. Rocio: — to our gifts, right? To our talents, to our highest level of being.

Layla: Yeah, that's important.

Dr. Rocio: I have not always been here so it's taken me a long time. I'm 40 years old now. I think much of being sort of radicalized came from my mom and my *abuelita*. Mom especially taught me, even though I grew up in the — what I call the Mexican Catholic church and so I did have a lot of programming growing up, programming in terms of like what it means to be a good Catholic, what it means to be a good daughter, especially as the eldest daughter and the eldest daughter of an eldest daughter of an orphaned daughter so there is deep, deep programming there of caretaking, of also being in servitude, really.

Layla: Which is different to service that you spoke about, yes.

Dr. Rocio: Yes. Servitude is just your needs are not met and you are always denying yourself, right? To take care of other people. You don't matter. And you're just an instrument, really, an object to get other people's needs met. And so that was the programming that I had to unlearn but what really helped me early on to be critical and sort of radicalized was my mom, even though we grew up in the church, she always taught us to be critical of it, especially when it came to women's rights.

Layla: Wow, okay.

Dr. Rocio: She never agreed, for instance, she felt women had autonomy over their own bodies, sovereignty over their own bodies. That was very different from what was said in church. And so, for me, that sort of opened a window into like, okay, systems can be questioned, systems don't have to stay as they are —

Layla: Right.

Dr. Rocio: — we can change them and we can change them within our own family, within our own life, within our own mind, what it means to be different, because she really changed the course, I want to say, of our lineage. I never felt, even though I had to be a good daughter, I never felt like I have to do things a certain way. It was always some flexibility there and especially, as girls, Mexican girls, that grew up traditionally, we didn't even have to like clean the house or cook, like she always, "What do you want to do with your studies?" And so really, she says like she gave us wings, you know, and I really feel that way. I never felt like I had to live up to her expectations. She really allowed us to flourish. And so that I think, for me, planted the seeds early on.

Layla: I love that you said she, I'm paraphrasing but that you said that she really, you know, change the course of our lineage. Like it's so powerful when we consciously think about like what could this do, right? In different ways that, especially for those of us who are parents, thinking about what do I want to pass on that's really helpful that helped me, right? That I think would be helpful to them and what maybe do I not want to pass on? Like what wasn't helpful for me? What did I have to heal from, right? What did I have to work through that I don't — or what am I learning now as an adult because we remain teachable, hopefully, you know, for the rest of our lives and was always things that we didn't know about that we're coming

to learn about and that we're saying, "Oh, I thought this was what was correct or right or the right way of seeing things that I'm seeing, actually, it's not taking into account x, y, z experiences that I don't have because those are not my identity." So, yeah, it's really powerful.

Dr. Rocio: Yeah, and I think within — every generation has and every person has the ability to do that. It's just that I think that we have to leave some room for flexibility, for freedom, for sovereignty, for the unknown to show up —

Layla: Yeah.

Dr. Rocio: — and I think that often that can be scary for people of like the not knowing and especially under the colonial paradigm, this is what you do, this is how you become successful, this is how you be a good person, how you're a good woman, a good mother, right? Like all of those things. And so it's so important to leave like — I'm using a psychology term, like degrees of freedom to really come into your own and —

Layla: Yeah.

Dr. Rocio: — to really allow like the magic and the medicine of each generation or each person to come.

Layla: Yeah. So, I'm wondering, how did you get to doing the work that you're doing now? Like there is a story there, right? Oftentimes, when we are called to this work and we stay committed in it, there is a personal connection of something we've been through. So, I'm wondering, what has been your journey with decolonizing in your life? And in the moments when, I guess, like in those moments when it does get hard doing this work, like what are you remembering about what

you've been through that remind, no, this is why I'm doing this work?

Dr. Rocio: Yes. So, I think most of my life, I have existed in a programmed way doing what I thought was going to bring success to my family and, being the eldest daughter of a single mom, I took on a lot of responsibility of like I have to take care of my family and so even the reason why I got a PhD was to — what's going to help my mom and so it wasn't even a decision that I felt like this is really what I wanted — like, of course, I'm in my purpose, but I also went that far to be able to help my mom and, within all of that training, I did all the things that I think, you know, they tell you you need to do to be successful. I went along with all of the conditioning. And so doing all the research in college, doing all the research in the doctorate program, then in my internship, then getting my PhD. I chose becoming a professor. I was 10 years a psychology professor, I did all the research, all the teaching, earning tenure, which means having a secure job for life and then, in 2015, I became pregnant and my body started to break down and, actually, even two years before that, I lived in daily pain and that became normal for me, of like having severe migraines, chronic migraines for two years and I didn't even think about — like that became normal for me, I didn't even think about maybe I should take a break. Maybe I need to take care of myself. In two whole years, that was never a thought that entered my mind and that's all part of the programming of like — part of it, I feel, is like coming from an immigrant background, right? And like that idea of like your worth is in your productivity, your worth is in how much can I even tolerate, like tolerating pain, especially I think for black, indigenous, women of color, that's viewed as a strength and, in my culture, it's called *aguantar*, which means to endure pain. That's viewed as a good thing.

Layla: Wow. So there's a name for it, right.

Dr. Rocio: Yes, yes. And my mom grew up that way too of like being the strong woman, right? And so that was my model. So I never thought I could take a break. I was also — academia's very colonial and I worked in a toxic environment and that was also not modeled of like caring for yourself, being a whole person. That was not modeled. And so, finally, in 2015, when I became pregnant, my body started to break down. My body said, "This is enough, we can't do this anymore. If we're going to grow a child, you need to rest, you need to take care of yourself," and I had to take a medical leave and that was so difficult for me to finally accept that. I had to get to the point where I couldn't even get up out of bed to finally accept that I had to take a medical leave. And thinking back to that now, it hurts me and I say, no, I was so colonized that I was apologizing to my boss for having to take a medical leave and he was not even receptive to it, really, like he was still questioning me, like, "Do you really need to do this?" and I felt like I had to like prove to him how much in pain I am and I felt guilty for even saying those things.

Layla: I think a lot of people can relate to that.

Dr. Rocio: Yes.

Layla: I mean, I think you understand now looking back, right? Like how backwards that is, right? Like how like it's working against you, right? But it's also the norm.

Dr. Rocio: It is.

Layla: It's not that your outlook is backwards, it's the norm that we work ourselves in this way and then when we can't show up and perform, we apologize as if we're somehow deficient —

Dr. Rocio: Yes.

Layla: — and not human, like we're expected to be robots, which I think is hard I think for women and femmes who are having to explain things to men about the ways our bodies work, right? But also, I think, for people with maybe hidden or, what do they call it, like invisible disabilities or mental health problems, you know, how can you explain it? It's really hard, but it's so valid and it's true and it's that person's experience but they're expected to act as if it's not happening or it doesn't matter or it's not impeding their life in any way which it just pains me.

Dr. Rocio: Yeah, and you're right, it's normal for people and it's the system that we're currently under, of colonization, of you are not human and you're expected to work yourself to the bone, right? Like to depletion is expected. And if you can't work yourself to depletion, something's wrong with you, right? Like that's how we're evaluated and then we internalize that, right? Especially women and femmes of color, we internalize that something's wrong with us and that's what I felt. I felt like I was failing at my job. I felt like a failure. So, finally, I took that medical leave and I was on that medical leave for a year, my child was born, and then I took maternity leave, I returned a semester and the pain came back again —

Layla: Oh, wow.

Dr. Rocio: I had to take another medical leave and really, this is because I exploited and abused my body for all of the years that I was trying to get a PhD. That's what I did. I willingly, and knowingly too, abused my body. I hardly slept. I didn't take a break to eat. I would just write, write, write, like to finish my dissertation, like it was just writing and I think a lot of folks that

are in academia or writers like have had that experience. It should not be the norm.

Layla: It should not be the norm, no.

Dr. Rocio: But it's also encouraged and this is the other piece of colonization of like valuing our mind over anything else, over our body, over our spirit, valuing our mind —

Layla: Yeah.

Dr. Rocio: — and that's why we are encouraged to just write and deny that we need food or that we need water, that we need sleep.

Layla: And that's such a powerful point, especially in the world that we're living in right now when the biggest crises that we are facing, right? Is the health of our physical bodies in this global pandemic and the physical health of our planet, right? Like the body of our planet. But colonialism, capitalism, white supremacy, patriarchy is so much about only valuing the mind, that knowledge or, you know, the intellect and very much about the body is just a vessel that carries the mind. It just happens to carry the mind. But without all of those pieces working together, the mind, the body, the spirit, the emotions, everything, it's just not wellness.

Dr. Rocio: Yeah, there's nothing sacred in colonization. And we're not sacred beings under colonization. We are just a means to an end for them. And that's what I discovered. So, after I had to take that medical leave, I lost my position is what they said. I was in talks with HR, human resources, which at the time I thought was a part of the university that was to help me, that it was meant to help, and I was in conversations with them a long time of like what are the accommodations that I need?

How can I still do my work but in a different way because I have a disability now? And through that time, one day, I woke up to an e-mail letting me know that I lost my position which means that I was fired, really.

Layla: Yeah.

Dr. Rocio: And that was a huge blow. I cried and cried and cried because I never thought that that would happen.

Layla: Right.

Dr. Rocio: I thought that, you know, I earned tenure, I have a secure position for life. That was never something that entered into my mind. And that is what sort of catapulted me into this journey because I realized that security is an illusion. I realized that security is a colonial lie and that everything that they sort of tell you to do to be good, to earn this job, to be successful, that there are conditions to it and I didn't know that before. And that really sort of lifted the veil for me and really helped me to see that it is a lie, you know? That it's a lie that we're all operating under to exploit ourselves, right? And to get us to produce under them and so that, really, for me, it was a dark night of the soul moment. You know, I really question like who am I? If I'm not a professor, who am I?

Layla: Right.

Dr. Rocio: Who am I if I can't even work at the time? Honestly, I didn't even know. I was so debilitated that I thought my working days were over and I had to surrender to like I'm just going to try to get healthy, as healthy as I can, and raise my child and that was my goal at the time because I was so, so in pain, so heartbroken, really, because I lost something that I had worked my whole life for and that began this journey.

Layla: Who were some of the — were there certain teachers or writers or just people who helped you to make that connection that this horrible thing that I never thought could ever happen to me, especially because I wrapped so much of my identity up in, right? Like that gaining that success, gaining that security, it's gone. You know, what helped you to make the connection why this decision happened? Like the bigger picture, not just the story of me somehow "failing," like my body failing on me, but actually the system is designed this way. What helped you to make that connection?

Dr. Rocio: Yeah. So, it was the spiritual folks and the revolutionary folks that helped me to get to that. So, spiritually, the writings of Thích Nhất Hạnh, Pema Chödrön which are Buddhist monks, Deepak Chopra also. Spiritually, they grounded me in that moment, because I really lost everything. I didn't have my health. I had no career. Eventually, they gave it back to me and then I lost it again. They gave it back to me and then I said, "No, I don't — I'm not going to do this. I deserve better than this," because what I know too is that if I was a white male, even a white woman, I would not have been fired.

Layla: Right.

Dr. Rocio: But because I was a Chicana, that's what happened and, really, that's what — my experience now, I know that this has happened to many women of color in the academy of really being disposable, you know? Not treated in the same way. But when that originally happened, it was those spiritual writers that helped me to see I'm experiencing a lot of loss in this moment and I am grieving it, but there is also a greater purpose and the reason that this left my life is because it wasn't meant to stay forever and it's fulfilled its purpose.

Layla: Yeah.

Dr. Rocio: And so then the writings of Frantz Fanon, in particular, Dr. Michael Yellow Bird who does work on decolonization, Eduardo Duran then helped me to see it from a colonial perspective of like these are systems that are not here to serve us, that are here to abuse us, really, and colonize us and to just begin to see that that's what happened to me was, number one, painful, but also empowering of like, okay, then if this was created, this means it can also be dismantled and it can be changed.

Layla: Yeah. So let's talk about the work that you're doing around that then, the dismantling and the changing, the healing, and — I very much also see you as — because there's two works, there's two sort of sides to like doing anti-oppression work, right? There's the dismantling of the old paradigms and then there's the building of the new. Do you see yourself as doing both? Do you lean more towards one side than the other? Has your journey changed where it started more on one side and now it's moving towards another side?

Dr. Rocio: Yes. I love this question. And I'm just like smiling big because I feel like this is where we're at in this moment in time and I often say that I have felt too decolonial for the spiritual world and too spiritual for the decolonial world. I felt like I haven't fit in in either one. Most of my life has been in the anti-oppressive work so I spent most of my time there. Throughout my training and my studies has been through the works of folks that have done the writing, reading those books, researching all of that and then when this happened to me, then I sort of leaned in more into the spirituality which has been always with me. I'm a seer, a psychic, and I was born this way but it's something that I also felt like I had to hide because of colonization, because that was severed in my lineage. And so,

now, since that time that my world imploded, really, it has been more bringing in the spiritual piece and so I do often feel like I don't belong. When I started sharing my work on Instagram, which was in 2018, I want to say late 2018, it was because I heard a voice and so when I started to become healthier and I was like, "I'm done with work, I'm just going to focus on me and my family," I started to hear a voice and that was the voice of my ancestors and first, my *abuelito*, my grandfather and I feel like he was the bridge to bring me to my ancestors of like, "Don't forget us." I feel like he sort of like introduced me to them again and when I began sort of communing with them, then I heard the message of like, "You have to share your work publicly," and it's funny now because I was so uber private before joining Instagram, like I would have never, never done something like I'm doing now, pre all of that. I just heard a voice of like, "You have to share this work. You can't keep it to yourself," and I thought all of that was a waste, to be honest with you. Because I had been fired, I felt like there's nothing that I can do with all that I've learned. I felt like it was a waste. And so they told me, "You have to share this. It wasn't a waste. It's time to share this with the people now. You don't have to be in a classroom. You don't have to be in university to share these things."

Layla: Yeah.

Dr. Rocio: And so, slowly, that's how I began to share. In 2018, I felt like — and even I want to say 2019, a lot of this was controversial, like to talk about decolonizing was very controversial and it felt scary for people, like there was a small part of the population that was awake to it —

Layla: Yeah.

Dr. Rocio: — and to other people, I want to say like it was scary, it did feel threatening as you share it, like that's the energy that I will —

Layla: Definitely.

Dr. Rocio: Yeah. And then, late 2019, more people started to get it. And then in 2020, of course, then the whole world woke up —

Layla: Right.

Dr. Rocio: — and then in 2020 is when I started to speak more of the spiritual piece of like, yes, we need to fight these systems, right? But also we can't spend all of our energy fighting —

Layla: That's right.

Dr. Rocio: — because then we are still upholding those systems and so we need to leave some of our energy for the creating, for the imagining, for birthing the new —

Layla: Yeah.

Dr. Rocio: — and I want to say that that is still a little controversial for some people because they feel almost — especially folks that are just existing in the social justice world that don't have the spiritual piece, it's almost like an offense of like how dare you dream when there's so much pain still?

Layla: Which I find interesting because I think even when I look at — I mean, the work of any civil rights activist, right? Civil rights writers, social justice writers, some of the ones that you even mentioned and then look at sort of like the Black Lives

Matter movement, I think there's both. I think there's always been both. I think that there has been very strong movements to call out, right? To shine a light, to show what's actually happening, and to ask for change, to ask for accountability, to demand justice, while also being very instructive about what healing looks like and what joy looks like and sort of the importance of reclaiming all of that. I think that that's always been there.

Dr. Rocio: Yes.

Layla: So it is interesting to me, but I also recognize it because I — you know, you talked about your journey, that was definitely my journey. Like I started out with the waking up to, “Oh, my gosh, this is actually the world that we actually have,” and then a lot of energy spent on the calling out, the showing, the demanding change. What changed for me was I almost burnt myself out trying to do that and I almost lost myself in that and I lost hope, optimism. I lost me. I was just a fighter. There was nothing else and that isn't the core of who I am and so I began to sort of open the doors to the rest of it just as an attempt to save myself, but I also started to see, no, it's not just about saving you, it actually is about, collectively, we need both. We need anger absolutely, right? We need justice, we need to demand accountability, but we also need healing. We also need, like you said, imagining, creativity, what is the world that we're actually asking for and what do we want it to look like?

Dr. Rocio: Yes. I find it so interesting that, for both of us, it's the seed for the new started with us sort of like saving ourselves and healing ourselves —

Layla: Right.

Dr. Rocio: — like that we were burnt out and then it began with healing ourselves, of like coming back into our spirit, and so I find that really interesting and also not because that's the work that I do with women and femmes of color, of like almost giving them permission to be like you do matter and all the programming of like you just exist to be in servitude, that we just care about how you're nurturing other people or that your voice doesn't matter, that you need to shrink yourself and hide yourself and all of these things that we put on women and femmes of color, that's not all of your existence —

Layla: That's right.

Dr. Rocio: — that's actually not why you're here. That's what you've been told, right? To serve the colonial capitalist patriarchy, but almost giving them permission of like who are you? What's your soul? What's your medicine?

Layla: Yeah.

Dr. Rocio: And especially when women and femmes of color sort of discover that in themselves, like it will naturally extend to the collective because that's —

Layla: That's right.

Dr. Rocio: — and that's our spirit and that's really feminine energy of it's not selfish and it's not linear and it's not exploitive. It's nurturing in a way that is also nurturing to us.

Layla: We've used these two words in this conversation a couple of times, like the service versus the servitude and something that struck me as you were talking was when we come into this awakening of consciousness and, you know, realize what the systems actually are, how they operate, how

they're not supposed to serve us and we start on this path towards whatever you wanna call it, anti-racism, anti-oppression, liberation work, whatever you wanna call it, that we often take our same mindset that we had from being in the previous paradigm into this new paradigm. So, on the outside, we're working towards liberation but, on the inside, we're still coming from a place of servitude —

Dr. Rocio: Yes.

Layla: — in service because we haven't yet learned how to take care of ourselves. Nobody taught us — we do not yet have a global construct of the world that we're trying to build.

Dr. Rocio: Yes.

Layla: So, we need to imagine something that isn't yet there, right? And I see you talking a lot about — I don't know, sort of the languaging may be different about how you talk about it, but I see you doing a lot of work around that and sharing with people around, yes, like it is about collective change but it actually has to start from within.

Dr. Rocio: Yeah. Some folks may think that that's selfish, right? And so you're hitting the nail on the head of like we're so colonized that we unconsciously replicate the systems of oppression —

Layla: Right.

Dr. Rocio: — of we're doing liberation work but we're doing it in a colonial way —

Layla: Right.

Dr. Rocio: — and so what I always tell the folks that I work with, the women and femmes that I work with, is we cannot do decolonial healing in a colonial way and so it's really about doing the work in a sacred way and if we really think about, for me, and this is where like my indigenous lineage comes in and the work of being a medicine woman comes in and so my teachers are Don Alejandro Apaza and **[inaudible]** who have really sort of helped me do healing work in that way is that everything starts with the seed, and so envisioning self as that seed and I have to nurture self, that seed, first, I have to water that for it to be able to bloom, right?

Layla: Yeah.

Dr. Rocio: And we've almost, like we're doing it the opposite way of like we're expecting it to already be out there but we're not doing the work inside ourselves and so I think if folks understand even just the way intergenerational trauma works —

Layla: Yeah.

Dr. Rocio: — like we have deep healing to do. This is not just my healing in my own lifetime, this is 500 years of healing that I have to do. And I'm going to be more effective, I'm going to be able to vision more if I can remove, if I can cleanse myself from all of that, to reveal my spirit and myself.

Layla: There must be a lot of grace that we have to have for ourselves and for one another, because, as you said, it's generations that were healing from constructs that we are deconstructing, right? And trying to build new constructs that don't bring those old constructs into the new construct, right? There's a lot of grace that we have to have for ourselves and for one another. What are some of the tools and the practices

that you are sharing with the people that you work with to help them to break through? Because I will tell you, you know, in my own journey with this, it's a very painful journey and I think the biggest pain for me has always been realizing that when I peel away the layers of all the things and all the things that are getting in my way or the ways in which white supremacy and colonialism impact me, one of the biggest culprits is me. And not because I'm doing it on purpose but because it's so ingrained in me that I don't even know that I'm doing it. It just feels — it's not even something that I'm thinking about, right? And so it's so deep and I remember like coming to that realization and just being in such deep pain, like I cried, like I had this realization of I am an agent of white supremacy against myself in the ways that I talk to myself, in the things that I think I'm allowed to have access to, the spaces that I think I'm, you know, I'm allowed to exist in, the proving that I think that I have to do in order to feel worthy of having certain things or being in certain places, like it's always there, right? In the back of the mind and it will come to the forefront at different times, right? The difference now, I think, for me, is now I'm aware that it's there, I wasn't aware before, but that doesn't mean that it's gone away. So, what are some of the ways that you're helping people to bring that into consciousness and then to work with it?

Dr. Rocio: Yeah. So, I think compassion is one that I always share. Like it's so important to have compassion and so I always invite the energy of compassion and the energy of — I wanna say patience, because, again, it makes its way, right? Like the colonial ways of doing things makes its way, then we try to do our healing in a perfect way, like, okay —

Layla: Yeah.

Dr. Rocio: — now I know I have to do my healing but now I'm going to do it in a perfect way and I'm gonna do it on this timeline and this is exactly how it's going to go and so, really, constantly inviting in the energy of compassion, of patience, and self-love and the self-love I think is difficult for women and femmes. It's a totally new concept and this is why, for me, I also came to really discover that a lot of what we experience, depression, anxiety, like the roots of that is colonization —

Layla: Yeah.

Dr. Rocio: — because if you continue to search back and back and back, that is the root of it. Like why do I carry some anxiety? Why did my mother carry anxiety? Why did my *abuelita* carry anxiety? Because they lived in poverty. And where did that poverty come from? Being colonized peoples. And so, it really is the root of that. And so, just even having that perspective, I think, it's always important for the women and femmes of color that I work with, for them to acknowledge that perspective and constantly call it in. Because we are taught to internalize it.

Layla: Yes.

Dr. Rocio: We are taught to — when I'm struggling, that means there's something wrong with me. But if we can see that much of our struggles are rooted in colonization and colonial programming and us being disconnected from our ancestors, from our lands, like all of that is a soul wound, right?

Layla: Yeah. And I think that's a big part of what's missing from kind of the mainstream conversations on self-help and personal growth —

Dr. Rocio: Yes.

Layla: — is there's a heavy emphasis on, you know, taking responsibility for your thoughts, your beliefs, which is important. I think it's really, really important, right? Because, yes, we have to take into account that there are these systems and factors that are like for generations have been having an impact on us but at the end of the day, we only have ourselves.

Dr. Rocio: Yes.

Layla: We are the one person that we can take control of. So, that part is really important but it's missing the other part.

Dr. Rocio: Yes. Yes.

Layla: Talking about systems of racism and capitalism and gender disparities and all of these things, it's just missing.

Dr. Rocio: Yeah, it totally is missing and, for me, that was also a wakeup call. When I started to get healthy, like I started to ask myself how did I even get here? How did I even, you know, get to the point where I abused my body so much that I'm now in a health collapse? I can't even get out of bed, I can't even take care of my child. Like that was so hard. It's so painful, as you're saying, to begin to look at what led me here.

Layla: Right.

Dr. Rocio: And this is where the self-help books don't help, I think, especially women and femmes, folks of color because I had high self-esteem. I, you know, was a successful woman. I had achieved all of these things. And yet I treated myself this way. I treated myself as if I didn't matter. I exploited my body, I abused myself. And so that didn't make sense to me. Like how can I have high self-esteem but treat myself as if I'm not

worthy? Where did I learn that? So then that's when the words again of Malcolm X came in, like who taught you to hate yourself?

Layla: Wow, yeah.

Dr. Rocio: And then, even in this moment, like I feel like I want to cry, like then even more grief came like, wow, I really do believe like I deserve less. I really do feel like I'm unworthy of taking care of myself. I really do believe that I just exist to serve others. And as I speak that, like I feel the pain.

Layla: It's emotional. It is emotional, because when you really face it and see it, you come to that realization that, first of all, so many people love me, are rooting for me, right? Like are — I'm valuable to so many people. Like you said, I'm confident, I have self-esteem, I have all of these things and yet this thing is still there and I don't know how to get it out and I don't want to look at it directly. When you look at it directly, it's extremely painful, but it's — I think it's the moment where real healing can begin —

Dr. Rocio: Yes.

Layla: — because you're finally looking the beast in the eye.

Dr. Rocio: Absolutely. And I think for women and femmes of color to know like, yes, like I went along with this programming unconsciously, like I think that's where the compassion comes in —

Layla: That's right.

Dr. Rocio: — did it unconsciously —

Layla: Right.

Dr. Rocio: — like you didn't even know that there was another way to exist. I didn't, because I learned it from my mom, from my *abuelita*. Their needs didn't matter. They struggled to prioritize themselves, like they did just exist to take care of other people. And self-care wasn't even a concept for them. And so, for me, of course, then I learned that. Of course, I would have a hard time with compassion for self, you know? Of course, I would tolerate abuse and pain and that would be seen as something good, you know? And then, for me, and I think this is some of the newer generations too or maybe children of immigrants, then comes like this survivor's guilt.

Layla: Yes. So, I wanted to ask you about this. Yes. What is the survivor's guilt?

Dr. Rocio: So, this is how it showed up for me of like I do have to work hard and I have to work even harder because my mom and *abuelita* suffered so much. And so how dare I, as someone who has more privileges, who isn't living in poverty, my mom and my *abuelita*, my father and his family, they all lived in poverty, so now here I am in the US, we have a home and we have food every day, like how dare I complain and attend to myself when they had it much harder? And so this is where I think we get confused. We think that to honor our ancestors means to suffer like our ancestors.

Layla: Yeah.

Dr. Rocio: Yeah, and we feel guilty if we begin to honor them by taking care of ourselves. We begin to honor them by actually thriving and not just surviving.

Layla: Yeah. It's hard.

Dr. Rocio: It is. Yeah.

Layla: Making that switch in the mind, right? Of actually honoring them is me thriving, like that is what they would want for me, not for me to suffer like they did. But it's hard because it almost feels like betrayal, I think.

Dr. Rocio: Yes, that's the word that was coming up, yes.

Layla: Yeah.

Dr. Rocio: That's what I felt like initially too. I'm betraying my mom and *abuelita* by just focusing on myself.

Layla: Yeah.

Dr. Rocio: But I real— and, again, that's when I heard my ancestors, "We don't want you to suffer. We dreamed that there would be a time where we wouldn't have to suffer anymore."

Layla: Right.

Dr. Rocio: And so then I feel like they gave me the permission to be able to do it differently, of, okay, yes, that makes sense, even though right now I feel guilty and I feel like I'm betraying, the ones that are alive, the ones that are in the spirit realm are telling me that this is not what's meant for us, that we were actually never meant to exist this way. In service, in suffering.

Layla: And that's the sort of point where you dig deeper into that internalized oppression of, right, realizing, oh, I have bought into this idea that we are supposed to suffer. So, me suffering is continuing a lineage of what I am supposed to be

doing. It's a whole other thing to — no, like this was never supposed to be there. Me thriving, therefore, is me living within my human dignity, right? I don't have to earn it. I don't have to earn thriving. I don't have to earn wellness. It's my right.

Dr. Rocio: Yes.

Layla: Yeah.

Dr. Rocio: For me, that's the spiritual piece. For me, that's the — yes, the fighting, but also the spiritual, like who were we pre-colonization? Because colonization is manmade.

Layla: Yeah.

Dr. Rocio: And so who were we before this paradigm? Before these white men told us that this was our reality, who were we before then? And so, that getting — I think, for folks to understand that, like we are not meant to suffer, that's part of the colonial programming, and to also not identify so much with the suffering because I think that's another thing that folks of color tend to do. It becomes our identity, it becomes our narrative.

Layla: Right.

Dr. Rocio: And we feel like a betrayal when we start to lean into our wellness, when we start to lean into our sacred, you know, our soul path, and the truth is, people do judge you, like people do judge you if you begin to do more of the wellness and not as much of the fighting and, for me, I think both are needed.

Layla: Yeah.

Dr. Rocio: And I see them as sort of like on the scales of like the energy that has been coming through is like water. Like sometimes we need the fighting and then sometimes we really need to lean into the spirit because what is the new that we're trying to create?

Layla: Yeah.

Dr. Rocio: But we still do oppress self but within our own community oppress each other, and that's sort of like another obstacle too. And so that's where I also teach boundaries, right? Like boundaries on this journey of decolonial healing are needed because there are going to be people that are not going to see that you're trying to break this cycle of colonial trauma. They are going to see it as you're leaving, you know? You're betraying us.

Layla: You're abandoning, right.

Dr. Rocio: Yeah.

Layla: And it's hard.

Dr. Rocio: Yes.

Layla: I think what frustrates me in all of that is that those who, I want to say began and benefit from that violence are not harmed by that inter-community harm, right? They're not impacted by it at all but it leaves these very, very deep scars for people who are in that space. It's very hard to navigate through. And I think that's — I would come back to something you talked about earlier which is the importance of compassion for self and for others, the importance of patience, the understanding that this is a really long journey that we're on, this is a generations journey that we're on, but it's hard.

Dr. Rocio: Yeah.

Layla: Yeah, it's hard.

Dr. Rocio: Absolutely inviting compassion for self and others that they may not have this consciousness yet and that we know where the wound comes from, we know why they are identifying with the pain, we know why they feel like it's a betrayal and so we can have compassion but that doesn't mean that we need to stay in the pain because —

Layla: Right.

Dr. Rocio: — then none of us, you know, none of us will be on the other side to create the new earth and so then comes in the courage, right? This is what I also invite in, the energy of courage for those moments where it does feel like you're alone or where their judgment comes in, you know, of people that maybe don't see it yet. So, for me, what helps me also is, again, seeing it from a spiritual perspective of like not everyone is meant to see it when the dream is being birthed, you know? And not everyone is meant to understand the calling —

Layla: Yeah.

Dr. Rocio: — and that's okay and that's been so hard for me because, as an empath, you know, I want everyone to be healed and everyone to see this and everyone to be free. But then there's going to be moments I understand now that are going to be lonely —

Layla: Yeah.

Dr. Rocio: — and that's part of the journey, I think, for visionaries or leaders or people that are charged with a calling and a dream.

Layla: I think it's also that, you know, so many of us have different identities and positions that put us either in a place of privilege or not having privilege, as well as our own personal, like our own personal history of what our ancestors have suffered through and, therefore, what has been passed on to us, right? And so each of us is doing our very best, I think, to survive, first of all, in this thing and then if we can survive, to thrive, and what that journey is going to look like for each one of us is going to be completely unique and completely different, right? And for some people, they may lean more into the spirituality as their way to find meaning. Other people may lean into science, right? Like it could be something else completely different. But we're all trying to find that way and I think, for me, what's been really helpful is loosening my grip on what I think it's all supposed to look like.

Dr. Rocio: Yes.

Layla: Right? Because none of us actually know, right? This world that we're building towards —

Dr. Rocio: Yes.

Layla: — not one person has that blueprint, right? And with 8 billion people in the world, we're all going to have a different idea of what it should look like.

Dr. Rocio: Yes.

Layla: Right? So we're kind of like each one is building our part.

Dr. Rocio: Yes. And so I think here is where like sovereignty also comes in.

Layla: What do you mean by sovereignty? What does that mean to you?

Dr. Rocio: Well, we've forgotten that we are sovereign people, that I don't have to do things the way you do them and I don't have to do things the way that society does them, and especially I think in creating the new world, we have to allow people to be sovereign. If we don't allow them to be sovereign, their dream, their vision, like their piece of the puzzle, won't come in.

Layla: Yeah.

Dr. Rocio: And so I think that's so important, of like making space.

Layla: Yeah, definitely.

Dr. Rocio: And to accept like I do have one piece of the puzzle, I'm not the whole puzzle, you know?

Layla: That's right.

Dr. Rocio: I only have one piece of it and I need other people and we all have to do this work together, I think, is so important and even as you're saying, you know, that we don't know what it's going to look like, I think that's such a beautiful thing too. We've been taught to be scared of the unknown and we started talking about this earlier of like we fear the things that we do not know, right? Because our human mind, of course, is built that way. It wants to know and wants to grasp and cling on to things. But, actually, the unknown, and this is

what my health collapse taught me, is like the unknown is so full of possibilities.

Layla: Yes.

Dr. Rocio: And so, for me, it's not scary anymore. Because I know that when I don't know something, it means that there's infinite possibilities available to us.

Layla: Yeah.

Dr. Rocio: And so that's what excites me about this moment in time. We can create so much new, like all the things that we know that are not working, we can change that and we can create better and we actually have some instructions. If we go back to pre-colonial times, our indigenous and African ancestors, they have the keys and it's us remembering that and calling them back to help us usher in the new world, that alchemy that we're going to create from all of this.

Layla: That is beautiful, especially, again, just in the times that we're in now, when there is like uncertainty is now the norm.

Dr. Rocio: Yes.

Layla: And I look at, I mean, I look at my mom and how she's, in her own way, trying to grasp on to a sense of what she knows is normal or what she can create a certainty and I want to be like, "Mom, we don't know how things are going to be in a few months from now," like there's very little point in making big plans, like concrete plans, because we actually don't know the state of the world in a few months from now. But it's — first of all, like we don't even know the full toll that this much uncertainty is putting on us and how it's going to play out over the coming years. But it also, on the flip side, is a space of possibility. There

are solutions, there are innovations, there's a sense of creativity that can come out of being —

Dr. Rocio: Yes.

Layla: — you know, where we're at right now and I find that very helpful as sort of a touchstone to return to, especially when I find myself sort of spiraling, thinking about COVID, thinking about the climate crisis, thinking about how is the world going to be for my children when they are my age, you know what I mean? Like all of those kind of thoughts can take you to a really, really scary place. And it's important to be real with what's going on but I think we've been talking a lot about like duality and sort of even like non-binary, right? Like the spectrum of things. And part of that, for me, is but what about hope? Where can we find hope in this moment? What possibilities are there? So I love what you said about that.

Dr. Rocio: Yeah. And it's interesting when this happened in 2020, you know, I sort of made a joke of like, well, we've been calling in the collapse and here it is —

Layla: Here it is, right.

Dr. Rocio: — we're like, oh, wait, it's here, you know, and now we don't know what to do.

Layla: Yeah.

Dr. Rocio: And so it does make me smile when I think of that because all of us that have been doing anti-oppressive work, we've really been calling this in. We've been calling in this time for these systems to begin to dismantle and we're seeing it —

Layla: Yeah.

Dr. Rocio: — and then remembering — I think what helps me is to remember like we're human and so, of course, there's going to be moments where we struggle with it —

Layla: Yeah.

Dr. Rocio: — but then coming back to, for me, spirit, like I deeply know that a better world is possible —

Layla: Yeah.

Dr. Rocio: — and that this is a part of it. You know, any mother that has had children, like birthing is not easy, birthing is painful, and this is the moment where we're at and there can be moments that are hard, absolutely, and also, we need to focus our energies on those possibilities, on the new, on the creation.

Layla: And I love that you're using the word "possible" as opposed to a new world is guaranteed, because it's not.

Dr. Rocio: Yes, yes.

Layla: Right? It's not guaranteed. Like we actually have to do the work, we actually have to do the dismantling, we actually have to do the visioning and the building of the new world. It's possible but it's not guaranteed. And —

Dr. Rocio: Yes.

Layla: — and I think about all of the loss that we've had, from this pandemic, all of the people's lives that have been lost, job loss, home loss, all of it, right? Mental health, everything, it's not a guarantee that we're going to get through this and get

back to a sense of normal, first of all, that we want to get back to a sense of what normal was before, right? And that this will naturally lead to a better world. Not necessarily —

Dr. Rocio: Yes.

Layla: — not necessarily and that's where doing the decolonial work, right? Which, for me, is about look at history, what has it taught us? Right? What do we know will happen if nothing changes, right? If nothing changes, nothing changes. But we can go, like you said, to pre-colonial and look at what are the tools, practices, wisdom that we can pull from that and bring into this time now to help us?

Dr. Rocio: Yes. This is the moment of decolonizing, of unearthing —

Layla: Yeah.

Dr. Rocio: — all of those icky things that we feel, all the things that we don't agree with, like it feels like a moment of sacred fire of like all the things that we disagree with and that are not serving us collectively, personally, it's time to throw them into the fire and create a new alchemy and you're absolutely right. This is a prophetic time. There's many indigenous lineages that have prophesied this time but it isn't guaranteed. We have to do the work. And so it starts with, I believe, with you unlearning it in yourself because it's people that uphold the systems.

Layla: That's right, it is. Right? The systems can change on paper but unless our psyche changes, unless our behaviors change, it stays the same. We just uphold it in different ways. It's so important to do the inner work.

Dr. Rocio: Yes.

Layla: Yeah. This is a powerful conversation. So we could definitely keep talking, but I wanna put this to a close here before I ask my very last question. So, we're talking about decolonization, decolonizing your mindset, doing the healing work, doing the inner work in the world that we're in right now. What are some tools or some ways of being that we're really being called to step into at this time so that we can meet that moment of possibility?

Dr. Rocio: What's coming up in this moment and what's been coming up is that I think most of us get, and I'm particularly speaking to folks of color, I think most of us are waking up, right? Our consciousness has opened to the ways that we've been indoctrinated, programmed, colonized. And we get — of healing and being free and sort of what I feel and what I've been hearing lately, our challenge is to not become so empowered that we become oppressive, because we almost — and, I mean, we see this, women, I want to say, in particular, women and femmes of color, like become empowered and we define empowerment in a capitalist way, of like, "I'm going to get all this money and I'm going to be successful" —

Layla: Right.

Dr. Rocio: — and then how does that success come? It comes from exploiting other people. It comes from exploiting the lands, right? Like —

Layla: Yeah.

Dr. Rocio: — we see so many businesses like clothing, you know, and like how is that clothing made and what is the impact on the people that make it and what is the impact on

the earth? And so I feel like a challenge in this moment is to really examine the way that you're doing your healing and your empowerment so that it's liberating to the collective and not oppressive to the collective.

Layla: So we talked about the importance of healing yourself, right? Doing the inner work, basically saving yourself, right? And it sounds like you're saying that's very, very important and it's also important that it doesn't go to such an extreme that it now is at the — you swing the pendulum the other way, right? Where you — whereas you started before, it was about others over self, you begin to put yourself first, take care of yourself, really nurture yourself, and now, oh, the pendulum is swinging and now it's becoming self at the expense of others.

Dr. Rocio: Yes.

Layla: Not even over others, because I still think it's important to say, "I have to take care of myself first" —

Dr. Rocio: Absolutely.

Layla: — but there's a difference in "I have to take care of myself first" versus "I'm going to take care of myself at the expense of others."

Dr. Rocio: Yes, I think that's so important and I think that's like a missing piece or what I want, you know, what they're telling me — when I say "they," my guides, my ancestors, of like that's the piece we also need to remember and this is part of, you know, the indigenous lineage and the prophecy that I work with, the Q'ero Inca lineage, is of like returning to the times of harmony and balance. And so when we, yes, caring for self but making sure that, like as you said, is not at the expense of others, does not exploit others, does not exploit the land —

Layla: Yeah.

Dr. Rocio: — do not become so empowered that then you oppress other people, right? And knowing that your wellness actually, and this is what we're learning in COVID times —

Layla: Yes.

Dr. Rocio: — your wellness is deeply connected to the wellness of others.

Layla: That's right. Yeah. There's no way for you to get well, right? And it only be you, right? If others are unwell, we are all exposed. And we're seeing that even with the vaccines, right? That it's — you can still be a carrier, you can still get sick, right? Like it's not a guarantee. So many big lessons in that in and of itself. But, yeah, I hear what you're saying. How can we track for that within ourselves? Like how do we know we've swung the pendulum too far? Or what are some things that we can put in place to check us, right? So we don't go there, yeah.

Dr. Rocio: That's such a good question. I love this conversation. And I also want to say like our wellness is connected to the wellness of others and also the wellness of our planet, right? Mother Earth. I mean, this is what the research and science is telling us of why we're even in a pandemic is because Earth is — we've so exploited it and so all the things that have been in place for a virus to not be out of control, like all of that is almost disappearing. And so, for — what some of the sort of things to keep in place for me is like the integrity piece, like integrity and alignment. And so if we're saying that we want to do anti-oppressive work, that we want to do decolonizing work, to be in integrity with that, to be in alignment with that means that we also have to include other people, that our success

needs to take care of others and this is also the unlearning. I want to say this is the hardest piece, like the capitalism piece —

Layla: Yeah.

Dr. Rocio: — is the hardest piece for people to unlearn, especially for folks of color, because now, you know, it's almost like you feel like you're telling me I can't make money here, like I got the promise of being a millionaire and now, you know, maybe I can't be a millionaire? And those are all things that we've learned from colonization of like excess, right? And so how can I take what I need, right? And maybe a little bit more than I need, some things that I want, but when is enough enough?

Layla: Right.

Dr. Rocio: And that's the balance and harmony piece. So that other people can have. The people that are without —

Layla: Yeah.

Dr. Rocio: — I can share my resources. And, for me, that's returning to indigenous ways, pre-colonial times, of sharing our resources, of not being so individualistic.

Layla: I think community is also really important as well, right? Like — especially having trusted people around you telling you you're actually out of integrity right now, with the values that I know you to have, I found that to be really important.

Dr. Rocio: Absolutely.

Layla: But it's — yeah, it's getting feedback from people you know and trust, who have your best interests at heart and want to see you be the you that you say you want to be.

Dr. Rocio: Yes, and the community and also I want to say that care about you but also care about the same vision, care about those same values —

Layla: Yeah.

Dr. Rocio: — because sometimes, it does take hard conversations to ensure that you are in integrity and so that they have the same commitment to that vision and to those values.

Layla: Yeah. Beautiful. Well, this has been an amazing conversation and it's been so rich in exploring just where we're at right now, right? Like the world that we have right now, why we have it and what are the ways that we are being called to step up as ancestors as well as the — like I can feel like the support that we have of our ancestors as well. So, thank you for bringing that into this conversation, because, like you said, we're in very uncertain times, scary times, even, and it can feel like we are alone and we're not. And that's very important to remember. So thank you for bringing that here.

Dr. Rocio: Yeah. Just thank you for birthing that with me and co-weaving and, yeah, I think what I also want to say is for folks, when you feel lonely, in those moments where it does feel hopeless, it is calling in on the spirits of the highest light, calling in on your healed ancestors, even if you don't know their name —

Layla: Yeah.

Dr. Rocio: — calling them in so that you can feel that support, grounding and connecting with Mother Earth, because then you feel the energy and you know that you are not alone. You're a part of such a prophetic historical moment in time and then you begin to feel the possibilities because you're not just in the earthly realm, you're connecting to beings beyond this realm.

Layla: Yeah. That's powerful. Thank you. Okay. So, our final question, what does it mean to you to be a good ancestor?

Dr. Rocio: Means living in a way that is not just good for me and us in this time, but that is good for future generations. That gives them a promise and real, tangible ways that ensures that they will be well and that they can be free and that they can be whole.

Layla: That's beautiful. Thank you.

Dr. Rocio: Thank you, Layla. Thank you for your work. Thank you for your spirit. Thank you for your vision and all the things that you offer to us.

Layla: Thank you.

(Outro)

This is Layla Saad and you've been listening to Good Ancestor Podcast. I hope this episode has helped you find deeper answers on what being a good ancestor means to you. We'd love to have you join the Good Ancestor Podcast family over on Patreon where subscribers get early access to new episodes, Patreon-only content and discussions, and special bonuses. Join us now at [Patreon.com/GoodAncestorPodcast](https://Patreon.com/GoodAncestorPodcast). Thank you for listening and thank you for being a Good Ancestor.