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Oral Histories of Pacific Islanders in Utah: Rape Culture and Sexual Violence

Narrator: **Moana

Hello my name is Moala and I am an undergraduate researcher and scholar at the University of Utah. Thank you for willing to be a part of my project. My project is about sexual and gender based violence within the Pacific Island community. I would like to understand how this type of violence affects the people and the culture in Pacific Island communities and vice versa. I would like to understand how it is handled and why it is handled that way through oral histories. Do you have any questions?

Not yet

Q: Can you tell us your name and pronouns? Just a little introduction of yourself

A: Perfect. My name is Moana, I use she/they, any pronouns are honestly fine with me. I will say and I felt like it was important for me to say this. I personally have never had any experiences with sexual violence or anything having to do with rape. However, I do know many women who have felt comfortable sharing their experiences with rape culture and sexual violence also I got my degree in sociology so theres a lot of conversations that I've had to go through women gender studies and what not so I'm very excited to talk about this topic for sure.

Q: Yay! So the first question is really simple. Tell me about your family and where you live, and where in the Pacific Islands is your family from?

A: I am Tongan Samoan... My mom is Tongan my dad is Samoan. My mom is actually an immigrant. She came straight from Tonga at the age of nine and then has lived here ever since. My dad was born and raised her in Salt Lake City, so he has never left Utah

and yeah that's kinda my background. I will say I have always grown up on the east side. I have never in West valley I've never really lived anywhere near the Pacific Island communities but that never prevented my parents from like making us connected to the culture because we were always doing family things or always culture things growing up and so even though I didn't have any like close proximity as far as like Polynesian friends growing up, I still was heavily connected to the community in some way. So I played volleyball and I played volleyball with all the Polynesian teams. And a lot of the friends I had to make were typically at events and what not so. But I will say I didn't really get like close Polynesian friends until I was in college and I went to Utah State. So even at Utah State the community was not very large, however... I met my first community like people out at Utah State and that was also kind of like where I started to interact more with the Pacific Islander community in a more personal level without my parents like in the background so that was really big for me. And then obviously like working here at Mana Academy this has been the closest as far as being around Pacific Islanders I have been in the past three years, so yeah that's a little bit about me.

Q: Okay so, we're just gonna start off with taboo. What do you think is a taboo or subject topic for Tongan/Pacific Islander families to talk about? Something that's hard for them to talk about?

A: Yeah so I mean obviously since your thing is on rape culture and sexual violence I would absolutely say that is a taboo topic. I would also say though, because I was thinking about this last night, LGBTQ issues talking about being gay is definitely a really taboo topic and I think that there is like an intersection between the two, which I think is really interesting cause I was thinking a lot about the conversations that the Polynesian

girls that I hung out with up at Utah State would have and there was a lot of obviously there was like a sense of being shush - shush about like sexual violence, but also there was also this weird connection of like predators and perpetrators being gay. Which is something that I heard of growing up, but until I actually had those conversations with some Polynesian girls that I was like, "Ohh" that was really interesting so I would say that those are two really taboo topics that come off the top of my dome.

Q: Why do you think these [topics] are hard for us, Pacific Islanders to talk about? (What makes them taboo for us?)

A: Well, a lot of it just has to do with the fact that like we are talking about sex, which I guess in its own, without even talking about sexual violence, sex in itself is not really talked about. It's considered almost disrespectful I feel to talk about sex, so I feel like that's one component of it is that... nobody wants to talk about sex, but specifically talking about like rape cause that's not consensual right. So if there's already the baseline that we're not going to talk about sex period, of course there isn't going to any conversation about like what is consensual sex and what is not. So I feel like that's one part of it. But also I feel like another really big part of it is religion, because our people are very religious and the belief is that through God we can get through anything so if you just pray that these things won't happen, they won't happen or if they do happen to you just pray and it'll somehow erase everything that happened to you. I think though what I find really interesting and I feel like you would probably know what I am talking about here too is the fact that the community acknowledges it. People in the families they know, they know who these perpetrators are. They just don't say anything about it.

“Yup, I know Uncle Sione was doing that, but you know what we just prayed about it and we just forgave him and it’s, it’s over.”

You know what I mean, it’s so crazy how everybody acknowledges it but we, nobody wants to say anything under the skies of being disrespectful or it’s gross. Of course it’s gross like of course, the topic is disgusting. Umm sorry I went off a little bit on that, but I have always found that to be really interesting how everybody knows who the perpetrators are, but it has become this like, “okay we all know and it’s okay that you know, now that you know but just like don’t say anything about it cause it’s gonna be disrespectful and it’ll bring a lot of shame on to the family.”

Which obviously family is really important to Pacific Islanders so you don’t wanna put shame on your family, but I think that that conversation needs to shift to it’s not a familial issue, it’s that person’s issue who just so happens to be a part of the family, you know what I mean. Unless, you know all of you... are complicit and then in which case like yikes. Which in some ways, in some families I’ve heard that there is a sense of being complicit because they know that it’s happening and they’ve allowed it to happen and they don’t say anything. Then that becomes like a,

“hmm maybe it is like a family problem and maybe there should be shame associated with that.”

I’m sorry I’m speaking in circles.

Q: You’re good, you’re kinda answering a lot of my questions. What are some of the responses you have witnessed, we kinda talked about this already, when discussing these taboo subjects? How do they act and react?

A: Gotchu, gotchu. So at least with the victims I have talked to, as far as like emotions, the trauma is deep and the unfortunate part to me is that a lot of them are very young. And for some of them it was like, had been ongoing up until the day that I had met them. And so I think that that is the saddest part is knowing that for a lot of them they had been repeatedly abused in their home, outside of their home, from a really young age, and seeing how that affected their daily lives. Because like obviously if you have trauma in your life your not at every moment like “Uahh - uhh” that’s not what is was, what is was, was watching a lot of these women like am I allowed to swear

Interviewer: Mmm yeah

Narrator: Okay I was like, I’ll refrain, I’ll try not to but like for a lot of these women like they would purposely sabotage healthy relationships because they felt like, “I’m a dirty individual you know because of what happened to me. I don’t deserve happiness,” and that was what was really hard to observe is to watch all of these women that I knew who were very deserving of love, like because of what happened to them they would purposely sabotage things in their life. I recall one night I had a girl who was like when she would get really really drunk she would cry. Like deep sobs coming from the heart and we would just sit with each other and I just be hugging and just being like you know, “you’re gonna get through this.” but like it’s hard to say that when you’re so deeply traumatized. I’m surprised she didn’t look at me and be like “Bitch, shut up like no.” But that’s what I mean, for some of these women their everyday life you would have never guessed until like they were intoxicated in some capacity or you just watch and observe the movements that they would make. It was like they would purposely sabotage their healthy relationships, they would openly like talk about how awful, very self degrading

about themselves. I knew one of the girls she was in a relationship and it was really hard for her to, like when she would talk about them having sex like she would tell me certain things that I would be like, man this is like a trauma response. The reason why you feel like you can't do these certain things when you guys are being intimate to each other is because of trauma, you know. And that's sad, knowing that for some of these women they couldn't ever really be intimate with people that they love because of the trauma that they went through in the past. That's what always made me really sad. Sorry I kinda lost track of where I went there as well. But the observations that I've made just based on the women that I've known that have shared their stories with me, it's always just really, like their survivors a hundred percent through. But for some of them, you could really see the cracks and that made me really sad. I knew a girl actually who didn't even, it wasn't until her and I were talking that she said something had happened to her and she shared it with me. Sorry I'm tryna like step around the story cause I don't wanna inadvertently talk about, like out her and her story. But when the two of us were talking, and this is something that I have actually been thinking about a lot because I kind of regret, I kinda regret what I said but I'll come back to that. Anyways she was telling me what was happening and I told her I was like, "Hey ... this doesn't sound very consensual. You know like what happened doesn't sound very... what happened to you doesn't sound like you really consented to that." I just remember she kinda went really quiet and then she just moved on and the reason why I say I kinda regret doing that to her is because... I feel like there are many women who have very similar stories to her and when they find that hey, what happened to you was not okay. I feel like it causes them to spiral because it becomes like they are now aware. You know what I mean?

Interviewer: kinda awake from

Yeah, from what happened. Because that's the other thing I will say about some of the Polynesian girls I knew, they would joke. They would joke about the things that would happen to them and I would be like ... I'm sorry I can't kikiki [laugh] over that. I can't laugh at that, you know what I mean. That is not like woah , and a lot of it again goes back to the whole cycle of abuse. A lot of them because of what happened in their past would choose relationships with some people that kinda emulated the past. And so when you call it out for them, and I obviously I wasn't like, "You've been abused!" No it wasn't like that, it was always very intimate settings with me and other people, very quietly just being like, " Hey that doesn't sound very consensual and I think you should seek help from that." In many ways I kinda regretted doing that for some women, because you could see on their face like they had never thought about that, like that fact that that wasn't consensual which kinda goes all the way back to my earlier comment about sex is never talked about in Pacific Islander communities, so of course if you don't know what is consensual and what is not, then of course you're gonna be like cool with whatever and, "Oh I that was kinda weird and I didn't like that experience but everybody else must go through that you know." That's not the case and that's not true a lot of the time. But as far as observations about Pacific Islanders who have talked about the issue of rape and sexual violence. It's always the same conversation. Hush - hushed. I know of so many survivors who will say something like, "Everybody in my family knew but nobody did anything." The amount of time I've heard that in community settings, of people being like, "People knew it was my uncle and they didn't say anything." Like, I've heard that a lot. I've heard that a lot, which is why I brought that up earlier because typically when

these conversations are brought up, that's usually what it becomes, and then it becomes a trauma dumping fest where they air out ALL the dirty laundry. And that's fine I don't mind people, and I don't even consider it dirty laundry, to out the people who have abused you. I want to make that very clear, but I will say... my biggest issue with community gatherings where we talk about sexual violence and people going and talking about every little thing that happened to them, there are other in the room who you could easily be triggering as well. But I feel like, because we don't talk about sexual violence in the Pacific Islander community that's the way that we all believe is the best way to talk about it, is to just trauma dump on everybody and be like, "Okay I said my peace, I said my truth." Which we're gonna talk about Eleni here in a little bit, but I kinda feel like that's what happened with her story. Is it became this space and vacuum for everyone to be like, this also happened to me and dadaddadadda, but then what happens at the end. We're all just traumatized, we've all just heard what's happening but what, where do we move? Where's the next movement other than, okay we're all traumatized cool. You know and then of course these conversations always eventually lead to, "Well, I prayed and forgave them and God forgave them as well so we're cool."

..... my personal opinion, that's not the move. That's not the move and that's not productive in my opinion because I feel like that's just another way of sweeping everything underneath the rug. By saying "Well God forgave them and then I prayed to God and it was cool and we had a kumbaya moment and I'll never talk to that person ever again, but I'm cool now because God is cool that's just sweeping right back underneath the rug. Because there one - there's something said about victims saying their peace, but there is, there has to be another part for the abuser. And this gets into one of my most

controversial opinions because... I believe in restorative justice, which basically means that people who are abusers, there is redemption qualities in them. I truly do believe that and so restorative justice is all about, making sure that those who are the abuser, get the help that they need in order to reintegrate into society. Does that mean that the people that they abused, have to talk to them again? No. Does that mean that the people who were abused have to forgive those people? No. But I believe that if we continue this culture of ... So restorative justice is one of my most controversial opinions because I know - when I first came across restorative justice in sociology and criminology, there were a lot of people who were like, "Well then are you saying that we have to forgive all of our abusers or that you know abusers should get redemption?" And yes I'm saying that abusers should get redemption, but I'm not saying that people should forgive them for their actions. However, I do think that when we label people, I believe heavily in label theory, but when you label people as abusers and what not, you don't allow them to reintegrate properly. If we want a society where shame no longer exists or people are allowed to grow, one of those things is requiring people who have done criminal time ... redemption arc unfortunately and so sorry I But anyways coming back to talking about people who have sexually assaulted other people. I'm not saying that their victims have to forgive them, their abusers. But I am saying that there is some redemption... there should be... part of the plan for change in my opinion needs to come with victims getting the help that they need and the therapy that they need, but also these people who are perpetrators also need help. And labeling them as rapist and what not, which you know that's a title that they deserve, they did, they raped a person but, unfourtunately one aspect of change and healing is allowing those people to get a redepmtion arc. The

unfortunate part about all of that though, is therapy can only get you so far. And some people are beyond redemption, I will say that. There are some people who are beyond redemption, but if there is one thing I have observed from the Pacific Island community, sorry going back to this, is that a lot of the people who are abusers and perpetrators were at some point abused and sexually abused themselves.

Interviewer: And the cycle continues

It's an endless cycle so if you wanna end that cycle, there has to be, you can't just pray to God and say okay we're cool. Again, it comes back to restorative justice, both parties need help. And unfortunately I wouldn't even say that victims get help, because they don't. When victims come forward they are oftentimes, as we talked about earlier, shut back into the closet. "Keep your mouth shut, don't talk about uncle like that." You know I'm referencing men, but there are even you know some of the women that I knew back up in college were victims of sexual abuse from women as well. So I would even say that yes the topic of sexual violence is taboo, but even like again another aspect of it being that there women perpetrators as well... This is just a really long roundabout of me saying that I believe in restorative justice and that in order to move forward in a healthy way for the community it would be to acknowledge that these happen without saying we just need to shove it back into the closet and true acknowledgment of it. But then also getting help for victims and getting help for perpetrators in order to break the cycle of abuse. I know there's a lot of people who don't agree with me on that and that's okay, you know that's fine. I get that and it's really easy for me to sit here and say this because I'm an observer. Again, I've never these things happen to me so of course it's easy for to say this is what the path should be when I haven't really experiences it, but I truly do believe

just based on the research that I did when I was in college, I truly believe that that's one way to seek proper justice is that every party involved gets the help that they need. But again, it sounds like when I say that victims are the only ones getting help, they're not even getting help period, currently. So, we need to help victims first is ultimately where that begins and then move onto the perpetrators. Anyway that's all I wanted to say.

Q: We're basically already in the third little section of rape culture and sexual violence and I'm sure you already know the term rape culture and are familiar with all of that. You kinda already culture as well but, do you think rape culture has affected Tongan, Samoan, Pacific Islander cultural practices? Has it affected our beliefs and morals as Pacific Islanders?

A: So you know what's really interesting, because I had a dilemma about this last night I had to stop thinking about because I was like - aaahhh, brain overload! So what's interesting to me, and this something that I'm still tryna wrap my head around because I'm like where does this come from, so I might be stumbling through my thought process but I've been doing that this whole time. There are a lot of Pacific Islanders, and not to put my family on blast but my Samoan family especially is very much like this, who believe that abuse is synonymous with the culture. Who believe that abuse is just inherently a part of the culture. I have many problems with that, but unfortunately, unfortunate reality is that there are many Pacific Islands out there who believe that abuse is a part of the culture. Especially with Fa'a Samoa, there's a lot of people who are like, "well, the Fa'a Samoa way is to be abusive." And I hate to tell y'all this, I hate to tell y'all this, I hate to be bearer of bad news, but that's just not true. Like I refuse to believe that my ancestors utilize these cultural practices to abuse each other. What the difference is, what the change was everyone, is colonization and the introduction of religion,

ultimately. Because, you - and I'm not saying - cause everytime I say this there's always some idiot who's always like, "well, are you saying that your ancestors were pure and they didn't hurt each other at all?" No. I'm not saying that at all, literally I'm not saying that. I'm not saying that my ancestors were perfect human beings. However, with the introduction of religion came shame and shame can make a whole culture - especially shame and colonization because they work hand-n-hand with one another, they can change and mold your culture into all types of ways. So when it comes to you know sexual abuse, earlier I talked about you know one of the reasons why we don't talk about because there's no talk about sex. The reason why we don't talk about sex is because of religion. Because I mean the large majority of Pacific Islanders, Tongans, Samoans are mormon. I grew up mormon, but let me tell you talking about sex in a mormon setting, no. The one thing that always blew my mind was that we never learned about sex, you never talked about sex, but then you get married and suddenly have to have sex in order to have kids. How are you supposed to have sex when you've never talked about it? You know what I mean, like what are we doing? And so of course.. there's going to be shame associated when you start to tell these savages that, "hey, you can't just have sex whenever you want. It's only for God and God only. Especially you dirty savages, you guys can't have sex with each other." It's basically like you guys are animals having sex with one another. So of course if your people hear this year after generation, after generation, of course there's going to be some sense of like quiet hush-hush about sex, which then leads to being quiet and hush-hush about sexual violence. Which then leads into the problematic belief that abuse is synonymous with the culture, because religion changed a lot of the cultural practices. Something me and my friends talk a lot about is in

Samoan culture, and even Tongan culture if you really think about it, like everything is connected to God. Like what we can do for God. You know and so of course, sorry I'm branching out a little bit more here, but because religion is so heavily integrated into our culture, people start to believe religion is associated with culture, and people who hate religion obviously people that, abuse and religion are together and of course it's gonna affect the culture and that's why I want to be my own person and not a Pacific Islander. And it's like, that's literally not how it works. We had a whole culture, indigenous culture and belief before those damn missionaries came. And our people were not perfect I'm not saying that they weren't, but with the introduction of religious colonization and the generations that that has span to today, of course there is going to be a lot lost in translation, a lot of shifting the culture in order to mold into white culture, which is inherently violent and abusive and so.. I think that this idea that sexual violence is a part of the culture is just very misguided. It's a misunderstanding that stems from colonization and it makes me sad because the people that typically say that the culture is abusive, are the ones who struggle with their identity the most. Sorry, this is going into talking about identity, but they are the ones who struggle with identity, and that's a whole other conversation but also I will say that my cousins and what not who confuse abuse with the culture, that is not coming from a place that is invalid... I mean it is invalid to think that way cause it's not true, but also it's informed, the reason why they believe that in the first place is because their parents or their grandparents have utilized the culture to be abusive. Those two things have always been hand-n-hand, and they've just passed that down through generations. So when my cousins and stuff talk about like, "well, Pacific Islanders are just inherently violent." I'm like, schht (sucking teeth) no it's not it's that

your grandpa was inherently violent to your dad. And your dad thought it was okay to be inherently violent to you. That's where the cycle comes from. That doesn't really answer, I don't know that really connects to talking about sexual violence... anyways essentially culture has been transformed, the culture has been transformed into one that can be perceived to be abusive due to colonization. And this myth that culture and abuse are the same thing, is just wrong. But, people are informed by the generational violence so of course they're gonna believe that that's the truth. But it's just not and unfortunately our cultures have become so silent about ourselves that it's to believe what is true and what is not, and what is the old ways and what not. And that's not to say that all the old ways are the best ways, I'm not saying that either. Anyways sorry. I don't know if any of that made sense but yeah.

Q: This question is kind of off subject in a way, but what are your thoughts/feelings about the treatment of PI women when it comes to their sexuality?

A: Period! Okay, I have so many thoughts, I'm gonna condense this. Sorry I talk so much, and I'm like the worst person to interview because I talk and talk and talk and then you have to go back and listen to this. I'm sorry so, I want to touch on this thing called compulsory heterosexuality, have you ever heard of that?

Interviewer: *No*

Narrator: So this changed my life when I was in college. So compulsory heterosexuality is in reference to when women, both Pacific Islander and not - any one who identifies or has been raised as a women. Basically they are conditioned to believe that the only thing they can be heterosexual. That's what compulsory heterosexuality is. So in a sense, it makes it so that sexuality is a choice, because compulsory heterosexuality basically, the

theory is that women are choosing to be heterosexual because that's the only option they are given from birth. Right? And that changed my life because, when you start to read in depth in the theory, they talk about the ways that women you know you're always going to be, from a young age when you're a baby. You have a girl baby and a boy baby everyone's like, "oh my gosh they're ends, and they're gonna be so cute together when they're older." Then they grow up into toddlers, "oh my gosh look at Moana she's playing with Sione, oh my gosh the two of them are so cute together, maybe they'll grow up and get married one day." You get even older than that and then you start playing with toys and stuff, "oh Moana, she wants to play with the barbies and let's get her like Ken dolls so that there can only be a boy - a man and a woman together." And so even getting, as you get older and older like every turn, women are only given the option of men and that's not even talking about marriage. Obviously there's this whole marriage component of like you have to marry a man. The other component of that is, women are only pointed in the direction of talking, women are always pointed in the direction of always being with a man. And so because of that, there are many women who have convinced themselves due to being conditioned, socialized if you will, to only choose men, right. And so that changed my life because I started to recognize like, "Yeah do I even, I don't even like this guy!" And it's not the fact that I don't like men. I just started to realize like, man it's so true cause oftentimes you are pushed to only like men. And so because of that you don't really think about it because it's something that you're socialized about you know. And so it becomes this whole thing where it's like... for me at least as far as like identifying, and like stumbling a long as far as sexuality goes, for me it was like, "oh I just realized I like men, but a lot of yall annoy the fuck outta me. A lot of yall annoy me!"

And it's like I don't ever want to be in a relationship with you. It's not just one man, it's multiple, it's more than one. Oh I'm starting to realize like it's all men. You know what I mean, like it's almost every single dude I come across. I mean that was for me, but when I started to realize that, I started to also realize it amongst the women around me. Because I was like,

“look girl, I don't even think you like men.” You know what I mean, like I don't think you like men, period. But because you feel like, and this going back to the whole entire talking about LGBT things, because there's such a huge stigma around, polynesian women dating other men and just being gay in general, of course you're not gonna view being gay as an option. Does that make sense? So I feel like there are many women who fit into compulsory heterosexuality. They feel like, “I have to be a man because that's all I've ever been taught and also ew I don't wanna be gay.” Which is straight up homophobia, that's straight up homophobia. But of course if you have been conditioned to believe that, you're just gonna view it as like, “No it's just you know, a preference to not like women.” But also ma'am you don't like men. So like... and I know you're like trying to convince yourself that you like men, but I'm here to tell you. Everything that you have done, says otherwise. You know what I mean. I feel like women as a whole, especially Polynesian women because there is a deep deep rooted homophobia, which also stems from religion, fun fact. But because there's such deep homphobia, many women don't even view being gay as an option. So in many ways their sexuality is a choose in a sense that they're like, “well, you I'm supposed to end up with a man and man can provide for me so that's what I'm gonna do.” But sorry, it's not you know you gotta unpack that a little bit. And I'm not saying that, here's the one thing I want to make

clear. I'm not saying that every single polynesian women is secretly gay, I'm not saying that. I'm not even saying that every single women in the world is secretly gay or that they're secretly bisexual. What I'm saying is though, is that there are many women who just haven't even thought about their sexuality other than the socialization of being straight and that's a problem. That's all, that's all I'm going to say about exploring sexuality. Like there's just no option to do that, due to deep rooted homophobia and choosing a man out of socialization. Wow I should've just summed up that way.

Q: It's fine, thank you. Okay so now the subject that we are all excited to talk about. Elenei 'Iongi and her story. So you've told me that you're familiar with her and her story. Did you watch her live?

A: So I watched... was it an hour long live?

Interviewer: *Yeah*

A: I think I only watched like thirty minutes. I think I like skimmed through it. I listened to the whole beginning part, but then after when she started to like to go... go into detail I was like, "oo girl like. Woah pump the brakes for a second," and especially I don't know. I know this sounds very judgmental and I mean I acknowledge that it is but her dropping the N - word every five seconds in that live just left a really bad taste in mouth. And I know that there will be people that will say, "why you so focused on the language that she's using when she's talking about being abused?" I can do both. I can be critical of the language she's using and also you know listen to her story. But that ultimately for me I was like, "girl... there's a better way you could've done this." But anyways, sorry

continue, yes so I've watched it. I think I watched like thirty minutes of it, thirty to forty-five minutes maybe, I can't remember.

Interviewer: Okay, you can just continue because the next question is what are your thoughts? What are your thoughts on her... like how she went about sharing her experience and sparking up these conversations. I mean, some people even said like she kinds challenged Tongan culture in some cases, and some people argue that she challenged rape culture within Tongan culture. So yeah just go ahead, and continue.

Narrator: Okay, you know what's so crazy...

Q: Oh sorry this is one more part. And then do you think instagram live was the best way to go about this? Or Should we continue to use instagram live or whatever..

A: Okay okay, you know what's so crazy okay.. I'm not necessarily gonna comment how she went about how she went about talking about her story, because I think that instagram has its place. Instagram is a great tool to bring awareness to things and people are on the gram so people were gonna see that. Especially Polynesians here in Utah, they were gonna see that. So you know she used instagram live, other people have used other forms you know like facebook, I've seen people talk about things on Facebook too. You know however, you want to get your story out is fine. The one thing I have though, that I kinda talked on earlier is, nothing really came about. Nothing... like there were some things that came about. People talked about it, you know it was a trending topic for a little bit. And I'm not saying that you know, she shouldn't have used instagram. I mean I can't say that I would do any differently, but what I will say is... Oh yeah she had that other live too with her friend right? Or was it her sister?

Interviewer: *I'm... I think it was her friend.*

Narrator: Okay I was like her friend or whatever, and then her friend also got up there and was like talking and what not... man I'm tryna think back to that whole moment cause I did a whole instagrams story on that.

Interview: Oh yeah?

Narrator: I did, I remember and even Betsy had like reached out to me about it because she knew the girl. And she, Betsy, had reached out to me about it when I had talked about it on my instagram story. But the point I had made in my Instagram story, I wonder if I still have it, but basically the point that I had made or was talking about was the fact that ...oh my gosh I lost my train of thought.... Woo

Interviewer: *it was using instagram live and then...*

Wow I totally wow I was thinking about something and then something clashed with that anyways, doesn't matter. Ultimately what I had thought about the live was, I was glad she was able to get her story out. However, I felt like nothing productive came from that conversation and that is how I always feel when we have these community conversations is ... somebody goes on facebook, somebody goes on instagram, they talk about whatever and then everybody talks about it, they do podcast, like I remember like I remember so many people doing podcasts about that and I was like, "okay?" And then I remember her friend got up on instagram and had told her story and that almost felt like watching trauma porn. Which is like whole other thing, yeah actually I'm remembering now.. um it was like a trauma porn fest because you had Eleni who got up and talked about it and that's great, but then you her friend come up and talk about it, and then you had all these other people who are like coming out of the woodworks. Again I'm not

against sharing your story... but what was the end goal? Nothing happened, like we all talked about for like a month and then everybody forgot clearly because I couldn't even remember her name when I saw it. You know what I mean when I saw it, I was like, "oh yeah, like that girl." But that's what I mean, when we have these big conversations in the community everybody suddenly has something to say and then it all kinda settles down in the dust. And then we go back to the whole entire, Don't talk about it, let's just keep it under wraps and then there's another community explosion because somebody has something to say and then it all kinda dies down again. It's very reminiscent of what happened with the shooting at Hunter. Like the dust is slowly settling and everybody is slowly just kind like,

Interviewer: Going back

Yeah like, "oh that was a really sad moment and oh we'll never have it happen again." It's gonna happen again in like three four years and then we're gonna be back here again like, "what are we gonna do? What's gonna be done?" And it's like didn't we just have this conversation. It's the same convo over and over again. So while I think it's great that she was able to get out her story, the one part that's missing for me was where do we move from here? And also I had heard a story about someone who had reached out to her to ask, "would you like to receive some therapy, some service to get through this situation?" And her response was, "oh I prayed to God and I'm okay now. Me and God are on good terms and that's all that matters." And like I said earlier, I'm sorry but that's just not the move. Maybe for you it is, but for all these victims who came forward, it kinda sounds like it wasn't the move cause they're still thinking about what happened to them. You know, and that's not to say that getting therapy and seeking help your suddenly magically

healed and you don't think about it anymore, but when you have unresolved trauma it makes life a lot harder it makes life a lot harder is what I would say. Because just reading about all these other stories that like came out from different women who went through similar experiences, I was like the one thing that connected a lot of them was God. And then talking about, "God forgave that person." Girl God doesn't need to forgive that person. You know God is not the one that forgives your abuser, it's you. And if you don't forgive your abuser, you don't have to. If God tells you, "forgive your abuser," you don't have to. You know what I mean, anyways, sorry another rant on its own. I had heard that that had happened with her and these are all like, I trust the source that told me these stories. There's a lot of he said she said type of things goin on. I just know that Eleni had said that you know, "I don't help, anymore. I had prayed to God and I'm good now." And then it was kinda like, then what was the point? You know like if you had settled it with God then why would you get on Instagram live?. There's a, I don't know, I'm kinda contradicting myself in many ways, but yeah I ... I just remember when it had all dropped my biggest complaint had been like the language that was being used. And I know that there were people in those comment section because I read the comments and people were just like, "girl I feel bad for you, but what is this language we are using?" And then people being like, "why you so focused on the language?" Because the language was like, what are we doing? You can talk about your sexual violence story and not be anti-black. But anti-blackness in the polynesian community is a whole other conversation, so we're not even gonna go there, But do I think that those dudes deserved to be put on blast? Absolutely. I'm glad that she named them, I thought that that was great when she named em. I thought that was very empowering to be able to say, "no it

was these dudes that did this to us.” I think that that’s great. I’m all for victim naming and shaming their, I guess this kinda goes contradictory to what I was talking about with restorative justice, but I do think it’s great when victims are able to find empowerment in being able to name the people that abused them. But also what happened to those dudes? Like.. I remember that there was a facebook post about one of the guys, about one of them. And I just remember that his family was like, “this girl’s a liar... dadadada.” And that’s the other thing too about Poly families, they have so much pride about what their family looks like, they will defend these abusers until they’re black and blue like brother. Nobody’s asking you to do that. I understand this is your son, this is uncle, this is your nephew, whatever. But Instead of maintaining that your son is innocent and he would never, he’s a return missionary, he’s a good kid. Maybe the wave, maybe the move should be, “we acknowledge that our son has something wrong you know and we’re looking to help him through this time.” I did think that the family’s response, one of the families responses was weird because it was like, “our son would never. He’s a return missionary.” And it was like, what does that have to do with anything? You know what I mean, again it all goes back to religion like these people are religious and they don’t want to look bad in the eyes of others... anyways. That’s what I thought about the instagram live. If I find the post that I made on it I’ll let you know...

Interviewer: *yeah*

Narrator: cause I totally forgot what I had said that night when I had seen it, cause Alai was actually the one who had posted it on her instagram story and that’s how I saw it. But I did not repost it on my story because I was like, well first of all I don’t know many

Pacific Islanders like that but also two, the anti-blackness really left a bad taste in my mouth but anyways.

Q: And just for the record, I'm not tryna like shame Eleni or try to criticize her... her way of going about her trauma. I'm just tryna talk about how the community reacted and what your reactions were and things like that. But you kinda said Betsy reached out to you and then you said you saw Alai. So what were their reactions if you saw their reaction or other Pacific Islanders to her story or just any sexual violence story?

A: Yeah Betsy had reached out to me because she, and this was during the pandemic right? She reached out to me because she was like, "I know that girl personally." I think she's related to Eleni if I recall correctly and she just messaged me and she was just saying, "I've been up all night. I'm so sick like I'm actually physically sick over this because I know this girl and I just feel so awful for her." And that's really all Betsy had said to me but I had talked to 'Anapesi about it and I know that Richard had some opinions on it, I don't remember what Richard had said. I just remembered that 'Anapesi had talked about ... what I had told you about that person who had reached out to Eleni. That was 'Anapesi's friends in the community who had reached out to her. So that's was where that story came from, is from 'Anapesi's mouth directly. Her friends who worked in mental health services had reached out to Eleni and that was her response was, "I'm okay cause I prayed to God and God got me." That was just a really, that was an observation that 'Anapesi had made she was like you that's sad that there doesn't seem to be, you know she doesn't think she needs help. Clearly, you just went through something very traumatic, you should get help. And then Alai, Alai... I remember Alai had said

something about it, but I think Alai's response had been more about like sexual abuse is not okay and we know many perpetrators in the community. Just like standing in support of Eleni and Elena's story and believe it victims. So that's all I really remember. What I really remember was the fricken comment section cause the comment section was nuts. You had people in there who were really supportive of Eleni, which I anticipated. But you also had a ton of people, which weirdly enough a lot of them straight from Tonga living on the island in her instagram being like, talking bad about her and her family. Which I thought was interesting cause it's like, you're in Tonga! What are you doing? You know and obviously it goes back to whole entire having pride in your family, so I assume that all these people who were coming in and being like, and saying things about Eleni I was like you guys must be related to the dudes that she outed. But also if there's one thing I know about Pacific Islanders or Tongans in particular, is that they view women who, whether or not it's consensual sex or not, they view them as like sluts. So a lot of the comments I was like I don't even know if y'all are related. I bet you anything you just view this girl as a slut, because she was willing to talk about what was happening. You know what I mean? So It was.. I wasn't surprised about a lot of the comments, but I will say I thought it was heartwarming that there were many comments who were.... like very supportive of her. The thing though, putting on my sociology brain in here, all I could think was though is, or one of the things I was thinking was Eleni is very pretty. Would this community outrage, community conversation had been the same had eleni been ugly, or even dark? Dark skinned.

Interviewer: *Cause even the other girl was fair skin*

Narrator: And so cause I know some of the darkest and some of the more, people would consider them to be ugly in our community, they are the ones with very traumatizing stories, but have had to really push it because nobody, “nobody” wants to hear it. You’re to ugly to have had this happen to you, you know type of situation. So while I thought it was great that Eleni was able to get her story off of her chest, that was one of the things that was running through my mind was, you know for every Eleni, there’s like fifty other girls who don’t fit the pretty light skinned look, whose stories have never been told you know. And that’s sad. That’s the other part of these conversations is we always highlight very specific, or not highlight. Very specific people are able to talk about the abuse they go through, and it is “accepted.” Not accepted, but there’s a little more support than people who don’t look like Eleni. That’s sad to me, but yeah. I think that’s all I wanted to say.

Q: Okay that was really, so I’m gonna end on a little bit of a lighter note. So the 4th section is healing through cultural values. So while this issue is still a big problem in our community, it has to do a lot with our people, and our culture, and religion, and things like that. What examples can you give of how Pacific Islanders or Tongans are addressing this within our community in a more positive way then you know this trauma fest?

A: Weirdly enough I feel like we do a little bit of that work here at Mana. The unfortunate reality, and to be fair I haven’t gone to many community events. I know that there are spaces like the Kava talks thing. There was actually a situation here....some of the girls actually reported that something had happened in her home. And she went missing for a couple days, and when she went missing the girls in this class went to ‘Anapesi and told

‘Anapesi what had happened. Now obviously we are required by the state to report incidents like this. But what I find really interesting is, Mana is such a unique space. We know all the kids, we are personally connected to them in some way, so ‘Anapesi, before she made the report she made sure that the girl that this happened to was okay first, right. So there was a lot of like, trying to figure out where the girl was, then they brought her in, then they had to have that conversation and it was interesting because when that conversation came forward then all these other girls also came forward about their experiences. All these other girls came forward and unfortunately you know, ‘Anapesi had to tell all of them, “unfortunately I have to report this to the state.” Now here’s what I find interesting about that story, is the girls were okay with that. And I think it has to do with the relationship that ‘Anapesi has with kids because ‘Anapesi told them that I have to report this, but I’m not leaving you to the hands of the government right. Like I’m just gonna you know, call the cops and be like, “okay guys good luck.” And so ‘Anapesi, when she was telling me about this she said that, you know she was heavily involved in the investigation process, but also in making sure that the girls received therapy along with their mothers. And so I thought that that was really interesting because in no other school are you going to get that type of care you know what I mean? And so ‘Anapesi said that it was all up to their own consent so all the girls consented to therapy. Unfortunately though, there were many parents who did not all their daughter to go. ‘Anapesi took the time to find them therapist of color specifically therapists that had to deal with sexual abuse, specifically women of color who dealt in sexual abuse therapy, and it was affordable therapy. It was therapy that was paid for by Mana. What other school are you going to go to would that? And that's not to be like, “oh Mana doing the

bare minimum!” But in a way I think that that’s a really positive, that’s a huge positive! So ‘Anapesi talked about some of the girls went with their mothers [therapy] and became a moment for many other girl, not only to get off of their chest trauma that had been sitting there for a while, but a lot of the mothers also were able to get off a lot of the trauma that was on their mind as well. So ‘Anapesi said that there were many girls who were like, “I’ve never felt closer to my mom. I didn’t know that we have both gone through the same exact thing.” And so you know ‘Anapesi said it was really sad to see certain girls parents just not believe them and say that they were liars and what not, but ‘Anapesi said that what was worth it for her was seeing the transformation and the girls who got the support that they needed and were able to connect with their mothers in a different way. And their mom’s were able to get support which is a big deal! I don’t know what the data is but I know that it’s like one in five women who have been sexual assaulted or one in three. So you know I think it’s really amazing some of the spaces that we’ve been able to carve out here for sexual assault, sexual violence women. The also held a weekly therapy session. So this was back in, in 2019; there was this therapy class and certain girls would go to and it had to do with dealing with sexual abuse. And Yamilla is actually one the people that put that together. So Yamilla was also with them while they also were getting therapy, like group therapy with another person. And it wasn’t at that point it wasn't just the girls who that huge situation happened with, it was other girls in our school who came forward because they heard about how positively the other girls' experiences were. So girls who had been dealing with issues of sexual violence and sexual assault that weren’t even related to the main group were also able to, you know get some form of therapy in school! Where else can you say that that's gonna

happen? I also think about the students just this year who... who have been getting therapy because 'Anapesi had read something of their's or they have disclosed it, felt comfortable enough to disclose it with one of us in order to talk to 'Anapesi and have gotten proper care you know. I think that it's really great that we're able to actually provide the next step. I mean because again, all of these other community spaces it's, "let's just talk about what happened to us and then we're cool!" Like no, there needs to be a next step and I think that it's really great to be in an environment where the next step is occurring. That doesn't mean that we, and I hate using the word save because it's not saving the kids but am I saying that every single kid, like takes away from this experience is a better person? No, but they are getting help in some type of capacity and that main group of girls that I talked about in the beginning all of them have been transformed. They are not the same girls that they used to be. So, you can see the transformation which is really amazing. So yeah that's what I would say is a positive change is, is working here at Mana and providing the next step but taking care in who you choose for that next step not just allowing the government to do whatever or allowing us to just choose whatever therapist, there's actually proper steps being taken. Yeah that's what I would say the positive note is.

Q: Do you have an experience that you would like to share that was a healthy and supportive interaction between you and your family with a serious topic or a taboo topic? If any.

A: ... You know what's so crazy, in many ways my family is considered to be one of those families that taboo topics are not talked about. So for example I talked about earlier I talked about being bisexual, I feel like personally. I don't feel like I am in a place

anywhere yet to talk to my parents about that. It's not that I think that my parents are going to be, I mean I think there is going to be some semblance of disappointment, but for me a lot of it has to do with the fact that they're raised Mormon. Because my family is Mormon, there are many topics that I have always felt like were off the table, so like sex being one of them, LGBT issues being on of them. I do think that if I were to talk to my parents about sexual violence, I think they would be very supportive and very receptive. I know that for a fact, but when it comes to issue like bisexual or not wanting to be Mormon anymore, things like that. Those are topics I withhold myself from talking about with them because I know that it'll be emotionally draining. I know this because, my mom is great and all but let me tell you as an eldest daughter who grew up under my mom, my experiences are much different than what the kids see here with my mom. There's just a lot of things from my childhood being raised as the oldest daughter that have informed my decision to not share certain things with my parents... so that's why it's a little bit harder for me to answer this question because like even something as simple as mental health, like when I shared with everyone on Friday that I have depression, I haven't even told my parents about that. My parents don't even know about that. That was the first time that I have ever vocalized it to people, that I have depression. Again it's not that I think that my parents will be disapproving, I just know that there is a sense of uncomfortableness and emotional labor that I don't want to deal with; that I know I will have to. I mean you're the oldest daughter, you know how it is when it comes to talking about important things with your parents. I did it once when I was younger and it was shut down so quick that it informed everything else from that moment, okay we're not gonna talk about any of this anymore. And even though I know I'm twenty-five, my

parents are getting older and they're becoming more aware of things and I'm able to have conversations with them, I keep things light hearted because I just remember what it was growing up. In many it makes me sad, but in many ways I feel like that's just life. You know that's just life.

Interviewer: Yeah this the card or cards we were dealt with.

Narrator: And that's why though, I feel like I am very authentic with other people and I'm intentional with how I talk to others, because I know that there are many others who have very similar upbringings to me. When some of the girls here talk about their upbringings, man it hits cause I remember. Like when a student was crying about the things you know, the things that are going on in her family, I remember that. I remember being in that headspace so I can't really say that I have a story that was really positive, where the conversation was really positive and productive. What I will say, that because I was raised, that has pushed me to when I interact with others, when they wanna have an uncomfortable conversation, forcing myself to listen and like really being like, "okay I'm here, I'm present, I wanna talk about this with you." Because yeah, you know. As the oldest daughter, you say one thing and you never say anything again. And then you just never say anything again!

Interviewer: And then you let the little girls.

Narrator: I let my sister say it and then I just go "yeah," and just nod my head and keep it stepping

Interviewer: That is so funny because I can....

Narrator: But yeah that's all I have to say about that. There's a video that Tracy Ellis Rose just released, it was from an interview that she just did. And I really love what she had to

say because she was like, “all I wish in life is for people to be authentic selves around without judgement. Because yes, I can be a judgemental bitch. I can be. I know I can be, but ultimately I want to be a person where people can feel like they can be their authentic selves with, because I know what it’s like to live in a house where you have to play games all the time about your personality. So anyways that went off on a completely different tangent.

Q: In response to Eleni there was a video that was put out and it got really popular. This guy was kind of... it was his rebutal to what she was having to say when she was kind of challenging the culture, challenging rape culture. And he was talking about how Tongan, specifically, have the four core pillars.

Narrator: Yes! That’s what I was going to say! Oh my gosh why do I remember this?

Interviewer: Did you see the video?

Narrator: I remember watching it and then rolling my eyes about it, but go ahead, go ahead.

Interviewer: So, I mean you can go ahead and talk about how you feel about that, but then the questions that I have are, do you think these values help or will help with your own mental health as somebody who has gone through trauma? And if you do think they are useful, how have you seen it help you in your own journey?

A: Yeah oh my gosh! I wish I could go back to that moment cause I remember when he was talking about it and rolling my eyes at it.

Interviewer: Me too

Narrator: I thought it was annoying what he was trying to say cause if I recall correctly, he was trying to use the four pillars as a way to say that she was being disrespectful and I thought, “you’re an idiot.”

Interviewer: I thought the same thing too. I was like, “you’re kind of dismissing her entire... yeah okay.”

Narrator: I’m glad that you remember that cause I was listening to his.. and then all the Tongans in the comments too. I was like, “man just shut up, just say that you don’t support her. You don’t have to bring in the culture in order to say that you don’t agree with her... like what the hell!” So yeah , that was my stance on it. It sounds like you just want to be dismissive and call her disrespectful because of her speaking her truth. You know, whatever. As far as the four pillars go, I feel like the four pillars are only applicable to families that are untouched by colonization, which is none of us. Which is none of us! It’s so funny because I remember when we learned, which is around this time when everything was happening, when we learned about the four pillars all I could think of, was all of the families that only have three, or two, or barely standing on one. You know what I mean, cause I was like even in my own family which you know, I would say my Tongan family. So my great grandfather, Tonga Poteki Malohifo’ou, rest in peace OG okay, he was very old school Tongan. We’re talkin old school Tongan before Mormons came, religion came,

Interviewer: Like indigenous

Narrator: Yeah, so he incorporated, he saw the *four pillars*, the Faa’i Kavei Koula, in Christianity, he did see that but ultimately, like reason why ‘Anapesi is so strong on culture is because of her grandpa, which is my great-grandfather because he was so about

the Fa'ai Kavei Koula, to its core. The foundation being love and then everything stemming up from that, and so I would say that my Tongan family is really, as far as the fale and everything being built, they're pretty damn close to having it solid. Now there are a couple that I'm like okay we can work on this a little bit, like this is something we need to work on but ultimately, when we we're learning about the Faa'i Kavei Koula, one of the reasons why I feel like the Faa'i Kavei Koula was not present in many Tongan families, is because the majority of their foundation, does not start with love it starts with loyalty. And we learned in the Faa'i Kavei Koula if you don't build the Fale (*house*) correctly, it's gonna fall apart. So because so many Tongan families are built off of loyalty first, everything second, that's why...

Interviewer: Family first! Family over everything, whatever

Narrator: Yeah, that's why I feel like the Faa'i Kavei Koula is useless argument in terms of talking about rape culture because all of you people are loyal to your families. You don't even love them, you're just loyal to them! You know what I mean? You're just loyal, and maybe you're not even loyal to the family, you're just loyal to a narrative. A narrative that comes from colonization so it's just so interesting to me when he was using that because I was like, "you don't even have your fale together, like your fale isn't even correct sir! Don't come up here talking to me about the four pillars and your pillars are not even standing, they're lopsided, and some of them are missing." So that's why I felt like the Faa'i Kavei Koula was a useless argument in that situation, because some of y'all don't even have the baseline and even with Eleni's story. I know that there were people in her own family who were upset that she did that. Your pillars isn't even built on the right foundation and so that's why I feel like the Faa'i Kavei Koula is only able to work in

terms of combatting rape culture if the foundation and fale are built correctly, but the majority of Tongan families, it's not. And they're built incorrectly, and some of the pillars are missing, the makafetoliaki, *the reciprication at the top*, it's missing completely. And like Queen Salote said, if you don't build it correctly, you're always gonna fall apart. And that's why all, a lot of these families have fallen apart because their fales are not properly built. I think that they are useful in combatting rape culture but it requires that the whole family does self - refelction on what these values mean and how they can makafetoliaki, be reciprical to each other. That's what I would say that if we wanna use these themes in order to combat rape culture, there needs to be a lot of self reflection, self work to be done first. Something that as I get older that I start, that I've come to realize is not everybody is willing to put in the same amount of work and that's tough you know. Everybodies gotta be ready to dig in the trenches, or only some of y'all are gonna be able to a fale and the rest of you are not and that's still gonna make your fale fall. I think that not wanting to do the work stems from the vulnerability aspect because if there's one thing I know about Pacific Islanders, nobody wants to be vulnerable. It's hard to be, it's hard to be for whatever reason. But that's what I would say, did that answer the question?

Q: Yeah, yeah. And then the last million dollar question. The last question that will close up our interview basically is, do you think that we can use our own cultural practices, or values, or morals to help with healing those who have suffered from sexual violence and rape culture and that trauma?

A: Yes, yes absolutely and even going back to the Faa'i Kavei Koula. When you do the work, when you do the work and it's an ongoing process, when you continually work on

the foundation and go up within yourself to build your own solid fale in your fatu, *your heart*, I think it allows a space for others as well. Here's what I mean by that... I love that in the Faa'i Kavei Koula the foundation is love. I really do love that because, it's so crazy because I used to never really be about love. I used to be like whatever about love, you know I was never really intentional about what it meant to love others and then also allowing people to be themselves as a form of love. Because for me it was just kinda like, "well people don;t allow me to be myself so why should I allow others to be themselves too?" But as I've gotten older I come to recognize, if you come from a place, a foundation of love and allowing love into your heart and allowing love to leave your heart and allowing yourself to get hurt and still trek on and continue to give love, there is something to be said about that. However, obviously all the rest of the other things are important as well. Like if I didn't have love as my foundation, like if I didn' have respect also there, and also Tauhi Vaha'a [*building and nurturing relationships*], and Anga Fakatokilalo [*humility*], Mamahi'i me'a [*loyalty*], those are the icing on top of the cake of love which allow, I feel like the people around me to see that in me and know this is a safe person to be with, to allow myself to heal. I'm gonna quote a book, but there's this book called "All About Love," by Bell Hooks. It is a transformative book, have you read it?

Interviewer: I've read like excerpts of it, yeah.

Narrator: Yes, it is a transformative book. That book has made me bawl and she talks a lot about love. It's crazy cause the foundation, the pillars are in the book, these things are in the book. What I love about some of the things that she wrote in that book is talking about how love, when it is pure and it is coming from a place of, I see you and I see

myself reflected in you and I hope you see yourself reflected in me, how transformative that can be for people, to heal. So I believe that to be the truth as well. I think that that's why even though life has given me many challenges and adversities it took me a really long time to realize that constantly shutting people out, was not helping me in any way. Not only me in terms of healing, but also the people around me because how are you going to heal with someone who doesn't even allow love into their heart. Which goes into another conversation, like who you date. If you're dating somebody, if you're dating someone who doesn't even wanna be, see what's going on, or even care about what's going on, then how are you supposed to see what's going on with you anyways sorry that's going off on a whole other area. We're talking about healing. So for me a I feel like if we have these things here, but love more specifically at the foundation, it allows people to be themselves, it allows them to heal and recognize that even through all the fuck ups that we have in our lives, we still loveable at the end of it. And that took me a really long time to understand, and it's still something that really struggle with, because when id o thing, when I fuck up, I really do feel like, "damn nobody should love me like nobody should love me at all! I'm such an awful person!" But when I'm surrounded by who see me fuck up and be like, "ooohhh, still love you anyways!" That to me, there's really no quite other feeling for me than that and I want to be that for other people so they can heal themselves, now am I gonna do that on my own, no, which is also Bell Hooks about that. You can't learn to love yourself in self - isolation, it has to be a community thing. You have to have a community to help you so that's why I wish and I hope that more people start to recognize that pushing away others and self - isolating, and doing that is never helpful. You're not only doing a disservice to yourself by doing that, but also the people

around you a disservice, because then they follow your cue. Because it's like, "well if that person doesn't give a fuck about anybody else, then I'm not gonna give fuck about anybody else." Brother, that's not a way to live, that's just not a way to live and it's okay to ask to be loved. That's okay. Anyway, I'm going on a tangent here, but ultimately if you have a strong foundation and a strong faith you will allow others to see that within you and they can find a space in you to heal themselves. Now, there are some people who are soul suckers. I'll admit that, I'll admit that, and they need to do some different type of work: but for the most part most people are not soul suckers, they just genuinely need to be loved, so that they can learn how to love others.