

Welcome to episode 125 of the Therapy Chat Podcast with host Laura Reagan, LCSW-C. Today Laura speaks to Dr. Loretta Pyles about her work and new book “Healing Justice”.

Loretta came to mind-body healing practices in 1999, after leaving a difficult long-term relationship and becoming burnt out from her social services and social change work. She found herself anxious, grief-ridden, and disconnected from her body, mind and spirit. Over the years, she has committed herself to a journey toward wholeness, presence, and compassion. The realizations that she later found in meditation and yoga deepened her ability to understand the ways in which oppression and undigested experiences rest in the mind-body continuum. To learn more about these parts of herself and to experience life more fully, she practices a range of modalities including mindfulness, lovingkindness, breath work, physical poses, devotional mantra, group support, and self-inquiry.

Loretta’s sensibility about transformative social change was formed during her time working in a women’s collective at a community-based domestic violence program in Lawrence, Kansas. She continues to be inspired by the insights of collective and consensus building that come from feminist and other social movements, as well as conscious communication practices. She works with public and non-profit organizations to promote healing justice and offers workshops which support social workers and activists to embody mindful practice and self-care through trauma-informed and anti-oppression lenses.

Loretta received her B.A. in philosophy and sociology from Baker University, an M.A. in philosophy from the University of Kansas and a Ph.D. in social work from the University of Kansas. Formerly on the faculty at Tulane University School of Social Work in New Orleans, Loretta is Professor in the School of Social Welfare at the State University of New York at Albany. She was Director of UAlbany’s Community and Public Service Program from 2008-2012. The National Science Foundation has funded her research on human capabilities, community participation, and disaster recovery. Loretta’s social change and healing justice work has taken her across the globe including to Haiti, Mongolia, and Indonesia.

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