



Conscious Life presents

Reconnecting and Healing Across Historical Trauma

Guest: Dr Lisa Bratton

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[00:00:09] Jaï Bristow

Hello, and welcome to this conference. My name is Jaï Bristow, and I'm one of your hosts. And today I am delighted to be welcoming Dr Lisa Bratton. Welcome, Lisa.

Dr Lisa Bratton

Thank you so much. It's an honor to be here.

Jaï Bristow

It's great to have you on board. So, Dr Lisa, you're an associate professor of History at Tuskegee University in the US, and you're currently writing a book on Historic Brattonsville, the South Carolina plantation in which your ancestors were enslaved.

This topic of enslavement already can bring about and activate trauma in people or can bring about trauma responses. It can be a very taboo subject, but you have a really fascinating story around it. So I'm wondering if you can start by talking about the history of enslavement, particularly in the US, and how it ties into your own personal story.

Dr Lisa Bratton

Okay, thank you very much. It's an honor to be talking about this topic. So, the first enslaved people in the United States were actually brought here in the 1400. People talk a lot about 1619. That was when they were brought to the English speaking part of the United States, as opposed to the Spanish speaking part in Florida.

My ancestors were enslaved at a place called Historic Brattonsville. The white Brattons came from Scotland and Ireland, migrated through Virginia and finally settled in South Carolina, York County, and started there as a small plantation. And then it grew. My ancestors were Green and Melinda Bratton. They were born around 1835, 1845.

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And we're not sure of the exact date because that wasn't documented for enslaved people. We were considered chattel property, which is really the type of chattel enslavement that just denies your humanity. You're a piece of property, just like a horse or a cow or any other field implement. And so their dates of birth are not recorded.

But what I do know is that they were enslaved at Historic Brattonsville for most of their adult lives and actually went on to become the first freedmen to purchase land in the county. But their lives of enslavement are well-documented in the 150-some-old years of plantation records that have survived. And so we're able to see, to learn a lot about their lives just based on the documents.

Historic Brattonsville is a plantation still standing. It's open 363 days a year. And every day that you're there, there are people who are dressed in period clothing to talk about what enslavement was like in the 1850s.

Going back to that actual place can be a traumatic experience, because you're right there. I'm standing right there, as we say in the US, in the room where it happened. I mean, I'm right here in the actual place where at least that generation of my family was enslaved. So, I do a lot of work with the plantation, and I think that's part of my healing. I've been working with them for a long time and doing some of the projects that we do and some of the events that we have, and I think it's part of my healing.

I first went there as a child, so I don't really know of a time when I didn't know about Brattonsville. I've always known. And my father had a picture of a man. He looked like a white man, but he was on our mantle my whole life. And I remember asking my father one day, "Who's that man?" And he said, "That's Green Bratton." And that's all he said.

So my father may have known him. My father was born in 1917, and Green Bratton died around that time. We're not really sure of his death date. So, I don't know how much my father knew of him, but he did tell us that. But if you take us back...

Jaï Bristow

Sorry, could you just tell us who Green Bratton is, exactly, to you?

Dr Lisa Bratton

Sure, yes. Green Bratton is my great-great-grandfather, who was enslaved at Brattonsville. And we have that one picture of him. So, my father, when he took us to Brattonsville for the first time that I remember, I was very young, about six, and I thought it had our name on it. And there are these old buildings. So that means that we used to be rich. That was my six year old analysis of this.

Now I got a little older and I thought that every African American, if they drive around the South long enough, they'll find their plantation. So it couldn't be that big of a deal. But the reality is very few African Americans... I am maybe the only person I know of all my friends who can go back to a plantation that is standing. And I'll talk a little bit about the relationships that have come about as a result.

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In black America, and for African Americans, very few of us can find our plantation. If we know the plantation... If we know the State where our ancestors were enslaved... Some of us don't even know the State, don't even know the County!

But if we know that, and if we have a plantation standing, which is very rare, it's not a historic site, it may be a private house where someone lives. It may be a house that's falling down, and so no one lives there. And if we do know the house, we don't know the white people who are connected with that. Maybe the house has been sold to someone else and we don't know the white people who enslaved our families.

Now we're getting to an even smaller percentage of people. If we know the white people who enslaved our families, there is no relationship. Either they don't talk at all, generally because one side or the other or both don't want to have relationship, or the relationship is contentious and ugly.

So, part of my healing, I think, with this, is that I have found the white Brattons who enslaved my family. I know them. I work with them, I talk with them, travel with them, and I think that that too is part of the healing. And we meet every month on Zoom. And one of the topics we talk about is the trauma that is related to... On both sides.

Because just as African Americans were harmed by enslavement, I'm understanding now that white people were harmed by it as well. They weren't harmed financially. They actually benefited tremendously. But what they're dealing with now is a lot of guilt, and a lot of shame for what their ancestors did.

And I'm speaking for them based on what they've said. I don't like to talk for people, but it's a lot that they're dealing with in this, especially when they go back to the exact place where it happened. Being on the land at Brattonsville still, even though I'm 61 years old, I've been going there now for 50 some odd years and every time I go, I think it brings up a different level of trauma.

And what's interesting about this... And I didn't know this was me. People have asked me for years. I'm writing a book about it. I write about it every day. And different people have asked me at different times, "Aren't you frustrated, or aren't you upset? Isn't your work depressing?" Absolutely not. My work is not depressing at all. And I said, "I enjoy what I do. I'm learning about it. This is my passion. This is what I love."

About a year ago, I had a fellowship from the Mellon Foundation, and we went to Highland Plantation, which was owned by James Monroe, one of the American presidents. And there was a film that we saw. I'd seen the film before. I had been to Highland before.

As I watched the film, I just went to another level. I was upset, I was angry, I was frustrated. I didn't want to talk to anyone. I didn't want to go see the rest of the exhibit. I just wanted to be left alone. So I went outside. It was a very hot day. I sat out in the sun. And it even occurred to me, "Lisa, why are you sitting in the sun? Why don't you go sit in the shade?" But I sat up there for 20 minutes baking. It was just that upsetting to me.

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One of my colleagues came and she asked me, "Are you okay?" I said, "No, I'm not." She says, "You want to talk?", "Yes." So she sat by me and we talked for a while.

And that, I think, was these years of trauma building up. That's the only way I can explain it, because, like I said, I'd seen that film before and I'd been to Highland before. But what I think happened at that moment was the years that I've been working with this and writing about this, which I do almost every day... And it just built up at that moment.

Yeah, I'm still trying to figure out what that was about. And it was just interesting to me that it didn't happen at Brattonsville. I go to Brattonsville several times a year, and I've never felt this, but I think it was the years of trauma building up.

Jaï Bristow

Interesting. Thank you for sharing some of your story. So it's really interesting to hear a bit... I know some of this, because some of it is common history about enslavement in the US from the 14 hundreds onwards, and how the majority of African Americans are descendants of enslaved people.

But then for you to have this direct link growing up, of knowing the plantation where your ancestors were forced to work and then going to that regularly, and then finding out the connection that you're not only related to the people who were enslaved there, but also to the owners and the captors, the enslavers.

And that you now have a relationship with the descendants on both sides of your family is quite incredible. And it's, I think, quite a unique position and one that isn't spoken about so much. So I really appreciate you coming on board and talking about this possibility of connection, of healing from trauma, that for you going back there, it's not traumatizing. It's actually really interesting.

It's like you say, it's your passion to learn more and to heal from this kind of collective generational trauma. And I also really appreciate how you can name so clearly that this history doesn't just impact you. It also impacts the white people, the descendants, or this guilt. There's a lot of trauma on both sides, and I think it's really important to name that.

And so I'm wondering... You talked about having monthly Zoom meetings with your family members. I'm wondering, first of all, how did you find out about this connection? Did you always know you were connected to Brattonsville? When did you find out about your connection to this plantation? You talked about going there already from the age of a child. When did you find out that connection to the enslavers and the owners of the plantation? When did you connect with the family members, and what has that healing process looked like?

Dr Lisa Bratton

Okay. Oh, great question! For years, I wanted to connect with the white Brattons, and I knew one because he was the congressman from the area, and I met his daughter one time. But I really wanted to just have a conversation with them.

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The staff and management of Brattonville was very hesitant, and they wouldn't help me for a long time, find more descendants. I think they thought that it was going to be an ugly relationship, that the conversation would get ugly.

And I told them, "I'm not interested in that. I'm interested in just having a conversation. We have this shared history, and I want to talk about it." So finally they started helping me find more of them, and we started talking on Zoom, January of 2022.

Around maybe March, one of the descendants, white descendant, said she had some documents from her maybe great-great-great-grandfather, Rufus Bratton, who was responsible for bringing the Ku Klux Klan to South Carolina, to York County. Anyway, South Carolina.

The Ku Klux Klan is a terrorist organization that was formed right after African Americans were freed, to keep us down financially, educationally, in any type of way they could. They were a very violent organization, and actually, factions of the Ku Klux Klan are still very much alive in America, even now.

Rufus Bratton, a self-evowed white supremacist, racist, murderer of Jim Williams, a man who was killed in 1871, a black man. And just this one more fact about Rufus... He escaped to Canada to avoid prosecution of Jim Williams. The Federal Marshals, American Marshals, went to Canada, brought him back, and he stood trial for the murder of Jim Williams.

He was acquitted, but other men were convicted. And this is during a period in American history called Reconstruction, right after enslavement was over. We had a pretty decent amount of protection from the federal government at that point, which we don't have now, I might add.

She said she had some of Rufus's documents and did I want to see them. "Of course." A couple of weeks later, I'm in my car driving to her home, and we are looking at the documents and some Civil War records and some handwritten letters that she had of his.

And then I brought up the issue of DNA. I said, "Oh, have you gotten your DNA tested?" She said, "Yeah, I have." So we pulled it up. Up pops Lisa Bratton. But there are a surprising number of Lisa Brattons in the world. And I didn't get excited.

I said, "Let me look a little closer." She got excited. I said, "Let me look a little closer." I looked a little closer. And there's Lisa Bratton, me, which confirmed that I was, in fact, related to the white Brattons, which we always suspected.

But just because a person is a child of the plantation does not mean that the plantation owner is the parent, because black women's bodies were so devalued during enslavement that the white father could have been anybody, a white man riding by on a horse, could have been anyone.

People have said to me, "Look at your skin, your light skin. You have white in your family." Okay, I know that comes from somewhere, but it didn't necessarily have to come from the white Brattons. So, when Nancy and I connected with DNA through [ancestry.com](https://www.ancestry.com), that was the confirmation. And so it changed the relationship with the white Brattons, but it changed it for the better.

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Before we found out we were blood-related, we had already had three Zoom meetings. That's been since January of 2022. And the Zoom meetings have continued, and they really have expanded even more. We've traveled to an art exhibit that was all about racism and white supremacy and enslavement. So three white descendants and two black descendants went to this art exhibit together.

There's a lot of work that we're doing, too, at Brattonsville. We're restoring the slave cemetery, working with Brattonsville to do that. We're fashioning a quilt that we only sew and work on while we're at Brattonsville. So it's going to take some time because we're not there that often. Some of us live so far away.

Then we're going to use the batting. That material that's inside of the quilt will come from sheep that are raised at Brattonsville. And so it's a really interesting project. So even with the quilt, we're trying to tell the younger people, "You may have to finish this quilt. So you should be involved." Because sometimes they're interested, sometimes they're not.

So that's some of the work that we're doing. And like I said, as it relates to trauma, we talk about this. We've used a book by Dr Teresa Reed entitled "You're Likely Not a Racist: Answers for Curious White People." And so we use that book as a basis to talk about some of the more difficult questions that we have as it relates to our shared history.

Jai Bristow

Thank you for that. No, I'm really touched by how recent it all is. You connected in January 2022, and then it's after you connected that you realized you were actually related. That's incredible! I thought it might be the other way around.

I'm really touched by your interest in your history, by how recent a lot of this history is. Not just the connecting with them in 2022, but even you talking about your great-great-grandfather, that's not that long ago... And that one of your direct ancestors was the person who brought the KKK to the state.

It's really interesting to me how by following the history you were then able to connect with these family members, how you were able to talk about it, to use existing resources, to have the difficult, uncomfortable conversations, and that you're continuing to work together on different projects at healing some of this ancestral trauma.

So I think it's really interesting history, but I'm curious again about the impact on your lives today. So, of course, you have this connection now with your family members. But on a day to day, how do you feel like it's impacting you as a black woman and the descendant of the enslaved? How does it impact them as the white people and the descendants of the enslavers to heal this ancestral trauma together?

[00:19:36] Dr Lisa Bratton

That's a great question. So, for me, I live in a primarily African American suburb of Atlanta. I teach at a historically black college. 99.9% of the students at my college where I teach are African American. I graduated from a black college, Howard University in Washington, DC. I attended a black graduate school, Atlanta University, before it merged with Clark College. And when I did go to what we call a PWI, Predominantly White Institution, my Master's and PhD were in African American studies.

So I live in a black world. One of the descendants and I, one of the white descendants and I went to the Georgia Aquarium. Her two children and we were watching the dolphins. And she lives in Oregon, which is mostly a white State. Probably a handful of black people living in Oregon.

She says to me, "My black friends were so excited when I told them that I found my black family." She said, "My black friends were so excited. What did your white friends say?" I said, "I don't have any white friends," and not that I refuse to have white people as friends. My life just doesn't... We're not in the same orbit.

That was a wake-up for me. Wow, really? I don't have any white friends! I have acquaintances, people I work with or people I've known for a long time, but I don't consider them friends. I don't call up and say, "Guess what happened today..." We're not like that. And so that was kind of a wake-up call for me. I said, "Wow, this is interesting!"

I think that this relationship with them has actually made me a better person. I've told them that. I'll tell anybody that. It has made me a better person and opened my sphere of friendships. It's opened up my willingness to get out of my comfort zone and out of my black world a little bit.

And for them, I will just share with you some of what they've said to me. They feel the need to do more for African Americans. One of my white cousins is an endocrinologist, and she works with patients who have diabetes. And she said, "I give all my patients 100%. But I give my black patients extra." And that's the way she gets chosen to give back. So I said, "I think that's beautiful."

In our own way, a lot of us are taking the trauma, and the trauma is not over, and using this trauma to become better people with it.

And I've said to them, and I'll say it to anyone, "I will never forgive white people for enslavement, ever. I just don't see what would have to happen for me to do that. So this relationship doesn't mean that it's okay now, and all that you did to us is all forgiven. Absolutely not! But what it does say is that I can take Green and Melinda's legacy of thrift, because I can see, I know what they bought in the store, I have records of what they bought in the Bratton's store.

I know that they were the first freedmen to purchase land in York County. I can take that and build on it. And that's exactly what I've chosen to do. I'm a very thrifty person. I own a lot of property in the United States. Well, I say it's a lot, but... It's a lot for me! I own property here, some investment properties, etcetera.

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That's a part of the legacy that I'm living with. The enslavement part, the rape, the trauma, the not being allowed to read and write, not being allowed to use whatever talent you have to enrich yourself. You have to take your talent and enrich this white landowner for generations.

That part I can't change. In some way it's internalized in me. It always will be. But I can take the good that they had and build on it. The land that they purchased in 1877 is still in our family. It's very close to Brattonsville. That piece of land is so important to me. It's more important than any other property that I own.

I could get more houses. I can get another beachfront condo. I cannot get any more land that my great-great-grandfather, after enslavement, worked and saved and kept for his other generations. I'm so appreciative of that. I don't know what to do.

And I see in the documents his thriftiness, and I see his ability to save. So how could I not, as a person who has so many benefits and resources that he could only dream of, how could I not take that legacy and build on it?

And the work that I do is work that I have to do. I couldn't even stop doing this work if I had to, because I have a Master's and PhD in African American studies. How dare I not write about this, and how dare I not speak about this at every opportunity? It's a debt that I owe, and it's a debt that I will never finish paying. It's a debt that I'm not going to try to finish paying because it's impossible. But I owe them that to tell their story, because they couldn't.

Jaï Bristow

Wow. I'm really touched by how authentically you're sharing. And there's a few things that stand out for me. So, for example, I'm mixed, right? So I grew up with a black or Jamaican Indian Scottish mother and a white father. And so I've always carried in me that kind of dual ancestry. On the Jamaican side, I know that it was descendants of enslaved people, and I know some of that history.

And then on the English side, it's descendants of the colonizers a lot of the time. But for you to have grown up black, to have grown up in this very, as you say, a very black world, and then to suddenly realize that some of your ancestors were part of the colonizers, part of the enslavers, I'm wondering what that was like for you, personally, to have that realization?

Dr Lisa Bratton

I think historically, we've always known... We don't learn that much about African American history in the United States, unfortunately. But let me just go back a little. My K-12 experience was mostly white. My schools were mostly white.

Jaï Bristow

Sorry, what is K-12?

[00:27:16] Dr Lisa Bratton

I'm sorry. Thank you. Kindergarten to twelfth grade. So my entire... Before I finished high school, it was mostly a white experience. Even in high school, I went to all girls catholic high school with the nuns, with the habits and all of that. And what we learned about our history was very little, very one-sided and very sparse.

I educated myself as a middle schooler and a high school student. I just read books my parents had at home and went to the library and got more books. So we always knew that white people enslaved black people. We knew that. We didn't know the extent of it.

We didn't know that it happened not just in America, because that's what we get in high school, but throughout the entire continent of South America and all of the Caribbean islands in between. We don't learn that. We learned that enslavement was just in America. So we always knew... And I think it's different, and here's how I can tell the difference.

My mother's side of the family was enslaved at Fort Hill plantation, which is on the campus of Clemson University in South Carolina. Now, that information I only learned about four years ago. So when I went to Clemson for the first time, I expected to feel something. I don't know what I expected to feel, but I expected to feel it.

Brattonsville, I've always known. Clemson, I learned about as a grown up. But I didn't feel anything. What I did intentionally, though... I probably shouldn't tell this, but I will. There's a sign that says, "Keep off the grass." I intentionally walked across the grass. I said to myself, "I want someone to say to me, 'Ma'am, you can't walk on the grass.'" Please, I'm looking for Security, anybody that will tell me, so that I can tell them the reason why I deserve to walk on the grass and that my ancestors were enslaved.

But where is the police when you need them? But that was a different feeling. So I'm very fortunate to be able to see both sides of that, what it's like to always know, and what it's like to know when you're in your 50s. I'm still working on that side, still processing the experience at Clemson.

That plantation, I need to add, was owned by John C Calhoun, who was the 7th vice president of the United States. And if you go to Clemson University, a very popular, big school in America, the plantation house is right in the middle of the campus. So at any given moment, there are hundreds, maybe a thousand people walking that area.

And walking by the plantation house, I'm observing them as if it's just another building on campus, which to them it is. But to me, it's a trauma site. And also around that site, people go tailgating. I don't know if they tailgate in Europe. It's kind of a party before a big football game. I don't know if they know that word, but that's the word we use.

Right where people walk to tailgate is the burial ground of hundreds of African American enslaved. No markers. Probably some of the graves are mass graves. Just dump the bodies in there. But there is a group that has placed orange flags at every grave that they were able to tell through technology, they were able to find the graves under the ground, and so they put these flags there.

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But on game day, there are probably a thousand people walking by these graves to go and drink beer at the football game. And there are even signs that say, "Please respect this site. This is a burial site." But of course, the next day, there are beer bottles everywhere. But that's the other side of my family.

That particular area of trauma I'm still dealing with. I don't go to Clemson that much. I'm not nearly as involved with them. I am interested in meeting with the descendants of that side of my family, but they're just not very connected, pretty hard to find so far. But no one feels... I can tell, I know when people walk by there, they don't see it, they don't feel it. It's a burial site for all those hundreds of people that built the university who have not been acknowledged until now.

Jaï Bristow

I can really hear how the historical trauma and massacres and oppression and ill treatment of the enslaved, how it's just washed away and brushed under the carpet a little bit. And it makes people uncomfortable, to face the truth. And just how recent this history is. Yes, it started in the 1400s, but it went on for a very long time. I think it's important to have these conversations.

Now, there's two other questions that come to mind, having listened to you. One is, you were talking about how the beginning of your schooling was quite white, but how you've created a very black world for yourself. You work in a predominantly black university, your friends, your family, everyone in your life is black, right? It's what you were saying. And then connecting to the white side of your family, you said, somehow made you a better person, opening up to that.

I'm curious about that, about how you feel around... These days, I think, especially in the US, but all over the world, often people end up in their own little bubbles of people who look like them, who think like them, who have similar experiences to them. And sometimes that can reinforce the narratives and the separation and the division and the polarization.

So I'm wondering if you have anything to say about that, first of all. And then I have one more question for you.

Dr Lisa Bratton

Okay, most definitely. People sometimes tend to gravitate toward people who they're comfortable with and people who they don't have to explain everything to. Sometimes when I'm in the company of white people, I find that I have to explain a lot. And that's not horrible. I'm a college professor, it's what I do for a living. So that's not bad. It's not difficult. But sometimes you just want to be in a space that you don't have to explain, and people just get you automatically.

I live part time in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina. And so the friends that I have developed there are very international. It's my pickleball group. So my pickleball group is international. There's Hispanics, Asians, me and a few other black people with our group who play with us every morning, and whites.

That has been so positive for me, way beyond the pickleball and the exercise and the fun. It's been good for me to just connect with different people who don't have my same experience. They asked

me about Brattonsville. I told them where I was going, why I wouldn't be playing pickleball the weekend, and they said, "Oh, what are you doing at Brattonsville?"

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Oh, great question. So I'm explaining it to them and telling them about it, and I said to them, "I want you to come with me in February, we're having another event, and it's about a 3-hour drive. Maybe you all will come to Brattonsville." They said, "We would like to." Stay tuned and see if they really do come.

But I want them to see that side of me. And why is it important? These individuals probably think about enslavement every ten years. It's my guess. They don't think about it. White people don't think about race. They don't have to.

Me, on the other hand, I thought about race probably every day since I was in the fourth grade. So it's very different. And I think it would be very enlightening for them. But that, I think, is how it has helped me really become a better human being and open myself up a little bit more outside of my little bubble that I've been living in for actually most of my adult life.

Jaï Bristow

So would you encourage other people to also open up and connect with people from different backgrounds?

Dr Lisa Bratton

Absolutely. There's no question. But I don't know if everybody's ready to do it the way I've done it. I have a picture of myself. We were all wearing the same t-shirt at Brattonsville last year. And it's myself and about seven of my white family members. And I showed this to someone and she said, "Absolutely not. There's no way. I don't even want to talk to them. If I knew who the enslavers were in my family, there's no way." There are people who feel like that.

And then some people say, "Wow, Lisa, what you're doing is so amazing. It's so interesting," and have a lot of questions about it. So I think black America runs the gamut, definitely. And I really feel like it is what it is, but I don't know... I have to try to give this some thought. If this had happened 20 or 30 years ago for me, I don't know if I would have been so open.

And one of the white descendants said the same. She's in her 70s, and she said, "If this had been 30 years ago, I don't know if I would have been this open." So we're honest about that. And we have created... And they said this! They think that we have created such a judgment-free space and that if they make a statement or ask a question, no one's going to jump on them and say, "What kind of dumb white person question is that?" None of that exists.

I'm just happy that the black and the white descendants are still interested. They show up every month. They buy plane tickets when we have an event. As a matter of fact, my birthday is November 12, and I'm having a week-long... I'm a big birthday person. I'm having a week-long celebration in Charlotte. And two of the events are at Brattonsville. Brattonsville is very close to Charlotte, North Carolina.

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And so one of them, who lives in Massachusetts, she's already bought a plane ticket, to come and be a part of the birthday and go to the Brattonsville event. That's how they are. And the black descendants are the same. I don't know. People don't really get this until they see it in action.

We were at Brattonsville for the big event by the sweat of our brow. That's every second Saturday in September. And we did two panels of black and white descendants. And so people got to see us like we really are, which is so positive, so supportive, so nonjudgmental. And so many people were saying that they were encouraged to either seek out other family members or continue to do what they do, open themselves up.

So I told them, "Other people are replicating us. I mean, it's beautiful. It's beautiful all the way around. It's a win-win for everyone."

Jaï Bristow

That is beautiful. And that ties in perfectly with my last question. This is quite a unique story, and it's an incredible story, and I understand how healing it's been for you. But what can our audience who are listening, what are some things that people can learn from this story, can take away from this story and can apply to their own trauma healing, especially around race?

Dr Lisa Bratton

I say this a lot, that if we can heal from it and we can begin... We're not healed from it, let me just be clear. If we can begin the healing process, anybody can begin the healing process. Because every time I talk to them, every time I look at them or get a phone call or a text or email from them, I think in some way... It's not a trigger that I feel, but... I don't know how deep this is in my subconscious and how this is affecting me. On the surface, it feels very positive. But I don't know. Maybe all this is what led down to that breakdown at Highland.

Some people aren't ready to do this. But I would encourage you that hopefully there is positivity on the other side. And sometimes you only need one person. I've happened to connect with several. But sometimes you only need one person to make that connection and begin... Just begin. And maybe if you don't have the situation that I'm in, the healing begins internally.

I'm an optimist. I'm such an optimist and always have been. And even when it looks so bleak, everything, the whole world, I say, "You know, there's one good piece that came out of this." And I can always find the good.

It's hard to say because everyone's situation is so different. But, yeah, I would just say that if we can begin this and start this and we're not finished, then anybody can begin. And I'm not saying, "Just start and it will be perfect." It's not that, because sometimes it was very difficult, and I understand that. But to begin, to take the first step...

Whatever the situation is, take the first step, even though that means sometimes the first step is the hardest step. And step two through seven is really good. And then maybe step eight had a little

issue there. But I mean, life really, honestly could be so beautiful! This is really one of the high points of my life. Honestly, reconnecting with that side of my family has been one of the high points of my life.

[00:41:57] Jaï Bristow

That's beautiful. Thank you so much for your time today, Lisa.

Dr Lisa Bratton

And thank you for your work. This is amazing, and you've been really an amazing person and a lot of fun to talk to today. Fun and, I hope, helpful to someone.

Jaï Bristow

Thank you.