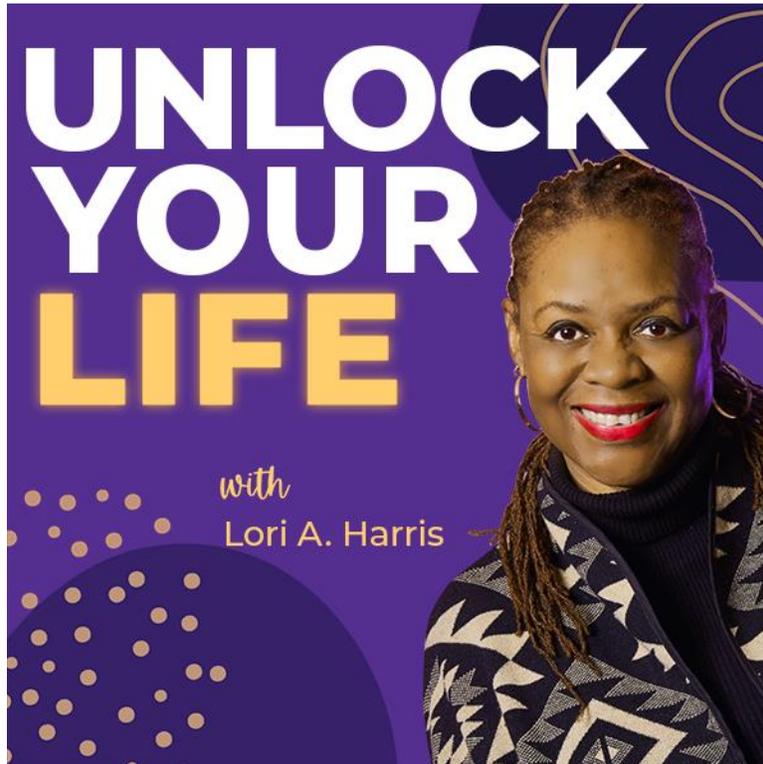


Ep #39: Remembering Mary Turner



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Lori A. Harris

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Ep #39: Remembering Mary Turner

It's the very last day of March. International Women's History Month. Today, I want to speak the name in honor, Mary Turner. Mary Turner was a pregnant woman, eight months pregnant, and she suffered a terrible and tragic death. She was lynched. I'm going to tell you a little bit about her, tell you why I think it's worthy of stopping and speaking her name, and give you tools and tips you need to keep the revolution going. Let's get started.

Welcome to the *Unlock Your Life* podcast, a podcast for highly successful visionary women who want more out of life. If you feel that ache of unfulfillment in your soul, you're in the right place sis. Join life mastery consultant Lori A. Harris as she teaches you how to stop living for others and finally put yourself first. Let's dive into today's show.

So it has been a very historic month. This month we saw and witnessed the confirmation hearings for Ketanji Brown Jackson. Judge Jackson is poised to become the next United States Supreme Court Justice. We watched as she was interrogated. She definitely handled each question posed to her. While the senators yelled and disparaged her, she kept her cool.

She provided thoughtful, nuanced answers that encourage all of us listeners to think, what is the job of a judge? What do we look for in a judge? What is the purpose of sentencing? What is the purpose of prison? How does one consider justice from both the point of view of a perpetrator, a defendant, and a victim? How does a judge do all of those things? She provided us with a little bit of insight.

I found it to be quite powerful. Because there was a time when I was like her. I was a public defender. I worked in the courts. I was working to try to help the court understand another way of looking at things. Help juries to understand another way to see the facts. Help fact finders and judges decide what should happen in any given case. Quite frankly, I left that work because they found it painful.

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With Judge Jackson this week, we were able to get a little glimpse into her world, and what it's like for her as a judge. She gave us a little bit of insight of how difficult it is to handle troubling cases, and what it does to one's psyche. How it affects you, and how you might, in fact, take those images home with you. The things that get imprinted on your mind.

I was impressed with her ability to stay even-keeled, to make note of the parts of the job that are painful, yet she's still standing and was able to stay inside the work. Many of the people who listen to this podcast are people who care and who are doing work that helps them to serve in the community.

Now, just as Judge Jackson provided us with a little bit of insight as to what it's like to be a bench officer, she also, with the questions posed to her by various senators, gave a little bit of insight of why it's extraordinary that she finds herself in this place. It is the result of much hard work by her, and survival of those who went before her. Much hard work of her parents, grandparents, and all of her ancestors, who living on the North American continent had to survive a brutal system of chattel slavery in order to be where she finds herself today.

One thing that is a part of our history that still continues to this day is lynching. There are a number of people—activists, workers, law enforcement, attorneys, and journalists—who are working to eradicate and shine the light of truth on lynching as it continues to be our problem here in the United States.

So what is lynching? Lynching is an extrajudicial killing by a group. It's most often is to characterize an informal public execution by a mob in order to punish an alleged wrongdoer, to punish a transgressor, to intimidate somebody who may or may not have been convicted of a crime.

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So what about Mary Turner? Who is Mary Turner? Mary Turner was a victim of the lynching rampage of 1918. Mary Turner is a 21 year old woman that had the temerity to complain when her husband was lynched as part of the group of 11 people who were killed at that time. They targeted her because she spoke out against the murder of her husband, who was wrongfully murdered by this mob.

This mob watched by several hundred people witnessed her infant child be cut out of her belly, stomped to death, and she witnessed it too. Then she was killed. So I just think it's important to remember these things and to say them out loud lest we forget. On March 28, 2022, legislation the Emmett Till Antilynching Act was presented to President Biden for signature.

It could be tempting to say, "Oh, well, that doesn't matter. That doesn't happen anymore." But actually, it is still happening. There are still people disappearing. Between the year 2000 and today, there are some nine people who have been found hanging and died under suspicious circumstances, which leads investigators to believe that these people were in fact lynched as well.

So it matters because it's still happening today. I don't want to ever suggest that this is an African American problem or a Black people problem. It is not. While it's true that most reports of lynching usually involved African American male victims, it's an epidemic that is extended to communities of color including Chinese-Americans and Mexican-Americans. Just as it happened in 1918, in Georgia in January of 1918, there was a mass lynching in which Texas Rangers and ranchers destroyed an entire Mexican-American village. An entire village.

So it's important for us to remember and to stand for justice. We celebrate Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson. We celebrate senators who keep the conversation going, who make it unlawful to commit such crimes, and we celebrate people who stay inside the work.

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One such person who is staying inside the work is my friend Brittany Gooden. Brittany is doing a film to shine the light on the lynching of her uncle Izell Parrott who died some 15/16 years ago in upstate New York. Izell Parrott.

How is Brittany shining the light on her uncle's death? She has a film that she's working on and producing and seeking funding for. Her film is called *Strange Bird*. If you want to learn more about it or support her effort for justice for *Strange Bird*, go to her website. It's strange-bird.com, and you can get more information about Britney's lovely uncle and current efforts to investigate his suspicious death.

Now, I promised you at the beginning of the podcast that there would be tips and tools for the revolutionaries among us. In order for us to keep the revolution going, our work going, we need to keep an open mind. This work too is a form of vision work.

So when we get wearied, and it's likely that you will get weary doing this kind of work, I invite you to go back to why you started. Think about why you started this journey. Think about who it is that you hope to serve and the difference you hope to make. I also encourage our listeners to stay open, stay flexible, and be willing to change the way you serve. To not get stuck to consider another way to serve.

All over the country people are changing the way they serve. Some people are forming for purpose or nonprofit organizations. Some people are changing which side they serve on. Perhaps you've been a lifelong public defender, and now you're considering running for office. Perhaps it's running for judge, running for the school board, running for the local prosecutor. There are a number of ways that we can continue to serve.

When we open our minds to other possibilities, we open the field of possibilities for everyone. You can just change your mind, change sides. I

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have friends who are now working as advisors to local prosecutors. I know prosecutors who have gone out publicly and told more information, revealed more information from the inside about how it works to work with law enforcement, and what justice looks like.

That's just in the criminal justice arena, but there are people switching it up in all areas of life where we have an opportunity to serve. Whether it's how you serve as a social worker or an educator or medical service provider. It's important that we stay flexible and not get stuck in our ways. It's also important that we continue to have ways to care for ourselves so that we can stay inside this effort and keep our revolutionary work going.

So whether you are a frontline activist or someone working behind the scenes, it's important to practice good self-care. What does good self-care look like? Well, first of all, I think it's great to have tips and tools you can use in the battlefield, when you're feeling really particularly stressed.

Whether you're in a courtroom, in a hearing, doing an important meeting, making a presentation. If you find yourself feeling a little anxious, a little anxiety, it's important to be able to do something in that moment to calm your nervous system. To tell the body everything is okay. I've got this.

You all know my favorite tip is to return to the breath. We can always remember to breathe. When you find that your breath is getting a little bit anxious, I invite you to stop, pause, close your mouth, take a breath in through the nose, hold it, and then blow out through the mouth as if blowing through a straw. In through the nose and out through the mouth as if blowing through a straw.

Another thing you might consider that seems kind of counter intuitive is called progressive muscle relaxation. What you do is you tighten your muscles and then relax them. By concentrating all that energy, it relaxes the body. All you need to do is tighten and release your muscles.

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Start with your feet, clench your toes, and press your heels towards the ground. Squeeze tightly for a few breaths, then release. Now flex your feet in pointing your toes up towards your head and hold that for a few seconds, then release. You can do this exercise going all the way up your body. You could try it just right now with me.

Take your hand, tighten your hand into a fist, hold it, hold it, and then release it. I know that when I do it I feel a slight tingle through my body. But it's a great way to acknowledge that you're feeling some anxiety, take action, and then release it.

Now, these are just something quick that you can do to offer yourself some comfort or self-soothing. The last thing that I would suggest to you is more of an ongoing practice. It's just taking good self-care. These are the basic things that we all talk about and aspire to do on a regular basis.

But I'm going to remind you again right now, get enough sleep. All of us need a certain amount of sleep. I find that I need at least seven hours sleep. Eight is usually too much for me, but seven is perfect. Then I feel good. Some people need even more. But getting sufficient sleep can help you with concentration, with your memory, and managing the stress of the revolution.

Good nutrition, eat in moderation. Eat mindfully, not mindlessly, but eat mindfully while you're eating. Make good, healthy choices with your food. Consume enough water, hydrate the body. Whenever you're having a headache, a great thing to do is just drink a glass of water. The final tip of the day is get sufficient exercise. Five days a week, 30 minutes a day will do the body good. Will do your mind good.

So that's it. Those are my self-care tools for revolutionaries, activists, and people who love people. In order to serve you have to take good care. Over a hundred years were invested in passing antilynching legislation. What

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does that tell us? Persistence beats resistance every day of the week. It's our job to stay inspired.

How do we do that? We manage our anxiety. We acknowledge it when we're experiencing it, returning to our breath, or we can practice progressive muscle relaxation. On a daily and regular basis, practice good self-care, sufficient sleep, good nutrition, moving the body, and hydrating the body.

Well, we've reached the end of the *Unlock Your Life* podcast. This is episode number 39. If you've enjoyed today's show and don't want to worry about missing an episode, you can subscribe and follow the show wherever you listen to podcasts. If you haven't already, I'd love it if you could leave a rating and review and let me know what you think about it.

Here's what one reviewer recently said. She tracked me down on social to share this with me, and I was so excited. "We all know there are a lot of podcasts out there. However, I found out about Lori A. Harris's podcast in an amazing podcast group I'm in called Lunch, Grow, and Explore Your Podcasts. When I came across her podcasts, I felt encouraged and enlightened at the same time. I love how she talked about Harriet Tubman's leadership ability. I also liked how she shared how we should befriend our fears, and that was very powerful. This podcast is special and should definitely be listened to. I'm pressing the replay button now."

Thanks, Angie. I appreciate your support. That's it for this week's episode of *Unlock Your Life* podcast. Remember, it's your life. Make it a great one.

Thanks for listening to this episode of the *Unlock Your Life* podcast. If you want more information on how you can transform your life and do it quickly, visit loriaharris.com. See it on the next episode of the *Unlock Your Life* podcast.