

PARENTING DECOLONIZED PODCAST



Parenting Decolonized Podcast Ep #52: Decolonize Your Spirituality & Raise Liberated Free-Thinkers with Ally Henny

Yolanda Williams: This podcast is brought to you by the Rona, Racism and Radical Parenting Virtual Conference happening on September 23rd to 25th. It is designed to help equip you with the knowledge and practical advice you need to manage your triggers, yell less, connect more and raise liberated, emotionally well children. Click the link in the show notes for early bird registration and save \$40 off your ticket today.

Hey fam! Today's episode is recording from my Conscious Parenting for Social Justice Conference that happened back in June of 2021. I am going to be speaking with speaker and writer Ally Henny to discuss how to decolonize our spirituality and raise liberated free thinkers. I just want to give you all the taste of what to expect from the Rona, Racism and Radical Parenting Conference happening in September. So don't forget to click the link in the show notes and save \$40 off our early bird ticket. With that said, let's dive right into this amazing conversation with Ally.

Yolanda Williams: I have been sharing all of your amazing content so much on my page, people probably are like, what's going on? Is she over here? Promoting for Ally? I am just like 'no, she says the truth all the time!' And I have to always bid it up. Every time I see something, I am just like yes, I have to share it, I don't care if I just shared a moment ago, I am sharing it again.

Ally Henny: That's so (indiscernible) (00:01:23)

Yolanda Williams: And you tell us a little bit about your personal history and how you came into this work.

Ally Henny: Yeah, so that's actually like a really long complicated story, but the Cliffs Notes version of it is I grew up in (indiscernible) (00:01:37) Missouri in a predominantly white town, so I grew up, you know, experiencing, seeing, having the family history of, I saw a lot of racism. And so as I went off to college and moved into doing things as an adult, those experiences were something that I always carried with me on top of my family, my mother in particular was very intentional about educating me about who I was as a person and was very,

very intentional about centering blackness in our home and in our experience and so I grew up with a tremendous amount of self love in terms of my blackness, but then being in a world surrounded by whiteness, where that was in conflict and so I am a Christian minister, I have a degree in – I am a Master of Divinity, it's kind of like, this all makes that sounds like really super duper, it tends to. Basically, all that means is that I went to school for like two and a half – three years to, of intensive study of The Bible in particular which you can go, you can get a Master of Divinity in any religion. But my faith is Christianity and so that is sort of my world. I have pastored, I have been leaders in churches, I lead a religious non-profit organization and so all of that, my faith intersects with my work and so kind of how I can do that in this work is really, I have been speaking about race for a very long time, but really in earnest, since about 2014 whenever my oldest daughter was just a few months old, the tragedy happened in Ferguson and of course, I lived in Virginia at that time, but I am a native Missourian and so Missouri is home, I am from the Kansas City area and the St. Louis is home for me.

And so those – that whole thing was deeply personal for me right, and so I just really felt the need to speak up about what I was seeing happening in Ferguson and even particularly some of the responses that I was seeing in particular some of my fellow Christians, some of the horrible responses that I was seeing, and so that, one thing sort of led to another and it kind of has become a gig, it's not something that I really intended to become a gig, but it just sort of happened, I just launched the Facebook page that you were referencing, I launched that, I guess it's three years ago, now three years ago in March. March of 2018 I launched that and that was really just because I really got sick of white people like coming into my personal page and showing their tale and so I was just like, well, like I will just start this page, like I don't want to have to moderate my own comment section. So I am just going to start this page and like, you know, maybe like 50 of my closest friends will like read what I say, who care and maybe will share it with their friends. It just has snowballed. It is not really anything that I have pursued or have tried to build like, I am going to market myself or put myself out there, just have – it's just something that has built and so I just have decided to steward the platform that I have and to use the voice that I have and that's why I am here.

Yolanda Williams: You know, I think we actually, I probably got started months after you and I think people are just looking for truth and that's what you represent, you know, on your platform and so thank you for that. You know, as we reconcile the things we have learned in religious institutions, religious dogma, individual beliefs of church leadership with our conscience telling us there is a problem with different perspectives, so like homosexuality and like hierarchies of power, like how do we navigate this, because this is my personal journey right now as I am on this decolonizing journey, and like as a Christian how do I navigate all the different messages that we are told that we need to follow to be good Christians?

Ally Henny: Yeah, you know, I will speak kind to some of my own personal journey because I think that we really get in trouble whenever we take our personal journey and try and to be like I have only lived my life, right, like I have only lived in my context. And so I think that we get in trouble whenever we try to prescribe for other people who have (indiscernible) (00:06:19) experience, have a different context, whatever, what they should or should not do. So I will just speak from my own perspective and I think that one of the things that helped me was being able to have the privilege to study for my undergrad at a public university that was a little, a liberal arts school and also had a public affairs mission. And I was also a Religious Studies minor, I actually had enough credits that I could have declared the major, but I did not like the pressure of having a double major and I think that there is like maybe like one little other like portfolio or a project that they wanted Religious Studies majors to like do and I was like I am not doing any more work, what I have to do as a Psychology major, Religious Studies minor.

So I had the privilege of being able to just study religion, so those experiences I think kind of helped me to be able to navigate some of these things, so I am really just like in plain English, my college thought that it was important for people to learn a variety of subjects, like I had to take courses across a variety of subjects in a variety of schools within the college, so it wasn't just all psychology classes. I had to take classes in biology, I had to take chemistry classes, I had to take classes in the Humanities, I had to take business class, I had to take a couple of classes in the College of Business. So there was this kind of just well-rounded aspect of it and with their public affairs mission, one of the things that they really emphasized was that there is a big broad world where people have a lot of different world views and so how do we be good citizens within all those different world views and how do we interact with one another understanding that people come from different world views.

And so that was something that I just had in my formative years and of course that's a privilege, you know, that being able to be educated, being able to go to, have a scholarship, being able to go to college and that type of stuff, you know, I definitely want to put that out there, but I mentioned that because I think that that was something that was critical for me in my formative years, and I must say to everybody, you know, that you have to go to college, you have to go to public affairs university or whatever to have this, but I think that what that did was even being in religious spaces that would have gleaned maybe more fundamentalist or whatever, it sort of inoculated me in some ways like from that level and brand of fundamentalism, where it's like, you know, kind of, you know, my way or the highway to hell or whatever, it is like I was able to realize, you know, these are my beliefs that I am holding, but there are other people that think other things and that are, and that are living their lives and are faithful to what's true to them.

And so like, you know, like I don't have the monopoly on that sort of things and so you know, I learned that there, so then being a religious studies minor, taking a lot of – I took a lot of courses where we – they want theology courses minor because it is a public university, it wasn't – they

were trying to get you saved or whatever, it was just talking about The Bible, or it was talking about religion, it was talking about different religious figures, different religions whatever, and so I think that having that experience, I learned the difference between what is contained in a religious text versus how it's understood by the people who are in power within that religious context, versus what the practitioners of the religion might teach versus just kind of like what is kind of the folk version of the religion and so oftentimes like institutional, with Christianity, there is kind of what, you know, whatever people's denomination or whatever people's church or institution might teach, but then within that and it has always been true that there are kind of almost folk beliefs within that and there are practices that people maybe retain as they convert from another religion or whatever and they maybe retain certain practices, but just Christianize them and that is actually something that has happened like throughout Christianity.

And so oftentimes what happens is that like my individual personal faith and belief might not precept upon precept, line upon line agree with whatever it is that my denomination or my church or another religious leader or whatever believes and that's okay. And I think where a lot of people get in trouble is that and this is I think part of like colonized thinking even in Christianity, is that in any religion, but I am going to speak to what I know, specifically as Christianity, I think that what contributes to this colonized thinking is that it's like we have all the answers. You know, we know everything. We have the answer to all – we are the answer to all and it doesn't appreciate nuance, it doesn't appreciate nuance colonized religious thinking, it doesn't appreciate that there might be different interpretations, there might be different understandings of religious text and so oftentimes, people's religion gets really super colonized, or gets really super in love with wielding power over people and I think that abuse of power is like the root of colonization, right.

And so oftentimes, whenever religion excludes people, it excludes people that it wants power over, or that it thinks that, well, you know, this group of people, women, gay people, Africans, people, that are of other thinking, that those people are inferior in some way or there is something wrong with them and so we are going to exercise power over them. And so all that to say within the journey that I made and that I am still making in some way or another is holding true, holding very tightly to what I believe to be true about my deity and about my religion's sacred text, and at the same time, be okay with mystery and being okay with embracing 'I don't have all the answers' and my religious text actually doesn't claim to have all the answers and I can be okay with that, that those are claims that other people have placed on, that they are claiming on the text, but the text itself actually doesn't, it doesn't really make those claims in the way or there might be certain claims maybe that it kind of sort of makes, but those are understood, those are understood, they are kind of a culturally coated way or whatever, but realizing that I can hold tight to things that are benefiting me, that are building me up, while not having to take on things that the more harmful or difficult aspects of those things. So I think

that one of the dangers of religious fundamentalism and I say religious fundamentalism and not just Christian fundamentalism because fundamentalism can happen at any context.

Yolanda Williams: Yeah, yeah.

Ally Henny: One of the dangers that I think in that is that it asks you to check your brain at the door, right. So it asks you to kind of be like, well, okay, you just have to check your brain at the door and you have to believe the certain way, even if it goes against what your intuition is saying, even if it defies common sense, this is what the dogma says, this is what the people in power tell you that you have to believe and how that –

Yolanda Williams: That's blind obedience.

Ally Henny: Yeah, just kind of blind obedience to somebody's interpretation of what religion says that should be and that's a problem, right, so like I think that oftentimes the issue is, is that people's dogma will miss like some of the broader concepts of what religious texts or a faith tradition or whatever is teaching. So again, Christianity, that's what I know, so that's what also I will speak to, you can – if you are from a different faith tradition, you can certainly apply this where and how it needs to be applied. But Jesus Christ actually taught about this in The Bible, where he talks about how there were religious people who approached their faith in a certain way and they missed some of like the weightier matters of law. He said he had kind of actually made in the text is actually like a joke there when he talks about like how sometimes religious people will strain in that or will weigh a bunch of stuff out, but they will miss the weightier matters of the law. Like they will miss the weightier matters of what God is actually trying to say and so to then take that back to some of the issues that you brought up, is I think that in my own journey what I have realized is that people often say, will often "cherry pick" scriptures out of The Bible and will cherry pick those scriptures to oppress people.

Yolanda Williams: Spare the rod and spoil the child which (indiscernible) (00:15:42) in The Bible you all, patches is not in The Bible, but they cherry pick that one.

Ally Henny: Not in the way it's not in there, in the way that we would think that it would be in there. But there is like this whole thing where people will kind of cherry pick and will use those things to oppress people and so if they don't bid it or miss, they will be like okay, well, you know, there is a scripture over here, so many times we will refer to (indiscernible) (00:16:08) whereas it is like oh, there is this scripture over here that says that women shouldn't get to talk in church so women can't be preachers and well, there is a scripture over here that alludes to some type of practice, some type of sexual practice or whatever, so that must mean that gay people are sinners, and they cherry pick those things and then say, but then they miss the scripture's overall message, of love!

Yolanda Williams: Right.

Ally Henny: And so for me, what I have chosen to do in my own journey is to take what I think is a core central tenet of the scripture. Now, there might be other people, that will be like, oh, no, no, she interpreted that scripture wrong, it (indiscernible) (00:16:47) what it is, but what I have chosen to do is I have chosen to look at my religious texts and studied my religious texts and I have spent years and paid my people a whole bunch of money to be able to look at this text and know how to read it, interpret this text for myself. And what I have come to a conclusion is that one of the central themes of The Bible is love and is justice. And so I have chosen to emphasize that in my work. I have chosen to hold that. And so all this other stuff and all this other debating about who gets to marry whom and who gets to preach and who gets to have sex with whom, I really don't care about that. So I care about loving people and so loving people leads me to love my queer, my transgender, my people, my Muslim, my Jewish neighbors.

Yolanda Williams: Yeah.

Ally Henny: You know, it's revolutionary, right? But that's really – that's really just the journey that I have been on and that might sound – some of that might sound contradictory to embracing the mystery, but I don't think that is in contradiction at all. I can say, you know what, I do not have all of the answers. I don't know why this scripture is here this way, I don't know, I have some ideas that can maybe interpret as to why, but I don't know, the thing doesn't tell me why the thing says the thing, I can only guess why the thing says the thing. So it's a mystery, I have no idea, but I can lean into that I believe that God's overall characteristics are for love and justice and not hatred. And not bigotry and not whatever. So again, taking, holding onto what is good, in my faith and what's good in my faith tradition and then tossing all that other junk in the trash. Like we don't need that.

Yolanda Williams: Well, you know, I run into people, I am sure you do all the time. When it goes back to that, like we were talking about children and how they are the most oppressed group of people who, you know, it is legal to hit them, it's legal to do all, so dehumanize them and they use The Bible as the tool to be able to do that, and that's what, yeah, like you said, that The Bible preaches love and not to go ahead, you know, to smack your kid upside the head with this rod. Yet, that is what people choose to hang on to and it's people who don't even go to church, like you all even don't go, you all don't read The Bible, but that's the one passage that you are just stuck on, you know. As you wear probably (indiscernible) (00:19:36) you are not supposed to be wearing.

Ally Henny: Right.

Yolanda Williams: You know what I am saying? So like picking and choosing and in order to have power over these small people and so I kind of want to ask you, let me see, as you mentioned, the point is that people can use this power over someone and usually it's about submission, right, they are trying to figure out how to get someone to submit to something. So if we're – from what people interpret, a wife is not equal to a husband, a child is not equal to their parent. So what do we need to understand about the dynamics in relationships and how they impact our parenting from a religious perspective, especially as we decolonize our spirituality?

Ally Henny: Yeah, that is a really good question. So I don't think that it is possible to raise liberated children if everyone in your home isn't free, like just period.

Yolanda Williams: Right.

Ally Henny: Now that's an easy answer. But then there gets to be kind of like the harder question, oh okay, well how do we honor our faith traditions, how do we understand our faith traditions and how do we hold on to things that might be important to us or whatever. And so I would say that first of all, people need to examine what their beliefs are. So like this idea, like you need to examine what your religious belief system actually says, because I can tell you that as far as Christianity goes, a lot of the things so there is a – first that people always talk about like how, you know, children are supposed to obey your parents, but (indiscernible) (00:21:09) guess obeying your parents was also one of the 10 commands, but then that has been expounded on the Book of Ephesians, where it's children obey your parents as unto the Lord, but then it turns it around, it says parents do not provoke your children to wrath.

Yolanda Williams: Come on!

Ally Henny: So you touched on this earlier that a lot of the mindset behind this is power, is that we have been taught and it has just been passed along on down because homes, in that I am talking specifically with Christianity that a lot of times, people talk about you know how home is the first church. And that's true but at the same time, what people often mean by that is, well, we are going to take our colonizing principles and you need to make sure that you aren't acting those in your home, first. So it makes it easier for them to submit to the church. That's where that comes from. Now, I think that we can re-appropriate that and say, you know, our kids, like our – if you are a person of faith, your faith tradition, what is important to you, that's something that you are going to impart and you are going to and you are going to pass on to your children and I think that there is that, you know, your children also should be able to exercise agency, right, and decide there is going to be a point where they might decide, you know what, actually this set of beliefs doesn't fit me, maybe something else. There might be a point when they say,

oh, hey, I love this and this is part of who I am, this is part of who I am too, and so I don't think that we should shy away and all from if you are a spiritual person raising your children in your own spirituality, I don't think that we should shy away from that at all, right. But oftentimes, what people do with this colonized mindset that people have, that people with decolonization and they make it about parents wielding power over children, so then you know, you grow up and you become the parents and so then you decide to wield power over your children and it just becomes cycles of abuse and power.

So something that I want to challenge us to do is your faith should not be a cudgel, right, like your faith should not be something that you use to physically beat your children, literally beat your children, psychologically beat your children, you should not, like that's not the business. Faith is something that should be, I believe, it should be something that enhances your life, it should be something that builds your life, it should be something that makes you a person of peace, that makes you a person of justice, that makes you a person that is seeking wholeness and wellness, that's what faith is for, and so you can't be, you can't expect to decolonize your faith, you can't expect to decolonize your parenting if you are a spiritual person, you can't expect to do that and then approach your children, approach your spouse with the mindset of trying to wield power over them, because like I said, the root of colonization is abuse of power.

And so if we are going to then approach our children, abusing power, now that doesn't mean, but like the way that I see it, because I have a 4-year-old and 4-year-olds, each of my kids, I have two kids, I have a 7-year-old and a 4-year-old right now, 3 was a difficult age for my 7-year-old, 4 has proven to be a difficult age for my 4-year-old just in terms of like, hey, like there are rules that you need to follow, there are things that will keep you safe, like you have to pee in the toilet, you can't just pee anywhere in the house. Like so what we try to do is because my 4-year-old is also – she didn't – like my 7-year-old started saying 'why', she started out with 'how', but she would ask how but she meant why, she was doing that too, everything was how? how? Then she learned that the word was why so she started doing 'why', so she did that probably up until she was like 4 or 5, and then she stopped. My 4-year-old didn't start doing it until like she was like 3-1/2-4, she has made for lost time. Everything, everything on earth is why! Her whys have whys.

And we try to do with her is it's not just like, oh well, because I said so, but I do, listen, it is just like, you know, I told you to do this, so like I told you because I told you to not pee on the floor, so don't pee on the floor please. There is sometimes, there's some moments where it's like, okay, I can't go into this like extensive explanation, I just asked you to do it please, please do it. And then I always try to make a point where I do that, always like a point to explain later to say this is why I asked you to do this later, but in a moment, I am not able to explain. But something that we try to do with our kid, something that we try to do with our kids is not to just be like why I did this because I wanted you to do this, because we said so. But to really kind of

emphasize that it's, we love you, and so we think, like we don't want you to put your finger on the light socket, because we love you, and that could hurt. Like we don't want you, we don't want you to run through the house because you could run into the granite countertop and that juts out in the kitchen and it could hurt you and so we don't want you to run around that corner.

And so we try to really enact that in a way that is loving and not then again, any thought process you can turn it into something that's weird and abusive. It can get weird and abusive and toxic and stuff like that, but we try to examine, we try to examine that and try to give our children power, there's some things that like you can't give your 3-year-old power to like do whatever because they are just going to like eat, they are going to drink all the orange juice and they are going to have a tummy ache and they are going to eat every single package of goldfish and they are going to get a tummy ache and they are going to pool it all (indiscernible) (00:27:08) and they are going to, you know, some things you give your kids power to do, right? But we try to –

Yolanda Williams: Make their own choices.

Ally Henny: Empower them, and help them to make their own choices and to see what, there are some things that's, yeah, does not have a natural consequence and stuff to it.

Yolanda Williams: Yeah.

Ally Henny: Like, okay, I guess you are not going to do that again or maybe you should do that again, or maybe you know, you hurt somebody's feelings, that's not cool. But yeah, but we try to power, try to parent in a way that isn't about wielding power and revolving over our kids and you know, I am the one that said this and whatever, we apologize to our kids, we tell our kids when I read a stuff wrong, like, oh, I was wrong about that, oh, you know, I misspoke there, or you know what, because I am not perfect, yeah, you know, I was really frustrated at this point and I raised my voice and that wasn't a kind thing for me to do and I am sorry.

Yolanda Williams: I feel like when we do that with our children, we are humanizing as small children look at us almost as if we are Gods. We do control their very life, you know, and they depend on us and that's why when we wield that power egregiously, it's so offensive to me. You know, with small children because they have no choice, but to depend on us, you know. And we have the responsibility to learn how to wield our power in a way that empowers them, in a way that does not dehumanize them, but also humanizes us because for some people, the parenting power is, it feels so – they are like that's some more power I have got in the world, so that's, you know, that's what I am really going on this one.

Ally Henny: Yeah, and you know, something that I will say specifically speaking to the African-American context, the black American context, is I think that oftentimes black

American parents because historically the only place that we have been able to wield power is among – in the church and among those in our homes, that there are a lot of toxic power dynamics, toxic paradigms that I have seen among black parents, particularly black fathers and that's not to pick on black men at all, whatsoever, but there is like these weird kind of expectations that they have for how their children should interact with them or how whatever. This is the last thing I will say, but this is a perennial conversation that comes up on the internet. It is like, it is something that people will just like recycle and like it comes up once every 18 months, you probably know (indiscernible) (00:29:32) say, but the whole thing about, well, who gets the plate first.

Yolanda Williams: Oh my god! It just recycles!

Ally Henny: It just recycles and it is like we have – we negroes have debated about this, we have been debating on this on the internet forever. Like, Jesus, fight another thing. Because I don't even engage in those types of discussions because I think that they are ignorant, but I will say this because this is a parenting thing, I feel like that that discussion is inherently flawed because it's not about who comes first, it's not about sliding somebody, it's not about whose power, it's not about whatever, I think that a lot of the premise – that the conversation often relies on faulty premises. And to be like in my house, there are days that like I am the one, the first one who gets my plate and there are days that my partner is the first one to get his plate. There are days that the kids are the first ones to get their plate and it's just – and it's not like, oh, like, I am symbolically the first person to get my plate so I am the most important. It's – it was time to eat, I called these people to eat, they are down stairs, watching Peppa Pig, they are doing whatever, everyone wasn't going to eat, I am hungry!

Yolanda Williams: Well, apparently, it has some cultural context, you know, when these men, well, after reconstruction times, that was the only time where they could feel like they were the king of something, right, so they will come home even though women worked a lot, the reconstruction work, sometimes the only ones who were working were black women, but they will walk into the house, it was like, let me, let me make this man feel like he has some kind of power, like he is the king, because out in the world, he is dehumanized and abused and all this other stuff, but you know what, so are children and so are women.

Ally Henny: Right.

Yolanda Williams: To a greater degree. And so I think what happens is that we have these, I can't stand that conversation either because for me it goes into patriarchy, right. It goes into that system, and we all know that that's an abusive system, and so like I am kind of on this thing now where it is kind of like name that system, well, when we started talking about these things, you got to look at how, what system is this investing in. What is it keeping for and why and

who benefits, who benefits from this discussion because it really at the end of the day, how does it make or break you if you don't get your plate first. Like (indiscernible) (00:32:20) are a man, so what does you getting a plate have to do with manhood? These weird associations are harmful, especially when it comes to women and children because when you cannot conform to them, then sometimes there is violence, you know.

Ally Henny: Yeah, and I think that the plate example is a great example of how our culture often will take symbols of things and imbue those symbols with an undue amount of power and then hold other people hostage.

Yolanda Williams: Right.

Ally Henny: To those symbols and so then, so that conversation, it gets on my, it works my nerves, but I think that it is very revelatory in terms of who answers and how they answer is very revelatory about people's politics and about people's whatever and so it just – I hate the conversation.

Yolanda Williams: Are you a (indiscernible) (00:33:20) parent or educator hanging on by a thread? Has this pandemic turned you to the parent you always told yourself you wouldn't want to be? Are your kids showing signs of stress, anxiety and acting out more than ever? Well, friend, same, I am in the same boat as you and this weed is taking on water, we need help. That's why I decided this year's Parenting Decolonized Conference be a remix of my first one. The Rona, Racism and Radical Parenting Conference, the Remix, happening on Sep 23rd to 25th is a multi-day fully virtual conference focused on a parent to parent (indiscernible) (00:33:52) to recalibrate from (indiscernible) (00:33:54) in order to form deeper connections with their kids, I have lined up 20 plus educators, parent coaches, mental health professionals, and social justice leaders to help you get your mind right and parent with intention and for liberation. My past conferences have helped over 3000 people become the conscious parents they have always wanted to be. You are not only, have more grace and patience for your kids, and for yourself too. Click the link in the show notes for early bird registration and save \$40 off your ticket today.

I am waiting for the (indiscernible) (00:34:26) questions I have for you from the audience. In the meantime, I just want to ask you when we think about, you know, the whole point of this is collective reimagining, right. And your particular topic is decolonizing, you know, spirituality. What does that mean?

Ally Henny: Yeah, so whenever I think of decolonizing spirituality, I think of people being able to practice their faith in a way that imbues them with meaning, that gives them a sense of pride, if that's the word, if I can use that, that gives them a sense of peace, gives them the sense of

pride, where they feel like regardless of whatever their identity is that they feel loved, that they feel acceptance, and so whenever we start to talk about decolonization then, it is also decolonizing religion to the point that it's not used to cause harm to others.

Yolanda Williams: Someone is asking, how can one decolonize Christianity when so much of it is based on evange...

Ally Henny: Evangelization?

Yolanda Williams: Yeah, which is spiritual colonism, in case for another word.

Ally Henny: Yeah, so I think that there's a lot of different ways that I can answer this question. So I think that I would challenge the assumption that Christianity is predicated on evangelization and spreading the word. Yes, I know that there is like The Great Commission, or whatever, that exists in the religious texts, but I want to challenge the notion that Christ was just like, oh, you have got to go out and spread the word in the way that people have spread the word since Constantine. Because spreading the word whenever we look at the Book of Acts, so you see it in Matthew, Mark and Luke, this idea of go out and tell people about Christ, tell people about me, tell people about what happened here. That wasn't go and tell people and make a state religion and kill the people who don't believe and do all sort of (indiscernible) (00:36:35).

Yolanda Williams: Right.

Ally Henny: And so we have to decouple spreading the good news, we have to decouple that from colonialism. And so that is something that I think is very hard to do because a lot of us, that's all we know. So to me, spreading the good news of Jesus Christ is I am doing it right now.

Yolanda Williams: Right.

Ally Henny: It's talking about my faith in a way and what it means to me. Now, I am not putting any demands on you, I am not saying, I am not going to do an (indiscernible) (00:37:06) and say, well, if you want to come, then you won't get saved, that you won't – (indiscernible) (00:37:09) in terms or whatever, I am not doing that. I am just sharing what my faith is to me. And what it means to me and in my life and in my walk. And if people decide that hey, I want what she has, or I want to know more about Christianity or whatever, cool, I am willing to sit down and talk with you about it. And if you decide that you don't want to take it, pick it up, okay cool, we are cool, like we are good. And so I think that we have to decouple it from this idea of what we see in a lot of evangelicalism, which is like now (indiscernible) (00:37:44), why do that much anymore. But going and trying to make people and to converse rather than – and

emphasize on the making rather than existing and living out your faith and people and your faith is such that people want to join your ranks and they choose to join.

Yolanda Williams: Yes. How do you balance keeping gaining trust from your child to care for them while modeling mistakes and apologizing?

Ally Henny: That's a very good question. So yeah, I guess that the easy answer is that I love my children and I listen to them, I listen to their needs, I try to listen to their desires or their wishes whatever and then also, if I make a mistake, I admit it and so like I don't say those things necessarily as opposed, like I think you can do both.

Yolanda Williams: And then how do you reconcile the problematic past and deeply entrenched atrocities done in the name of religion and still hold on to religion and social justice practices and decolonizing?

Ally Henny: Oh, that's a very good question. So I think that there is a difference between what a sacred text says and how people interpret that sacred text and then the actions that people do and people's personal practices. And so that doesn't mean that oh well, all people that went and kill – all the Christians that went and killed people who were non-Christians like, well, I can just kind of feel like, not in, and just kind of, you know, and just kind of, you know, we have got to reckon that, we have got to, excuse me we have got to talk about that. We have got to talk about that. But I think that that doesn't prevent me from – that doesn't prevent me, it maybe prevents other people, but it doesn't prevent me from also seeing the beauty of my faith and of my tradition, while also realizing that people need to be accountable for that. And the last thing that I would say on that is that Rachel Held Evans actually wrestles with some of these in her book, *Searching For Sunday*, and then also she has a book called *Faith Unraveled*. It used to be called like something about *Monkey Town* or whatever, but I think that her new publisher changed the title to *Faith Unraveled* and she wrestles with some of these things in a beautiful way in the audio book because you could hear, she passed two years ago, where you get to hear her voice on the audio books.

Yolanda Williams: I am going to take that our myself because it is something I wrestle with a lot as I do this decolonizing work, so thank you for that. And the last question we will ask you is what does the reimagined world look like to you?

Ally Henny: A world in which everyone is free, everyone is cared for, everyone is loved, everyone doesn't want for anything, they have their needs met, yeah, that's what I think. It doesn't mean the world that's necessarily, you know, free of hurt and harm and whatever, but a world that is way more just and way more equitable than what we have right now.

Yolanda Williams: I really appreciate you, this has been super enlightening. Where can people find you, so we can – we are going to make sure to put everybody's information in the chat, so you know you can add to your already 100th of thousands of followers on Facebook.

Ally Henny: Yes, (indiscernible) (00:40:49). So you can find me on my Facebook page, it's just my name, Ally Henny, there's a writers' page, just like a public Facebook page, like don't try to friend me on my personal profile.

Yolanda Williams: Good.

Ally Henny: (indiscernible) (00:41:00) I would, like, but if you would file – if you do my public profile, just follow, follow or like, I forget Facebook's in the (indiscernible) (00:41:11) hit that like, follow or whatever it is, do that. I am also on Instagram as Ally Henny, I am also on Tik Tok @AllyHenny, I don't do Tik Toks very often, but sometimes I do, I did one recently. And you can also find me on Twitter as @armchaircom. The ArmchairCom is short for the armchair commentary because back whenever I could, on my Twitter account, you will limit it – that ArmchairCom was like the limit of your handle, now you can have like super long handles, but I have never changed it. But the armchair commentary is my personal blog that I don't post too enough, but it's there and you can subscribe to it, so whenever there is like a full moon and Mercury is in retrograde and Saturn is in retrograde and Uranus is like, you know, in Jupiter or whatever, or in Mars or Aquarius I would say, you could – and Uranus is in Jupiter's (indiscernible) (00:42:04) and Aquarius and whatever, I post, in these conditions, I post right, and so you will get the alerts and then I am also on Patreon, again, just go to Patreon, my name, my podcast, Combing The Roots, my website, AllyHenny.com, somewhere you are going to find something that is linking with other things of me.

Yolanda Williams: Well, thank you so much for being here with me today. I will make sure to link all that into the show notes, so we can follow you. And again, thank you, and thank you all for listening. Please make sure to leave your rating and review and until next time, keep it conscious!