

Reclaiming Our Power: Practices for Generational Healing and Growth for Black Women

By Tamara Thomas

It is said that we carry 14 generations' worth of memories stored in our DNA. That's an extraordinary and sacred connection, but for Black women, it also means we carry more than just memory. We carry our ancestors' trauma, passed down from generation to generation, layered on top of the pain we've experienced in our own lives. That makes healing not just important, but urgent.

Healing is how we begin to rewrite the story. By creating healthy environments, developing emotional regulation, and learning better coping mechanisms, we protect ourselves and our children from inherited patterns that were never ours to begin with. When we heal, we heal our bloodline—past, present, and future.

“Inherited trauma is a growing theory that explains how negative experiences of past generations can trickle down and influence the present generation through DNA,” explains Bennett.edu. “Epigenetics studies how specific structures of DNA found in offspring can be altered by trauma experienced by the parents—or even by the experiences of ancestors from centuries ago. There is also growing scientific evidence that generational trauma can have a profound impact on the lives of the BIPOC community... [meaning] the Black population in America is essentially living with chronic post-traumatic stress disorder.”

Breaking the Cycle

Generational trauma is a vicious cycle, but it's one that can be broken. Reflect on your life: your thought processes, decisions, and the patterns you observe. How do you treat yourself? How do you cope? Do you suffer in silence? Have you taken steps to change your life's trajectory, or are you continuing a role you never auditioned for? Recognize recurring themes in your family history and take the initiative to change the narrative. It didn't start with you, but it can end with you.

I'm not a professional. I'm still learning, still unlearning. Just a woman with deep curiosity and a sacred desire to heal.

Tip #1 – Lift the Veil

This is the beginning.

Lifting the veil is the moment you stop lying to yourself to stay safe. It's when you stop

romanticizing dysfunction and see things clearly for what they are and what they've always been. It's a shattering, but it's sacred. Once the veil lifts, there's no going back. Life begins again.

Be warned: it will hurt. This clarity may isolate you. You might lose relationships. You'll definitely lose illusions. Looking at yourself and your loved ones truthfully—without filters—is terrifying. But it's the most honest foundation you'll ever build on.

Reflection prompt: Where in your life are you still wearing a veil? What truth are you ready to see?

Tip #2: Learn the Lessons

Learning from the past is essential to creating a better future.

How often have you found yourself repeating patterns from your parents' lives? These recurring experiences indicate lessons unlearned. Observe your family's history to identify how generational trauma manifests. As children, we absorb what we see and experience. As adults, it's our responsibility to learn and make necessary changes. Though challenging, these experiences are meant to teach us, allowing us to ascend and evolve.

Reflection Prompt: What recurring patterns in your life mirror those of your ancestors, and what lessons are they teaching you?

Tip #3 – Cultivate Self-Awareness

Who are you outside of survival?

Self-awareness is a courageous act. Step outside of yourself and observe. Be honest about how you show up in the world. Accountability is not self-hatred, it's self-respect.

Don't be ashamed of what you uncover. We are all shaped by environments we didn't choose. The point isn't to punish yourself for what you've done to survive, it's to shift into a version of yourself that thrives.

Reflection prompt: How would your life change if you fully aligned with the person you are becoming?

Tip #4 – Change Your Environment

Healing in the same environment that broke you is almost impossible.

Certain people and places train us to shrink, tolerate dysfunction, or numb ourselves. Change your environment: physically, emotionally, spiritually and you change your life.

Yes, it's scary. But if you survived trauma, you can survive transformation. New environments can reduce stress, lift your spirit, and help you rediscover who you are outside of survival mode.

Reflection prompt: What environment or relationship is keeping you in survival?
What does peace look like for you?

Tip #5 – Deepen Your Self-Care

You are not meant to live in a constant state of urgency.

If you grew up in trauma or chaos, rest can feel foreign—almost dangerous. But you deserve softness. You deserve peace. Begin setting boundaries, even with yourself. Prioritize your rest. Learn how to self-soothe and de-stress in ways that *nourish* rather than numb.

True self-care isn't just bubble baths, it's radical reparenting. It's learning to tend to your body, soul, and nervous system with gentleness.

Reflection prompt: What does true rest feel like in your body? What small act of care can you offer yourself today?

Additional Healing Practices

Here are more practices that can support your journey. Pair each with gentle intention and honesty.

- **Prayer & Meditation**

Where are you still seeking clarity or guidance?

- **Journaling**

What emotions or memories are asking to be seen and released?

- **Somatic Movement (Yoga, Stretching, Dance)**

What feelings are stored in your body? How can you move them?

- **Open Family Dialogue**

What conversation has been avoided for too long? Are you willing to go first?

- **Therapy (EMDR, Individual or Family)**

What healing might professional support unlock for you?

- **Massage or Bodywork**

What parts of you feel heavy? How might you lighten them?

- **Positive Affirmations / Rewriting Inner Dialogue**

What would it sound like if you spoke to yourself with love every day?

If you're in the wilderness now, you won't be there forever. I promise. But healing doesn't just *happen*, it requires your participation. The good news? You've already survived the hardest part.

You are powerful. You are sacred. You are capable.

Your body, mind, and spirit deserve rest.

You deserve peace.

You deserve to flourish.

Anything outside of you that told you otherwise was never the truth.

You were a masterpiece when you were created, and you still are.

Know that you are loved.