

[Intro music]

Noelle: Whaaaaat up?!

Miranda: Welcome to The Unpacked Project

Noelle: We're your hosts-I'm Noelle

Miranda: And I'm Miranda.

Noelle: We're here to explore all things social justice. It's through casual conversations, interviews, and story telling that we hope to inspire others to take action towards a more compassionate and equitable world.

Miranda: 'Cause honestly it kinda sucks here sometimes.

Noelle: For real, we can do better people.

Miranda: Alright, let's start unpacking.

[Music plays]

Miranda: Soooo...[laughs from co-hosts] so we're starting a podcast everyone! We've been talking about it forever, it's just crazy to me that we're finally here, right? But ultimately what we're trying to do, it's so needed, and that's why we're here today-to share The Unpacked Project with you and to start having some crucial conversations. We're going to educate, share knowledge, and challenge you all to grow along with us. We know that some of what we're going to talk about this season may be hard, but we're really just here hoping to create the space for change in this world because it's so needed.

Noelle: Yeah, I mean, there's been so many things-you and I have had these conversations together. I think it's sort of what has helped our relationship grow, our friendship, so much of just being able to support each other through difficult times and especially with the climate that we're in right now with so much going on. I'm just really grateful that we have the friendship where we can do that, and now we're here doing this together.

Miranda: Yeah.

Noelle: So it just...it makes me think, how did we get to this place? You know, you really brought this team together so what was your thinking with that?

Miranda: Honestly, it came to a point where I was just tired, I was tired of posting on Instagram. I kept thinking to myself, ok what am I going to do? Posting isn't doing anything, you know? People look at it, they just swipe past your stories and they don't want to follow anymore because they don't want to hear it. And fine, you know, they have that right but it's like, what was I going to **do**? And then it turned into...ok, but I'm doing **something**, you know? I just had that moment where I was like, ok, I don't know what I want to do, but I'm going to do **something** and so I hit you up and I was like, Noelle! You care about this work... are you in?! Liiike, do you want to do something too? 'Cause I'm frustrated.

Noelle: You know I'm in.

Miranda: Right! You're like bet, I'm in, let's do something. We don't know what we're going to do but who else is with us? And so, I kind of sat on it for awhile and then I thought hmmm, Vicky?! So Vicky, for our listeners, is our Executive Producer and I used to work with her at the YMCA years ago back in San Francisco and I was like, I swear Vicky has some background in editing or something and I was like...let me just shoot her a text. So I asked her -I don't know what I want to do but I want to do something, Noelle's down and you've met her once and she's like, yeah I'm in! Ok, cool. Then I sat for a little bit and I'm like, I still don't know what we're going to do...and then Raquel-our Branding and Marketing girl-she had posted some resources and was asking if anybody knew of a platform that she could use to post some of these resources, because of what was going on she was frustrated and wanted to initiate change and educate people. And so she was like, these are some resources that I learned about back in college and I'd like to use some platform to continue doing this. And so I was like-hey Raquel - I don't know what I want to do, but I want to do *something*. Are you in? And with her background I felt like it would be a good team, and she was like yeah, definitely, let me know. And then evolved into, which I think is funny because we've always been talking about a podcast, that we ended up settling on...a podcast!

Noelle: Here we are.

Miranda: So here we are. [laughs between co hosts]

Noelle: Yeah, there's going to be really important things that we talk about this season...we are going to touch on important topics like racial injustice, women's rights, there's going to be LGBTQ issues that we talk about-making sure that we're just bringing awareness to inclusivity. You know, with all of these things that are happening right now, and we've talked about the fact that we've been quarantined, I think that that's created a situation where we're even hyper sensitive to some of these things that have happened and we don't want to sit around anymore and not talk about it. And then George Floyd happened and...it was just... we just couldn't sit idle anymore.

Miranda: No.

Noelle: And I remember that experience of us having that conversation of what do we do? And went out to the protest together, and a lot of that was me showing up for you, so what are people doing to show up? What are we doing to show that we're not OK with these things that are happening and it's been going on for a long time. But here we are and when I think about how we're sort of crafting these episodes together, Black Lives Matter is a big thing for us right now and I have all of these sound bites that go off in my head. All these headlines and all of these things that just feel overwhelming. So let's just take some time actually to reflect on all of these things that have been happening, let's listen to this clip together and then let's reflect and see where our thoughts are.

[Sound clip begins...]

President Obama-“We need to recognize that this is not just an issue for Ferguson, this is an issue for America. But what is also true is that there are still problems and communities of color aren't just making these problems up. “

News anchor 1 speaks-“There are new developments in the death of George Floyd, the unarmed black man in Minneapolis who died in police custody”

News anchor 2 speaks-“Now showing a man named Eric Garner being taken down by mostly plainclothes police officers while being placed under arrest. One of the officers employed a chokehold; moments later while on the ground, after complaining he couldn't breathe, he was dead.”

Black Lives Matter chants

News anchor 3 speaks-“Supporters are showing up for trans lives too. So far this year, at least 16 black trans people have been killed in the US, like Tony McDade, a Black trans man shot and killed by police.”

News anchor 4 speaks-“No justice, no peace are some of the signs outside that Sanford FL courtroom. At this hour you're watching the special edition of 2020-George Zimmerman found not guilty in the murder of Trayvon Martin.”

News anchor 5 speaks –“An Ohio Grand Jury today declined to indict 2 White Cleveland Police officers. Timothy Lohmann and Frank Garmback in the shooting death of 12 year old Tamir Rice.”

News anchor 6 speaks- “Thousands march in cities from Los Angeles to Washington DC, taking a stance against police brutality. The City Council in Minneapolis is announcing the intent to dismantle the city's police force.”

News anchor 7 speaks-“Students at Block High School, in rural Louisiana, say conditions at their school are so bad that they're struggling to get an education.”

Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez speaks- “This is not an elitist issue, this is a quality of life issue. You want to tell people that their concern and their desire for clean air and clean water is elitist. Tell that to the kids in the South Bronx which are suffering from the highest rates of childhood asthma in the country. Tell that to the families in Flint.”

News anchor 8 speaks- “The Department of Education Civil Rights division released a report indicating that Black students are more likely to be suspended from US public schools even as tiny as preschool.”

News anchor 9 speaks-“Bias on the Bench-an in depth analysis shows Blacks are being given longer prison sentences than Whites in Florida, even if they commit the same crimes.”

Sharon Content speaks-“It's traumatic to a community when disproportionately, there is an absence of men in the community because so many of them are serving such long sentences.”

Ta-Nehisi Coates speaks-“I think our criminal justice system is working as intended. It is only broken to the extent that our society is broken.”

[Sound clip ends]

Miranda: So, one word that comes to mind when you hear all that?

Noelle: For me, I think of the word silence, which may be ironic for people who know me really well, 'cause I'm not typically silent- I always have something to say. But I mean that in two ways, the noun and verb. There's just been silence for far too long; from the White community, from these powerful societal systems that we have, right? The police, our government, these groups of people that hold power in our society and it's just like, how long do Black communities need to literally say stop killing us, stop inciting violence on us? And then what's the response? It's just silence. It's just ignoring some of these things that have been happening, and this isn't new, these things have been happening. And what's the expectation, that Black communities are supposed to be silent? That they're not supposed to be speaking up and saying this isn't right? And it shouldn't even have to take that, it should take all of us, but especially our White communities that hold power and these organizations and power structures that are running things here. It takes them to be a part of this dialogue and it takes the willingness to confront our history, acknowledge these truths that are uncomfortable but have created these injustices that keep happening against marginalized groups. And I'm really hoping that this podcast will encourage people to take some action so that the violence and oppression against these communities can then be silenced- it needs to end. So, I don't know but that's where I go with it. What about you?

Miranda: You know, I listened to that clip multiple times and I just felt so much and it was really hard for me to come up with just one word that kind of put it all together. You know at first I thought tired, maybe exhausted, but I feel like those words don't take into consideration the anger, the sadness, the questions or honestly sometimes they hate that I feel because these injustices, like you said, are still happening. You know, I grew up remembering my parents talking about this, and my mom talking about how her grandmother and great grandmother were experiencing these things and I'm just like, what the hell people? You know, it's overwhelming. And then I came to why- why is this still happening? Why do people think it's OK with what they're seeing? Why can't humans be compassionate? I think that sometimes folks believe that being a nice or kind person is enough, but it doesn't make you anti-racist or anti anything for that matter and they think that that's good enough. And I wonder why is our society so rooted in power dynamics and the continuation of holding marginalized people down. I just have so many why's, ok! So many.

Noelle: We're going to try to answer these why's.

Miranda: We're going to be exploring the answers to these questions throughout various episodes this season. But you know, I just feel like I shouldn't have to be here doing this work, and not that I don't want to but it's like, it's 2020, we shouldn't have to be doing this.

Noelle: But all those feelings that you bring up-just hearing you list that off; anger, frustration, sadness, being tired, how do you hold all that and then still function in your daily life?

Miranda: I mean, it's hard. At the start of everything with George Floyd we were in quarantine and that was a whole different experience than now, because at least I can be out and I can socialize with friends and be in these communities that support me. And in some ways you were

able to then. But ummm...it's draining, you know? I think the best way to describe it for me is death because I lost my father to Cancer. I get a call from my mom and she's like-he's going into hospice, in home hospice, and here I am in Florida. I fly to California and I see this man who's a shell of a person. Because he's at home I'm trying to support my mom and I'm helping her take care of him, I'm cleaning him, I'm feeding him, I'm giving him his medication, and you see him over the course of like a week and a half...just die in front of you, and that's a lot to deal with. And then you have to put all of that aside and deal with funeral arrangements and calling family, and all these things you just GO...go, go, go and you don't have time. That's a lot. That's autopilot and that's traumatic. And then you come back to work, to your life, and a lot of people just expect you to function as normal. I relate it back to one of my closest friends-her mother had passed from cancer a year prior to my father and when my dad died, I was like- I'm so sorry friend, I just didn't get it because I hadn't experienced that. And as close as she is to me, I tried my best and I thought I was doing what she needed, but I didn't know because that wasn't my lived experience and it wasn't my truth. So I think about people that go to war and they come back and you just don't get it, or any experience that's fairly traumatic that you just haven't experienced. That's what it's like, and then you come back to work and for me specifically, and a lot of my friends, we work in predominantly White spaces. So then after George Floyd and Ahmaud Arbery, protests, and police violence, we're in these spaces that are filled with people that don't look like us, or maybe don't support us or they try as best they can like I was saying, but there's a lack of support and understanding really built into these systems, so it's challenging.

Noelle: Yeah, and I think you bring up a good point about, well, as a White person I'm here and I will never know. In the majority of my life, probably most of it, I will never know what that feels like. Everywhere I go I see people who look like me and I never really have to think about it. You know, we've talked about that story of when I was younger when my family-we were going to move to...I think it was like South Carolina or North Carolina or something. We showed up at one of the housing developments that we were going to live in and we went to the pool community and we showed up at the pool, and it was all Black families. And I was like 7 and I remember in my head reflecting on the fact that this had never happened before, I had never been the only White person in a space. I'm so used to having teachers that look like me, I'm so used to having that comfort, right? I don't think White people reflect on how much that impacts your daily functioning of just having people around you that are like you. And then the fact that they haven't had to pay attention, that they don't realize that they're benefiting. Maybe they're just not knowledgeable about some of these racial-like you talked about-the power dynamics, and there are racial hierarchies in this country, so are we in denial about that? Have we fallen for these false narratives? This society wants to blame oppressed communities for their victimization. And they're not personally affected like you said, especially White people, right? You're not being affected in a negative way. You get to maintain your status and your power, and then maybe you're just consuming content that reinforces what you know, and then all that works in your favor and it keeps you comfortable. And it keeps you insulated. And then it's this intended cycle. It's just difficult to get out of that if it's not a conscious decision but I feel like we're just at this point where how can we stay in this bubble? We're seeing these horrific,

traumatic, real time displays of this overt racism happening in front of us, people literally being killed before our eyes?!

Miranda: And you're still in denial?

Noelle: Right? Really?!

Noelle: And this isn't new. If you've been paying attention this has been happening. Maybe with social media and against this political backdrop that we have now where there's just been this resurgence of people feeling like they have a right to be racist essentially you know, and activating some of that to regain this old social order that people had been comfortable with. But for me it's just too difficult to ignore at this point, you know? Actions speak louder than words and there's still-going back to my word of silence-there's still this pause from people who, like you said, maybe are well intending, maybe you're kind, but you're not being anti racist. So now what? We can't just say this needs to end. What are we actually doing to make this end? What sacrifices are you willing to make? What truths are you willing to confront?

Miranda: So true. I always think, what needs to change, right? Because there's this systemic side, so we're changing the infrastructure of systems in place and the barriers that we face-and for me personally, and I think for you as well, we talk about the education system a lot with our backgrounds-but really, it's everywhere. It's our healthcare system, the justice system, it's in media and marketing. I mean, it's ingrained in society. I mean the list goes on, but ultimately people first need to do a lot of interpersonal work and self reflection. They need to reflect on their biases, they need to begin to challenge their thoughts and actions as well as other people's-and like that's a big thing too-at home, at work, in relationships. I have friends whose relationships with their families are broken now because they're like-I just don't agree and I'm going to challenge this. And honestly, the list goes on.

Noelle: I think all people, all of us, no matter what race or ethnicity you are, I think we don't realize how much of what we do is driven by this subconscious processing-these things that,because we've been socialized-dependending on what time period you were born in and what culture you were brought up in, and what community you live in-we're all being fed these messages. And if you're not thinking about your thinking, then it can quite honestly be dangerous in some situations. We're going to be discussing bias in the next episode because it's something I think that's really important to think about as we go into other topics. You know it's most specifically implicit bias, and it just drives so much of not only how we see the world, but how we're seen in the world by other people as well. And I think people take for granted how passive we are, what passive consumers we are of all this content around us, not just in the immediate moment, but historically. Like how generations and cultures have been shaped by really false information and distortions by the media, by the scientific community, our educational system. I mean, when you think about what was actually science, historically, that created so this justification for racism. It's just crazy and it's purposeful, it's not by accident. We live in a society that's dictated by these pre programmed racial attitudes and it keeps the system

going whether we want to admit it or not. Whether we want to admit we benefited from it or not, you're going to hear me call attention to White people a lot in this 'cause, I mean, that's the experience I bring to it, right? I'm around a lot of white people. There's that notion of the White solidarity, right? What people feel like they can say to each-

Miranda: Oh my gosh your stories...

Noelle: Yeah, 'cause there's this assumption that-oh, you're White I'm White, you must believe what I believe-And no, actually no. So we need to start digging deep. What have we been taught to believe about Black people and other marginalized groups? What are the messages that society has sent us-for very specific reasons that we will discuss, that oppress certain groups of people and then justify that as the groups that are in power as the white majority, are you willing to share your power? Are you willing to share resources with other communities that deserve them just as much? I mean, the list goes on, but at the end of the day, who's really committed to change?

Miranda: Right, right. Well it reminds me, there's that quote that's almost become our mantra right? "Don't ever doubt a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed is the only thing that ever has." And that's Margaret Mead. We're posting it on our social media.

Noelle: It's everywhere

Miranda: We have it on our website, it's everywhere, but it's true. And our collective of four-even though you and I are co-hosts, our team of four-we're committed to change and *this* is what we're doing.

Noelle: Yeah, I mean we've already talked about so many topics just here in this episode now and there's so many things that we're going to be covering-systemic racism, bias, barriers to equity-they're not simple. You know, you said in the beginning, these conversations are going to be difficult and it takes courage to be able to confront some of these things and maybe deal with the fact- or learn how to deal with the fact-of what do you do when you get this new information that maybe is a completely different way of thinking than you had before? How do we shift when we start learning new things or when we start being able to bring on new perspectives? Really, truly listen to the experiences of other people, that quite honestly, if you haven't had relationships across racial lines, maybe you've never even realized right? Which is common, we know that for all races and ethnicities it's not uncommon that most of your circle, your inner circles, look like you or represent you in some way. So how do we be conscious to actually change that and try to expand some of that? So, I think the psychologist in me...it's hard to not try to-

Miranda: Here we go...

Noelle: have some closure with an activity, so you know there's something that I want to do to just bring closure to some of this. I think it would be good for us to write a letter to The Unpacked Project. We put this together and we want to be able to just express what we're hoping we can bring to you all out there listening to us, what we're hoping to change and what our intentions were with this project. So Miranda, would you like to go first?

Miranda: Sure.

Noelle: Ok.

Miranda: Thanks Dr. Noelle, I'll go. Alright, so here we go.

[Begins reading letter]

Dear The Unpacked Project, I've poured myself into you over the past few months, getting ready for this-to help create space for change in this world for myself and for others because I think we all deserve to know that our lives truly matter. We all deserve to be heard, to be seen, and really to know that we belong. We all deserve to have the same rights and access to resources that allow us to flourish because- call me naive- imagine a world where everyone flourished. It would be pretty amazing. But we have a lot of work to do, to get there, you know? So I want change for our listeners. I want growth for our listeners and when I look back I hope we can say that we did something here that helped make this world a better place. Hugs, hugs, and more hugs.

-Miranda

Noelle: Miranda loves her hugs. Well that was beautiful, I liked it. Ok, here's mine.

[Begins reading letter]

Dear The Unpacked Project, this is it! I can't believe it! I wish I could hug you, but since I can't I just hug Miranda instead. Which by the way, she loves.

Miranda: Exactly.

Noelle: No, but seriously I literally can't contain the excitement. I am so inspired by you. I feel this work in my soul and I am also terrified. Will people understand? Will they truly listen? Not just listen to respond but listen to learn? As Nancy Solomon says, you get in life what you have the courage to ask for, so I am asking you for this-Be unapologetic. Be true. Be outraged. Be understanding. Be the change that we want to see in the world. You are a force to be reckoned with and I will make sure of this.

-Noelle

[Miranda claps]

Miranda: Love it! All right, well that brings us to the end of our first episode.

Noelle: Yeahhhh!

[Outro music plays]

Miranda: The Unpacked Project is produced by Vicky Lee. Branding and Marketing by Raquel Avalos.

Noelle: Show us some love and be sure to like, subscribe and review our podcast. And to stay connected and up-to-date, follow us on Instagram at the_unpacked project.

Miranda: Shout out to all of our listeners who unpacked with us today, we'll see you next week.

Noelle: Peace!

Miranda: Ayye byeeee

Sound clip links:

[*Ferguson's fury over Michael Brown shooting verdict | Channel 4 News*](#)- Barack Obama at 4:04 timestamp

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZWzkgKPZWcw&t=3s&bpctr=1601508261>- News Anchor 1 at 0:00 timestamp

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U0Y3FH9Nb3I&t=39s>-News Anchor 2 at 00:00.16 timestamp

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b0AK6jOeEI4&t=13s>-News Anchor 4 at 0:00.00 timestamp

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xPEFwrUsamE&t=27s>-News Anchor 5 at 0:00.00 timestamp

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RUXG7xEWtdA&t=24s>-News Anchor 6 at 0:00.00 timestamp

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=od3s3lZWbWM&t=151s>-News Anchor 7 at 0:00.16

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XY2ApKNxa9M>- Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez at 24.27 timestamp

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rRyfXoUCyGc>- News Anchor 8 at 0:00.08 timestamp

[*Analysis: Black defendants in Florida given longer sentences than whites*](#)- News Anchor 9 at 0:00.02 timestamp

[*The Enduring Myth of Black Criminality*](#)- Ta-Nehisi Coates 0:01 timestamp

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dyp7iAvnYWY>-Sharon Content at 0:00.00 timestamp