

Sonaya, Red Hook Farms, Red Hook, Brooklyn
July 10, 2021

Rachel (00:01):

So Sonaya, why don't you start by telling me, who you are, how old you are, where you're from, where you grew up, where you live?

Sonaya (00:13):

Yeah. My name is Sonaya. I'm 16 years old. I'm Puerto Rican, so I used to live in Puerto Rico for a little while. I'm from Red Hook, but now I just come to work here.

Rachel (00:32):

You live somewhere else now?

Sonaya (00:34):

Yeah. I have to travel, but I mostly stay over here. It's only on certain days that I have to travel.

Rachel (00:39):

Okay. And how long have you been and working at Red Hook Farm?

Sonaya (00:44):

Three days.

Rachel (00:46):

Have you liked it so far?

Sonaya (00:47):

I like it. It's really good. The exercise is good. It's very nice. It's calming. When you're harvesting, the animals, the plants, it's very calming, you can relax, your thoughts are open. Whatever thoughts come, you have a conversation with yourself. It's just easy.

Rachel (01:06):

That sounds very nice. What brought you here?

Sonaya (01:11):

Well, you can say it's sort of a family tradition for my family to come here. My uncle used to work here back when he was in high school. My aunt works here now, but she's going to college, so she only works certain days. And now I'm working here.

Rachel (01:25):

Oh my God. So this is like really a family-

Sonaya (01:27):

Yeah.

Rachel (01:28):

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That's so cool. That is really neat. So Sonaya, I always start by asking this first question. When you think about global warming, what do you think about and how do you feel?

Sonaya (01:41):

When I think about global warming, I just think of all the pollution and the environment and the fact that a lot of things are changing now. And yes, we are aware of it changing, but there aren't simple solutions to these problems. There can be, but the people who are in charge of making these decisions don't really, I don't know how to explain it. I guess they're more so, they just let it be known that this is what's happening. I don't know if they're coming up with solutions to try and fix it, like the polar ice caps melting, because how can you solve that? It's really no way. Climate change is just, I think we did it to ourselves with everything that we built, the people in power might have made the wrong decisions, globally.

Rachel (02:43):

And how do you feel?

Sonaya (02:46):

It makes me feel cautious for the future, because you never know what's going to happen. All these things are changing, nobody really knows what to do. Yes, it's like the fossil fuel crisis, how we're trying to make solar panels, but those are directed towards people who have the means to reach it. This is a Red Hook Farm, look at the houses around us, it's projects, it's little houses. The main park is Coffee Park and all these parks are being shut down. The stadium is going to go down soon. The baseball field right across the street from the public pool, nobody knows what's going to happen with that. It was supposed to turn into a condo, but they might be living in a park. And the projects is being torn up, for what? Something that they say is going to happen. Little kids that go up here, don't have a park to play in, in front of their house anymore because now it's construction, just big holes in the floor. You can't even go to your building the same way you normally would because now there's construction.

Rachel (03:50):

And how do you feel when you think about those kinds of things?

Sonaya (03:53):

It makes me frustrated, because when I was little, I used to hang out in the little baby parks in front of my building. My parents would watch me because it's right there. It was right there. Now they don't have that, and it makes me feel bad. It's not like it's in my control, but it's just the fact that it's not the same anymore.

Rachel (04:14):

And when you said you feel cautious for the future, what does that mean?

Sonaya (04:17):

It just makes me worried like, what else is going to change? What else is going to turn into something new? I don't even remember what Basis was before it was Basis. And this farm, this farm did not used to look like this. It definitely used to look a lot different. And all this construction, everything is just different now and it's weird.

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Rachel (04:40):

So you're seeing your environment-

Sonaya (04:42):

Change around me, and I just, I don't know. There's nothing to do to stop it. It's not necessarily that I want to stop it. It's just, why do this now? What's the purpose of doing it now? One of my group leaders told me, "This area is contaminated." Is it contaminated just now? Or they decide to do something about it now? Why wait till now? That's why I want to know. That's why it's just, I'm worried for the future.

Rachel (05:14):

For you, all of this development around the area is part of bringing more pollution into the neighborhood and part of destroying the green spaces that felt good and more of a connection to nature. And I'm not trying to put words in your mouth, but that's this connection. And then the connection to global warming is that, it's all part of the destruction of the natural environment.

Sonaya (05:45):

How are you going to say, "Oh, we want to fix the environment." "Yes, we are farming. Kids that live in projects are farming." But look around, is this construction? This little piece of earth, yes, is something, but in the bigger picture it might just be nothing if all this construction is going on and they're talking about crisis, but they're adding to the crisis, not making it better.

Rachel (06:12):

I know. I know. I feel the same way. And I actually, I'm biking around the city and it's like, that we've been in this insane heat wave and I see all of this, they're putting in pavement and the roads. And all I see are these construction vehicles and it makes me feel really anxious, because just like what you said, it feels like that we are in a crisis and they're adding to the crisis. Every day, you can see it around you.

Sonaya (06:44):

It's very worrying. I love what we're doing on the farm. I love the vegetables. I love planting in the soil, but it's just the fact that, yes, these plants give us oxygen, but they're cutting down trees. There used to be this main tree in the center of Coffee Park, now it's just a stump. And then around us, all these trees now that we're planting, well, not that we are planting, but they've been here for a really long time. And I feel like in a little while, they're going to cut this down too, to create it into something.

Rachel (07:18):

And so when you say you feel worried for the future, what do you feel worried for exactly??

Sonaya (07:24):

Worried for exactly? Okay. Change can be good and change can be bad. I'm not scared for change. It's just the fact that I'm scared about how our climate is changing very rapidly. It's deteriorating. And since we're not doing anything to help it, what's going to happen to us? That's what makes me nervous. We're cutting down these trees, but you teach us in school, trees give us oxygen. You're cutting down these trees. A lot of people, a lot of children are being born with asthma, lung conditions, because they're breathing in bad air, air with dust and air with very bad particles.

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Kids are being born with a lot of different diseases, disabilities, handicaps. And it's just like, are we contributing to that fact, or is it just nature? Because, for example, there have been more, oh my God, children being born with autism than children in any other year. The past decade there have been... If you look at statistics mainly, there's just people with more disabilities, more handicaps. And is the environment due to that, or is it natural? Because this is the peak and it doesn't look like we're going down any further.

Rachel (08:43):

This is the peak of what?

Sonaya (08:45):

The peak of just a crisis for earth. Not even just the environment anymore. It's the environment all over the world.

Rachel (08:54):

Do you feel like... When did you first learn about global warming?

Sonaya (08:59):

I think maybe, I'm not sure specifically, but I feel like everybody's always learn about it. So I've always learned about it too.

Rachel (09:07):

You kind of grew up when with an awareness of it.

Sonaya (09:09):

Yeah.

Rachel (09:11):

Do you feel like your awareness of climate crisis and global warming has changed as you've grown up?

Sonaya (09:16):

I think it's more extensive now. Because I'm older, I can understand more. Yeah, just learning about it more. For example, I'm in the concentration for environmental justice.

Rachel (09:29):

Oh, wow. Cool.

Sonaya (09:30):

Yeah. So, my concentration leaders were supposed to be making air filters for the environments, putting them all around Red Hook, walking all around Red Hook, thinking about how it was years before. We go back 10 years, we go back 20 years, and we close our eyes and we imagine it. We go back a 100 years, 500 years. We're all guessing because we don't really know. But she told me... Well, sorry. They told me that due to their knowledge, they know Red Hook was a very industrialized community. So, is this construction due to the industrialization or is it just the fact that they decided we need more buildings?

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The Amazon building that's being built right here, I don't know what that building's going to be. And they might say [crosstalk 00:10:23].

Rachel (10:24):

I think isn't this going to be an Amazon warehouse?

Sonaya (10:27):

I thought that was going to be Amazon warehouse.

Rachel (10:30):

Maybe they're both.

Sonaya (10:31):

Probably.

Rachel (10:35):

Do you feel like you've noticed as you've grown up changes in your local seasons and landscapes and weather at all?

Sonaya (10:44):

Yes, definitely. Everybody can tell it's getting hotter. Every summer, yes, it's hot, but I feel like this summer is just all over the place. It's hot. It's cold. It's raining. Thunderstorm also, tropical storm also is coming. And we're barely... Just every thunderstorm here and there, we're just trying to pick up the pieces behind it. It's a lot more like, I don't know. The weather's just very different this year, because in the years before I, I can't say it was like this.

Rachel (11:15):

Talk about what is the difference?

Sonaya (11:17):

The serum. It's hotter, definitely. And due to the heat, a lot of things are rotting and dying. In the field, if you go on the field and try to harvest, there's a lot of dead plants and we had to just leave them there or put them into compost to try and put it back into the soil because they're just rotting. Every single time you try to cut, for example, when we were harvesting cabbages, there were so many cabbages that were rotting and I can't say it was due to the heat and the sun.

Rachel (11:49):

That's scary.

Sonaya (11:51):

It is.

Rachel (11:52):

So, yeah. How does that feel when you're experiencing unseasonable weather?

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Sonaya ([11:56](#)):

Everything's just unpredictable. Just me particularly, I don't really like... I like stability. I like being prepared. I'm a very prepared person. When I come to the farm, my very first day I had off's rate, the order, everything I needed, everything to make sure that I was good for the day, my water bottle, everything. Just not being prepared for this weather, not being able to know what's going to happen in the next few years, especially depending on the weather, it could get very worse. It could just be hot all the time or it could be very cold all the time. And the seasons, the seasons are just, they could come quick and they could go very quick. Put that in a different way. They come as fast as they go.

Rachel ([12:42](#)):

They come as fast as they go. I know. And did it feel like that used to be the way that you experienced seasons when you were younger?

Sonaya ([12:49](#)):

Not really. I can't say for sure because I'm not sure I really paid attention to the weather all the time, but we have more cold months than we have hot months. I've noticed that. But I feel like that's for every year, it's just, your winter's longer than your summer. Your summer is three months, but it might still be hot in September when you're going back to school. Then it'll start getting cold in November. It doesn't start getting warm again until maybe June. The year is split up into hot and cold. But now, we're having way more cold than hot and it's confusing because then everything's melting. What's going on?

Rachel ([13:27](#)):

Tell me more about being out in the farm fields and seeing what this intense heat is doing to the food.

Sonaya ([13:38](#)):

My very first day, it was Wednesday. It was very hot Wednesday and we're in... Just sun. There's barely... We're in the field for a good three hours. Yeah, we have our water breaks here and there, but we're mostly in the field trying to finish our tasks. We get tasks for the day. We just try to finish them. We're in the field where there's no shade. Just being in the sun, it makes you see what the sun's doing to these plants. A lot of them are leaning over. My very first day, I went with [Suhea 00:14:10] to fix apple trees because they were leaning over. And then with the rain now, there's so many plants that are just leaning over and just... I'm not saying they're dead. They're probably not dead yet, but the rain is just so hard on them, and then it's hot again and they're being burned. And then it's cold again, it's raining. I feel bad for the plants, but we're doing our best to fix them.

Rachel ([14:39](#)):

What are you doing?

Sonaya ([14:41](#)):

With trees, if they're leaning over and they have binding leaves over them, we grab a bar, I don't know how to explain it. It's like a metal pole and we wrap it around with wire to make it stand up straight so it can just grow up straight and not leaned over to the side. There was one leaning so far with bind root, that means Suhea had to constantly just keep pulling it, just keep pulling it, and pull it up. Yeah.

Rachel ([15:09](#)):

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Let me look for my questions. Oh, so here's a question that I struggle with, that I'm not sure the answers. I mean, it's impossible for us to live a day in our lives without engaging in activity or consuming something or putting something on our bodies that is damaging to the environment in some way. And so, how do you think about the activities in your day-to-day life that feel like they're exacerbating the climate crisis, but you're kind of stuck in this world that we live in? And are there ways you try to mitigate that? And what do you feel like are the effects? How do you reconcile living in this world that's impossible to avoid damage and violence?

Sonaya (15:58):

Yeah. Well, I can say for the days that I do travel, I wake up, I get dressed, I get my sister dressed. I put her on her school bus and then I leave and I walk to the bus. I wait for the bus. When I get on the bus, I get off at a certain stop to take me to the G train. And then I just walk all the way from Smith and Ninth here to Columbus. It's kind of a long walk.

Rachel (16:24):

That's a long walk.

Sonaya (16:25):

It is a long walk.

Rachel (16:25):

Yeah.

Sonaya (16:29):

I want to say I try not to be damaging, but public transportation, I don't know. That's just how I get here and there. But the fuel, you can see the smoke coming out of the bus. It's a lot. I'm not really sure what I can do to change that. I would say I would bike, but it's way too far to bike.

Rachel (16:55):

I think public transportation is considered to be pretty eco-friendly actually.

Sonaya (17:00):

Yeah, cleaner. Yeah.

Rachel (17:00):

Yeah. It's actually a very good way to be getting around.

Sonaya (17:03):

[crosstalk 00:17:03] of damaging, right?

Rachel (17:04):

Yeah.

Sonaya (17:04):

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We were talking about that in our concentration, I think, on Thursday. We were talking about how cars, we're trying to help with the fossil fuel crisis, help make the climate better, stop damaging the ozone layer.

Rachel (17:21):

That's fine. Yeah.

Sonaya (17:23):

We were talking about cars, like Tesla, their marketing, their fuel-saving cars. I don't really know much about Tesla. I just know that they're supposed to be healthier for the environment, I guess, but they weren't the first ones to market that actually. BMW were the first to create a car like that. But since Tesla was so... Tesla became a trend, we were talking about. A trend targeted toward people who have the money to buy these cars. And then people who drive these cars around, they're supposed to be healthier, but really it's a trend because you barely see anybody in Red Hook driving a Tesla. The Tesla factory is here, but none of us are driving it. It's just the fact that helping, as a people in Red Hook, yes, we can do a lot of things to help the environment, but Red Hook is, I'm not saying we don't have the money, but it's just, everything is different around here now. It's not the same. I don't know how to explain it. I know there is a better way to put into Words.

Rachel (18:35):

You're explaining it really, really well. Have you ever taken political action around the issue of climate crisis?

Sonaya (18:43):

No, I don't think so.

Rachel (18:45):

And why not?

Sonaya (18:47):

Mostly because I didn't really know much about it. So, I don't really know how to start taking action, more so because I think all of the political action leaders, I don't really know where they are.

Rachel (19:03):

Yeah.

Sonaya (19:04):

Yeah.

Rachel (19:05):

I mean, you've talked a lot about, it feels like an impossible situation and how are we going to fix this? And the people who are actually in power, aren't doing what they should be doing. But can you think of ways that this moment asks us as regular people to show up to this moment?

Sonaya (19:32):

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We can take certain actions. It doesn't have to be political, but just a little change in our everyday lives, like buy more produce, compost, I guess. We could just change the simple things that we do. Stop driving less cars. Or if you have a car and you are really far, just try to drive it as less possible, I think, because if they really care about the environment, they're going to find ways to change it. It's not more so like, "Oh no, I just can't." No, if you really care about it, you're going to try and do something.

Rachel (20:09):

How much impact do you think it for individuals to shift their behaviors?

Sonaya (20:15):

I think it will impact a lot, but it is just how you feel about it. If you really feel this strongly, then you'll take the changes and the chances to make it happen. Yes, you cannot control anybody's behavior and how they'll act, but more or so, their behavioral changes for everyday life, it just depends on how they feel about the situation. For example, when we were talking about environmental justice, a lot of people in my group were saying, they felt like smoking was an issue. Yes, smoking is an issue, but you can't tell anybody what to do with their lives.

Rachel (20:49):

No, especially smoking.

Sonaya (20:51):

Exactly. Yes. Nicotine was made to be addictive, nicotine and cigarettes and vape pens and everything. But if you choose to buy nicotine, it doesn't matter if they raise the price or not because they have raised the price in New York, but people are always going to find a way around it.

Rachel (20:51):

Absolutely. Yeah.

Sonaya (21:10):

Always. And they felt like that was such an issue. I didn't feel like that was an issue, more so because I think probably because people in my family do smoke and it doesn't bother me. But it's just the fact that you can't tell anybody what to do with their lives. Nicotine is soothing. It soothes the nerves. It soothes people that use it. I'm not going to use it. It's not for me. And you're not going to use, it's not for you. Then find a way to move around it. It's smoked smooth. It's not hard. Yes, they'll do it. Don't concern yourself about other people's behavior. Just focus on what you're doing. You're helping their environment because you're not smoking. They're doing what they want to do, that's them. That's their life. They want to spend the money like that every single day, every single week, can't do nothing about it.

Rachel (21:56):

Oh, yes. Do you think climate crisis will affect you differently because of your race, class, nationality, ability, gender, sexuality?

Sonaya (22:10):

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There's no right answer to that question. There's no wrong answer. It's more so just your opinion, I think.

Rachel (22:15):

But for you, how do you see your life impacted?

Sonaya (22:18):

I think my life is impacted because more so... I don't really think necessarily impacts me on my race. There's a lot things that will impact me on my race, but I don't feel climate change is one of them. I might be put in a community full of people like me that are put in a place where climate change is worse than others. But for me, I don't really think it impacts me that much.

Rachel (22:48):

Is there a way that thinking about climate change affects how you plan for your future?

Sonaya (22:55):

Yeah.

Rachel (22:56):

Tell me.

Sonaya (22:57):

Yeah. Okay. After high school, I plan to go straight into the Navy. So, if the climate crisis impacts the ocean, I know it impact the ocean a lot. It will impact me because my life is going to be on the ocean. I'm shifting my whole life around to be a soldier. So, as a soldier, it would impact me because you never know, I don't know what's going to happen. I don't know what it's like. I don't know if the ocean is going to go down suddenly or go up suddenly. You never know.

Rachel (23:33):

It feels like the volatility and the climate and how it's affecting the oceans, you don't know how that's going to affect you as a Navy officer.

Sonaya (23:41):

Yeah.

Rachel (23:42):

But you still are planning on joining the Navy?

Sonaya (23:44):

Yeah.

Rachel (23:45):

Any other ways how you think about and plan for your future?

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Sonaya (23:53):

Climate? Not really. I don't think so.

Rachel (23:56):

What kinds of conversations are you having with your friends and family about these issues of climate crisis and global warming?

Sonaya (24:04):

Actually, me and my family, well, my family was just me and my mom and my sisters, we just started recycling. Because I told her, I was like, "This is too important. We have to start recycling. We have to start doing this type of stuff." So, every single time, I'm the one who cleans and takes care of the house mainly. So I do everything to try and fix that problem. I don't overuse water. I definitely, if I was to brush my teeth, I'll wet the brush real quick, turn the water off. Take a shower real quick, make sure I'm all clean, turn the water off. It's not that I don't like the sound of water, it's just, I'm taking the steps to be sure we're not overusing water. There's no need for us to overuse water. Because we used to do that. So I'm taking the changes on.

Rachel (24:56):

And you're starting the conversations in the family.

Sonaya (24:57):

Yeah. It's just hard because my family, we can't really cook yet. There's something wrong with our stove, so we have to keep ordering out, which is the hard part, because you don't want to eat so much greasy food, but it's hard because we can't cook. So what else are we going to do?

Rachel (25:17):

Right. So what made you bring about those changes with your family? What was the catalyst for that?

Sonaya (25:24):

Just the fact that we go through a lot of bottles, a lot of cans. If I'm going to be on the farm, we're composting and we're reusing everything, so might as well recycle. And then the people that go into the garbage cans and grab the recycling to try to get money, give that to them.

Rachel (25:42):

So really, it was sort of looking around your environment and thinking like, "Oh my gosh, there's so much waste here."

Sonaya (25:47):

Yeah.

Rachel (25:47):

And how did it make you feel to look around and see the waste?

Sonaya (25:52):

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It made me feel like I was doing something to make sure that the streets are a little bit cleaner.

Rachel (25:59):

So it made you feel like you were making an impact?

Sonaya (26:03):

Yeah. Little everyday changes. Just saving every Pepsi bottle, saving every washing out, every beer can, every dunking donuts cup, every straw, especially plastic straws. I don't know why since it's so damaging to the ocean. It was such a big thing. Back then, it was a trend to hop on the bandwagon to go buy a metal straw. Now all of a sudden, people don't really care about it that much. Every time something becomes a trend, it's important for that amount of time, it could be important for a couple years or it could be important for two months. The minute that's over, nobody's talking about it anymore.

Rachel (26:40):

And how does it make you feel?

Sonaya (26:42):

It makes me feel like, what's the point of starting a trend and it's supposed to be a national crisis? You'll do something for the moment and just stop. So it's not that important to you. You just want to be doing what everybody else is doing, but everybody else should be doing the same thing. We should all be, "Oh, there's plastic in the ocean. Let's go get it out of there. Let's find another way to make it safer or let's just stop the use of plastic altogether." Turtles are being strangled. Turtles were supposed to go extinct. Everybody cared about it, "Oh, don't use a plastic straw, buy a metal straw." The minute that was over, you see how everybody with a plastic straw now? They don't care. It didn't matter anymore. It just stuck out. It clicked. It's like a light switch. It was on for a while and then they turned it off.

Rachel (27:28):

If you had an opportunity to talk to your great, great, great, great, great, great, great, great, great, great, great, great grandkid in the future, 100, 200 years in the future, what do you think they would say to you about this moment about their lives, about how they feel about what part you played in making the future better or... What do you think?

Sonaya (28:01):

If I had a chance to talk to a relative of mine in the future, like an ancestor, I would.... You mean just talk to them? I would want to look around and see all the changes. Did we make it better? Did we make it worse? What happened? Obviously, if we had to have made it better, we had to have made it worse to where this is the last person I'm talking to. I don't know why, but there's always an issue in the environment. And then there are people that care about it constantly, but then whenever it's put in the spotlight, it needs to stay in the spotlight. You can't be taken out. You can't push it into the shadows more because this is what's around you.

The ground that you walk on, all this concrete, this concrete is good for the earth? If people believe God made the earth, God made the universe, okay, would God wants you spending so much money on construction, buying these fancy cars, when you could be helping the environment, if you care about it? Honestly, I feel like generations of just people, we kind of messed up the environment. We can't blame it on nobody but ourselves. And it's just like, now you want to make a change, now you

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want to fix it. Now it falls on us because you messed up the environment. Now we're desperate for ways to fix it.

Rachel (29:29):

What does it feel like to feel like you inherited something that-

Sonaya (29:34):

It's frustrating. Why couldn't you all just take care of it in the first place? Why did you have to go and make it so bad? I'm pretty sure back then, when this was all, all in, everything was just grass and trees and stuff like that, I'm pretty sure we was living really good then. I'm pretty sure the ice curves was fully intact, glaciers and stuff like that. That ice was cold. Polar bears were fat. I'm pretty sure life was good back then, but now it's not. And now we don't know how to solve it. Maybe I just don't know. Maybe I don't know. Maybe somebody out there knows, but whoever knows need to say something so we can fix it.

This is a very difficult situation. There's Red Hook, farm there's Wolcott Farm. Are there farms all over the earth or are there people managing them? Are they teaching the community how to fix these things? Are they employing kids in the community to come here? Because we go back home, you're teaching two people at once. You're teaching the child and you're teaching their parents. They go back and tell their, "Oh, I did this for work today. We harvested this for work." They even make us stick to vegetables. We take the vegetables, we're eating a little healthier. These are not small changes necessarily, can't really size them, but they're changes and they're good changes.

Rachel (31:06):

Do you have energy for a couple more questions-

Sonaya (31:06):

Yeah.

Rachel (31:08):

... at your time? Okay. Do you have a spiritual practice or an ethical or a value based sort of system of thinking that helps you contextualize this moment, that how helps you understand this or that helps you kind of get through it?

Sonaya (31:26):

I feel like it's everything. Me personally, I'm not a person of just logic. I think with everything, I think with emotion, I talk with emotion. I talk with passion. I talk about how I feel about certain things. I might not use the perfect diction, but you get the emotion I'm trying to give off you. More so I would say, I don't really think it's spiritual, but everything has a connection, everything has roots into everything. So yes, spiritualization, will use logic to convey their thinking. So you can't just say you're not spiritual. Everything's a ethical way of thinking. Not really logistics.

Rachel (32:08):

Do you feel like there's things you've already lost or there are things that you're afraid of losing?

Sonaya (32:17):

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I'm not sure how to answer that. I don't really know.

Rachel (32:21):

Well, you actually did kind of talk. You started the conversation talking about loss. You started the conversation talking about loss of the home that you knew.

Sonaya (32:28):

Oh, yeah. Yeah. The loss of just the way of seeing things the way it used to be. Maybe because I was just so young, I couldn't see these changes. I couldn't see the problems clearly because I was thinking through a child's eyes, but now it's just crazy. Maybe this was just always here and I never realized and I'm realizing now. But I think I'm scared of just losing everything. All this, I'm scared of this leaving.

Rachel (32:56):

What is this?

Sonaya (32:58):

Just Red hook changing the way it is. I hope it changes for the better. I wouldn't be scared if it changed for the better, but the fact that these things are changing and there's nothing I could do stop it. I could use my voice, but talking only goes so far. I'm the person that, if I have a problem, I like to let it float in the air and disappear, but I also acknowledge it at the same time. I don't know why. I might not take the steps to fix it, but I'll know it's there. I'll just try to leave it alone. But talking about the environment is different than talking about that.

Rachel (33:35):

Why?

Sonaya (33:37):

Because it's just, those are not problems that impact the environment more so. Yeah. That was a more specific way to talking about it.

Rachel (33:45):

I see. And then grief. I'm wrestling for myself, how do I grieve for the things that we've lost in our natural surroundings? I don't know and I'm not sure what to do with that feeling, but it's so present.

Sonaya (34:04):

Yeah.

Rachel (34:05):

What do you think about that?

Sonaya (34:06):

The fact that it's just so present in your face that you can't miss it, it's kind of scary to, because you don't know what to do, you don't know what to say, you don't know how to feel about it. You're going to feel angry. You're going to feel a mix of emotions, and it's just stuck right there in your face. You can't push it

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to the side if you're a type of person who likes to push it to side. It's just like, everybody in my family talk about, "Oh, it was just so different back then." That's all they talk about. "It was so much better than it is now." But it's like, if it's so much better, how we can't go back to that or is it just stuck the way it is now? Is it just going to get worse? Is it going to get better? Or can we go back to the way it was?

Rachel (34:45):

What do you feel hopeful for about the future?

Sonaya (34:53):

I feel hopeful for that we'll find the technology. Somebody's going to find the technology to fix something. Might not be technology at all. We might just use nature and put it back into nature. Something is going to happen in the future. It could be good, but I'm just waiting for it.

Rachel (35:08):

You keep talking about these solutions happening from elsewhere, outside of yourself. Why do you feel like you can't be part of that solution?

Sonaya (35:18):

I don't know. I feel like, I don't know. I like to think realistically. I feel like I'm not a person who will step up to fix the environmental crisis. Not because I don't care about it, more so just because I don't know. I just started this. I'm not saying just because I'm new, I don't know how to, but it's a lot. It's a lot of factors and there's only a few I can think of.

Rachel (35:43):

You're so smart though. And you're so well informed. You know a lot more than you give yourself credit for.

Sonaya (35:53):

I don't think so. I feel like I just take it everything in one step at a time, just look at the different things that's going around me.

Rachel (36:01):

That's all you can do.

Sonaya (36:03):

Yeah.

Rachel (36:03):

That's all anyone can do.

Sonaya (36:04):

Mm-hmm (affirmative). Oh, geez.

Rachel (36:08):

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Are there any questions I didn't ask you that you wish I had asked you?

Sonaya (36:12):

No, I don't really think it was a... I feel like the best conversations aren't the ones that you can leave with just one question. I think it's just a flow. The fact that we're talking here and there and it's going so fast and going so smoothly, just stopping to ask a question, it would kind of throw off the balance of how you want the conversation to go. You say, I'm so well informed, but you're adding into that too because you're leading the conversation and we're both going down this path of the conversation, just flowing so easily. A question of, "Oh, what do you think about this?" I give my opinions and we talk about our opinions, it'll lead into different perspective, different thoughts and stuff like that.

Rachel (36:54):

Are there questions that you're asking yourself and in your own life right now that either do or don't have answers?

Sonaya (37:02):

I can't think of any at this moment, but I know there definitely are a few. It's just, how are certain things that we do just going to help it in the future? I know everybody's scared for what's going to happen here, what's going to happen there. I think it's best to live in the present. But if we're going to live in the present and we're going to more so make sense of what's going on, then we need to look everything in the face, whether it's good, whether it's bad or whether it's a problem or a conflict, you need to look it in the face. Doesn't matter if you have the answers yet, just acknowledge that it's there. Don't push it to the side.

Rachel (37:44):

That's so hard for so many people.

Sonaya (37:47):

It is. And it's hard for me too. It's very easy to talk about something and it's different to feel it and to act on it. But at least I know that it's there. I'm not saying it's not there. I'm not acting like it's invisible.

Rachel (37:59):

It is so hard to feel it and to act on it.

Sonaya (38:02):

Yeah.

Rachel (38:04):

Any other thoughts?

Sonaya (38:06):

No.

Rachel (38:07):

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This was awesome. Thank you so much.

Sonaya (38:07):

You're welcome.

Rachel (38:09):

I feel so, so grateful that you came to talk to me.

Sonaya (38:09):

Yeah.