

Pat and Vernice, Phoenix Community Garden, Ocean Hill, Brooklyn
September 25, 2021

Rachel (00:00:00):

I'm recording. This is just a backup because I've been known to not press record. I'm really tragic like that, so I always do a backup.

Vernice (00:00:09):

Oh, good. That's good.

Pat (00:00:11):

Weren't you pissed?

Rachel (00:00:13):

Yeah, I was so pissed and I've done it a few times, not just once.

Vernice (00:00:16):

Right, like you wasn't learning, huh?

Pat (00:00:20):

I get it. Go ahead.

Rachel (00:00:21):

I'm like learning stuff. And if I look down, I'm just checking the levels. And I have lots of questions so we can talk until you want to stop talking basically and I'll check in halfway and see what your energy and time is like.

Vernice (00:00:21):

Okay.

Pat (00:00:21):

Sounds good.

Vernice (00:00:41):

What time is it so that I can just have an idea.

Rachel (00:00:43):

It's 11:30.

Vernice (00:00:44):

11 30?

Rachel (00:00:45):

Yeah.

Vernice (00:00:46):

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Okay. I double-

Pat (00:00:46):

And you had to deliver some boxes?

Vernice (00:00:47):

No, I don't know. Marcia. Do, do you need me to deliver today to those...

Marcia (00:00:54):

[inaudible 00:00:54].

Vernice (00:00:54):

Yeah. [inaudible 00:00:56] I know.

Marcia (00:00:56):

I got to check out.

Vernice (00:00:58):

Okay. All right. Thank you. No, so it's 11:25. Can we give you till 12 o'clock?

Rachel (00:01:06):

Absolutely. I would love that.

Vernice (00:01:07):

Is that good?

Pat (00:01:07):

Sounds good.

Rachel (00:01:08):

Okay, so I'll ask you all my most important questions.

Vernice (00:01:11):

All right.

Rachel (00:01:12):

So the first... Let's first introduce yourselves to tell me who you are, where you grew up, where you live now, what you do, how old you are. Give me all the details.

Vernice (00:01:26):

A background so you know who you're talking to.

Rachel (00:01:26):

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Exactly.

Vernice (00:01:29):

Okay. My name is Vernice. None of those are my names. Hicks is my married name. Walters is my mother's married name and she wasn't married to my father. So my ancestral name is Nimins. That's my real name. I'm 67 years old. I was born in Brownsville and raised in Brownsville in the Brownsville projects until almost 13 years old.

I went out to school. I would bust out during the Civil Rights Era to Junior High School in Bensonhurst. And then I went to high school for cosmetology, got my hairdresser's license at the age of 17. I still am a practicing hairdresser at 50 years.

I've taught hair dressing, I've worked for hair companies traveling as a technical advisor and a educational director... advisor for hair care company, doing platform works on all of the world renowned hair shows across the Midwest and United States part in New York, Baltimore, Atlanta, all of that stuff.

I went to college Brooklyn College in the '70s, smoked a joint, walked off the campus and came back some years later and found I almost was finished. I was like damn. That was some brain fog, but I went back to school.

Pat (00:03:06):

That was some good weed.

Vernice (00:03:06):

Yeah, it was good weed back then, the '60s. I'm a '50s baby so I'm from the '60s when we had real marijuana. And I've had marijuana from Vietnam that made me think the refrigerator was coming and dropped my keys out the window so my friends could open the door and come in and get me. But that's another day. I've been clean and sober 25 years now. I no longer smoke or drink or indulge in mind or mood altering chemicals.

I'm retired. I managed a family shelter in Long Island. I've worked in residential. So my background is cosmetology. I had a beauty salon for a number of years right down the hill, Ocean Hill, Brownsville and then I went into mental health and...

Pat (00:03:58):

I'm sorry, I'm in your way?

Vernice (00:03:59):

... went to college for social work.

Pat (00:04:01):

You need a table.

Vernice (00:04:04):

So I managed family shelter. I worked for Barry Residence Committee for a number of years in residential as a Mental Health Tech. And I recently, two years ago, retired from Kings County Hospital Inpatient as a Behavior Health Associate, is the title, where I de-escalate crisis. It's a position where I was

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the liaison between the patient, the doctor, the social worker and the nurse. So I was first hand to the patient to gain a relationship with them to keep them deescalated and someone that they could talk to and someone there for them in the middle of crisis.

So when they called, it was like, "Oh! Vernese. Where's Vernese?" And so to do that, you have to have a relationship with the patients so that they trust you and stuff. So I did that for 10 years, and then I had made a pact with the God of my understanding as for, thank you for giving me this job and I promise that I will leave here at 65. And while I'm here, I will serve you and I will serve the sick and suffering and protect myself with your grace. And at 65, I jet it. One... Five days before I turned 65, I retired and I came to the garden here a year before I retired.

Rachel (00:05:35):

To Phoenix Community Gardens?

Vernice (00:05:36):

To Phoenix Community Garden. Because I was looking, I got this grand idea. I was getting the massage and the masseuse said to me, she said, "Do you have a garden?"

And I said, no. I said, but I love flowers. I also went to floral design school. So I make-

Rachel (00:05:51):

You've been so busy.

Vernice (00:05:52):

... African handcrafts, handmade Nubian style handcraft because I'm very into my culture. I'm very into collective living, co-op living, food sovereignty, respecting the earth. I've always known that this is a power greater than myself. That this earth is here for everyone. It's a cycle. The animals, the everything, the wind blows, not just for me and human beings. It blows to blow God's will around the universe. So I've always been aware of that. Always been aware that I'm African so I'm knew that this was not my home. My ancestors are captives, they're not slaves. They were not slaves. They were captives. They were stolen and they were brought there. So I just recently found out that I am from West Africa, but my family they both landed in Fredsville, North Carolina.

And I have my grandmother on tape. When I was 21 she took me to North Carolina, showed me the selling block, showed me my original plantation and I originally just revisited my father's side of the family in South Carolina and went to that land where our plantation was. My great grandparents and my captive ancestors are actually in history books as plantation owner was we were on that big famous Ford plantation. And my great, great grandfather was the main horseman for the plantation owner. So he is in the books and they... When the civil war was over my family, they had a protected, the slave owner and his family when the Confederates came through and took over the plantation land for weeks and they hit them in the slave quarters and kept them and for that, they gave them land which we still have down south.

And I just recently went down there and visited the cemeteries. They started the first school in Bamberg, South Carolina, and Denmark, South Carolina, in that area. They were given charge over when the slaves were free. He was given charge over a community of people because he had that much integrity and the slave owner defended him when the house... They believed the Confederates burnt it down, but they tried to blame it on him. And they said, "Oh, Nimins, George Nimins must have did it." And the slave owner defended him in court and said "No, he wasn't," and that got him out from jail.

So how I got here: like I said, my masseuse said, "Do you garden?" While she reads while she's doing that and I said no, but she said, "Oh, you should garden."

And I said, I always wanted a garden but I lived in the projects and I never lived in apartments. I never had my own house or anything, never wanted it either. I could get anything I wanted. So, but I didn't want it. And then I left her and I went to the supermarket and I'm in there shopping and this woman said to me, "Do you know you could grow everything you have in that cart?" And I looked at her and I said, you serious? I said, this is less than an hour ago. And she said, "Yes, you could plant the seeds." And I said, oh no, that's an omen right there. She told me where to go. I went out to Floyd Bennett Field then got right in my car. I don't play when somebody... You hear something...

And I went to Floyd Bennett Field and I couldn't find the garden. And then I took the name and I called and I couldn't get in there. That next Friday I was going to Lincoln Center to a concert. And I parked my car right where my car is double parked right now and look up and saw the gate wide open and saw a big sign, said Phoenix Farm.

Pat (00:05:52):

I think we're in a bad spot.

Vernice (00:10:26):

I grew up in this area. And I saw Phoenix Farm too. Is that noise from...?

Rachel (00:10:29):

No, not at all. Are we in the middle of your work space?

Vernice (00:10:34):

No. They just loading up. They just load up the bags and then people come and get them. And I came in and I met Marcia and Kelly and Mark right there.

Rachel (00:10:45):

And when was this?

Vernice (00:10:45):

That was in 2017 and I walked in and I said, can I rent one of these here boxes? And they said, "Oh, no." They said you have to do an apprenticeship. And I said, really? What do you mean an apprenticeship? They said, "You have to volunteer for a year so that you can learn how to garden." And I said, "Really?" I said, because "I don't know how to garden. So this was perfect because I would've messed up anyway."

So I said, "Wow, I didn't even think about such a good thing I didn't get the one in Floyd Bennett Field because I wouldn't have known what to do with it." So I volunteered and that was in November. And so I started in November, that was on a Friday night. So I started getting a bag in November and in April when they opened up the apprenticeship program, I began doing apprenticeship. So by the time 2000... and I learned how to manage my bed and everything and garden.

And I did more of my volunteer hours. I was diligent with showing up. I did my eight hours a week. I learned how to work the whole de-weed and everything. And they gave me a bed to plant and they told me if I didn't take care of it, then I couldn't get a bed. And I believed them. I thought... but it wasn't true.

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So I took care of it like it was my baby. But it... I took care of it as if it was a customer, as if it was a hair customer and I de-weeded it and stuff and took care of the bed. And then the next year I planted and then that was when I retired in 2019. So I spent from '17 to '18 learning. And so I've been here since 2017, 2018 actually. So this is my third or fourth year. Time is that mixed up now with this COVID thing, it's like calendars running to each other.

So I have two children and I have six grandchildren and one great-grand. And I love people, love myself. I love God. and I love to garden.

Rachel (00:13:26):

That's amazing... [inaudible 00:13:27]

Pat (00:13:26):

That really is.

Vernice (00:13:27):

Is it? Really?

Rachel (00:13:28):

Yeah. Thank you for sharing that story. All of it.

Vernice (00:13:32):

I left out a part of it, but I'll leave it.

Pat (00:13:34):

No, really. Even the part about... Especially the part about being able to go back to knowing who your great, great grandfather was...

Vernice (00:13:45):

Yeah, that's-

Pat (00:13:45):

Where he lived and what he did. Just knowing that is just really empowering information.

Vernice (00:13:52):

And my oldest daughter is, she was a rap artist and she took me all over the world. Following her, I was never stage mom. So I told her she told me at five that she was going to be famous. She said, "Mommy, I'm going to be famous and I'm going to buy you a pink car." And I said, good, now you can go talk to God about that cause I don't have nothing to do with that. And so she has a Grammy, she had a platinum album, she wrote three books. And then in 2012, she went to Dominican Republic with some friends and one of her friend suggested that they go to this hair, plastic surgeon that her friend knew and she coded on the table and got traumatic brain injury because she was in a clinic and...

Pat (00:14:42):

That's how that happened.

Vernice (00:14:43):

... by the time they got her back to New York she had been on a life support thing and so I've been taking care of her since 2012 and I had to raise her three small children that were 12, 8 and 3 at the time.

So my grandson is 18 now, he just went to college. The 22 year old is on her own, and the little 14 year old is running out wild out here with her father like a crazy maniac. I don't have anything to do with that either. I did my part. So that's who I am. So this is my sanctuary. I come, I garden for therapeutic reasons and that's why when I knew I was going to leave that feel of mental health, which is very draining... not draining, it's very consuming. Because you're giving. I knew I needed to put my hands in the soil. I needed to give. I knew that only the universe, only nature can give you that kind of joy. I'm a tree hugger. I love trees. I don't care if I never go to a Caribbean Island and lay on the beach. I don't like sand, I like trees. I like flowers. I like the earth. I like to feel my feet on soil and play in dirt. So that's it. That's who I am Rachel.

Rachel (00:16:10):

Hot.

Pat (00:16:11):

And with that being said, I'm an earth sign. I'm a Taurus.

Hi, my name is Pat. I'm 50 years old. I turned 50 this year. I'm a mother of two adult daughters and I have two grandchildren. A seven year old, his name is Egypt and a nine month old, her name is Aaliyah. And how I got into gardening was very recent experience for me. It happened during the pandemic.

A little background... Born and raised in New York City to two Caribbean American parents. My parents divorced when I was very young and my mother remarried my stepfather, who was a North Carolina boy. And they both had working the land, so to speak, in their blood. My mother, biological father, and my stepfather: all three of these people had growing, planting, harvesting, paying attention to these cycles of the weather, seasons, the moon. This is all a part of their culture and lifestyle.

And even when Christianity came into play and forced them to hide some of the old ways, they still... there was always a Farmer's Almanac around. And I didn't understand what that was. They always had compasses and seeds and these were things that were in their blood. So I, it took me a while to understand why certain things resonated to me and why I was drawn to them because that took my part of who you are.

My background career wise, I've never really been able to commit to a job because I was always one of those people that didn't really know where I fit in. I was always searching for that. And it took me a while to understand. And it came to me very hard during the pandemic. You're supposed to be your own boss, self sufficient, not just doing what you love, but seeing abundance and feeling abundance and doing what you love. And therefore the universe will provide what you need. You'll never feel like you don't have, if you approach it that way and have that perspective.

And that was kind of a thought pattern that was already a part of my daily mantra because back in 2017, I was working full time at Brookdale, in the emergency room. And talk about a very draining environment, especially when you're already a sensitive person; and you're already giving and you tend to over give; and you tend to neglect who you are in sight of what other people need. And of course that's it wasn't just my job at the time, but it's already who I was. I'm that person that over gives anyway.

And I got to the point where I was developing migraines. I had these headaches, I wasn't sleeping well. I was always not feeling well. I didn't feel grounded. I felt the brain fog. I wasn't digesting food. I had upset stomachs. And what's wrong with me?

And I went to have a Reiki session. I don't know if you know what Reiki is, energy healing? And she's like you need to find something that keeps you grounded and being close to nature is what you're supposed to be doing. And that made sense when she said it to me. When I was 14, 15 years old, I got drawn to herbs. Now it was always around me because my parents and my grandparents used them, but I began to develop a more personal interest with them. And that's because I went to fashion industries and knew about fashion, was learning about makeup and realized that there was a lot of makeup products that had natural ingredients in them that I could make my own eyeshadow.

So I got into herbs. I had this book called Back to Eden by Jethro Kloss. [crosstalk 00:21:03] Do you know the Back to Eden book? It's like the Bible.

Vernice (00:21:05):

I have the original right here.

Pat (00:21:06):

It's like is Bible of herbology. If you want to know, it's called Back to Eden by Jethro Kloss and he came from a long line of planters and people who knew about flowers and what to do with them and different ways to prepare them. Whether they were going to make a tincture or a tonic or make your own soaps. These are things that my people did as well. So I started connecting with things that were nature orientated, and I said, this is what I'm supposed to be doing in life. But I didn't have a map. I didn't know how to navigate my way into a plan that made sense in my everyday tangible life.

So moving fast forward: I'm at home. It's the pandemic. And I'm not getting up every day, looking at the clock, rushing, not eating, throwing stuff in my mouth and I'm getting sleep. I can think. I'm feeling better. My back doesn't hurt. I don't have a headache and my dreams are all of a sudden more clearer. And I don't want to sound spooky in real-like twilight zone or anything-

Vernice (00:22:20):

It's all spooky.

Rachel (00:22:20):

Life is spooky.

Pat (00:22:24):

... but I really feel like I started getting visions that made sense to me, that I could turn around and make tangible. And then I started remembering that you need to stay close to nature so I started going to Central Park and Prospect Park and being outdoors and sitting down next to the trees and noticing the birds and the bees and the raccoons and the cycle of things.

And I wanted to do this every day. I wanted to be able to just not get on a train and have to travel outside of my community to feel close to nature. Even though I live in the hood, I'm in the concrete jungle and I can hear sirens and helicopters. And that's what I wake up to a lot of the time and go to sleep to a lot of the time, unless I put my headphones on and start listening to my, the different tones and the different binaural beats to try to cleanse some of that out. And I'm walking one day in my community and I see a garden and I see people in there and it's open and something just says... And I

remember my dad, every time we ate something, don't throw the seeds out, put the seed in the container or on a piece of foil for me. And I just walked in the garden and said, okay. And then from there I started reading everything about...

PART 1 OF 4 ENDS [00:24:04]

Pat (00:24:00):

Everything about flowers...

Speaker 1 (00:24:05):

Oh wow.

Pat (00:24:06):

... plants, herbs, how to harvest, the cycles of the moon and how that affects rainfall, and different phases of the sun, and the best time to plant, and when to harvest, and how to treat so organically without using pesticides, and how to use some of these insects for your benefits, what they're there for, they have a purpose; you're not supposed to kill them, and it all made sense for me. I feel more connected, more grounded. I feel more healthy. I have information that I can share with people whenever I'm in the garden. People are always... it's a gateway to meeting people and having something wholesome to talk about.

I can pick stuff out the garden and go home and give them to people. And they notice that, "This didn't come from the supermarket," right away. And I'm a new gardener, and I'm making mistakes, and I'm learning., And I'm surrounded by people who know what they're doing, and I'm getting information that I would have to pay tuition for I'm getting for free because I'm active and I'm doing something that I want to be doing. And I've surrounded myself with people who have a mutual interest. And I love the idea of being able to pack a box or a bag, and whether we charge for it or not, but someone needed that, and they were able to get wholesome grown food, either free or affordable, without standing on line in a supermarket and not really knowing where that came from and how it was taken care of.

And when they see that and they become a part... It inspires people to become a part of it. "Now I want to farm. Now I legit want to learn and study agriculture, and go get some acres, and go get a trailer, and live in the trailer, and pump the water from out the well, or go to the creek that's nearby, and find some way to use that to..."

Speaker 1 (00:26:32):

It's transformative.

Pat (00:26:36):

It's transformative, it absolutely is. And like she said; it's therapeutic. Coming from broken relationships and even someone that has had dreams and aspirations they didn't get to pursue because they got pregnant too soon in life and became more about, "Raising my kids now, and I'm not going to get a chance to do that unless it's after..." It brings value and it helps you understand the cycle of life, life and death, and being reborn.

I don't want to get to... But it starts with watching a seed go to the ground and watching something grow. And then from there, all things are possible. The abundance is unlimited. And when I use the word abundance... We talk about food equity, and land equity, and knowing the real value and

wealth in owning, and being able to be a provider, as opposed to someone that is constantly trying to figure out, "How do I feed my family?" And so, unless you have any specific questions, I think that's all I have to give right now.

Speaker 1 (00:28:12):

Yeah. Wow. Thank you. Both of your stories are amazing. And they resonate with each other. Its just fascinating to hear. So last time, on Saturday, you shared with me these wonderful introductions to who you are. And so this time I'm going to start with asking you the framing question that I have for this whole project, which is; when you think about climate change or global warming, what do you think about? And how do you feel?

Pat (00:28:45):

When I think about climate change and global warming, I think about lack of respect for nature and God's creation. I think about how the fact that... I'm only thinking about in context of the United States, in general. I think about how native Americans had respect for life and the cycle of life and how that was ignored. How, when we lost the native Americans in the cycle of humanity, we lost that aspect of respecting climate change. And watching the change, and how things are changed in the world, in respect to weather... I'm not surprised where we're at today.

Speaker 1 (00:30:04):

And how do you feel?

Vernice (00:30:10):

I feel that we are going to lose something. I feel something doomed is coming. I feel that there's going to be a breaking point, where it's going to be a domino effect, which we see some of it now. But I just got the sense that we're going to reach a point of no return.

Speaker 1 (00:30:42):

What does doom feel like?

Vernice (00:30:44):

It feels like the catastrophes that are happening in the forest and then the glaciers, I think they're going to come close and closer to home. And that's what I sense when I see the fact that seasons are running into seasons, it used to be distinctive, seasonal changes, we went from summer to fall and you had seasons of fall, and then you had winter came, and then you cycled into springtime. And I think it's all like, "Oh, today it's winter. Tomorrow it's all. Next day it could be a summer day in the winter time." And I remember when that didn't happen.

Speaker 1 (00:31:37):

When did that start happening?

Vernice (00:31:39):

I would say that started happening... And what caught my attention, I would say maybe about 2000.

Speaker 1 (00:31:53):

So 20 years ago?

Vernice (00:31:55):

I think about just 20 years ago, I think, I started noticing, 20 years ago or less, I think I started noticing it.

Speaker 1 (00:32:05):

What did you start to notice exactly?

Vernice (00:32:08):

I started to notice that the trees didn't turn orange and yellow and red anymore. The leaves weren't on the ground, that there weren't any acorns, wasn't any of these, some things we call itch balls, they're a little fuzzy; wishing balls. But I started noticing that at first and started noticing that the birds didn't come, the migration of the birds didn't happen like they would happen. I think that was the first thing I noticed. I started getting anxious to get to Alaska, that's one of my bucket lists. That's my dream.

Speaker 1 (00:33:01):

Why?

Vernice (00:33:03):

Because I always wanted to go to Africa, Alaska, Hawaii, because I love snow. I grew up when snow was snow, when it snowed it snowed, the city, didn't close, they put chains on the tires, school didn't close, and we had snow up to our knees. And the snow was clean and then snow would stay and it would melt. And we might have maybe one or two snowstorms a year. And we played in the snow, and then the snow melted, and then the flowers grew, and then the bees came out. And I just started noticing that cycle wasn't there.

And I always wanted to go to Alaska because I wanted to see snow never in, see snow. And it's like, [inaudible 00:34:05] I just couldn't [inaudible 00:34:09]. And when I went cross country and I saw the snow up on the mountaintops, hundreds of miles away or something, and then as we drove and next thing I know the snow was down. I was like, "That's the snow that I saw when I was down," the elevation and stuff. And I'm just saying, it's a pity. It's a pity to see how people that respected the earth... It's like no one had regards for that. And I just always had regards for that.

I feel like we're going to have a drought. I feel like we are going to have an electrical grid go out, that's going to be devastating. You're going to have some hot weather, that's going to be too hot to take. Where you're hearing now where people die from the cold and from the heat and stuff. I think we have a lack of respect for the ocean, digging way below the surface, sea level, as if we know. Man thinks he knows. And I don't think that's the way that God gives knowledge. He gives knowledge to those that will have respect for it. And it's for money, that's the other thing that bothers me. How could you sell air? How could you sell something that's free. Electricity, it's free, fiber optics... Instead of you using it for the good of humanity it's used for profit. That's what we're doing.

Speaker 1 (00:36:21):

Bernice when you started noticing change, and now when you're experiencing change in season, what does it feel like on an emotional level, to experience unseasonable weather? And when you started to notice changes what emotions came up for you?

Vernice (00:36:46):

Praise, worship, gratitude that I understand. Gratitude that I understand who the creator is and that I understand that man is not... That's the emotion that I get.

Speaker 1 (00:37:07):

Wow. That's interesting. So, for you, it's a reminder that humans are not as all powerful as we like to think that we are, and it's a reminder that makes you feel closer to God.

Vernice (00:37:20):

Yeah. It's like we have dominion, but we only have dominion if we are using it for the good of everyone. If you are going to have these pipelines and things that are going to spill oil into the ocean and destroy animals that were put there for the survival rule of humans, it's like all of these... Everything was created for our good. My God created the earth and gave us dominion over the earth and over the animals, but not to destroy the animals. We have dominion over them that we would have more knowledge. We have a soul, we have wisdom, we have intelligence that those animals... Those things are there so that we can survive. So you destroying animals that could help diseases or things like that, because everything is connected.

Speaker 1 (00:38:34):

Right.

Vernice (00:38:34):

And it's so amazing that one set of group of people could say, "Well, we could make millions of dollars off of this. And nevermind the worth that it has to humanity." And then they devise a whole system where that happens at. It's discouraging for me. It's like, you devise a whole system so that you could do something evil, destructive, I should say, not just evil, something destructive. Because, when you go keep going up in space... God put you on earth to live. If he wanted you on space to live, we wouldn't have to be breaking through barriers that change weather, that destroy the atmosphere. We're just not satisfied with everything that we have down here. You can explore the earth, there's nothing beyond the floor of the sea, but destruction for the things that live in the sea. So it's for profit, that's my take on it.

Speaker 1 (00:40:04):

Pat, when you think about global warming or climate change, what do you think about and how do you feel?

Pat (00:40:16):

Immediately when I hear that... And I think I first started hearing global warming in the mid nineties to late nineties. And I think it was Al Gore that somehow brought it to my attention. But when I think about that, I think of earth in distress, she's sick, she's been abused and neglected. And whether it's through mainly manmade purposes or if the earth is just shifting without change, anytime there's great change, there's some type of trauma that comes with it. So whether it's manmade behavior that's causing it and/or along with natural scientific chemical changes that the earth is going to go through anyway, we've been through the ice age, we've seen continents that used to be connected disconnect, Gaea is

going to do what she needs to do to heal you herself. But as the caretakers and the inhabitants of this planet, we are obligated to do our part.

She can take care of herself and she'll be here after us. Humans can't destroy the earth. The earth is not going to let us destroy her. She will wipe us away and will continue to exist before that happens. So with that being said, and that's how I see it.

Speaker 1 (00:42:03):

Oh. And just pull your hair back [inaudible 00:42:06].

Pat (00:42:07):

So with that being said, we are obligated and should feel committed to do our share, whether it's recycling or you donating to a Green Peace organization. I had to really try and understand what global warming was. And I think I still could use some information and enlightenment on it. But one, I know that the summers are not as long and vibrant as they used to be.

Speaker 1 (00:42:42):

That's something you've noticed?

Pat (00:42:43):

Yeah. When water is not as clean as it used to be when you go to the beach, there's so much erosion. There's something wrong and we've participated in it, we're creatures that are not as thoughtful as we should be. And a lot of the littering, the abuse, the taking from the earth and using her natural resources; all the gas and the energy, and not putting back... In my spiritual practice, when you need something, if I got to go and take from the bush, I ask for permission. And I say, "Thank you for your wisdom, for giving me the wisdom to knowing how to use what I'm about to take from you." You have cultures in societies where people make offerings to the earth to give back to the earth. "Thank you for feeding us this season." And I don't know if there's been enough of that over the centuries going on. So yeah, the chickens are coming home to roost on that one and we are trying to play catch up.

Speaker 1 (00:43:59):

And how do you feel?

Pat (00:44:02):

How do I feel about the topic or how do I feel about what should be done?

Speaker 1 (00:44:07):

What emotions come up for you when you think about global warming?

Pat (00:44:13):

At first, it seems like an issue that's too large. Like, "What do you want me to do?" But again, it starts with little things... For me, I don't like to be in the street. I don't like to waste food. I come from people that do not believe in wasting food. To throw food in the garbage was almost a sin, and we used to get our asses beat for stuff like that if you were caught throwing food away. There was always a bin, I didn't realize they were making compost bins, but there was a place for everything. Everything had its place and what you consider garbage can be reused for something else.

And I practice that and I try to just be an example of that without being the butt of everyone's jokes.

Speaker 1 (00:45:15):

What do you mean by being the butt of everyone's jokes?

Pat (00:45:17):

We live in a society of waste. And people interpret abundance the wrong way. Just because there's an abundance, that doesn't mean that there's wasteful. And you talked about the natives, when the explorers came to these lands, they were starving in Europe, this is what they don't really want to teach. They were starving to death. They had nothing to eat. And then there was the plague on top of that. They had to go explore. It's a human nature for us to be explorers and seek what is beyond our dominion, especially when your resources dry up. And they saw so much Buffalo and land, they never ran out. And they were taught, it was a spiritual practice to only use what you need. And then the Europeans came here and they... You come from a continent where people are starving, nothing to eat, and they came here and they hunted for game for sport. They were bored. They came and they hunted for sport.

So all I can do is I pass on what I know and what I can teach. And I would love to be more actively involved, hands on, but there are so many issues. For me, I feel more rewarding... I'm a teacher and I like to learn, and I'm a teacher and a student at the same time forever. And I feel more comfortable when I can teach and influence. That's where I belong.

Speaker 1 (00:47:10):

So I hear from you also a feeling of overwhelmed, it feels so big. It's hard to find how you can fit into it in a meaningful way.

Pat (00:47:24):

What you said. Yeah. In a meaningful way.

Vernice (00:47:31):

We do our part. That's what I make sure, like pat. We don't litter. My children don't litter. My grandchildren don't litter. You ask for what you can eat. Someone gives you a plate, if it's too much, you let them know before you begin eating, you can take some of that off, you can do that. Because, we were taught not to waste.

Pat (00:48:00):

If you can't store it and save it for another time, it's best for you to find some.

PART 2 OF 4 ENDS [00:48:04]

Pat (00:48:00):

If you can't store it and save it for another time, it's best for you to find someone else to feed. There's always someone else who didn't eat enough today.

Speaker 1 (00:48:08):

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So you're maybe answering part of this question, but my next question is, is there a way that climate change or climate crisis affects you on a daily basis?

Vernice (00:48:18):

Well, it's not even that. That's out of, I would say, "Customary."

Pat (00:48:25):

And I'm sure it does-

Vernice (00:48:26):

We've been doing it affects me because I see it. And it's like that old commercial, where that Indian used to be walking and see the trash in the street and the tears coming down his eyes.

Pat (00:48:42):

See, these are old school commercials. You've got to go Google commercials from the 1970s and early '80s.

Vernice (00:48:44):

And look at that. There was an Indian that used to walk and walking on the beach or something. And he would see the garbage in the water and he would see the litter in the streets and stuff, and he had a tear in his eyelids.

Pat (00:48:56):

Wow, you remember that?

Vernice (00:48:57):

You remember that?

Pat (00:48:57):

That was like the early stages of-

Vernice (00:48:58):

Early stages of climate change.

Pat (00:49:01):

Climate change, and being aware of what we're doing to the planet.

Vernice (00:49:06):

And I guess you had some green people then that were just trying to make people aware.

Pat (00:49:10):

And Smokey the Bear. Yeah.

Vernice (00:49:13):

You had people, that were trying to raise awareness about the misuse.

Pat (00:49:22):

It started with the coffee cups and not using the styrofoam. Bringing little things like that to people's attention and it became-

Vernice (00:49:30):

Like waste. Where's it going to go? It's pollution. The pollution in the air. When they came out with plastic bags. Because everything was a brown bag.

Pat (00:49:41):

One summer. I'm so sorry.

Vernice (00:49:43):

Go ahead.

Pat (00:49:43):

One summer, the beaches in this city were closed. I think this is back in the late '80s or the early '90s due, because the waters were polluted. We had polluted so much that they had to close the beaches. So that's how it affects us. And most people don't realize until it's too late, that, that affects you. You should care because somewhere down the line, some natural part of living will be taken away from us. Whether it's clean drinking water, being able to get clean fish to eat from the rivers and the oceans, going swimming in the beach, at some point it will affect us. But most people don't realize that.

Speaker 1 (00:50:24):

Do you feel like there was a moment when climate change really showed up, in your own backyard? When it really felt like, "Oh I'm experiencing this global phenomenon personally."

Vernice (00:50:39):

No, I think it was, for me, it was gradual. I noticed it from... I knew it was an accumulative effect. And I saw it when it was small from the litter. When they changed from glass to plastic bottles. I knew then that we were going to have a lot more litter because we used glass. Glass was used for a lot of things. We recycled the glass, it was recycled. They put it in the asphalt in the street, they preserved food in it, they stored stuff-

Pat (00:51:26):

Our people have been using Mason jars for decades.

Vernice (00:51:29):

When you didn't have a Mason jar, you exchange things with that. When you bought it, you used your glass bottles. If it was even if it was a soda bottle, if you were buttering, if you made a mixture of... I remember I drank some cleaning fluid.

Speaker 1 (00:51:48):

Oh God.

Vernice (00:51:50):

From the maintenance guy, giving my mother some cleaning fluid. And they had taken and put a tea bag, they would put teabag in it. I don't know what the teabag is for but I thought it was iced tea. But they used glass, so it wasn't like a glass would get recycled before it got discarded. So that made less garbage. The plastic made garbage. It just made garbage mount.

Speaker 1 (00:52:19):

What about you Pat, do you feel like there was a moment when it felt like-

Pat (00:52:22):

In my backyard where very noticeable it hit me?

Vernice (00:52:26):

I've always.

Pat (00:52:29):

I think when it snowed in April. What was that, '92 or '93 for me living in New York and also too hurricane Sandy and the slight little earthquake, that little mini earthquake that we had, what was it, like about a week or two right before it. Growing up in New York city as a kid, you just hear certain things. And we were always safe. Oh, there's no such thing as earthquakes and tornadoes and storms in New York, we're safe from that. But we always heard, the minute you see stuff like that happening here, something's wrong. So when that happened, I said, "Whoa, we're messing with the planet way too much for that to go on." It didn't feel right, it felt off.

Speaker 1 (00:53:27):

Did anything change for you after that?

Pat (00:53:30):

Yeah. I started being more conscious of the fact that I'm in a concrete jungle that I don't even really live in nature. And that everything around me is almost artificial and I'm not connected enough with nature to be able to sense what's coming. That's what was the first thing. And I think that was when I started spending more time in parks. You live in New York and you've got some of the greatest parks in the country right here. People come from all over to visit Central Park, you never go.

Speaker 1 (00:54:12):

Pat, it's so interesting for you to say-

Pat (00:54:14):

Yeah, so do stuff like that.

Speaker 1 (00:54:16):

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It's so interesting for you to say, "I wasn't connected to nature to be able to notice things. I wasn't able to prepare for whatever changes are to come" because you're disconnected.

Pat (00:54:31):

Started keeping batteries around the house more and bottled water and dry food and canned food and stuff that we don't have to heat up and use electric for. I really went there. And I'm still on it.

Vernice (00:54:43):

And that's weird. In the '80s, starting in the '80s, I started letting my gas go off for about three, four months. It was a process of survival for me. And people would say, and I said, "Because something's going to happen and we have to learn to live without."

Speaker 1 (00:55:08):

So what would you do?

Vernice (00:55:10):

Well, at that time I had an electric frying pan, I had something but... I also, I don't have the microwave I haven't had a microwave for like 15 years. I don't microwave food.

Speaker 1 (00:55:23):

So you did it to practice?

Vernice (00:55:26):

To practice, yeah. Practice, to prepare for survival.

Pat (00:55:31):

Survival readiness.

Vernice (00:55:34):

I have slept in Bear Mountains Park, when the park was closed, just no one in the park. Nothing but just a flashlight kind of thing. I grew up like this. My mother used to tell us, she would say, "Hey girl, I'm going to kick your ass at three o'clock. And I, my kids are raised like this too. My grandchildren are fearless. And when you get outside, I'm going to whoop your ass and she taught us how to fight. Physically taught us how to fight. And she also told me if you ever find yourself in jail, somebody bigger than you want to jump, you, you start the bottom. Don't worry about punching them in their face, get them down to your level. When they get down there, don't let them back up. And that was to take the fear out of us. So we were fearless, man. I was outside eight years old. It was like nothing bothered me.

Pat (00:56:47):

I know it sounds crazy. But that was a characteristic that my stepfather had. The one that was born and raised in North Carolina and came to New York as a teenager. Country kids kind of have a fearlessness about them.

Vernice (00:57:05):

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My mother was from the country.

Pat (00:57:07):

They don't have time to be scared of everything.

Vernice (00:57:09):

Yeah, they have no time to be scared of [inaudible 00:57:11].

Pat (00:57:10):

And I remember him being very hands on with, let me show you what to do if someone ever came to you and did this and there was always this, be offensive not defensive type of attitude.

Vernice (00:57:26):

We weren't taught to attack anybody. We were not allowed.

Pat (00:57:30):

Exactly.

Vernice (00:57:30):

We were not allowed to bully anyone. None of my kids. That's the, when I'd go to school or something. Somebody say, oh, she said that she did that. I say, I can tell you exactly what she did. Her head went like this. And she went like that. But do not tell me that my grandchild or my child cursed at you, kicked you or spit on you.

Pat (00:57:48):

Absolutely. It was never about being the aggressor.

Vernice (00:57:48):

It was always for your own protection.

Pat (00:57:48):

Right.

Vernice (00:57:51):

Always for your protection. And was just to take the fear so that you would have time to calculate who you were dealing with. So by doing that, somebody told me they are going to beat me up at three o'clock. I didn't come out of the building shivering. I came out like, okay, who is that? Where you at? Let's go, kind of thing. But, so we were just taught, I don't know. I was just taught to respect the earth. I was taught to put my feet on the ground. I don't know who I've always been just very African like bare feet on the soil. I know the stories of the plantation and the word getting sent from plantation by plantation from bumps in the ground. And so I know that there's a connection. For me it was always knowing that there was a connection. Like I said, [inaudible 00:58:44] I'm a treat. I know that there's a connection with me and the universe. So, I don't know. I noticed the change long time ago when snow stopped melting.

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Pat (00:59:00):

Right?

Vernice (00:59:00):

When snow stopped melting, I was like, this is not snow.

Pat (00:59:05):

Right. Do you remember that? [crosstalk 00:59:07] On social media, there was a video that was circulating. It was the same, about four winters ago.

Vernice (00:59:14):

The same snow.

Pat (00:59:17):

It was weeks, weeks after a snowstorm, the dirty snow is still on the sidewalk. A guy takes a lighter to the snow and it would not melt.

Vernice (00:59:28):

It was not snow.

Pat (00:59:29):

And you know, not to get trial out zone, but it was like, what type of, what is this? What is, what is this that fell from the sky? And it's still sitting here. It refused to melt.

Vernice (00:59:39):

It was not snow.

Speaker 1 (00:59:41):

Well what was it then?

Vernice (00:59:41):

Well I don't know...

Pat (00:59:43):

It looked like snow. We all played with it like it was snow, it was showing it like it was snow, but it wouldn't melt.

Vernice (00:59:49):

It did not melt.

Pat (00:59:50):

It would not melt.

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Vernice (00:59:51):

That was not...

Pat (00:59:53):

Yeah. I said, yeah, a few winters ago.

Vernice (00:59:56):

Its manmade, man wants to control the universe.

Pat (01:00:00):

I think that every time a spaceship breaks the stratosphere, it affects things as well. And I'm kind of conflicted, because I believe in exploration. If I'd have had things my way and been able to live my dream as a kid, I'd been an archeologist. Because I always loved digging dirt and flying stuff.

Vernice (01:00:25):

Like you would have been an Indiana Jones.

Pat (01:00:27):

You know what I'm saying?

Vernice (01:00:28):

Yeah.

Pat (01:00:29):

And I believe in exploration, but at the same time there is something about every time that's done it affects the, I can't think of the proper word. It does affect the...

Vernice (01:00:29):

The atmosphere.

Pat (01:00:52):

... The atmosphere. [inaudible 01:00:54]. And unless...

Vernice (01:00:55):

... If its gray. The sky gets gray and it's not like cloudy.

Pat (01:01:02):

And unless we've taken the time.

Vernice (01:01:03):

Hurricanes don't look like hurricanes. I'm a hurricane lover. Hurricane Sandy, I spent sitting in, was it Sandy? No, not Sandy. The one before Sandy.

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Speaker 1 (01:01:17):

Irene?

Vernice (01:01:18):

It was my birthday.

Pat (01:01:18):

It was Irene.

Vernice (01:01:20):

And I sat in the window and watched, I watched Hurricane Donna came when I was eight years old. [inaudible 01:01:26] Because hurricane Donna came. And I stood in the hallway in the projects all day long, watching the sky and the thunder and the rain and the trees blowing. And I remember the sky being red and purple and as the years went on, that's not what I see in hurricanes now. I just see rain.

Speaker 1 (01:01:52):

What did you love? What do you love about hurricanes?

Vernice (01:01:54):

I love the thunder. I love thunder. I love lightning. I still have friends, old friends that caught me in storms and said, "I know you outside on that terrace. I know you out there looking at that storm." I love storms, I guess because it reminds me of the power of nature. I mean you like just so powerful to see a tree blowing and blowing and blowing and not coming down. And now lightning is striking. Lightning struck and knocked out three trees in my complex.

This last storm we had during the beginning of the summer, like pow and I'm stamps in there looking, I'm like, oh my God, the tree just like toppled over. And the tree's been there since sixties, since 1960. The tree, the whole brown came off, knocked the tree down. A few minutes later, another lightning hit, pow!. Another tree came down. They just, I used to, couldn't see down in the Boulevard. Now I could see down in the Boulevard, those trees are gone. They replanted some at a Memorial for people lost in COVID and they planted some more trees in there. I don't think that some generations notice it like your generation might think, oh, this is the world. It's a beautiful place. Oh and things are happening in the world, but I don't think they know the change.

Speaker 1 (01:03:38):

I think you're right.

Vernice (01:03:40):

I don't think they understand that it is a change. So I think that's why global warming, the word global warming can create so much, how you say it, like...

Speaker 1 (01:03:55):

Controversy?

Vernice (01:03:58):

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Recognition. Because we didn't see it as global warming. We saw it as they're messing up the earth, they're messing with mother nature, kind of thing. And now it's got a title to it. And you got people watching the water and you got people watching this, you got people watching that. But in my era it was all the same. Everything was one. It was all connected. So...

Speaker 1 (01:04:26):

Do you think that you will be affected differently by climate crisis because of any aspect of your identity, shape, class, gender, sexuality, religion?

Pat (01:04:44):

I've never thought about that before. I mean, can I be affected by it because of who I am, how I look, where I'm from my demographics. Well, let's start by saying this. Me being a black woman, living in America and living in the "urban inner city area" there are less things of a certain value available to me. For example, let's start with food. If I really want to eat healthy and provide certain nutrition for my family, I have to go outside of our zip code to do that. Even aside from the community garden, that's what I would have to do. So in that way it affects me because I live here, I've got to go all the way over there to go get the Whole Foods or Trader Joe's or any other thing that's organic and nature based. And it's an economic price out when you make it expensive to eat healthy. So yes, in that way. Other than that, I don't think I really seen how or thought about it.

Speaker 1 (01:06:10):

What about you [inaudible 01:06:13]?

Vernice (01:06:16):

I think that, I think I'll be more affected by it more physically than I am mentally by it.

Speaker 1 (01:06:29):

Interesting.

Vernice (01:06:30):

I think that when I'm affected by it, others are going to be affected by it. It's not going to be an isolated thing. I think when we have food shortage, it's going to affect everyone. I'm just not looking forward to it. I fear for it for my children, which is why I try and convince them to eat more whole foods than processed foods. Because that's where your reliance comes at, to learn and not eat, to learn to eat only when it's necessary, to learn to drink water, so that you can make those decisions for yourself and not feel anxious. When you can't get a pizza or you can't get a hot dog or you can't call Uber. So all of those things are false reliances...

Pat (01:07:42):

We're spoiled when it comes to that.

Vernice (01:07:45):

... And we're controlled, it's not even spoiled. That's all about control.

Pat (01:07:48):

We're spoiled.

Vernice (01:07:49):

You know what I mean? It's like, yeah, if they don't understand that, that's controlling. Not get used to social media because when we have that grid locked down, be willing to walk and go and check on somebody, be willing to go out and see what's going on in your community and not just say, "oh my God, I can't go outside." I didn't give COVID a second thought. I didn't give COVID a second thought. I was like, I have a friend down in North Carolina. She was like, "girl, you have never been quarantined." I said, there's no way in hell. Nobody's going to tell me that I can't go outside.

There's no way you are going to convince me that I'm not going to see my grandchildren, that I'm not going to eat with my family, there's no way. There's no way you're going to tell me to put something in my body for herd immunity when you don't know what herd immunity is, it's no way. No. So I think when you protect yourself with that, it's like I will eat because I will eat what I have, when I don't have nothing to eat my body will take care of itself. And when I get something to eat, I won't eat it. I will wait until my body needs to eat it.

Speaker 1 (01:09:24):

You know, something that I hear you talking about is sort of like you are straddling two realities in the way that you live. It sounds like you're living in this world where you have gas, you have food available, you have electricity, you have a home but you're also preparing yourself for a world where you don't have those things. And you seem to be very, very aware of that and very aware of the precarity of your reality in this moment, of our reality in this moment. And I don't hear a lot of people talking about that.

Vernice (01:10:16):

Yeah. I, I don't turn on the lights in my house because I can. I get up in the morning. I don't go and turn on the lights because you have to get, it's like, ah, I don't have lights. I mean, people didn't have lights for a long time. People got up and did things because the sun came up because when the sun go down, they can't do it anymore. And that's the way I, just kind of like, and that's just who I am. I don't...

Speaker 1 (01:10:54):

Are You having conversations with your family, your community, your friends, about the climate crisis?

Vernice (01:11:03):

My family. Yeah. Yeah. Oh yeah. No. We, always...

Speaker 1 (01:11:07):

What do those conversations look like?

Vernice (01:11:09):

The conversations are about, this is disrespectful. This is, the same way you're taught to not litter and the reason why, because you live here and who's going to clean it up and that's the reason why you need to not take advantage of things, don't, I don't know, this is weird. It's like the earth we, it belongs to us, but it's not ours to use, it's for everybody to use. So my conversations with them are just about a matter of how I live really just how I live. And like Pat said...

PART 3 OF 4 ENDS [01:12:04]

Vernice (01:12:00):

You know.

Pat (01:12:01):

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Vernice (01:12:02):

And like pat said you know, people not have people poke fun at you and stuff, but you know, like my family say, oh, you want to know how to freeze something you know, call Ima, she'll tell you how to freeze it. Oh, you want to know something natural you can take, so you don't have to go to store and buy something, call Ima she'll tell you how to do it.

Pat (01:12:22):

Yeah.

Vernice (01:12:22):

You know? Oh you know, and that's just who I am you know? And that's my contribution, to the universe. It's like you know, I'm here. I want to be here. I appreciate everything else that's here. Let's share this together. You know, I hate when I see people come out of the store and drop a bag down on the ground, I have literally said to people, why, I have road, stopped my car and say, "yo, why'd you do that?" You know?

Pat (01:12:59):

Well, like you're driving on the highway and people are throwing [crosstalk 01:13:03] stuff out the car in front of you. It's like, ugh like wait [crosstalk 01:13:09] till you get to a gas station or something.

Vernice (01:13:11):

Yeah. Moi's cleaning out my pocketbook from stuff.

Pat (01:13:15):

And now on today's society, there's something wrong with you for feeling some type of way about it. So it's like, oh, I don't have the mic on, wow.

Speaker 2 (01:13:25):

Yeah it's okay.

Vernice (01:13:25):

It's like, when you pay attention to those small things, [crosstalk 01:13:28] you get to see the bigger picture.

Pat (01:13:30):

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It's like we created a environment of look the other way and don't say anything and mind your business about all things. And now it's 360 into see something, say something, and why didn't you say something.

Vernice (01:13:30):

Say something, and who you want to say-

Pat (01:13:49):

You know what I'm saying? And it's crazy. We're always backpedaling on issues that we create ourselves. Like talk about stay woke, like.

Vernice (01:14:06):

Stay woke.

Pat (01:14:07):

We're and so...

Vernice (01:14:09):

Too late for that.

Pat (01:14:10):

So unless we're going to live on another planet...

Vernice (01:14:13):

Stay woke.

Pat (01:14:14):

You know.

Vernice (01:14:15):

I saw somebody with that on their shirt.

Pat (01:14:19):

It's a saying.

Vernice (01:14:20):

I saw somebody just on TV, a politician.

Pat (01:14:23):

And now that we're all...

Vernice (01:14:24):

Jamal. [crosstalk 01:14:25].

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Pat (01:14:25):

Now that we're no longer sleeping, let's stay awake now.

Vernice (01:14:28):

Stay awake now, I've been awake. That's from the last poets I've been awake since the sixties.

Pat (01:14:33):

Like being socially conscious is new trend.

Vernice (01:14:36):

It's a new trend, right.

Pat (01:14:36):

Because you all lived in decadent...

Vernice (01:14:38):

Right.

Pat (01:14:38):

Abundance for so long.

Vernice (01:14:40):

Right.

Pat (01:14:41):

It was bling bling bling just the other day, remember?

Vernice (01:14:44):

Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Pat (01:14:45):

And red bottoms. And [crosstalk 01:14:49] that's all we can talk about.

Vernice (01:14:45):

Right. Yeah.

Pat (01:14:49):

And Dubai and all this excess.

Vernice (01:14:52):

Excess.

Pat (01:14:52):

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Excess about everything.

Vernice (01:14:54):

[inaudible 01:14:54] this show yesterday. I was like, I am not watching that. Speak sis.

Pat (01:14:59):

You know.

Vernice (01:15:00):

It's like speak sis, when we women talking about you know, mental health issues. It like women been crazy since the oh god.

Pat (01:15:13):

It was just three years ago that some of the biggest videos on TikTok, were people eating food.

Vernice (01:15:17):

Food.

Pat (01:15:17):

The food ASMR videos.

Speaker 2 (01:15:18):

I think they're still doing that, actually.

Pat (01:15:20):

You know so yeah, with that, I appreciate.

Vernice (01:15:25):

You want some more?

Pat (01:15:28):

Us as society trying to get back on track again, and again you know, my contribution would be more like on a daily personal, who's around me that type of an influence. I'm more hands on that way [crosstalk 01:15:44] by living by example, sharing information and teaching, and you know.

Vernice (01:15:28):

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Pat (01:15:50):

That way, and...

Vernice (01:15:51):

Yeah.

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Pat (01:15:52):

Someone else can you know, run the fundraiser.

Vernice (01:15:54):

Yeah fundraisers right.

Speaker 2 (01:15:55):

Okay. So I have, we probably want to stop in about like a couple of minutes.

Vernice (01:16:00):

Okay.

Speaker 2 (01:16:00):

I just have three more questions.

Vernice (01:16:03):

Okay.

Speaker 2 (01:16:04):

Well, and the first you can tie them together. The first two questions are, what do you fear for, for the future? And what do you hope for the future?

Pat (01:16:12):

Oh, okay.

Vernice (01:16:14):

I fear for nothing.

Speaker 2 (01:16:15):

You fear nothing.

Vernice (01:16:19):

I don't fear for anything. I really don't. My concept is that I will be here until I'm gone. I will be here until I'm gone. I tell everybody, unless a building falls on me and you could say, oh shit that must have hurt. Don't even worry about how I left here. If I leave here and I'm on another continent, don't even come and get me. Don't none that bullshit about, oh we have to pay to get the body here, leave me where I'm gone. You know I believe that at the end I will be in spirit.

Speaker 2 (01:16:55):

So what do you feel hopeful for?

Vernice (01:16:58):

I feel hopeful that people will begin to desire, to want to see the earth whole, that people will learn. I feel hopeful that people will function from a state of caring, loving, respect for each other you know. That all of this, that we won't need no... You know that's you know. People saying, "oh, it's okay to be this. It's okay to be that." Let people be, go be you know. That's you know, I think, I don't know. I might be too, that might sound too surface but, and then maybe sound too deep. But that's the reality of it. That's the way I function. I don't know the sense of, I'm a part of the energy that's flowing through the universe.

Speaker 3 (01:18:00):

Okay.

Vernice (01:18:01):

And only when I participate in a flow, am I contributing.

Speaker 3 (01:18:08):

Absolutely.

Vernice (01:18:09):

And that's just it. Like you know, you saying "can we interview, can we?" Yeah sure you have something going on. You know this, "no, not me. No, I can't" like God, what would I have been doing? If I had said no, no, I don't want to be a part of that. This same hour right here. I'd have been somewhere doing nothing. So why not be here? You know, how did I just you know, that's who I am. God bless you.

Speaker 3 (01:18:09):

Bless you.

Speaker 2 (01:18:41):

What about you, Pat? What do you fear for the future and what do you feel hopeful for?

Pat (01:18:48):

What do I fear for the future, in general?

Speaker 2 (01:18:54):

Yeah.

Pat (01:18:58):

I fear that people will repeat history when it comes to being more focused on control, as opposed to cooperation. I think that as a species, we can get more done with cooperative living, but you know, someone's always got to be the king. There's always got to be a superpower. And so long as someone's always striving to be the king or the superpower or there's invested interest groups, that really are more focused on profit you know, because I forget the name of it. I got exposed to this philosophy of what the world would look like, that we could live without chasing money. That there's enough in the world, and there's, it's a certain kind of society. And I think the man that came up with this idea was a student of the philosophies of Tesla. I can't think of his name, but when I do, I'll text it to you.

Speaker 2 (01:20:29):

Yeah.

Pat (01:20:30):

And it's a certain kind of living. It's like a certain kind of utopia. And at first a lot of people thought it was just an ideology. And I think he had to really go through a lot to prove that this is a reality. We can have this, but the reason why it's not being promoted is there's no profit in it. We live in a world where there's people that want to be different from others and show their elitism by what they have, what they possess, and what they can do. And so, as long as that mental consciousness exists amongst us, it'll be hard to have cooperative living, so that's my fear.

Speaker 2 (01:21:24):

What are you hopeful for?

Pat (01:21:24):

My hope is that you know, we live in a society now where people are figuring out ways to live longer you know. Even just you know, if you're wealthy enough, they might even, can freeze your body. You know, everyone is trying to be super human or immortal at the end of the day. Everyone wants to live longer, look younger, be more vital, be more healthy live as long as they can. So if that's the ultimate goal, my hope is that, that common desire will make people be more,

Cooperative in making society a more livable place for all, or for the majority. Unless you just want to just drop out and be hermit and separate yourself from society, then that's on you. But I'm, it's my hope that the common things, the common drive amongst us will outweigh, and that's a long hope. That's something that we've all hoped for, for centuries, that, that would outweigh the differences. And it sounds so idealistic. You know when you look at nature, animal kingdom, there's always the strong and the weak. You've got the deer, the butterfly, the cricket, then you have the wolves and the hyenas and the sharks and the lions. And it is what it is at the end of the day. And I think that human beings have to try and figure out where they fit in and who they are, and just in life, do your best to surround yourself with like-minded individuals. And just remember that while you're pursuing your own goals in life, that like she said, we're caretakers of each other in our environment. And it's my hope that people will be more socially conscious of those things. And not just because it's trendy, that a real awakening will take place and it'll hold. But I know that every thousand years, something happens. That's been the history of things. So yeah, that's about it.

Vernice (01:24:00):

I think that we are moving into a serious age of class division. And I don't think it's going to be on a racial level. I think it's going to literally be a matter of control. It's going to be a matter of whose in charge and who has control. It's a lot of control and a lot of suppression and a lot of oppression going on. And I guess that saying you know, like stay woke, I guess that's what is saying cautionary to people that do not have an awareness or people that are now just gaining a consciousness, awareness now. The consciousness awareness now, is a new consciousness awareness you know, from the era of when we had to have a civil rights consciousness and we had law changes and all of that. Now I think it's going to be a little different.

Speaker 2 (01:25:16):

What's the difference?

Vernice (01:25:17):

The difference is I think we are going to have a takeover. It's the same thing like with this here, with this mandate for the vaccination. I think that a lot of people are sleeping on the fact that they are calling for mandate for vaccination on one level, but their goal is a whole nother thing. You know, they're saying, "oh, we need public workers. We need this. We need you know, we want public workers. We want police officers. We want teachers to all be vaccinated," but all of those people control a larger mass people. You want all these 17,000 teachers to get vaccinated so that you can control the 200,000 children in school. Once you can say that teachers have to be vaccinated, you are now going to tell the parents, now your child has to be vaccinated. And that's what it is you know, kind of thing.

If you have the police have to be vaccinated, then they going to say, so I'm not going in that house, unless that person is vaccinated. Then they going to call off all that. You know? So it's you know, that's what it's you know, that's what it's about. It's not about what they show on the surface. You know, people voted for Biden because they thought Biden had this agenda. And now just like quick as a bunny, short as a dot, you can see what Biden's real agenda is. You know, we got people on the border, those Haitians on the border, that are being treated this way, but people don't remember when there was a different set of people on the border that was treated a different kind of way. And then some that was treated similar to like this.

Speaker 2 (01:27:14):

Right.

Vernice (01:27:14):

You know what I'm saying?

Speaker 2 (01:27:15):

Absolutely.

Vernice (01:27:16):

And, and the standards have changed. Why? Because of the color of these people's skins or because where they came from, because they came from Haiti.

Speaker 2 (01:27:26):

Right.

Vernice (01:27:26):

America will never forget what Haiti did to them. The Europeans will never forget that Haiti whooped their ass and told them, you can't. You know, take control. But we today don't realize that, that's still the agenda.

Speaker 2 (01:27:38):

Yeah.

Vernice (01:27:40):

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[crosstalk 01:27:40] We don't have, our way of life has changed so much to like, we are looking at red bottom. We are looking at [crosstalk 01:27:49] cell phones for 12 to this.

Pat (01:27:50):

Yeah.

Vernice (01:27:51):

And we're there. So we don't see the connection between, so this here stay woke should be saying, get woke.

Speaker 2 (01:28:02):

Yeah.

Vernice (01:28:02):

You know, cause you can't wake up to what's going on now. You have to really, really deeply.

Speaker 2 (01:28:09):

Tune in.

Vernice (01:28:10):

Tune in and look back.

Speaker 2 (01:28:11):

Yeah.

Pat (01:28:12):

You know and if I can just add that, as far as like the global warming is concerned, like people have to pay attention to patterns. Because things do repeat itself. You know, there was a time where we you know, the ice glaciers melted and you know, there was a time where the whales were washing [crosstalk 01:28:37] up on you know, and whenever these things happen, we have to look at what was the precursor to it.

Speaker 3 (01:28:44):

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Pat (01:28:46):

There's always something that, and it's usually in advance, but it's there. And I think if we can begin to recognize the signs and the patterns in nature and keep, scientists do it, they keep data on hurricanes and tornadoes that happened a hundred years ago you know? And what's the pattern going to be? What's the next one going to you know, what is it estimated to look like and feel like, I think that we have to learn to incorporate those same skills in our lives, in our daily lives and teach them.

Speaker 3 (01:29:18):

Yeah, yeah.

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Pat (01:29:19):

To our kids and our grandkids.

Vernice (01:29:20):

Grandkids. Right.

Pat (01:29:21):

And it gets difficult when you live in the urban jungle. It does. But when it's not a trend and it's part of who you are, or you're learning to make that a part of, at your lifestyle, because you do have a new state of consciousness. It's very important to do that, and it helps you not fear what outside circumstances can do to you.

Vernice (01:29:52):

Because you got to know where your source of information is at. And that's the other thing. Now you bring that up is that they don't allow the people that have the truth to share that truth. [crosstalk 01:30:06]. And that's what I mean by the control.

Speaker 2 (01:30:08):

Around how you get your own knowledge.

Vernice (01:30:10):

Yeah. Because when we rely on the commercial news, we are getting our information from the people that want to control society.

Speaker 2 (01:30:19):

Right. Right. So we have scientists, we have you know, immunologists that know about say COVID, but you won't hear that on commercial, that information. So that's what I mean by the people [crosstalk 01:30:37] that's controlling.

Pat (01:30:36):

What they doing, on social media. It's not a censorship, but they're like flagging or giving these warnings. Like, don't say, COVID, don't say vaccination, don't say virus. A girlfriend of mine [crosstalk 01:30:53] made a video.

Speaker 3 (01:30:53):

On social media?

Pat (01:30:54):

Yeah. On social media.

Vernice (01:30:55):

Oh I don't do social media.

Pat (01:30:56):

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Girlfriend of mine made a video back in, I think February. And it was a video on how to keep the immune system [crosstalk 01:31:04] vital. [crosstalk 01:31:07] Ginger, turmeric, garlic, [inaudible 01:31:12], black seed oil. She talked about it all. Castor oil.

Vernice (01:31:16):

Sunlight.

Pat (01:31:17):

All of it. And-

Vernice (01:31:19):

It got taken down.

Pat (01:31:22):

It got taken down. She made another one, they were threatening to take it down. And I think she had to you know, when you have to cop an appeal on Instagram...

Vernice (01:31:38):

Because you believe in Instagram.

Pat (01:31:40):

Because of the content.

Vernice (01:31:41):

Crazy.

Pat (01:31:42):

But I mean, but people it's a medium [crosstalk 01:31:45] of communication.

Vernice (01:31:47):

But you find another outlet. You find another outlet.

Speaker 2 (01:31:48):

Now I just pause for one second because I want to make sure you get home.

Vernice (01:31:52):

Oh yes.

Speaker 2 (01:31:52):

On time.

Pat (01:31:53):

Oh right. You right.

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Speaker 2 (01:31:54):

We should probably.

Pat (01:31:55):

But if it's a medium that can reach millions from an age group of 13 to 90.

Vernice (01:32:02):

That's what the problem is that's where the problem lies.

Speaker 3 (01:32:06):

What's the problem?

Vernice (01:32:07):

Is that we have brought into that being the medium.

Speaker 3 (01:32:11):

Yeah.

Vernice (01:32:11):

To reach where, instead of saying, I reached this-

Pat (01:32:15):

Guess what? At one time telephone didn't exist. [crosstalk 01:32:18] Now we have phones.

Vernice (01:32:18):

No, no, no, no, no, no, because this is-

Pat (01:32:21):

We can't be afraid of technology.

Vernice (01:32:23):

It's not technology. No, this is what I'm saying.

Speaker 2 (01:32:25):

I'm afraid of technology.

Vernice (01:32:25):

It's not.

Pat (01:32:25):

I know.

Vernice (01:32:27):

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No, but I'm saying that if though, if that's, if technology is going to begin to control society, then that's not the medium that we need.

Pat (01:32:39):

I don't know if it controls, but it is a strong influence and it can be for good or bad. You can get on-

Vernice (01:32:45):

It can be good if you can get on there and tell people [crosstalk 01:32:46] what to do right and they get knocked down.

Speaker 3 (01:32:48):

But it is interesting because it is a communication medium that is controlled by...

Vernice (01:32:54):

It is a communication that is controlled by a company.

Speaker 3 (01:32:58):

Has their own interest.

Vernice (01:32:58):

That has their own agenda.

Pat (01:33:00):

Of course.

Vernice (01:33:01):

And that's why we shouldn't...

Pat (01:33:02):

As they all do.

Speaker 3 (01:33:02):

Right.

Pat (01:33:03):

But it doesn't mean that we still shouldn't. Listen, if you have a page, [crosstalk 01:33:07] if you have thousand followers on your page. No. I mean, you don't have to start something new, but for those who are already doing it.

Speaker 3 (01:33:03):

Yeah.

Pat (01:33:15):

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They see purpose in it and then yeah.

Speaker 3 (01:33:18):

No, you're right. And it is an issue because it is a lot of the way that people get communication and people get information.

Pat (01:33:24):

And it's going to stay that way. It's not going anywhere.

PART 4 OF 4 ENDS [01:33:27]