

Lotte Leib Dula: The racial wealth gap is increasing. Suffering is increasing. Just divisions in our communities are increasing. And for those of us who are so inclined, we feel that this, this history and learning about this history together is what will bring healing to our communities.

Sam Fuqua: That's Lotte Leib Dula, and this is Well, That Went Sideways! A podcast that serves as a resource to help people have healthy, respectful communication. We present a diversity of ideas, tools, and techniques to help you transform conflict in relationships of all kinds. On this episode, we talk with Lotte Leib Dula about personal and public work towards reparations for African Americans. She is the co-founder of the reparations4slavery.com website and co-founder of the Reparations Circle Denver. I'm Sam Fuqua, co-host of the program with Alexis Miles. Hello Alexis.

Alexis Miles: Hi Sam.

Sam Fuqua: And we're very happy to welcome Lotte Leib Dula. Hello!

Lotte Leib Dula: Thank you, Sam and Alexis, I'm delighted to be here. Thank you.

Sam Fuqua: Let's start with a basic overview. Uh, some listeners may have heard the word reparations, but may not know exactly what it means and what the work entails. Can you give us a basic introduction?

Lotte Leib Dula: Absolutely. Thank you. Um, reparations is the basic idea that redress is due to people of African American descent, uh, in this country for not just the history of, of slavery in this country, but also that which followed it. So everything from black codes, Jim Crow laws, up to today, up to impacts we see today. And all of that is embedded in the racial wealth gap, which is currently about ten to one. So if you, if you actually look at history and unwind the racial wealth gap and what are, are all the components that create it, uh, you will see all of that is reflected in our history of institutional racism.

Alexis Miles: So Lotte, you are a white American. How did you get involved in the reparations movement?

Lotte Leib Dula: It's a very typical story, um, of many white people that I now meet, uh, have a very similar story. Um, I retired in late 2017 and I thought, well, uh, now that I'm retired, I can actually unpack. My mother had died two years prior and I had all of these boxes and I thought, you know, I'm gonna take, take some time. And, and for the first time in my life, I have time to unpack, literally unpack my family's history. Well, I made an unfortunate, um, and very sobering discovery. Um, I discovered a, a ledger book, uh, that ended up being from my family's plantation, which I'd never even heard of the person who had belonged to, or of the plantation or of our family's history in the south. So, uh, on pages 27 through 30 of that ledger were names of people my family had enslaved. And I have a feeling that this ledger book may have been a request for reparations based on property lost during the Civil War. It reads like that. I was floored by this discovery, and within 24 hours, I had informed my family and my sister that, um, I didn't know what it meant, but there was a word reparations I had heard about and that I was, we were going to have to look into repair for, uh, these atrocities. And it's been a journey ever since, uh, trying to determine what is owed, and how does a person in my position begin down the path of repair.

Alexis Miles: And that's actually a, a great question. How does a person in your position begin on a path of repair? What, what, would, are some of the first steps a person could take?

Lotte Leib Dula: There are a number of, uh, depending on your situation. One of my first steps, uh, because I, my family, uh, has a very strong interest in genealogy, um, my great grandmother was the gene, Mayflower Society genealogist, um, and genealogy has been used to separate people for, for hundreds of years. And so my partner, Briayna Cuffie, and I, uh, we do actually a program called Reparative Genealogy, which seeks to bring people back together, black and white, to look at our shared history. So that was actually the first thing I did was try to research, who are these people and where did they live and, and what did they do? Um, who am I? Who am I in this history? And my, my history is, I'm a person, I was not a racial justice warrior, I was, I was somewhat conservative before this point. I lived completely in a white bubble. I have, I had no friends of color. Uh, no coworkers. Zero. And as I started to look into my history and saw kind of the context, uh, through which this, this ledger book was so emblematic of, of my family's past, I realized that there was something missing from my understanding of our, of our nation's history. It wasn't just my family history that I was missing. It was the entire nation's history. And I realized that really it had kind of been erased.

I mean, I, I grew up in California. There was maybe one paragraph about slavery that you study, you know, and it's kind of brushed aside and, and there's always this, and I was raised with this, uh, this is embarrassing, but it's true. I was raised with a real, noblesse oblige kind of perspective. Oh, those poor people over there, we can help them. Um, and so the first thing I realized I needed to do is, one, understand who, who is my family and, and, and, and what have they done, how, and also, what is this history that, that I didn't learn? One of the things, um, I also learned about my family, um, is that my, my mother and other relatives belong to the United Daughters Confederacy. Now, this is the group, as I'm sure you well know, that has basically erased our proper history of the enslavement era and, and other things, um, from our textbooks. And so, that's part of the reason why we don't know this history. Um, it's just been, it's been whitewashed and erased. So I, I decided, within like a week, that I need a way to study this history and I, and I looked online, I couldn't really find anything, uh, that would, what needed to be done. So I thought, well, I'm gonna start a website that daylights this history and makes it easier for white families like mine to figure out who are we, how do we reconstruct our own history, and how does that connect up to this nation's history of enslavement. And finally, what does that, once we understand these things, how do we begin to engage in repair, unwind harm?

Alexis Miles: You talk about discovering your family's history, which is a microcosm of US history. Um, often people feel a lot of guilt and shame when they make a discovery of personal connection to slavery and the Transatlantic, Atlantic, slave trade. How did you not get mired down in those feelings and begin to take action?

Lotte Leib Dula: So easy to get stuck in shame and guilt, basically, because we, we realize, uh, once you've done this research that this whitewashing of history, including our own family history, allows us to stay in, in a, in this position of noblesse oblige because we don't realize that we have actually created the, these conditions ourselves. Our families created this situation. And I think, um, once I became aware of the history and just got clear and realized that, you know, my, my ancestors are holding a smoking gun. I hold the keys to the kingdom through inherited wealth, through skin privilege, whatever advantages, I like to call. I don't talk about privilege, I talk about advantages. I have advantages. But it's my responsibility to engage in repair. Pure and simple. And so, once I was clear about the types of harms my family had, uh, created, it became clear to me how you might, and I'm a strategic planner so it's kind of how I think anyway, so I could look at indivi, the exact harms, my family engaged in, and then determine, uh, based on what African Americans have, have called for. You know, you can't just act on your, your own. It's a, that's part of the whole white supremacy formula. But to the extent that African Americans have called for certain types of repair and you, you determine your family owes these types of repair, you can engage in

those directions. So, so gaining that clarity allowed me to move through guilt and shame into action and taking responsibility.

Sam Fuqua: What about some white people who you talk to about this who don't feel guilt and shame and who say I had nothing to do with slavery? I don't discriminate, I have not created any barriers. And who believe in the idea of meritocracy that somehow, if people are given the same access to education, the same opportunities, everybody can succeed and build wealth. How do you talk to people about that in a way that doesn't make them defensive and can bring them into the conversation, and change their mind?

Lotte Leib Dula: Oh, you're speaking to, to who I was just four years ago. Absolutely. I was a major, as a fiscal conservative, um, a major proponent of the bootstrap argument, meritocracy. That's exactly how I believed until I actually learned this erased history and realized actually, literally it was my ancestors who created many of these barriers to black economic success. Those barriers are there and they're there on purpose and, and that they've been covered up so well that it's easy to build this fallacious bootstrap argument. So, so when people use those with me, I just, I explain exactly, uh, I have a presentation where I take apart the bootstrap argument by showing exactly how my family amassed wealth and political influence over 400 years and wrote the laws making sure that African Americans could not follow in our footsteps. And you have such good examples. I mean, like for instance, uh, what I like to have white people do is it's like, okay, part of the ten of the bootstrapper argument is our white ancestors, "We just worked so hard and we did it all by ourselves." So I have people go on to the Bureau of Land Management, um, site and look up to see whether their family received free land, the land grants, um, through any of the homestead acts, original patents.

My family received land in probably five or six different states, a ton of it. And yes, of course they worked hard. Everybody works hard. We all work hard. And we got some free stuff that got us ahead. I mean, that's the source of our wealth is that land. Uh, African Americans, I, I believe it's maybe only like one or two percent of African Americans, uh, after emancipation were able to get the same land. Then even if you, for instance, even if you receive land, like for instance, people in, uh, in Tulsa, they have, they have, they receive land at emancipation, uh, through, I believe the five civilized tribes. There's oil this, found on these lands. We have an entire community of African Americans gets rich, and then of course, white people can't, just cannot tolerate success, and so they go in and firebomb Tulsa on a trumped up excuse. So, so it's all in how you look at history and, and how you look at, you need to know your own history. Did you receive land grants? Uh, what other, did you, uh, make money off the, literally, the backs of enslaved people like my family did? I mean, I can, I can show exactly how my family, uh, earned its money, uh, ended up sending a whole bunch of kids to law school, you know, through, through pro, plant, plantation proceeds. Then ran law firms and plantations at the same time for multiple generations after that. You know, it's, it's easy to prove, but you need to know your family's history and this country's history.

Sam Fuqua: So assuming you're able to educate someone about this history, how do you bring them further into the reparations conversation and some level of involvement?

Lotte Leib Dula: The way I structure my lecture is we look at every era in the, and we, we calculate the racial wealth gap, you know? So once we start talking about free land, I ask people, so how is your balance sheet looking now? How is your, and are you able to transfer that wealth? How is your family doing that? Now, can black people do that? Now, let's look at Heirs' property law, which prevents many black families from passing property onto heirs. Let's look at all the mechanisms of wealth transfer. So we go over all these different areas and it's, it's very, it's just easy to prove with logic and facts. It's, that is a fallacious argument. So I find that no matter how, when I give this lecture, I've not had even a single person say they

didn't believe it. Um, even conservatives will say, wow, hmm. Uh, I've never thought about it this way. Because I'm, I'm an ex-fiscal conservative myself, you know? Um, so I know the language because that's, that's how I, my, uh, that's how I lived my life before this. So it's just very easy to do.

Sam Fuqua: So after educating someone about the historical injustice, where do you go from there?

Lotte Leib Dula: Well, this is where we get to the white solidarity lane of the reparations movement. And so in this lane, what we're talking about is personal partial reparations. So it, it's a given that all of us in this lane support capital R, a federal program of reparations, because no one person, I mean, anything I can do, it's a drop in a drop in a drop in a bucket. It's a tiny amount of repair. So what we really need is the federal program of reparations, which is currently H.R. 40, is one of the main vehicles for that in terms of legislative redress. So, and that's, that's uh, before Congress now, and hopefully this year, um, we'll come to a vote. That is, that is the hope. And so the black solidarity lane of the reparations movement is pushing forward H.R. 40. Those of us in the white solidarity lane, we are working on personal partial reparations. So looking at your family history and determining how do I personally unwind some of this harm? So, so when people have done this kind of research and also, also look at what, what are the modern day situations we face economically like housing, land, all these different areas, and how does that relate to this history? You can see it plain as day once you connect the dots. Uh, once you know, your family history, like for instance, my family made a lot of money, um, in law and in medicine and through politics. Some of my oldest ancestors were, uh, the founders of the, uh, Province of Maryland, the Calvert family. Well, they were a huge, the largest enslavers there. They actually wrote the laws of enslavement.

So my thought is, okay, so one of the first things I did was create a scholarship for anybody wanting to study law, medicine or political science. I need to get somebody educated in those areas. So I had a, a young woman who just graduated recently and she, in medicine, and she is doing her residency now in anesthesiology, in New York City. So I worked with her to help pay for part of her education and helped her get an apartment. It's, these are just small reparative acts. So we call it, you know, reparations, lowercase r, personal partial. My partner, um, Briayna Cuffie, on the reparations4slavery.com portal, she lives in Annapolis, Maryland, we were joking around one day, um, because we teach this reparative genealogy class and somebody asked, well, have you ever thought maybe you might be related? Well, we hired a genealogist and my ancestors lived a stone's throw away from hers. So we have a repaired relationship that's very close. I'm helping her right now buy a house because I have that expertise and she'll be the first person in her fam, she was first person in her family to go to college. Um, and now the first person to buy a house. And I'm helping pay down her education debt.

Alexis Miles: She's African American. Is that correct?

Lotte Leib Dula: Yes. Oh, absolutely. Yes, yes. Yeah. We have a, we have a friendship, reparative relationship and friendship across race, class, age and geography, since I'm, I'm here in Denver. And so, so many people I know are working to figure out, how do I begin this process? So, so you begin the process by looking at your family's harm and then finding ways to unwind it. But eventually you drop that because you just develop friendships, um, and working relationships, and you're working together, um, from the heart. But it gives people who are not connected in these communities a way, a way in and, and something, something to do, to work toward.

Alexis Miles: And Lotte, you said at one point that it has to be personal, um, when you were talking about the role of white people in reparations and repair. You said it has to be personal. It has to be more than writing a check. Can you say more about that?

Lotte Leib Dula: Yeah. I, what I say about that is we wanna move from being performative to transformative in our reparations work. And so most of us, I mean, I certainly started out being performative. Uh, I'm not connected in the communities, four years ago. Um, I don't have any, uh, colleagues or friends of color, so the best I can do is write a check and then I can walk away. It's not, it's not personal. Um, as you get involved working together in this middle lane where black and white are working together toward repair, you form these relationships. Um, and the relationships themselves dictate the tenor of the, the work toward repair. It's something you're doing together and you organically determine together what to do.

Alexis Miles: You talked about a white lane and a black lane. Could you say more about why it's necessary to have separate lanes?

Lotte Leib Dula: Well, yeah, for instance, um, in a national program of repair, it's, it's, it's definitely it's, it's, it's considered the standard that the harmed party dictates the conditions of reparations. So it is not up to me to say what reparation should be. It is the African American, the black solidarity lane that leads that effort nationwide. For instance, uh, N'COBRA, um, and NAARC, are two groups that are in that lane. They are leading the charge to try to get H.R. 40 passed. N'COBRA is the National Coalition of Blacks for Reparations in America, and NAARC is the National African American Reparations Commission. And, N'COBRA, if you're white, you can't even, uh, join the group. It is truly a solidarity organization, uh, leading that charge. And I respect that, you know? Absolutely. And there's also a, many white people once they get involved in reparations expect, oh, well of course, all African, African Americans want me to, to merge into this lane and oh, sure. They, I should be a welcome person in this room. And, and the answer is maybe not. Maybe people need their solidarity lane to, to get this, this work done, and, and to, to, to say what needs to be done. Then it, it's, it's up to us to follow those leads.

So, but, so the white solidarity lane, one of the things, uh, we talked about is, uh, processing shame and guilt. Those are topics that we need to, this is our own homework. We need to do this amongst ourselves. Uh, we don't need to dump our trauma on African Americans. It's, it's, it's, it's the wrong place to do that. Yeah, we've gotta work through a bunch of stuff. Um, there is an emotional impact to doing this work, but should we be weighing somebody else down with our process? The answer is no. That's not appropriate. So, so each, each lane has its separate kind of mission. And each lane is just as important as the other in terms of getting this work done. Um, but we have to just be very careful to be as respectful as possible and to just acknowledge, um, our, our appropriate place to be in the movement.

Alexis Miles: Since you became involved in reparations repair work in 2018, have you seen an increase in the number of white people who have been involved in this kind of work?

Lotte Leib Dula: Yes. It's been very inspiring to me. And it's to the point where the NAARC, which is the National African American Reparations Commission, they actually have a white reparationist arm now, which is the Fund for Reparations NOW. It's a fully white led arm of NAARC that is fundraising, um, for, right now they're working on monumentation. Um, they, they fundraised and created a monument, um, at Elaine, Arkansas, I believe it was last year, to com, to commemorate and mark a massacre that occurred there I believe in, in the early part of last century. Um, now I believe they're working toward another, more monumentation at other sites. Uh, for instance, the Chattahoochee Brick Company, which I believe was involved in convict leasing, and there were a lot of horrible things that happened there. So part of restoring history is, is creating these, these monuments so people are not oblivious to this history, it's all around us. Um, but it's also falling and dis, repair, and dis, and disappearing. So, um, a number of white people are working toward, uh, trying to ensure that this history stays, uh, stays at the forefront.

So, um, there are other, there are many other projects. Uh, there's one called the Reparations Project. A woman named Sarah Eisner is working with a man named Randy Quarterman, and, uh, her great-grandfather, I believe, uh, was enslaved, the Quarterman family, but at, at emancipation, uh, gave the family some land, um, in Georgia. And when Sarah was growing up, she heard this story and then she later learned that the Quarterman family still had the land, but they were losing it due to Heirs' property law, which is a very complex, um, set of laws where African American families, many lose their land because, uh, there's no, um, there's no will. So the person dies and tested and the property goes to many, many owners. And then, um, developers can, can swoop in because of loopholes in the laws and grab the land, which is how people lose their land. So the Quarterman family was about to lose their land, so, uh, Sarah created a foundation to help Randy's family keep the land and also record all of the stories about the history of the area, because it's, it's been in his family, and that community's been there since emancipation. So we have a lot of really important histories that need to be recorded. So you have white families doing, um, working with, with African Americans together to do this history. Uh, but Sarah's been very careful. It's up to Randy's families to dictate what they want to happen. And since she has funds agency, you know, time agency and, and resources, that's what she applies as, uh, dependent on what, what they, they request and require.

Alexis Miles: So we live in an age of many people fighting against critical race theory. And at the same time, you've just said that there is an increase in the number of white people working toward reparation and repair. Why do you think that there's this increase in the number of white people who are working in that direction?

Lotte Leib Dula: The racial wealth gap is increasing. Suffering is increasing. I think for many of us just divisions in our communities are increasing. And for those of us who are so inclined, we feel that this, this history and learning about this history together is what will bring healing to our communities. That, that's my belief. I mean, ultimately it's about healing, these wounds, which have been festering for these many years since before this country was, was founded. Um, even when I talk to conservatives, all you have to do is, I mean, if you use buzz words and you're talking about something outside yourself, sure you're gonna end up in an argument. When I tell my story, what I have found out, I don't get arguments. Sometimes I'll get stunned silence. Sometimes people will say, wow, that's really brave. You just threw your family under the bus, all 400 years, all generations, your family. I've never seen anybody do that before. But I don't, I don't get arguments. And I don't use buzz words. I don't use a single one because it's easy, it's easy to, to push aside an argument if, if somebody's using a bunch of buzz words. For me, it has to be completely personal. And that's how I get my message across. The most comp, like I said, like, like you just said, the most compelling arguments are from a very personal point of view.

Sam Fuqua: In addition to this personal reparative work, this education, can you tell us a bit about what is proposed at the federal level? I recall that back in the 1980s, the federal government did provide some financial reparations to Japanese Americans who were interned during World War II. So there is a precedent for at least that model. But when we talk about federal action on reparations, uh, what are we talking about?

Lotte Leib Dula: Yes. And it's good that you mention that. So in the late eighties, um, yes, Japanese Americans did receive a form of redress. And I believe it was in 1989, John Conyers, Representative John Conyers, um, modeled his H.R. 40 legislation after that redress package that passed for Japanese American. So it is, it, it mirrors that same process. And what it really does is it just sets up a commission to look at this, to basically daylight this history and then determine based on what they find, what the best solutions for redress would be. So no money is allocated for actual reparations. It's just a commission to study and make

recommendations. Currently, I believe there are, I think 194, maybe five, somewhere in there, um, uh, co-sponsors of the bill. Speaker Pelosi has, has, uh, made it clear that we need 218. So, uh, a full, full plate there, but we have almost that many, if you combined yes, promised yes votes and co-sponsorships, um, so the powers that be, Human Rights Watch, N'COBRA, many of the, um, different African American led organizations are working hard in the background trying to ensure that this legislation gets passed. Um, and if they're unable to do that in a certain amount of time, likely I believe they'll be seeking, uh, an executive order to, and, and again, it's just to create a commission to study the history and make recommendations for redress based on what, what they find.

Sam Fuqua: Which seems like a pretty modest step, and yet John Conyers introduced that bill so many times without success.

Lotte Leib Dula: 29 plus years. I mean, until he died. So now it's Representative Sheila Jackson Lee, um, has taken on the, that mantle from John Conyers. So she is leading the charge now.

Alexis Miles: How hopeful are you that that will pass? Because right now, as I mentioned earlier, so many people are fighting against critical race theory, which is, uh, a particular way of viewing American history. Um, so how hopeful are you that that will pass in this climate that we're living in?

Lotte Leib Dula: Oh, it's, it's a major challenge. There's, there's no question. If I focused on that level of challenge in, in my everyday work, I might not get out of bed in the morning. Um, instead I try to focus on, on, you know, what, what successes I can work toward myself. So while, we're, I mean, and you know, I'm a, I'm an advocate of H.R. 40. I have met with legislative aids as part of Human Rights Watch's, you know, campaign. Um, so I'm certainly an advocate for H.R. 40, and, but I know we also can't wait. So I'm an advocate at, at the personal, at the municipal, and state level. For inst, for instance, you have the state of California, um, they've put together a commission and they've been having hearings looking at it. So, so if municipalities like Evanston, uh, Illinois, they, they actually passed, um, a marijuana tax of funding, um, for housing repair reparations. And so they, they've actually, uh, I believe cut checks to the first recipients of those, those programs. Is it enough? No, only the federal program would be enough. Um, however, um, what I think a lot of people say is harm happens at the personal and at the local level. So you need to have, uh, repair at the personal and local level. And those are things that we have control over. We can do this. These are our communities, these are our lives. So we can do this work ourselves, putting one foot in front of the other. Occasionally looking up to the federal level and adding our support there. Um, but not getting discouraged because there's so much to do. That, that's probably the biggest challenge we face is just feeling discouraged, you know, waking up, getting out of bed and saying, okay, what I, what am I working on today that will, uh, further this effort?

Alexis Miles: Can you give some more examples of some successful actions toward repair and reparations?

Lotte Leib Dula: Well, there, there are a lot of, uh, municipalities working toward repair and, and some, they, they have successes for a while and then you get stuck. So it's, there's a bit of a learning curve. One of the most inspiring to me early on, um, has been Asheville. Um, they actually got a coalition of people together and they decided, um, all of these different nonprofits who were working, um, and wanting to get, uh, reparations, um, happening in Asheville, um, they had the support of their, their local government. Um, and they ended up having, I, I believe it was the, why they got a grant to hire a, a local coordinator at Asheville. His name is, is, uh, Rob Thomas, and they actually got the grant. It's tobacco money that they got. I mean, how symbolic. Absolutely amazing. And so I thought this, that's an active unwinding harm right

there. A tobacco company funding a local activist to, and, and at a good salary too, to coordinate all of the repair efforts.

So making sure that all the African American groups were leading the charge and then letting the white, uh, coalition know, okay, here's what you, we need you to do. You gotta show up at the city council meeting, you gotta do this, this, um, and just get, getting the, the white army of supporters activated really, really in a, in a, creating a, a circle of support around black solidarity lane. That, that's kind of what I see, what we, what we could do if we were really well organized across the country. And it's, it's, it's a huge step. You know, this is, this is not easy work to do. But sort of like showing up for racial justice does, you know, in, in local efforts, uh, we could be the reparative, the reparations, surge elements, you know? Um, and so anyway, that really, I thought that was some very smart community organizing, and that was actually very inspiring. So each community has come up with, um, a different combination of reparative, uh, moves and, and ways of, of coming together, um, that, that are just very, very inspiring. So we have quite a few, am, Amherst, Massachusetts is another municipality that's, um, looking at reparations and has put together a broad coalition to do that. So, you see a number of municipalities and of course, California, um, doing all this work together, and each one has a slightly different approach depending on the injuries that, that were happening, where the constituents were involved. And then, then of course there's the, just the, the personal efforts, um, across the country, which are really person to person in nature. Um, tho, those are some of the most inspiring stories to me. Yeah.

Alexis Miles: And I believe people can find some of those stories on the website that you founded.

Lotte Leib Dula: Yes, my website has a ton of stuff. Um, almost anything you wanna research, uh, you can find on there. I basically built the site because I couldn't find the information myself. I thought, well, alright. I just found out I'm a descendent of enslavers. I need information about what to do and I couldn't find anything. Um, I found N'COBRA and it was clear that they were closed to white people and I thought, okay, so that's not my resource. Fine. But what is? And there wasn't anything. And so that's why I, I created the site, uh, with my partner, Briayna. We, we have a funny story of how we met. I, um, had gone to a, Coming to the Table, it's a racial justice and healing group, and they had a reparations guide out. And so I decided to go to their national conference. And they had a session on reparations, and here I am, a brand new person, didn't know anything about that group, and I'm brand new to reparations, but I'm an arrogant sort of person, so I stood up and I'm talking, let's do, you know, making all these proclamations, and who's with me, and nobody, crickets. And then Briayna, my future partner, uh, she's only 23 at the time, she kinda walks up to me, arms crossed after the meeting and says, "Well, well, well, aren't we arrogant? Don't we have some grand ideas?" And she started to, to take apart everything I said. Luckily I, I, uh, I'm smart enough to, and strategic enough to say, oh, mmm, there's my future partner right there. And we've been, we've been close friends.

We spent the whole weekend kind of talking about it. And, um, so she, um, she was the first person to point out, well, aren't you nice with your scholarship? What about people like me who have, you know, six figure education debt, and there's no way I can pay it off, and I, I can't make my monthly nut. So I just looked at her and I said, I'll help you pay it. I just made the decision just instantly, which was kind of shocked, "You will?" So you have to take some risks that many people aren't, not used to taking. I'm taking risks, saying yes to things that most people would blanch, literally. It's part of the fun, it's part of, there's equal parts risk and reward to doing this work. But if you can, if I, with Briayna, if I can repair her life, I've told her I want her to have the same net worth as a white person, when she, by the time she's 40. Out of debt and with an asset, and we're on track, we're doing it. And her, her life is totally changing. And with that change comes all the benefits. It's not just about her. It's about her entire family and her entire

community. Since she doesn't have to work three jobs now, she has, um, I helped her start her consultancy and I said, okay, let's first thing, let's establish your, your hourly rate. We, we'll start at a \$100 an hour, and then you, you need to go up from there. And she's 23. Well, she was able to quit two jobs, start doing consulting work. Start teaching. She can just do things that, that she wanted to do that are really in her skillset, and not some hotel job or some of this, that, and the other. And now she's written a book about the, the black history of Annapolis. She's only 28. I think now. So personal partial reparations can benefit an entire community. Even if you're working with one person.

Alexis Miles: Lotte, you have talked about helping white people become fearless. If you can say like one or two sentences about what that looks like.

Lotte Leib Dula: It looks like, uh, laughing hysterically a lot after you fall in your face. Um, I'm always, uh, making mistakes and, uh, literally I, you gotta put on your overalls every morning, 'cause you're gonna fall into something and get up and dust yourself off. Um, so for me, it's, it's, it's really about humility. Humility and a good sense of humor. If you have those two things combined with, I mean, I, it takes a certain level of arrogance for me to do what I'm doing. There's just no question about it. And I have to have equal parts humility, and then a really good sense of the absurd because sometimes things just absolutely, uh, go wrong. Um, other times things are hysterically funny and we'll just, we'll just laugh hysterically. Um, I mean, I've had situation after situation, which are unbelievably funny, um, in working with people and, and repair issues. 'Cause we'll get to a point where like, I didn't expect that to, I didn't. Oh, okay. And, and that's what it's about. And we're establishing relationships that, that don't have boundaries. Um, so we're, we're, we're building relationships across race, across class, all these different things that divide us. And part of that is opening our hearts, laughing together when it doesn't go the way we planned and figuring out how to get up and take the next step.

Alexis Miles: Excellent. Thank you so much for that.

Sam Fuqua: Lotte Leib Dula, thank you for joining us. We appreciate your time and your work.

Lotte Leib Dula: Well, thank you. I, I absolutely appreciate being here and your, your interest and thank you so much.

Sam Fuqua: Lotte Leib Dula is co-founder of the reparations4slavery.com web portal. She's also co-founder of Reparations Circle Denver. That website is the word reparations, the number four, then the word slavery.com.

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