



PODCAST TRANSCRIPT

S6E16: Reclaiming Truth as Conflict Resolution with Glenda Russell

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Glenda Russell: The, the lack of a history invisibilizes people. And as a psychologist, I can tell you unequivocally that that is bad for people. We know that when kids learn a history about groups of which they are members that it contributes to their wellbeing, whether it's good history or bad history, meaning whether it's about good things that happened to their, their kinfolk, or whether it's bad things that happened to their kinfolk, it's important because it locates them in the world, and that's a really important psychological thing.

Sam Fuqua: That's Glenda Russell, 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. In this episode, we talk with Glenda Russell about the importance of inclusive history and the impact of erasing or marginalizing people in the historical record. She's a retired psychologist who's still active as a researcher, writer, and activist. Glenda Russell writes a blog called *Tools for Troubled Times*.

I'm Sam Fuqua, co-host of the program with Alexis Miles. Hello, Alexis.

Alexis Miles: Hi, Sam.

Sam Fuqua: And we're so pleased to be joined for this episode of Well, That Went Sideways! by Glenda Russell. Hello.

Glenda Russell: Hi. Hi, Sam. Hi, Alexis.

Sam Fuqua: I wanna start by asking you about one of the ways you identify yourself, which is as a public or community historian. And, some of the thinking and writing you've been doing lately about how individuals or groups of individuals can be erased from history. Can you say something about what you mean by that?

Glenda Russell: When I was coming up, when I was going to school, I would diligently read my history books and listen to my teachers. And, it didn't occur to me that there were lots of things that weren't getting talked about, and that wasn't just because I was young. Um, that was because there were lots of people and lots of groups that weren't covered in my standard history books. And then at some point in my adulthood, it took me that long, it took the world that long, uh, we started recovering some of that lost history, and it was some of the most exciting history that I ever read or studied or got interested in, and I realized how important it was. There was a moment in January of 1974, I was sitting in Boulder's city council chambers. There was a debate, uh, not a debate, it was a, it was a hearing, a public hearing. It was a debate. It was a pro, it was billed as a public hearing on was Boulder going to include sexual orientation in the city's human rights ordinance. They had already passed, they'd actually already passed that too, but there was such a hue and cry from, from the citizenry that they had to revisit the, the issue.

And I was sitting there, and I had one piece of paper which was a, a paper that we'd been given when we entered the room, and I borrowed a pen from somebody, and I started writing down the

names of people who spoke and if they represented any place in particular, and, uh, what their main argument for or against the inclusion of that, of sexual orientation in that ordinance, uh, was. And I did it because I was, I was sitting there going, my God, this is history being made right here. And it's, it's a history that is gonna go maybe in the newspaper, and in fact, it did get covered by the newspapers. And I realized I was doing that because it was about queer history, we would've said gay history at the time, and I knew that there was a movement unfolding and that I was a part of that movement, and there were all these people there who were for and against that movement, and it was absolutely fascinating to see that. And, and, um, I started writing, and I have been writing ever since in one way or another. And, part of what provoked that interest in writing it down was knowing that that's exactly the sort of history that didn't get covered in my textbooks in school. Um, that that would never have come up, and that I had been learning that there were all kinds of other histories that hadn't come up, and that were happening, and that were really revitalizing this country in a lot of ways and offering us all kinds of things to think about and to do differently and, and that sort of thing.

So, from that moment on, I, I just started saving stuff. And now that I'm getting ready to move out of my house into a smaller place, I've saved a whole lot of stuff, and some library's gonna get a nice bunch of stuff pretty soon here. But meanwhile, I've been intrigued by what we've learned by looking at those lost histories, and they weren't entirely lost. Different communities kept their own histories in different ways, but they existed at the margins. And like so many things, that, that information at the margins is very valuable in charting where we've been as a country and where we need to be going. So, lately I've been so concerned, one of the things that has been most, uh, worrisome to me is how much that history is getting erased, and it worries me for many reasons that it's getting erased. I know what it was like to live without it. And, I know that there is a concerted and intentional effort to remove that history as quickly as possible, and indeed, a lot of it has been removed. And so, I've been thinking very much about that, and the, the latest blog is on the question of what can each of us do to keep history alive in our own, you know, what can we save and what can we, what kinds of conversations can we have, and what kinds of, of organizations can we support to do that.

But history, the, the lack of a history invisibilizes people. And as a psychologist, I can tell you unequivocally that that is bad for people. We know that when kids learn a history about groups of which they are members, that it contributes to their wellbeing. Whether it's good history or bad history, meaning whether it's about good things that happened to their, their kinfolk or whether it's bad things that happened to their kinfolk, it's important because it locates them in the world, and that's a really important psychological thing. And it, it insists, at least on some level, that other people recognize them as located in the world rather than these invisible entities that are kinda ghost-like walking around who don't have a past. 'Cause if you don't have a past, it's pretty hard to figure out what your future's gonna look like. That's a long answer to your question, Sam, but that's why I'm so concerned about history.

Sam Fuqua: Thank you for that. And, it seemed that progress, broadly defined, had been made over some decades since the, the '70s to, to tell the stories and to include marginalized groups in history lessons in schools, for example. Now we have, uh, the current administration directing our federal agencies that deal in the history of this country to not discuss what they consider to be

divisive or controversial topics and to promote America as an exceptional nation. This seems to be a, a turn back in presentation of complete history.

Glenda Russell: It is a turn back, and it's, it's happening in so many places. It's happening in the book bans. A lot of what the book bans are about are people, people of color, queer people. The president has essentially said, he wants America to look good. And, America only looks good if we hide all the things that have been painful for people about it. As an in, it's an interesting approach when you consider that, you know, I feel pretty good now, I don't, I'm not thrilled when I find a fault in myself, but I'm thrilled when I can do something about it and actually rectify it, and that, that has never occurred to him. But of course, he's also somebody who's never had to apologize for anything he has, he has in fact said himself. I think it's in, you know, there are websites that people have now copied and, you know, all over the federal government that, that have lost all kinds of information about different groups that are "divisive". And by the way, that language is so interesting. I mean, what is it, what does it do to you to think that you're the only, the big reaction to having history about you is it's divisive. It tells us bad things. I mean, that's a very weird thing to be on the receiving end of.

But, but websites have been one of my favorite ones, this was, this was actually, they were, they were going through various governmental we, websites. I mean, you know, using AI and just purging anytime they'd see certain words. One of the words was gay. Somebody was trying to figure out what happened with this one website about World War II where the airplane that dropped the bomb on Hiroshima didn't, didn't exist anymore because it was the Enola Gay. I mean, it, you know, it's, it was as thoughtless as AI can be and, you know, and that's the sort, that's, that's just one, sort of, silly example. And, and it's an example that shows you literally change reality when you take away what has happened to people. You, and, and that you would consider people who you don't wanna know about or people who are, who give us a bad name or people who are "divisive," and that sort of thing. I love the Smithsonian. I grew up near DC. I, the Smithsonian was one of my favorite places to go. It still is. A few years ago, a couple years ago, I was there, and I was just, I was just enchanted with how it's changed, because not only is it full of rich history, but they also had so much more of a historiography in there. So much more description of, "We used to think this, but now we think that." And, "We used to not notice that, this, and that."

And I just thought, this is, like, the kind of history that I would have loved to have learned growing up. And it wasn't just the content that was there, but it was the process of here's how we understand ourselves, and here's how we understand our country, and here's why it's so important to be paying attention to how we're talking about it, not just to what we think happened. And that's the sort of thing that, um, is very bothersome apparently to the administration. They don't like that sort of thing. They like you to believe that there is one true history. There is no perspectivity to history. It just unfolds, and those are the facts, ma'am, and that's what we'll do. So, a p, a part of what's being taken away, I mean, the, clearly the Smithsonian is on, Smithsonian is on notice, and they, you know, there have been letters published as well as the famous executive order that was for the his, well, really for the Smithsonian, but for every other federally funded, uh, museum. But we don't want this stuff that gives us a bad name, and we don't want this stuff that insinuates that we're not perfect.

Alexis Miles: So Glenda, can you give an example of what happens to public discourse when select parts of history are erased? Like, as you were talking, as, as an African American, I was sitting here just feeling a visceral response because I know what happened to me as a child when I began learning African American history that I had never heard in schools. Before, Black folks were presented as all these poor, wretched people who were brought to the US, and slavery was the best thing that happened to them because blah, blah, blah. You know, that kind of narrative.

Glenda Russell: Yes, yes.

Alexis Miles: And I remember when I started hearing a different story. I mean, it makes your backbone straighter to hear a different story. So, can you talk about what happens when parts of the narrative are deliberately erased? Can you give an example?

Glenda Russell: I'll start with a quote. It's one of my favorite quotes about history. It's, it's a quote from Adrienne Rich, the poet and essayist. This is not gonna be a, a quote, actually. It's gonna be a paraphrase. I don't, I don't [00:13:00] remember quotes very well. But her quote is something like, "When someone in authority, a teacher, say, describes the world and you're not in it, it's as if you looked in a mirror and saw nothing. You have a moment of psychic disequilibrium." Those are, those are basically her words. Psychic disequilibrium. That's why, you know, you describe that so well, Alexis, when you talk about your backbone getting straighter. Psychic disequilibrium does not make your backbone straight. It makes you, you know, sort of, fold in on yourself and wonder what's going on, and wonder, you know, who you are and how other people see you. Because what you're getting is either a total invisibility, and that's the ghostlike present, where I'm only a ghost in this history, I don't really exist in it, and I don't matter. And, one of the things that we're very aware of now is that everybody needs to matter. Everybody needs a sense of I matter. Everybody needs a sense of I am significant in some way. And, that doesn't mean they're, they're significant writ, large like everybody knows your name or something like that. It means people know I'm here, people know something about me, people take my, uh, presence and my contributions into account in, in my life. And not, and, and that is all up for grabs when you're not in history or when you're painted in history with one broad stroke that doesn't have anything to do with most of the people who are in that category. Or there's an outright lie, as some of the things you were just describing are outright lies.

And so, that psychic disequilibrium is a, is a, kind of, disappearing act. And, the, the thing I like really about that quote by Adrienne Rich is what comes next, is we have to create. We can only remedy this in community. We have to create a collective understanding of who we are. And, we have to hold onto that collective understanding 'cause if we don't, somebody else gives it to us. Somebody else puts it out there, and they may put that, that uni, you know, those unidimensional stories about people who just loved being enslaved on somebody's plantation or, or the disappearing act. And either, neither of those does anything to make people feel like human beings or like they matter or like they should matter to themselves. I mean, I remember how shocked I was to start reading the history that the feminists regathered, uh, in the '70s and going, "You mean they were doing that? I didn't know that. I never heard about that in history." I mean, just amazing stuff that I didn't have a clue that it was going on, and it changed, it, it gave me a stronger background, a backbone. I mean, it really does. It, it influences how you feel about, if I'm in a group and nobody ever gets talked about doing a good thing in that group, where does that

leave me? You know, it kinda leaves me, I don't think I can do anything either, 'cause we don't do important things. Otherwise, they'd write about them in history books, right? It's a great way to make people feel disempowered. It's a great way to make people feel like they can't change the things that are there. It's a great way to make people feel they don't matter. And that's bad for people. It's also a great way to not have an accurate history. I mean, it's, it's a lie to, to say that some things happened and some things didn't happen. It's a lie to, it's some, some of them are lies of omission and some of them are lies of commission.

Alexis Miles: You know, I'm thinking about, uh, like this podcast, which is [00:17:00] about conflict resolution, tools that we can use to help resolve conflict, even transform conflict. And, underlying all of that is truth telling. Telling the truth. So, if we as a country are having parts of our history erased, it seems impossible to have meaningful transformative discourse.

Glenda Russell: Yes. An accurate appraisal of what we're going to talk about, of what happened between us, of what is happening between us, is absolutely essential for conflict resolution. If we don't have an accurate appraisal, I mean, it's the first thing we learn about, you know, straightforward apologies. You have to say what the problem was. And if you can't put that into words, you're kind of stuck. You can't go very far at all.

Alexis Miles: There are parts of me, I would say innocent parts of me, that say, surely this is not deliberate. Surely people are not deliberately trying to destroy something. And another part of me that says, oh, this is a deliberate abuse of power. This is how people deliberately, intentionally, consciously grab control. Is that more accurate than just saying, oh, they're just poor, misguided people who don't really know what they're doing.

Glenda Russell: There's a distinction that's really important. I think that there are lots of people running around the world who believe this. They believe the world unfolded as they learned about it in the fifth grade or the eighth grade or whenever they were taking history classes. And then some people got mad because they didn't do enough stuff to be in those history lessons, and they are really, sort of, intruding on a truthful account, and it was already truthful, and you don't have to go back through and, and change things and, and add this stuff that, that really doesn't matter. I think those people exist. I really do think they're there. I don't know where any particular person is. I do know that I read, a couple of times now, I've read the president's, I don't imagine he wrote it, by the way, but I, I read the, the Trump's executive order about reclaiming history. He had, by the way, used the word insanity as part of what, how he was characterizing the false history, the revisionist history, you know. I believe that on the part of many people in the administration, I believe on part of Project 2, 2025 folks, that there really was an intent among at least some of those people, an absolute intent to do away with this history. And, I don't know what they believe because in terms of what they think actually happened historically. But I think that they think the original history that we learned when we were, when, when, that I learned when I was younger, I'll say, was accurate, and all this stuff is just fluff that's put on there that doesn't, that doesn't mean anything.

I also think that if I say that, I also have to say that they are trying to erase people of color, queer people, people with disabilities, women, all kinds of groups of people in every way that they can, not just through our history. And so, you have this confluence of evidence that suggests for some



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people it really is an abuse of power. There really is an absolute intent to do away with these kinds of things. Because it makes people, because it, it makes people powerless to not have histories. It makes them be much more likely to, to follow the dictates of people who are in power and to, and to not fight back. And, it delivers something that I think, and I think this is so relevant to conflict resolution in general. When people are not feeling great about themselves and they're not feeling like they carry much weight or they matter much, that kind of thing, they still can rely on their membership in groups that are privileged to feel better about themselves, and that privilege does make them feel better.

I grew up with, those are my people, those are the people that I grew up with. Um, and I watched people whom I loved feel better only because of the fact that they were White. And these were poor people. And they felt like, "At least I'm better than somebody." Um, and I literally heard words to that effect growing up. And I understand if you feel that bad about yourself or you don't have a way to feel really good about yourself, I'll say that, that when it's your history that's being served to you in the first grade, in the second grade, in the third grade, and, you know, all, all through school, um, all through the eight years you went to school, I'm thinking of somebody in particular here, you go, "Uh, that's my history." You don't think about that consciously. You, you don't put it into words, but you are, you have the approbation that comes from my group gets talked about, my group gets written about, my group did the important stuff. And as bad as I feel 'cause I'm poor and I'm not doing well and I'm not educated, I at least have that stuff. I have that feeling.

And so, there is, when I imagine what happened with people in that predicament when the so-called revisionist history started, when we started recapturing the truth of what had happened to marginalized groups, I think a lot of those people felt, uh, what I would, what I refer to as privilege deprivation. Like, suddenly I didn't have that that I had before. I didn't have that thing that made me, at least I have that, at least I can feel good about that. All of it not put into words because that's, that stuff when you're struggling, you don't have much time to think about that, for one thing. That's just not the coin of your kingdom usually. But I think that that privilege deprivation really is a hard thing. You know, I had something. I had something that I could, sort of, hang my hat on, and feel okay about, and now you wanna take that away from me too? And then they see other things, and they hear lies about what actually happens with, say, anti-discrimination laws. And it sounds like, oh, that means somebody gets something that they, that they don't deserve. They don't know that, in fact, if you're gonna get a job and they, and look at your membership in a, in a marginalized group, you still have to meet the qualifications for the job. That gets lost in the translation. And so, the privilege deprivation comes up with, I'm being cheated that there's something, I'm angry about it. And, and underneath it, I think, is just the sadness of, I don't measure up, and I, I don't matter very much in this society.

And, I think that that makes it very difficult to go the next step. 'Cause what we haven't said is look at what it does to us as a society to reclaim accurate history. We didn't do nearly enough of that. When I've had discussions with people, people in my family for instance, and say, "What do you teach your kids? You don't teach your kids to keep the lie going. You teach your kids to fess up and figure it out, and then you reward them for having the courage to learn from their mistakes and to move on in a, in a way that has more integrity to it." And they can get that. They'll just, people will tell me that about their kids, but it's harder to think about that partly because it's very

hard to acknowledge class differences and other kinds of differences. You know, we don't, we wanna pretend them away right along with that executive order, 'cause that executive order is absolutely crystal clear. We want it gone. We don't wanna be, we don't wanna be thinking about these things. They bring the country down. There's not even that much about accuracy. It's really about they're, they're just, they're, they're just unwanted.

Sam Fuqua: So, how do some of these things you've been talking about, the, this erasure and avoidance and some of these other things that are in play, how do they create barriers to someone, an individual, getting mental health services or therapy?

Glenda Russell: I have a standard answer to that. I mean, part of it is the, is the, the lack of money, which is a barrier. Though here's, my first response to that, honestly, Sam, is I don't think it's a mental health problem primarily. I think it's a cultural problem. And I think, you know, one of the things that I think we saw during this rather extended period where we were reclaiming history and we were rebuilding a history that was more representative of what actually happened and of who was involved in that history, one of the things that, that was going on then was people were, you know, tuning into Ken Burns shows on PBS, and people were getting fascinated by Roots, and people were, you know, all of those kinds of things. And I think there was a genuine excitement among some people about that, and there was a cultural support for that excitement. I don't know, though, that we supported the people who, who were most in need of what, of what you're, you're, you're describing here, and that is the kind of people who really are so lost in their sense of not mattering. Because that's not a, I don't think that's primarily a mental health problem, although it breeds sadness and it breeds alienation and it breeds isolation and it breeds fascism, um, which is not a mental health problem either, but, well, not entirely anyway. But it, it's not primarily a mental health problem.

It's a what are we going to do about the fact that so many people in this country are in a position where they feel less good than they used to feel about themselves. Where my parents were very poor, but they expected that their kids would be less poor, and indeed that is the way it turned out. My siblings who have children can't even feel that way, and their children really can't feel that way. They don't have the expectation that their children are going to do better. And that brings up lots of worry and lots of concern, and the answer to that is not therapy. The answer, well, therapy might help you to deal with it and figure out how to move forward with it, actually. I don't wanna discourage therapy, um, participating in therapy. But it's, it's really a problem of we've changed the rules about who has access to just being able to get by in America, and that has changed. You know, after World War II, people really could get by pretty well. A lot of people, you know, came back from the war, came, some, and women came out of the factories, and there was a, there was a real pos, and there was a, you know, there was a, a, a, an increase in affluence. Not affluence writ large, but affluence like we can buy a house, and we can get a car sometime, and we can, you know, add to this, and then maybe we'll send the kids to college or at least some of the kids to college or whatever. That's not there now. And, and what we tell people in this capitalist enterprise that we have is how you feel good about yourself is you can do those kinds of things. But they aren't able to do those kinds of things, and their kids will be less likely to be able to do those kinds of things, and that really is, that produces misery, and it produces jealousy, and it produces anger, and it produces the need for scapegoats. And one of the ways we get those scapegoats is we take those groups that are Johnny-come-latelies we, that I didn't

study about in school, and I just start dismissing them and going, that's not real history. What's real history is, you know, something else, something else that looks white and heterosexual and male and, and land-owning and et cetera, et cetera.

Alexis Miles: Glenda, I'm thinking about your tools for troubled times because it seems to me that those tools offer us a way to think more deeply and more meaningfully about what's going on in the world in a way that doesn't leave us [00:30:00] feeling hopeless. Can you talk more about that, about tools for troubled times, and some of the things you recommend for people?

Glenda Russell: Let me tell you its roots. In 1992, Colorado faced a, uh, a referendum called Amendment 2. It was on the ballot. And briefly, it was a popularly initiated referendum that a, actually was nationally initiated, but it looked like it was, you know, in Colorado we can get signatures and get on a ballot, and then we could do it even more easily than we can now. And this, this ballot measure said essentially, and, and I'll use the language of that time, that gay, lesbian, and bisexual orientations could not ever be, uh, made a basis for discrimination complaints, not by any legal entity, any governmental entity anywhere in the state, everything from school boards to, you know, state government. And that the three towns that at that point had protections based on sexual orientation would have to give them up and, and we would, we would never have them any, at any other point. And that, that election was, uh, preceded by a really vitriolic campaign. Within a couple of, within weeks after the, the election's outcome in November of 1992, I was in, in a group of people that included LGBTQ people and allies to that community, and I looked around and I went, this is really a lot of trauma here from what happened.

And the next Monday morning, I was in my office, and my first client of the day was a lesbian who was talking about her ongoing conflict with her partner about how open to be, 'cause this, this thing scared a lot of people, and a lot of people went farther into the closet. Some people literally left the state. My second client of the day was a heterosexual man who tearfully talked about his concerns for his gay male friend who was still reeling from this election. And I said to myself, somebody has got to, has got to understand what has happened here. And, coincident with that thought was, you are a social scientist, you can do that. And within a week, I had surveys on the street where I, where I was asking LGBTQ people to tell me what had happened. And the first part was like all these survey, you know, fill in the graph, blah, blah, blah. But I, I, I added, it was the therapist in me that couldn't just do that, and I added a statement at the end that said, "Please tell me anything about any reaction, any aspect of your reaction to Amendment 2." And, we got these incredible, incre, I thought, you know, I would, you know, ten percent were mad, and three percent were sad, and blah, blah, blah. And instead what we got were these, wa, was the [00:33:00] first time anybody had ever asked a marginalized group, "What's it like to be on, directly on the receiving end of a campaign that is designed to take away your rights?"

And it was mind-blowing. I mean, there were times when I had several graduate students and undergraduates coding data with, coding those qualitative data with me, and there were times we had to stop because people would cry because we were just, they were so sad and they were so disturbing. But, there was also a whole part of the data that was about here's what people are doing to, to deal with this differently and how they felt empowered, and they're not gonna take it anymore and they're gonna do things differently. And, and I followed up when Amendment 2 did

pass in Colorado, but it was enjoined immediately, so it never took effect. It went to, all the way to the Supreme Court, and on May 20th, 1996, the Supreme Court said for the first time, "Gay people are people deserving of dignity and you can't do this to them." And, I had another, another survey ready to hit the streets as soon as that, as soon as that decision came about. And so, I learned a lot in those early studies, and I did some more later on about what happens when people are under siege, and I learned from the people who were going through this stuff, here's what helps. I also learned what hurts and, and it was, it was, as I said, painful. But I also was amazed by the resilience and by what happened when people gathered with community. And for some of these people, they'd been totally isolated until Amendment 2 came along. They found community, they found common understandings. They did, they found collective power and, uh, I just kept doing research because I wanted to know more about that.

I've been doing that research for decades now, and in this era, it was not long before the, um, 2024 election, I decided that I needed to do something because I knew which way that election was going to go. And so, I, and, and I was thinking, how am I gonna do this? And I had some, an ex-student and some younger friends who were not ex-students, and they said, "We'll help you do a blog." And that was exactly the intent, was to take the stuff that people have told me, people on the margins have told me, combined with some other research I did, I did a bunch of research on allies, what happens when, when people really commit to, to doing, to working on, on the rights of, of groups of which they're not members. And so, it's, it's really just giving the wisdom of these people and the wisdom of a whole bunch of other people who, who, you know, whom I've read and that sort of thing, and putting it out there during what I knew was gonna be a very troubled time and troubling time. And I'm really interested in reducing polarization.

One of my ex-students is a, is, I call her the producer on this thing, and one of her jobs is to read everything I write before it goes out, and to make sure I'm not slandering anybody or being mean to anybody, 'cause I'm, have my moments when, you know, I could, um, and but, but I don't, I don't wanna add to the vitriol. I don't wanna add to the polarization, but I also want reality out there. I'm not gonna lie about how bad it is. It's bad. But I also want people to learn what I have learned from folks who have gone through not just ballot measures, but other kinds of, other forms of oppression, and they know a lot, and they've taught me a lot, and I'm, my interest is in passing that on, and it's really an interest in helping people to get in touch with their power, helping people to make community, helping people to figure out how they can feel better about themselves. And it's, it's truly a labor of love. It's not anything I make a, a nickel for. So, it's really nice to feel like I can pass on this wisdom from folks and, and [00:37:00] put it out there, and that's, that's where *Tools for Troubled Times* came from.

Alexis Miles: As we begin to wrap up, is there one tool that people could walk away with today that would be helpful?

Glenda Russell: I'm gonna do two. One is community. Community is absolutely essential during times like this, and that means people who will listen to you, people who will let you have your feelings, people who will support you, people who will cry with you, but also laugh with you, and people who can cultivate joy with you because that is one of the things that's really important. And the flip side of that, and this is why I wanted two things, uh, the, the flip side of that is do not give your power away. I mean, it's so easy for all of us, including myself, to think, um, these

people are so powerful we'll never be able to win. But I love what Jill Lepore, who is a, who is a real historian, unlike me. Jill Lepore says, "I love being a historian 'cause I can look at where things started and I can look at where they are now, and that gives me a great deal of comfort in knowing what we are capable of doing." And that's one of the real powers of, of history right now is to show us how far we can go, and that stuff happened because we didn't take it lying down. That stuff, those changes happened because we banded together and we learned together and we supported one another and we built together, including building new images of ourselves that were not easily invisibilized.

And part of the backlash we're facing, and it is a backlash, it's saying we want, it is not a mistake. Make America Great Again means make America great for these people, but not for everybody. And we were never perfect at making America great for everybody, but we were, but we can get better. And I think if we've learned anything from this era of time, it's how easily things can change, especially when people don't play by the rules, and how we can, we, we will never arrive. Humans are just such a perverse species. I love us to death. We think, "Oh good, we did that. Now let's stop." We can never stop. It is our, it is our jobs to, to keep making things better and to keep putting history as we really understand what happens, uh, in, into our kids' books, and to, and to take care of all of us, and to, and to not go back to where we were. And that's what we're struggling with right now. Are we gonna go back to, to what it used to be like when I was a kid, or are we going to, to reclaim the progress that we've been making? And I think, I, this country has a lot of strange things to it, including some really difficult stuff in its DNA, but it also has a sense of rightness and justice in its DNA, and, and I think we're seeing that emerge right now if you look at the, if you look at the, uh, performance figures that the president is getting. They're not, they're not exactly encouraging him, which means he's gonna get weirder for a while, and we have to put up with that. We have to expect it, we have to put up with it, and we have to fight against it.

Sam Fuqua: What would you recommend to someone listening to this who wants to take an active role in, in recording what's happening or being a community historian, as you were in 1974, taking those notes on everybody at the Boulder City Council meeting, what do you suggest?

Glenda Russell: There's so many things. Do what works for you. Take recordings of things. You have a phone in your, in your pocket. Pull it out when there's something interesting. And I don't mean your meal. Although it's less fun if you don't take a picture of that. But, um, if you're at an event, take a picture of it. Send it to somebody and say, "Look how many people showed up at this. Look how many people cared about this." Send an email. If you're gonna go to the, to any marches anytime soon, write to your friends. Send a postcard. Send a, uh, send a text with a picture and say, "This is what happened. This is why we were out there. I'm so glad I came." I think, um, buy books, contribute to museums, thank a librarian. There are just so many things we can do to keep history. You can become an amateur hoarder like I have, and I think if you're a member of a marginalized group, it is a great idea to keep things that the establishment might not keep, and then hold onto them. As it turns out, there are people who want them. There are people who are vying for these things I have hoarded all these years, uh, because they are history, and they're histories that they don't have because they didn't keep them before. So, there are many things you can do. Give kids history books. Take kids to museums. I, I have a thing that I do with a friend. We write letters to each other. They're actually emails now, but we write letters based on a particular event. How did you experience this thing, this, that is historical? How did you



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experience this thing? Here's how I experienced it. And we integrate it with our, not just our view of history out there, but what does it evoke in us? How does it affect our ability to stand straighter or to, or to not stand straighter? Engage with history. It's, it's really fascinating.

Sam Fuqua: Well, Glenda Russell, thank you so much for spending time with us. We appreciate that, and we, and we thank you for your work as well.

Glenda Russell: Well, I thank you both for inviting me. It's, it's been my pleasure, honestly.

Sam Fuqua: Glenda Russell is a retired psychologist who's still active as a researcher, writer, and activist. You can find her online at her WordPress blog, *Tools for Troubled Times*.

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