

<https://dissonanttimes.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/Disabled.mp3>

carnelian: telling the truth in community

“So does it work? Does carnelian help you tell the truth?” my radical mental health friend asked.

“Well, something does!” I said.

We laughed. I thought of causes— all the ways we get here.

“Probably it’s a variety of things, helping me tell the truth,” I added.

I thought of telling the truth in my writing, art, zines, relationships. Consent is vital, and we need honesty for consent.

Truth is one way I conceive of God— it’s sacred. Truth is worthy of worship. In the beginning, there was the Word.

community

I explained to my radical mental health friend how long ago, orators held the stone carnelian to help them speak well. So I

decided to keep carnelian for strength to say what I need to say.

At the time I was living in a community where sometimes my truth was minimized. My needs around disability were not considered valid by all my community members. Weird ideas of fitness were centered over justice. There wasn't equal consideration for everyone there. Yuck.

You know how some people who have normative, abled bodies think everyone should? Some people believe that considering non-normative bodies is expensive and optional?

There's the idea, "I worked hard to be fit and keep my health, and if you don't have your health, it's your fault." Fatness and disability were both treated as shameful, and attitudes toward food damaged me to be around.

Meetings hurt me, so I would cry and suffer the day before, the day of, and need a day or two to recover. Then two days later, time to prepare for the next meeting! Yeah, they were weekly. It was a horrible cycle.

good at different things

"What if I just stopped going to meetings?" I asked a housemate friend. "You know I could have Ming tell me what happened, and ask Ming to advocate..."

“Eh,” my housemate friend said.

“What if we can be good at different things, and I’m not good at meetings?” I suggested. “I’m good at some cooking, Den Parenting, putting away all the clean dishes in the morning from the night before... It’s ok to have different skills.”

No, my housemate friend was not having it. She believed we all need to attend meetings. Was she right?

I made a list of ways to make meetings less stressful. I shared it with the house and asked if we could try. Meeting outside was good for a while. Snacks didn’t happen. Others weren’t having the same problem I was having, so the change-energy needed to come from me.

carnelian

I’m not going to say that the stress of the meeting cycle is what ended my stay in that community. There are a few different ways of framing what happened there.

But really that community wasn’t set up for me or someone like me— that’s for dang sure. Close, but no cigar. Some ways of intelligence were high, which is how I got there. But emotional skills were low. Truth was low.

Now I'm getting to my crystal point. In the middle of all that, I put some carnelian on my altar, and a red / orange candle that I associated with carnelian. I prayed every day to become more ready to say the unwanted. My truth needed me. My body and the needs of my own body needed me.

This is a way of creating change. Pray for it every day. Even if no God is hearing your prayers, you're hearing your prayers. Commit. There was the red / orange candle and hunk of carnelian on my altar; I woke up next to them every day. There was no way to forget.

If not for myself, I needed to speak up to benefit the next disabled person who came to live there.

personal power

I was fearful around housing after spending four months homeless with Ming, and my fear was not always grounded in reality.

I forgive myself for being afraid. It takes a long time to understand how a community works, and looking back, I wish I'd allowed myself more access to my own personal power.

Some things I could have done...

- skipped meetings often as a gift to myself
- said “no” to being shamed
- called out bullying
- asked for help from more people
- requested mediation
- clearer assertions from the beginning about what I need
- requested ritual
- laughed at evil

I was more cautious then. I’m always growing up– traumatized and autistic. Definitely I forgive myself for what I didn’t do, and I’m glad I don’t live there anymore.

brave

What would you like to be more brave about? I’m a witch who did a sect of Hinduism for 27 years. My spouse Ming is Jewish, and we’re members of a local synagogue. But my favorite Bible verse these days, on my mind all the time, is Romans 12:14. Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse.

I want to create a world of long term connection where we don’t abandon each other. Kindness is beautiful, and gentleness is how I need to be treated. I thrive, with gentleness. I’m all about love of myself, love in two person relationships, love in family, and love in community.

But I’m never going to be harmed again, how I was harmed by

the fitness-loving bully who's mean to others because she's mean to herself inside— self-loathing, spreading hate, carrying a doom cloud. She centers her white, starving pain.

I'm sorry for whatever happened to her. But no one is allowed to do that to me anymore.

questions for discussion

What helps you tell the truth?

What are your strategies for interacting with bullies?

What helps you feel grounded socially?

What's your favorite type of rock?

What you are so afraid of, that you can't think clearly think about it?

What do you most need in community?

What are your strengths / offers in community?

Who would you be, if you were abundantly supported?

How have you pushed support away?

What could you do, if community was strongly holding you?

holding hands

Carnelian is my good friend. Dark orange is my favorite color. I hold hands with rocks, especially when no people are around.

I'm holding my favorite hunk of carnelian right now as we speak. It fits in my left hand perfectly. I feel its ridges and smooth places; I turn it over and over in my hand.

I'm safe to tell the truth to you. It's 4:30 in the morning, a quiet time to write, and I rub the carnelian on my forehead.

When I hold rocks, I'm holding Parent Earth. We hold hands. Parent Earth loves me more than anything, and I'm ok no matter what.

blessings for the reader

Please hold a nearby rock. Or hold your own hand and think of

the bones in your hand like beautifully shaped rocks. Then speak these words aloud or in your mind.

May you be known for who you truly are and supported in community.

May you respect others and be respected by everyone fairly.

May you find new sources of strength for doing the work you need to do, and return to old sources that you forgot about.

May your mouth be free to speak the truth.

May your ears be ready to hear the truth.

May your eyes take in the truth.

May your work be meaningful and smooth today. I love you.

Strawberry Pancake Fae Nopales is a queer disabled artist who lives in community—a witch in the tradition of madness. Find berry at listeningtothenoiseuntilitmakesense.com, ilikeyourstims.com, and on instagram as @xtrikeslutsx.