Corey Andrew Powell: ([00:08](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/rqySO1uHmhk3ao7Sv80X99VsYCphbj_HCh9FhS728-c1sSUntKdc3_EMdBY7o7YDJA-fUR2m0z8o70CEGFZOHAyFH14?loadFrom=PastedDeeplink&ts=8.52))

I am joined today by activist speaker, re-entry specialist and author Donna Hylton. Donna brings an authentic voice to her work based on her own unthinkable, traumatic childhood experiences and incarceration at the age of 20, for which she served 27 years. However, today she is one of the most prolific advocates for women's rights and prison reform. It's an honor to meet you, Donna. Thank you for being here today on Motivational Mondays.

Donna Hylton: ([00:31](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/rqySO1uHmhk3ao7Sv80X99VsYCphbj_HCh9FhS728-c1sSUntKdc3_EMdBY7o7YDJA-fUR2m0z8o70CEGFZOHAyFH14?loadFrom=PastedDeeplink&ts=31.44))

Thank you for having me. It's a pleasure.

Corey Andrew Powell: ([00:33](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/rqySO1uHmhk3ao7Sv80X99VsYCphbj_HCh9FhS728-c1sSUntKdc3_EMdBY7o7YDJA-fUR2m0z8o70CEGFZOHAyFH14?loadFrom=PastedDeeplink&ts=33.36))

Thank you. Yes. Well, to get right in, you know, I, I guess there's a starting point in some ways where you, as I mentioned, we're 20 years years old and you did get entered into the, the prison system. But prior to that, leading up to that, a big part of your platform is discussing like the childhood traumas and the things that abusive things that happened to you along the way that got you there, so to speak. So I was wondering when you wrote your book, which is your memoir, "A little piece of light and memoir of hope, prison and life unbound," what prompted you to write that book and what were you hoping people would get out of it?

Donna Hylton: ([01:07](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/rqySO1uHmhk3ao7Sv80X99VsYCphbj_HCh9FhS728-c1sSUntKdc3_EMdBY7o7YDJA-fUR2m0z8o70CEGFZOHAyFH14?loadFrom=PastedDeeplink&ts=67.8))

Well, what prompted me to write it actually was the encouragement of especially Dan Pearson, others around, me saying that it would be more impactful to reach people by putting my story into words. Why? Because as much as I was speaking, there's always going to be a demographic of folk that would not be, you know, accessible to, you know, the conversation or right. Even wanna know about the conversation, because, it comes with that cloud. Right. Mm-hmm that, that, and so, yeah, so I just said ok, all right, it took me a minute to say, okay, but

Corey Andrew Powell: ([01:46](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/rqySO1uHmhk3ao7Sv80X99VsYCphbj_HCh9FhS728-c1sSUntKdc3_EMdBY7o7YDJA-fUR2m0z8o70CEGFZOHAyFH14?loadFrom=PastedDeeplink&ts=106.89))

Why was that like a, a situation where you didn't know if you wanted to be that vulnerable? Like, I mean, cuz you are it's, it's cathartic. I know writing, but then there's also like, do I really want to, you know, go there? So what was your reservation?

Donna Hylton: ([01:58](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/rqySO1uHmhk3ao7Sv80X99VsYCphbj_HCh9FhS728-c1sSUntKdc3_EMdBY7o7YDJA-fUR2m0z8o70CEGFZOHAyFH14?loadFrom=PastedDeeplink&ts=118.53))

I think, you know, as much as you heal, there's still a piece of you that says, Hmm, maybe not. And how vulnerable do you wanna be to the world. Right. And so how much of that vulnerability do you wanna show? But then I, you know, I prayed, right? And and I was listening and having conversations with Dan Pearson and multiple conversations and with other people and, and this is what did it, it, I was at a speaking event with Piper Kerman in Brooklyn. And we were talking about our stories and like how she got, you know, how she did, "Oranges is the new black," her whole, that's her like, that's her story, mine .. What happened with, you know, mine with riddled, with abuse and trauma. And it was me speaking, this woman stood up and I don't know, there's an energy that shifted in this, in the, in the, in the place. And I felt it and, and, and, and something told me to like, to be still in this moment and actually the whole place got still, right? And I just knew something was coming and she stood up and she said, thank you. She said, because this is the first time that I'm sharing that I was hurt, that someone hurt me. I'd never told anyone. I didn't think I could because I felt so alone.

Donna Hylton: ([03:26](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/rqySO1uHmhk3ao7Sv80X99VsYCphbj_HCh9FhS728-c1sSUntKdc3_EMdBY7o7YDJA-fUR2m0z8o70CEGFZOHAyFH14?loadFrom=PastedDeeplink&ts=206.419))

And I felt it. You could feel it like you could feel it was so tangible. And it was in that moment that something shifted in me. And I recognized the power, that written word really, and truly can have up and does have on people. So I got up off the stage, went to her and held her in that moment. Cause that was her moment and was to honor her for even being able to feel comfortable enough and not alone anymore, to be able to share that. And so it was that moment. That was the deciding moment for me.

Corey Andrew Powell: ([03:57](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/rqySO1uHmhk3ao7Sv80X99VsYCphbj_HCh9FhS728-c1sSUntKdc3_EMdBY7o7YDJA-fUR2m0z8o70CEGFZOHAyFH14?loadFrom=PastedDeeplink&ts=237.75))

You do mention, when you you have mentioned it, but past interviews when you went to prison at 20, and when you got in that environment, you began to realize almost immediately, I guess I would assume through talking to other inmates that you were not alone, whereas you thought you had been. I guess that could make you feel very isolated. You said you tried to tell people, they thought you were lying. You had tried to get out of that situation all, all your life. But here you are meeting women who are saying, Hey, me too.

Donna Hylton: ([04:24](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/rqySO1uHmhk3ao7Sv80X99VsYCphbj_HCh9FhS728-c1sSUntKdc3_EMdBY7o7YDJA-fUR2m0z8o70CEGFZOHAyFH14?loadFrom=PastedDeeplink&ts=264.37))

For men that opened up as well. And that's a lot. Right. You know, you know, most of us don't speak and open up and tell, cause we don't feel believed or, you know, we're ashamed and we start and, and, and a lot of that comes of blaming yourself or whatever happens to own that. Especially kids not be clear. Like I was a child. Yeah. I was still a child at 20. I was still a kid, young person. Mm-Hmm you know, and, we don't give children the opportunity to tell their truths and to really believe them, you know? So like when we hear children speak about things, like we should really believe them.

Corey Andrew Powell: ([04:56](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/rqySO1uHmhk3ao7Sv80X99VsYCphbj_HCh9FhS728-c1sSUntKdc3_EMdBY7o7YDJA-fUR2m0z8o70CEGFZOHAyFH14?loadFrom=PastedDeeplink&ts=296.69))

Yeah. And especially when it comes to, I know, I mean, not to make it a stigma about African Americans, but for me, I know, know a particular demographic of African Americans from the south certain generation when I was a kid, you know, we were told, you know, to be at a, don't be in grown folks business, and you don't have nothing to say really. And, you know, they kind of almost like suppress kids emotions and not allow them to be little adults, which is what they really are. And they have something to say.

Donna Hylton: ([05:21](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/rqySO1uHmhk3ao7Sv80X99VsYCphbj_HCh9FhS728-c1sSUntKdc3_EMdBY7o7YDJA-fUR2m0z8o70CEGFZOHAyFH14?loadFrom=PastedDeeplink&ts=321.25))

They're little people. Yeah. Little people. And they have just a much of a right to speak and to share as anyone else. And we always S kids. Right. And so when I went into prison to get back to literally what your point was? I went into prison. I was still a kid. Right. I was an adolescent as far as the system was concerned, but I was, as far as the world was concerned as well. So I thought I was alone in my pain and my trauma. I thought I was alone. First of all, I was, I didn't realize I was carrying all that stuff. Like it was paying my baggage. It was my fault, everything. Right? And you don't realize that until you realize it. And so when I real, one of the things I started realizing throughout, you know, my time in the prison system was that, oh my God, these women that I'm meeting had very similar stories. So it was like, wait a minute. And one day it dawned on me, why are all of us here? Mm. Like the, common theme, the thread was no one listened

Corey Andrew Powell: ([06:15](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/rqySO1uHmhk3ao7Sv80X99VsYCphbj_HCh9FhS728-c1sSUntKdc3_EMdBY7o7YDJA-fUR2m0z8o70CEGFZOHAyFH14?loadFrom=PastedDeeplink&ts=375.23))

Mm-Hmm

Donna Hylton: ([06:15](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/rqySO1uHmhk3ao7Sv80X99VsYCphbj_HCh9FhS728-c1sSUntKdc3_EMdBY7o7YDJA-fUR2m0z8o70CEGFZOHAyFH14?loadFrom=PastedDeeplink&ts=375.31))

or we didn't tell .

Corey Andrew Powell: ([06:17](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/rqySO1uHmhk3ao7Sv80X99VsYCphbj_HCh9FhS728-c1sSUntKdc3_EMdBY7o7YDJA-fUR2m0z8o70CEGFZOHAyFH14?loadFrom=PastedDeeplink&ts=377.56))

Yeah.

Donna Hylton: ([06:18](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/rqySO1uHmhk3ao7Sv80X99VsYCphbj_HCh9FhS728-c1sSUntKdc3_EMdBY7o7YDJA-fUR2m0z8o70CEGFZOHAyFH14?loadFrom=PastedDeeplink&ts=378.25))

So those two things, well hand in hand and majority started from childhood and a lot of black and brown girls, a lot of black girls, right. And black boys too. But, you know, for me, it was black women, black little girls, and it was like, wow, the criminalization of black girlhood, like, this is what it looks like. Hmm.

Corey Andrew Powell: ([06:33](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/rqySO1uHmhk3ao7Sv80X99VsYCphbj_HCh9FhS728-c1sSUntKdc3_EMdBY7o7YDJA-fUR2m0z8o70CEGFZOHAyFH14?loadFrom=PastedDeeplink&ts=393.85))

I saw an interview you did with Yahoo news. And I thought it was fascinating when you made a point about people, characterizing women who are incarcerated and yourself at the time as monsters, right. They were calling you names like that. And it dawned on me a very specific case, the case of Eileen Warnous. Ah, and of course the film monster was based on her whole life. And when you, when you really look at that film and also just actual documentary about her, it is exactly what you've been saying. Like, no one cared until she had been pushed to a point where she was doing things that were criminal, but she had been trying to get help. Society had failed her.

Donna Hylton: ([07:13](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/rqySO1uHmhk3ao7Sv80X99VsYCphbj_HCh9FhS728-c1sSUntKdc3_EMdBY7o7YDJA-fUR2m0z8o70CEGFZOHAyFH14?loadFrom=PastedDeeplink&ts=433.15))

And we all have to take a part in that blame. Like, it's so easy to point the finger at a person, like it's like, oh, this all your fault. But no, it's not. Everyone's fault that we're still dealing with poverty, that certain communities are still dealing with poverty, that we still have kids going to bed hungry at night, that we have children going to school so they can eat, making sure, even if it's just that one meal that they can get something to eat and they just get some respite outside of their, that abnormal, maybe often times violent in environment at home, you know, whatever home might look like. Right? We have to know, we have to understand. Also we have to be clear that drugs have impacted, you know, the black and brown community where the family dynamic has been torn apart.

Donna Hylton: ([07:53](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/rqySO1uHmhk3ao7Sv80X99VsYCphbj_HCh9FhS728-c1sSUntKdc3_EMdBY7o7YDJA-fUR2m0z8o70CEGFZOHAyFH14?loadFrom=PastedDeeplink&ts=473.31))

Incarceration is the top leading factor in that. Right. And so we have ripped, torn families apart. So we don't have, you know, it's not all, so, you know, we like, we hear that stuff about, oh, like black people can't be good parents like black men, you see black men loving on their children all the time. Mm-Hmm so let's stop that right. Deadbeat dads. Let's let's be very clear. And now say here, the world's first dead beat dead who taught everybody else, was the white man. Like, let's be clear. You have children that look like me in this world, not knowing who their father is. So let's be clear about "deadbeat dads" where that comes fromat let's be clear about that, you know, and I don't mean any harm with it. But we have to be really honest here, you know?

Corey Andrew Powell: ([08:34](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/rqySO1uHmhk3ao7Sv80X99VsYCphbj_HCh9FhS728-c1sSUntKdc3_EMdBY7o7YDJA-fUR2m0z8o70CEGFZOHAyFH14?loadFrom=PastedDeeplink&ts=514.72))

So all, that's a, that's a part of history. Yeah.

Donna Hylton: ([08:37](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/rqySO1uHmhk3ao7Sv80X99VsYCphbj_HCh9FhS728-c1sSUntKdc3_EMdBY7o7YDJA-fUR2m0z8o70CEGFZOHAyFH14?loadFrom=PastedDeeplink&ts=517.55))

Disparaging things that are said, like, you know, misnomers and stuff about, you know, us is wrong. And so we're human beings. Things happen, listen to children even moreso. Concern yourself with what's going on in these indivi individual's, communities in their, you know, their homes. Mm-Hmm , but what's not going on. What's not available what resources they're lacking, you know? But we perpetuate things. And then we like to blame. And so you can't tell a person in the words of Dr. King, you can't tell a person, to pull themselves up by the bootstraps if they don't have a boot to pull up.

Corey Andrew Powell: ([09:13](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/rqySO1uHmhk3ao7Sv80X99VsYCphbj_HCh9FhS728-c1sSUntKdc3_EMdBY7o7YDJA-fUR2m0z8o70CEGFZOHAyFH14?loadFrom=PastedDeeplink&ts=553.6))

That's right. I right. Yeah. When it comes to what you did individually, though, what's, what's fascinating is while you were there in your incarceration, you educated yourself, like beyond— you've you maintained your degrees in, you got an associate's degree, a bachelor's degree and master's was it, in English? I think?

Donna Hylton: ([09:33](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/rqySO1uHmhk3ao7Sv80X99VsYCphbj_HCh9FhS728-c1sSUntKdc3_EMdBY7o7YDJA-fUR2m0z8o70CEGFZOHAyFH14?loadFrom=PastedDeeplink&ts=573.32))

English literature.

Corey Andrew Powell: ([09:34](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/rqySO1uHmhk3ao7Sv80X99VsYCphbj_HCh9FhS728-c1sSUntKdc3_EMdBY7o7YDJA-fUR2m0z8o70CEGFZOHAyFH14?loadFrom=PastedDeeplink&ts=574.25))

Yes. English, litera literature, which is amazing. And so on some hand, somebody might say, well, you know what, she's the anomaly, right? She had a different thing. Not all women are that resilient, but what do you say to that? If someone thinks that you're just the anomaly.

Donna Hylton: ([09:50](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/rqySO1uHmhk3ao7Sv80X99VsYCphbj_HCh9FhS728-c1sSUntKdc3_EMdBY7o7YDJA-fUR2m0z8o70CEGFZOHAyFH14?loadFrom=PastedDeeplink&ts=590.5))

No, I'm not. no, I'm not. No, I'm not. It is. Is that the platform that that I helped and others helped create and, you know, with their horrible, you know, especially with Dan, Pearsons helping me create this platform, allowed me to, for my voice to be heard even more strongly. But no, I'm not, I'm not anomaly. I'm not unique. I'm not any of that. There are thousands upon thousand. That's why I'm fighting because we have a rest did brilliant, amazing minds, people, human beings, instead of responding to the issues that have been harming them, or maybe, you know have not been created for them. You know what I mean? These resources and opportunities, again, like people for the most part just want an opportunity. Like everybody else to be able to have a living wage mm-hmm, sustainable, have a place to lay their heads, have food in their stomachs, clothes on their back.

Donna Hylton: ([10:47](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/rqySO1uHmhk3ao7Sv80X99VsYCphbj_HCh9FhS728-c1sSUntKdc3_EMdBY7o7YDJA-fUR2m0z8o70CEGFZOHAyFH14?loadFrom=PastedDeeplink&ts=647.29))

And if they have children, to be able to have fun with their children, they just wanna have a normal life. But we wanna mislabel people again and make them the anomaly, right?Anomalies, and say like, there's something different or wrong about them. And so we have to do something different or even more harmful to them. Right? So incarceration, we know it is since slavery, it has become the next best thing. Right? So we, we incarcerate people so we can enslave, then we still continue that mentality. And that in the physical sense, as well as a mental sense, right? Mm-Hmm so poverty continues to perpetuate this dynamic substance abuse, right? People have substance issues. Right? They have substance issues because they might be some mental health, there might be some trauma, there might be some stuff. And because people can't offered medication, so they're gonna self-medicate, right?

Corey Andrew Powell: ([11:41](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/rqySO1uHmhk3ao7Sv80X99VsYCphbj_HCh9FhS728-c1sSUntKdc3_EMdBY7o7YDJA-fUR2m0z8o70CEGFZOHAyFH14?loadFrom=PastedDeeplink&ts=701.7))

Yep

Donna Hylton: ([11:42](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/rqySO1uHmhk3ao7Sv80X99VsYCphbj_HCh9FhS728-c1sSUntKdc3_EMdBY7o7YDJA-fUR2m0z8o70CEGFZOHAyFH14?loadFrom=PastedDeeplink&ts=702.38))

Marijuana, or ganga as my Jamaican-self would call, is the go-to thing. Like, you know, or a drink or whatever. And so people do these things cuz they know they're hurting, they're in pain, but no one's helping them with that.

Corey Andrew Powell: ([11:54](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/rqySO1uHmhk3ao7Sv80X99VsYCphbj_HCh9FhS728-c1sSUntKdc3_EMdBY7o7YDJA-fUR2m0z8o70CEGFZOHAyFH14?loadFrom=PastedDeeplink&ts=714.2))

Yeah.

Donna Hylton: ([11:54](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/rqySO1uHmhk3ao7Sv80X99VsYCphbj_HCh9FhS728-c1sSUntKdc3_EMdBY7o7YDJA-fUR2m0z8o70CEGFZOHAyFH14?loadFrom=PastedDeeplink&ts=714.44))

You know, and we need to help each other. We need to look beyond color. We need to look beyond ethnicity. We need to look beyond language and preferences, sexual all this. We need to look beyond that and see the humanity, see the human being, the whole person and understand, especially children. We have to understand what's going on in people's lives.

Corey Andrew Powell: ([12:12](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/rqySO1uHmhk3ao7Sv80X99VsYCphbj_HCh9FhS728-c1sSUntKdc3_EMdBY7o7YDJA-fUR2m0z8o70CEGFZOHAyFH14?loadFrom=PastedDeeplink&ts=732.77))

Agreed. And especially when you think about the platform of reentry in general, the idea of reentry. So for people who don't know what that is, obviously we are talking about that's the, the act of a person trying to go back into society after they've served their sentence. So it's called reentry for those who don't know. When we began recording, I mentioned to you that this is something passionate to me because I've met people who made every attempt to reenter after they got out of serving a sentence and life is so difficult. It's like society was completely set up for them to return to prison. They could not get a job because if they put on the application, they were in prison, the job didn't wanna hire them. Or they feared them 'em for whatever reason. Of course, then that means they have no place to stay because they can't afford rent. And you know, it's just, it gets kind of crazy and crazy and crazier. So I I'm wondering like, you know, how can society expect to have a better outcome when people are released? If in fact they have nothing in place for them. So then I realize for women it's even worse. Yeah. Right. I mean, that's how, that's what guys experienced. So, I mean, for you to make it a platform for women, what is re-entry like when women are trying to come back into society?

Donna Hylton: ([13:23](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/rqySO1uHmhk3ao7Sv80X99VsYCphbj_HCh9FhS728-c1sSUntKdc3_EMdBY7o7YDJA-fUR2m0z8o70CEGFZOHAyFH14?loadFrom=PastedDeeplink&ts=803.86))

Well, you know, women, we have some unique conditions and issues, right? I mean, there's the aging factor. We age differently. So they have some medical issues. There's more mental health when it comes to women, you know? Because cuz of our, our, when we go to middle age and we start menopause — that word, that we don't really talk about that thing. Right? It changes the dynamic mentally, physically, emotionally, spiritually within us. And then vast majority of women who've been incarcerated were mothers are mothers. And so first thing that we trying to where's my child where my children like, or how am I gonna build that relationship back? Because we are relational, right? We are maternal and nurturing. And so, you know, our men, we're men are more territorial ways. Right? You know, for the most part and see it differently.

Donna Hylton: ([14:07](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/rqySO1uHmhk3ao7Sv80X99VsYCphbj_HCh9FhS728-c1sSUntKdc3_EMdBY7o7YDJA-fUR2m0z8o70CEGFZOHAyFH14?loadFrom=PastedDeeplink&ts=847.51))

And so their focus is different from us when we come out. And so we're trying to put the family back, whatever that might have been before, back together and try to knit that. So what steps do we have then? How do we have, you know, how do we do this? How do we do that? Mm-Hmm and we're trying to get that that family dynamic together. And so that's what makes us unique because our health, mental health, you know emotional health and then family and you know what I mean, things like that. And then the resources too. And what makes it even more difficult is because of resources that are available. We are the fastest growing population within the last 30 years that's being incarcerated —women, black women. Right? But we have the least resources available. We still have the least amount of housing.

Donna Hylton: ([14:51](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/rqySO1uHmhk3ao7Sv80X99VsYCphbj_HCh9FhS728-c1sSUntKdc3_EMdBY7o7YDJA-fUR2m0z8o70CEGFZOHAyFH14?loadFrom=PastedDeeplink&ts=891.22))

We still have the least amount of other support services. We go into spaces that are dominated by men [inaudible]. So like we're after thoughts. And we're like, Hey, hello. You know? Right. But what about, you know, and I don't think that people are doing it intentionally. It's just the way things are. And so it, we become comfortable in that. And so one of the roles that we do in, in, "A little peace of light," you know, it's like, it's time to become uncomfortable, folks. It's time to be uncomfortable. Because being so comfortable so long that we're losing it, we've lost it. And so we have to bring that back and we have to understand that everyone is equally important. We have to service everyone and individually, not so much in a group. This it's not a cookie cutter kind of thing. Reentry is not a cookie be cutter kind of thing.

Corey Andrew Powell: ([15:32](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/rqySO1uHmhk3ao7Sv80X99VsYCphbj_HCh9FhS728-c1sSUntKdc3_EMdBY7o7YDJA-fUR2m0z8o70CEGFZOHAyFH14?loadFrom=PastedDeeplink&ts=932.05))

Exactly. Yes. It's not.

Donna Hylton: ([15:33](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/rqySO1uHmhk3ao7Sv80X99VsYCphbj_HCh9FhS728-c1sSUntKdc3_EMdBY7o7YDJA-fUR2m0z8o70CEGFZOHAyFH14?loadFrom=PastedDeeplink&ts=933.58))

Yep. Yep. You know, cause everyone responds to it differently. No matter your agenda, no matter you preference, no matter, right? We respond to it differently. And so I have friends that, you know, folks that have been out here 20 years and they still haven't what I call speed bumps. It's like, woo. Something will happen and it's like - right back in, you know. Mentally ..and it's like, it's not thing that you wanna do, but you don't realize because the trauma that's happened to you, that you've lived through before you even got to the prison system and then while you were in it. And so there are those dynamics, you know? And so it's really difficult for yeah. women in that way.

Corey Andrew Powell: ([16:08](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/rqySO1uHmhk3ao7Sv80X99VsYCphbj_HCh9FhS728-c1sSUntKdc3_EMdBY7o7YDJA-fUR2m0z8o70CEGFZOHAyFH14?loadFrom=PastedDeeplink&ts=968.43))

And I also know there's another family component too, which is not talked about often because the re-entry is not just a person going back into society. Now their family sort of has to adjust or they have to adjust back with their family dynamic as well.

Donna Hylton: ([16:21](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/rqySO1uHmhk3ao7Sv80X99VsYCphbj_HCh9FhS728-c1sSUntKdc3_EMdBY7o7YDJA-fUR2m0z8o70CEGFZOHAyFH14?loadFrom=PastedDeeplink&ts=981.91))

Family re-unification. Yes, you have. Mm-Hmm there's that if there's any family left.

Corey Andrew Powell: ([16:26](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/rqySO1uHmhk3ao7Sv80X99VsYCphbj_HCh9FhS728-c1sSUntKdc3_EMdBY7o7YDJA-fUR2m0z8o70CEGFZOHAyFH14?loadFrom=PastedDeeplink&ts=986.44))

Like right, right.

Donna Hylton: ([16:27](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/rqySO1uHmhk3ao7Sv80X99VsYCphbj_HCh9FhS728-c1sSUntKdc3_EMdBY7o7YDJA-fUR2m0z8o70CEGFZOHAyFH14?loadFrom=PastedDeeplink&ts=987.94))

The losses that people have, you know, and people keep throwing in our face. Oh, well, don't do the crime if can't do the time and everything.

Corey Andrew Powell: ([16:34](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/rqySO1uHmhk3ao7Sv80X99VsYCphbj_HCh9FhS728-c1sSUntKdc3_EMdBY7o7YDJA-fUR2m0z8o70CEGFZOHAyFH14?loadFrom=PastedDeeplink&ts=994.95))

Yeah. I would expect you to hear that. Yeah.

Donna Hylton: ([16:37](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/rqySO1uHmhk3ao7Sv80X99VsYCphbj_HCh9FhS728-c1sSUntKdc3_EMdBY7o7YDJA-fUR2m0z8o70CEGFZOHAyFH14?loadFrom=PastedDeeplink&ts=997.29))

And it's like, like, but I tell people, hello, guess what? 95% of people are going to come out one day or another. I don't care if it's 27 years later, 30 years mm-hmm people are gonna come out. How do you want them to come out? How do you want them to do the, this walk? How do you want them to be when they come up? You know, you have to consider that because everyone's not, the system, it doesn't survive that way. It doesn't work that way. First of all, it's a money making machine. So the money doesn't happen like that. Everybody's mm-hmm right. You know what I mean? So it's evolving kind of process this door. And so people come out, even if it's decades later, how do you want people to come out? Most people wanna come out whole and okay. Wanna, you know, like whatever, they've atoned for their stuff. They've gone through that - the punishment was being taken away from society and being in a place where mm-hmm, lost so much. Right. That's the punishment, not the treatment. Shouldn't be the treatment as well. But unfortunately the treatment is worse than the time oftentimes. Right? And so we have to consider that. And so we keep putting people back into society and saying, okay, your time is done. Now you have to do this. But what, how how?

Corey Andrew Powell: ([17:43](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/rqySO1uHmhk3ao7Sv80X99VsYCphbj_HCh9FhS728-c1sSUntKdc3_EMdBY7o7YDJA-fUR2m0z8o70CEGFZOHAyFH14?loadFrom=PastedDeeplink&ts=1063.43))

Yeah. Yeah. You

Donna Hylton: ([17:44](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/rqySO1uHmhk3ao7Sv80X99VsYCphbj_HCh9FhS728-c1sSUntKdc3_EMdBY7o7YDJA-fUR2m0z8o70CEGFZOHAyFH14?loadFrom=PastedDeeplink&ts=1064.7))

Be like an animal all these years. How you expect me to be? I'm gonna probably act like one.

Corey Andrew Powell: ([17:50](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/rqySO1uHmhk3ao7Sv80X99VsYCphbj_HCh9FhS728-c1sSUntKdc3_EMdBY7o7YDJA-fUR2m0z8o70CEGFZOHAyFH14?loadFrom=PastedDeeplink&ts=1070.22))

Mm-Hmm and interviews I've watched. I know another poignant thing you've said is how can we expect healing when you've taken someone who's already gone through abuse and violent traumas, a lot of their lives. And now you've put them in what you call prison is a very violent environment.

Donna Hylton: ([18:08](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/rqySO1uHmhk3ao7Sv80X99VsYCphbj_HCh9FhS728-c1sSUntKdc3_EMdBY7o7YDJA-fUR2m0z8o70CEGFZOHAyFH14?loadFrom=PastedDeeplink&ts=1088.14))

Because it's so abnormal.

Corey Andrew Powell: ([18:09](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/rqySO1uHmhk3ao7Sv80X99VsYCphbj_HCh9FhS728-c1sSUntKdc3_EMdBY7o7YDJA-fUR2m0z8o70CEGFZOHAyFH14?loadFrom=PastedDeeplink&ts=1089.35))

Yes. Right. I mean, your solitary confinement was one thing you mentioned and all these things being locked down for long periods of time, isolated and then serving out your sentence for many years. How can someone heal in that environment? Exactly. Seems impossible. Quite honestly. Seems like it does the opposite effect.

Donna Hylton: ([18:28](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/rqySO1uHmhk3ao7Sv80X99VsYCphbj_HCh9FhS728-c1sSUntKdc3_EMdBY7o7YDJA-fUR2m0z8o70CEGFZOHAyFH14?loadFrom=PastedDeeplink&ts=1108.49))

I mean, it's possible but it's so difficult. It's so you have to like, you know, so I I'm thankful that I was in the prison that I was in with a group of women that actually we had the warden, which we call a superintendent in New York, but that we had, because without that, I can't be sure of if that's true, that we would be who we are and created the programs that exist now within the system and are replicated now, you know, as the model across the world. Like, I'm not sure that that would be, you know, because she allowed us to think for ourselves, mm-hmm, allowed us some for some delivers of autonomy where we can think about things like the things that we know we need, what would it look like if we had this, what would look like if we have to support the help, what would it look like if somebody listened to us? Mm-Hmm so we created those spaces, you know, that's why, "A little piece of life is modeled off of a safe space. Cause that's what we did and were allowed to do when we were inside.

Corey Andrew Powell: ([19:23](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/rqySO1uHmhk3ao7Sv80X99VsYCphbj_HCh9FhS728-c1sSUntKdc3_EMdBY7o7YDJA-fUR2m0z8o70CEGFZOHAyFH14?loadFrom=PastedDeeplink&ts=1163.77))

And you've actually made a 5 0 1 C three corporation that's named after your book, which is the,"The little piece of light" is the name of the organization as well. So what are some of the initiatives that you're working on, whether it be just in theory or legislative proposals that are really gonna try and change that landscape for women specifically who are reentering society?

Donna Hylton: ([19:45](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/rqySO1uHmhk3ao7Sv80X99VsYCphbj_HCh9FhS728-c1sSUntKdc3_EMdBY7o7YDJA-fUR2m0z8o70CEGFZOHAyFH14?loadFrom=PastedDeeplink&ts=1185))

One success that, one of the successes right now — most recent one, September Governor Hochul signed our less is more are bill, which we co-lead with two others [Inaudible] and Unchained into law. And so now to date, as we speak it has now allowed for the release of, from parole supervision, which for most people don't really need it. Right? It's a waste of tax payers money, like 680 million dollars a year at waste. 3,970 people have been released offparole. So released from the system entirely, like people like me and the people that work here, you know, who work for A little piece of light. Some of 'em are on parole. Mm-Hmm, , They're working, they're doing it right. They're Tax, paying citizens, they're doing right. Why are you paying to have them supervise? Especially you monitor them after a while you see like there's a, you know, most people wanna do good, again.

Donna Hylton: ([20:38](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/rqySO1uHmhk3ao7Sv80X99VsYCphbj_HCh9FhS728-c1sSUntKdc3_EMdBY7o7YDJA-fUR2m0z8o70CEGFZOHAyFH14?loadFrom=PastedDeeplink&ts=1238.23))

We're happy about that. We have some other legislations that we've been a part of the D V S J A (Domestic Violence Survivors Justice Act, which allows for a person's case to be adjudicated, revisited if they have significant amount of trauma, violence, you know, family violence, domestic violence in their lives. That's not been working as much as we would like, cuz of course it's like, oh, we don't want it to be a floodgate. Oh. So then you recognize that vast majority of people that have been inside have been subjected to that kind of harm —and hurt people, hurt people. Mm-Hmm So we're kinda trying to heal that, work to that. Right? But yeah, so we, we work on some policy stuff. We're organizers at heart. We are working to close down Rikers island. And it continues to be the most violent and just abnormal detention penal colony in the country.

Corey Andrew Powell: ([21:30](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/rqySO1uHmhk3ao7Sv80X99VsYCphbj_HCh9FhS728-c1sSUntKdc3_EMdBY7o7YDJA-fUR2m0z8o70CEGFZOHAyFH14?loadFrom=PastedDeeplink&ts=1290.69))

Yeah.

Donna Hylton: ([21:31](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/rqySO1uHmhk3ao7Sv80X99VsYCphbj_HCh9FhS728-c1sSUntKdc3_EMdBY7o7YDJA-fUR2m0z8o70CEGFZOHAyFH14?loadFrom=PastedDeeplink&ts=1291.25))

Country. It it's, and it was the, the, the premise of it was basically to capture those, those of our ancestors who ran away from being enslaved, trying to get away from that harm. And so they captured them and held them there. So I mean it perpetuate something on itself.

Corey Andrew Powell: ([21:47](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/rqySO1uHmhk3ao7Sv80X99VsYCphbj_HCh9FhS728-c1sSUntKdc3_EMdBY7o7YDJA-fUR2m0z8o70CEGFZOHAyFH14?loadFrom=PastedDeeplink&ts=1307.55))

So is that the history of Rikers? Or part of that? Wow. I

Donna Hylton: ([21:50](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/rqySO1uHmhk3ao7Sv80X99VsYCphbj_HCh9FhS728-c1sSUntKdc3_EMdBY7o7YDJA-fUR2m0z8o70CEGFZOHAyFH14?loadFrom=PastedDeeplink&ts=1310.52))

Yes...Look up, look up Mr. Riker's and who he was and what he did.

Corey Andrew Powell: ([21:55](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/rqySO1uHmhk3ao7Sv80X99VsYCphbj_HCh9FhS728-c1sSUntKdc3_EMdBY7o7YDJA-fUR2m0z8o70CEGFZOHAyFH14?loadFrom=PastedDeeplink&ts=1315.07))

Very poignant, final words. And I appreciate it. And I appreciate you and I appreciate what you're doing because again, our society is better off when we make it better for people who have to reenter into that society. Seems like a no brain can't figure out why , you know, people haven't done better. Yeah. You would think, I mean it's, it's, it's crazy that we're still going through that. So thank you. And I commend you for all the work. So Donna Hylton, thank you for being my guest today on Motivational Mondays

Donna Hylton: ([22:21](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/rqySO1uHmhk3ao7Sv80X99VsYCphbj_HCh9FhS728-c1sSUntKdc3_EMdBY7o7YDJA-fUR2m0z8o70CEGFZOHAyFH14?loadFrom=PastedDeeplink&ts=1341.55))

Thank you. It's a pleasure. It's an honor.