

If you only have a minute: Rooted and Unwavering is all about connecting deeply with ourselves, others and our service in the world. When disappointment and struggles inevitably come our way, do we embrace them and strengthen our connectedness, or run away?

Embrace the Beautiful Struggle

By Esther Groves and Hylke Faber

We all do things we later regret. The question is, how do we work with these moments? Vida Oliphant Sneed's mother did not scold her when Vida was not at her best. Instead, she asked a powerful question: "Is this a reflection of who you are - of who you want to be?" Vida quips, I wish she'd, "just punish me and get it over with! But, this taught me how to self-examine, how to be courageous...and not blame others."

Fast forward to the present. Vida is the mother of six and playwright of a new work, *The Lion Tells His Tale*. Her mother's provocative question prompted self-inquiry and made her the kind of mother she is today. Grounded in family and her relationship with God, she is brimming with energy, commitment and light.

The events of 2020 temporarily dimmed her bright outlook. Vida and her husband Steve were set for a once-in-a-lifetime trip to Africa. Vida wanted to connect physically with her roots...to allow her feet to touch the soil of her ancestors and say, "I am here. I returned and I am whole. We want to affirm that your pain is not in vain. Your resilience bore fruit you may not have been able to see."

But Covid intervened and the trip evaporated. "I don't handle disappointment well," Vida admits. "I was swirling in disappointment and grief." "God called me to deal with my relationship with disappointment...and gave me a perspective...that is perhaps more healthy."

After briefly wallowing in her disappointment, Vida embraced the "beautiful struggle" and recognized it as a gift - an opportunity to produce something deeper in her life. Throughout the pandemic, she took the quiet time to write, reminding herself of her father's admonition: "Do your own thinking or someone will do it for you."

From the ashes of her disappointment and grief came the joy of writing *The Lion Tells His Tale*. The play brings Delbert Richardson's national award-winning American History Traveling Museum: The "Unspoken" Truths to life through music, dance and the spoken word. Audiences will be transported on a journey of awakening through the brilliance, resistance, and resilience of Black people from Africa to the Americas.

"If I can't go to Africa," Vida concludes, "maybe I can bring Africa to the world."

The Lion Tells His Tale debuts at the Intiman Theater in Seattle in May 2024.

Until the lion tells his tale, the hunt will always glorify the hunter." African proverb
