



“What Would Love Feel Like If I Were Truly Free?”

A Guided Visualization for Marginalized Bodies in Pursuit of Relational Liberation

By Akilah Riley-Richardson



PAGE 1: Introduction & Grounding

“If I am not free to love on my terms, I am not free at all.”

This guided visualization was created especially for those of us who move through the world while navigating systemic trauma—racism, homophobia, transphobia, classism, ableism, colonial legacies. These forces often demand that we perform safety, contain grief, or shrink desire.

And yet, your love was never meant to be small.

This practice invites you to imagine love outside of survival—love that is spacious, soft, honest, and free.

Instructions:

Use this visualization alone, with a therapist, or in a healing group.

Find a quiet place. You may sit, lie down, or take a gentle walk.

Read each section aloud or record it in your own voice.

Let your breath and body guide the pace.



PAGE 2: Guided Visualization Script

Begin

Breathe.

Notice the rhythm of your breath and the weight of your body.

Let your spine remember its dignity.

Let your jaw unclench.

Let the mask fall.

You are not being watched here.

You are not being judged.

You are not being policed.

You are in a place where love does not demand that you disappear.

Now imagine...

You're in a space where your love is not a problem to fix, a performance to adjust, or a risk to manage.

Your love is not too loud, too complex, too much.

Here, you are not asked to code-switch to be cherished.

You do not have to over-function to be safe.

This space is yours.

Who are you when no one is controlling your love?

What do your relationships feel like when they're no longer filtered through fear, colonization, or religious trauma?

Let your body speak.

What sensations arise when freedom is not a metaphor, but a feeling?

What parts of yourself show up here?

What tenderness becomes possible?

Now ask...

What am I finally able to feel when I don't have to survive?

Who am I when I love without apology?

What becomes sacred when I am no longer performing resilience?

Linger here.

Let your nervous system have this memory.

Let your heart feel this glimpse of home.

When you're ready, return.



PAGE 3: Reflection Prompts for Marginalized Healers & Lovers

1. What did I notice in this visualization—emotionally, physically, spiritually?
2. What systemic stories have shaped how I give or receive love?
3. What new possibilities surfaced when I released those stories, even briefly?
4. What is one small, meaningful act I can take toward loving myself and others more freely this week?
5. Who can witness my liberation without shrinking it?



Optional Debrief in Group or with Therapist:

How did your body respond to imagining love outside of survival?

Were there emotions that surprised you?

What kind of relational declarations could be born from this place of freedom?