

Boston Ujima Project



# Cherish bliss

FREE FLOWING FEELINGS AND MEMORIES  
OF PEACEFUL EXPERIENCES SHARED BY  
THE BOSTON UJIMA TEAM

ORGANIZED MON-SUN

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TYPESET IN COURIER

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Bliss is a dish best served warm, with company; or cold, driving along the beach; maybe alone, in the quiet of personal or shared spaces. We approach fulfillment, sensuality, and deep/spiritual connection with what exists beyond us in the ways we know how. This booklet is an expression of our versions of those attempts; we were curious how each of us as staff undertook moments of joy in our days and our weeks, so the following pages explore, through conversations, stories, and personal musings, those very undertakings. As we engage in a solidarity movement moved by imaginative worldbuilding, fun, and abundance, we thought it pertinent to begin with the mundane pleasures we engage in regularly—we sought to share our practices so that the simple and quotidian may serve as a basis for radical forms of seeking alignment and enjoying ourselves in the fullness of our visions. Included in *Channel 1: Bliss* are stories, recipes, and track listings that lead us towards dreams and towards action; we'd love to hear from you all what goods, gatherings, and songs bring you joy!

It was more than a blessing to solicit these responses from our staff; moments to catch up with old and new friends are grace unto themselves, but the opportunity to really dig in together and to check-in beyond just the immediacy of the day-to-day presented a gift in bringing us closer to one another. We hope that this booklet shares not just our conversations amongst ourselves, but also an incitement to explore what bliss means, what it looks like, and what it smells like for you; we cherish our relationships with each person receiving this offering, and if *Channel 1: Bliss* inspires you towards love, care, and seeking yourself so that you can build with others, then this will be a successful production on our parts.

Peace and blessings,  
Alula, James, Mona and the entire Boston Ujima Project team

The simple things make me the happiest, typically; a song that scratches a specific itch, a moment that brings a smile to my face, the warmth of soup reaching my belly. Lately, Monday mornings where I can play hooky and dodge my responsibilities to take care of myself bring me the utmost fulfillment: waking up past 9am with nary a care and taking time to journal and process while sitting out on my porch and soaking in sun that brings me energy like I'm a temperamental plant, all that jazz.

I need a lot of time to myself to stay functional. I really enjoy being around my people and I get a lot of energy from sitting with loved ones, new faces, friends, and family, but lately I've been relearning how to be alone and sit with my intentions, my actions, and my heart—and I can't do that if I'm outside all the time. Plus I haven't yet learned how to process while in community with folks just yet. So I've been cherishing moments at home with light pouring into my third eye, scribbling memoranda while I sip black tea with too much sugar in it.

I shave my head once or twice every week; I started about 4 and a half years ago, when I was 19, just to see what I would look like and I've kept up with the practice since. It brings me real peace and cleansing energy to shed the hair off my scalp; when I can shave, shower, lotion up, and hit my head with the oils in my morning routine on a Monday, I feel sensational and sensorily-heightened. I get to take in my face and my dome at great length and reflection; I rarely pay much more attention to my countenance than in these moments, and it's grounding to see myself peering back at me from the abyss. I struggle a bit with a perfection complex; it can manifest as minor delusion (e.g. 'can't nobody get these fits off like me') or as nitpicking my features to the point of slight discomfort, but when I bare myself in the mirror, there's an element of "not being able to hide" that quells the ~other voice~ by presenting a version of truth that is no longer disputable. My journals often offer me the same lens of accountability towards what's nestled in the folds of my brain; there's no real sense in hiding from yourself, despite our strongest self-protective urges, so digging further to get to the other side seems the most appropriate path (even if a molten core obstructs the way). There's a sense of release/relief the more honest I get with myself, not really blissful and more anti-hedonic than fulfilling, but still a blockage is lifted and my brain's bowels can empty.

Discipline over time, despite the best attempts of my dopamine-hacked nervous system to convince me otherwise, seems to be the surest route towards genuine, rooted satisfaction; waking up and making the bed, brushing my teeth and shaving before I check my phone. Taking a walk everyday, a skate if possible, and staving off the caffeine until the afternoon; eating a well-portioned, proteinous breakfast and lunch and small snacks throughout the day; responding to emails as soon as they come in, and so on. I was telling a mentor of mine that I realized a short stroll is often enough to keep me sane, and they remarked that this was wisdom; I'm unconvinced that it's particularly wise insomuch as it just takes me a really long time to arrive at the common sense that drives healthier lifestyles, but I'm grateful for every lesson as each one comes along, on its own time.

ALULA

ALULA

Monday mornings shouldn't be hard: a breakfast recipe.

**Ingredients:**

Two to three eggs

A bowl

A fork

A pan

A spatula

Some oil or butter

A pinch of pepper

Two pinches of salt

A handful of dairy-free shredded cheddar

Two eggo waffles

100% maple syrup

Sriracha

Blueberries, blackberries, and strawberries

Your favorite tea (Black tea, for me)

Brown sugar

Dairy-free creamer or almond milk

Cinnamon

Ginger

Honey

Your favorite tv show or podcast (Questlove Supreme, for me)

**Instructions:**

Turn on your favorite show in the background, maybe on a small speaker or playing off of your laptop; I like having some favorable noise on while achieving all necessary and potentially boring tasks. This maybe comes at the expense of my long-term auditory health; so it goes. Start boiling some water (in a kettle, a pot, or the microwave), and once it's bubbling, pour a mugful into your favorite vessel and sit a teabag in it. Then, take your eggs in hand, and crack them swiftly, depositing the yolks into the bowl. I was going to include a metaphor in here about cracking the shell of what isn't to get to the yolk of what is, but I'll save those poetics for another time; in any case, swirl the yolks in the bowl with your fork to break them. Once properly beaten, slide your butter/oil onto your pan and heat your pan up on the stove a bit to get things greased; then, slide your yolks onto the pan and turn the heat up to your desired temperature. Scramble your eggs with the spatula as they start to solidify in the heat, and add pepper and salt (perhaps even cajun seasoning) as desired to season them. While this is happening, go ahead and drop your eggo waffles (maybe the protein variants, or the chocolate/blueberry jaws) into the toaster, so everything is getting ready at roughly the same time.

I like my eggs a bit on the browner side, so I let 'em rock in high heat for a second; once they've congealed, I throw the cheese on them (#dairyfree for my fellow lactose intolerant folks, we need to take that syndrome seriously), and keep moving the bits around with a spatula to make sure nothing gets burned and all scrambles get equal heat. Turn your stove off, and let the eggs sit for a second as you grab your waffles; slide the waffles on the plate first, swirl on your 100% maple syrup, and then add your eggs and your desired amount of sriracha to wake your tastebuds up a bit. Circle back to the tea you started up a lil bit ago, and take the teabag out; add creamer/almond milk, brown sugar, honey (for your throat), cinnamon (for the taste and health benefits), and ginger (for digestion), and stir. You've now got a quick, cheap, simple breakfast together in less than thirty minutes—if you've got the day off, keep watching that show and take it easy. If you've got work...scarf down what you can before you miss your bus!

TRACKS TO BREATHE AND STEP TO:  
 "BREATHE", BY NAVY BLUE AND YASIIN BEY;  
 "RIGHT ON TIME", BY LITTLE BROTHER;  
 "SHE CAN'T LOVE YOU", BY CHEMISE

Tuesdays are my days at Black Market—I'm usually here by myself, and there's some bliss and peace that comes with occupying a place solo. It's a little different from just being alone at home, although I enjoy that too when I'm working. I like to sit near a window, so the joy will come from whatever comes through the panes that day: I welcome any view, so if it's bright and sunny, that's wonderful. If it's raining, that's wonderful. If it's gloomy, that's, that's a little different sometimes...but yeah.

When I'm in Black Market however, the window is much larger, and there's the added impact of getting to people-watch. A funny thing often happens: because it's a big, dark window, people will check themselves out as if it's a mirror <chuckles>, and I have fun seeing different types of people pausing to take themselves in... maybe they see me, maybe they don't. I think there's bliss in occupying the emptiness of Black Market's big open space, too.

Sometimes my friends join me while I'm working, so a couple of eventualities become possible. One is quietly co-working, enjoying that peace time while accompanied by someone else. The other is kind of a raucous joy because I have friends who're real loud <laughs>, who may come by, and we get a lot of jokes cracking.

In the past I had meeting-free Tuesdays so I could just kind of focus on emails—that's changed, so now I'm in a lot of conversations and congregations throughout the day...when it feels less frenzied and when it feels like I'm able to have a substantial presence in each meeting, that's a certain kind of social and occupational fulfillment—if I feel like I've been able to really fully participate in each conversation once the day ends, there's a real satisfaction at having completed a full workday before I jump in the car to head home. I take the opportunity to mentally take it down a level and listen to some music on my way back—I'm an old person who still uses Pandora. Everybody laughs at me, but I appreciate mixing it up and being surprised by the algorithmic radio; I know you can do that in other places, but I still appreciate it. And I'm typically a passenger, so I look out the window and continue taking in views, people, and cityscapes as I watch Boston go by and I enter Cambridge, where I live.

My home is pretty peaceful for the most part—it truly feels calm and welcoming daily. And I do not cook at all when I get back; I have a whole bunch of people that cook for me by way of GrubHub, and my best friend Tomashi Jackson cooks for us when she can. One of the things I am particularly appreciating recently is the big pots of chicken soup that she makes. She doesn't really have a recipe, and just trusts her intuition to make us evening meals when she's around. And after that, I find my gratitude for the night and start to wind down. I always have moments of gratitude throughout my waking hours; there'll be something that I see or that I'm thinking about that offers an opportunity to really make sure that I'm thankful to be alive.

*NIA'S PANDORA STATION, GREATEST HITS: "I CAN DREAM ABOUT YOU", BY DAN HARTMAN; "SHE DRIVES ME CRAZY", BY FINE YOUNG CANNIBALS (THAT'S KIND OF LIKE MY EIGHTIES PUNK ROCK VIBE). "BOOT", BY TAMAR-KALI (GET SOME AFRO PUNK IN THERE); AND "TAIWA", BY MARC CARY (A JAZZ SITUATION).*

GEO

GEO

*An ideal #UjimaWednesday where productivity and bliss are not pushing and pulling at each other but rather flowing into one another.*

8:45-9:00a

My alarm is set to 8:45 AM so I can hit snooze for eight minutes before truly waking up at 8:53 AM; I'll prepare a hot loose-leaf tea with a whistling kettle and make a quick breakfast before my day officially starts at 9. The kettle only takes three to five minutes, depending on the day's physics, and while the kettle reaches a boil I've already cut two to three different fruits to make a fruit bowl for myself. I like cutting through pears and apples, the juices releasing easily against a good knife. I make food for myself as if I'm in a kitchen- I have an extensive culinary background! I've worked at a pizza restaurant, an American Diner, a juice bar, and at a Whole Foods.

If I'm feeling like I didn't get enough substance the day before, or if I have a longer day ahead, I also eat organic, crunchy peanut butter spread on bread. On days when it's sunny enough and above 40 degrees Fahrenheit, I'll eat and start working on my porch while listening to Bob Marley; "Misty Morning" for drearier days, and "Sun is Shining" when it's bright out.

9:00a-11:30a

I'll message folks some morning check-ins and get some quick tasks done before we have our Culture and Planning meeting from 10 to 11:30 AM.

A lot of the experimental nature of Ujima really informs the spirit of that meeting as we plan out our intentions and goals, as we plot actions toward honoring Black and indigenous working-class cultures, and as we foster community (internally and externally).

*MOVING AND GROOVING WITH GEO: "MISTY MORNING", BY BOB MARLEY; "SUN IS SHINING", BY BOB MARLEY AND THE WAILERS; "GUESS WHO'S COMING TO DINNER", BY BLACK UHURU; AND "WHAT IS LIFE", BY BLACK UHURU*

*TEA TIME RECIPE: YERBA MATE LOOSE LEAF TEA, WHITE SAGE LEAF, LEMONGRASS, CHAMOMILE, RAW HONEY; MEASURE EACH INGREDIENT TO YOUR PREFERRED TASTES, AND DRINK WITH CARE (IN A GOURD OR WITH A BAMBOO STRAW, IF POSSIBLE)*

2:00-4:00p

After early-afternoon emails and a quick lunch, I eventually make my way to Black Market! With a little extra money in my pocket, I'll head to Khadija's Express (a Somalian spot in Nubian Square). They serve really great fresh foods, nice and spicy, which I really appreciate. Sometimes I eat alongside James or Mari, colleagues who are typically around on a Wednesday; maybe I'll also see Yusuf, Nia, or JaNoah in-person and exchange some banter. As we advance towards 4:00 PM, we start making physical arrangements to make the space more welcoming for our volunteers who start arriving at 5:00 pm for Ujima Wednesday.

4:30-7:15p

I often have to step out and pick up the food for Ujima Wednesdays to feed our volunteers, staff, and members. Following that, we coordinate greetings and check-ins as we welcome folks into Black Market for the event, and we break bread with each other over food catered from a UGBA business or a Business We Love. Once we're all comfortable, we log on with our speaker, make sure that they can hear us and see us, make sure our digital materials are presentable for the online and in-person audience, etc. And then from 6 to 7:15 PM we are entirely hosted and co-hosted by our guest presenter, so we listen attentively, jot down notes, and ask questions.

After all that wraps up, I'll try and converse with all the people who've come in to share space and build community, and then I'll give a coworker or a member or a friend a ride home. That's a perfect Ujima Wednesday for me: my belly's full, my mind is fed, and I'm ready to head home.

8:00p-10:30p

At the end of this blissful evening, I may or may not have a to-go plate from the Ujima workshop that I'll drive home with me; if I don't, I usually cook at home with my partner (or they might make me something if I'm coming home late). I usually drink tea before I eat every meal, for digestion and for healthy sustenance of vitamins. I also recreationally partake in cannabis to close long days, and I'll put on a record or two; in the evening, maybe I'll throw on "Guess Who's Coming to Dinner" by Black Uhuru to troll my partner and dance a bit. I sing and dance a lot, which is only unusual in the city of Boston, apparently, but where my family comes from it's very common to dance at any time during the day.

MARI

MARI

I think it's the art principle, the music principle of Kwanzaa: Kuumba, for creativity, that guides my fulfillment. Mm. The principle to leave spaces more beautiful than when you come in. When I think about my happiest moments, my moments where I'm most connected with spirit and divinity: music, creativity, community, and collective care come to mind. There was a protest, in 2014 or 2015, where folks were gathered outside in downtown Boston, holding that space down; we were just drumming and chanting together, and that's a real core memory for me growing up in Boston and Cambridge. There was something so pure and powerful about being in a drum circle with strangers I'd never met before, all of us committed to this idea of liberation and freedom in a better world. Those three things: music, circles, and community, are what make up bliss for me. Whether we're doing a jam session at Recess on Thursday in the Cambridge Community Center, or if folks are doing no music because the DJs fucked up and the music stopped, we have that common liberatory movement language of rhythm and beat. My ideal Thursday would be a day full of circles. So I would eat injera, or roti on thali (a round platter common to foods served in South Asia and the Caribbean). We'd eat cranberries too, I think they're indigenous to Massachusetts.

My relationship with cooking is weird. I didn't really learn how to cook Ethiopian food until I was in college facing cravings for my cuisine and prices of \$30 a plate at Habesha restaurants. So I end up cooking American food more often than not at home (steak, mac and cheese, etc); I used to work back-of-house at a café in Chicago, and I was cheffing it up back there—breakfast sandwiches and burgers, mostly. I was usually the only person in the back, so I didn't really have to talk or engage with that many people, and I think the pressures of being a line cook come with the communication and the tension that get built up when you have 20 orders and many cooks to coordinate with; so the job actually didn't end up being all that stressful for me. But yeah, I learned a lot about service work and have a very different respect for people still in the industry.

I love cooking for other people so much. That was something I really liked to do in college. All of my friends were neighbors, so we would invite each other over for dinner and cook with each other. And I think that's a beautiful practice for people to engage on a Thursday: invite a friend over and cook a meal together. Make music, dance in circles, and share creative joy with your folks.

*TRACKS TO BUILD TRUST  
AND RELATIONSHIPS:*

*"TEZETA" BY MULUTU ASTATKE; TO  
GROUND US IN MEMORY AS WE CON-  
TINUE TO CREATE*

*THURSDAY MORNING: "VIDEO", BY  
INDIA.ARIE; TO START THE DAY  
WITH COMPASSION AND LOVE FOR  
SELF*

*THURSDAY AFTERNOON/EVENING:  
"FOR JAMES - INSTRUMENTAL", BY  
PALE JAY; SPACE TO BREATHE,  
PLAY WITH, FREESTYLE TO, HUM.*

**Alula Hunsen** I first wanted to know if there were any ideas that came to mind, when you came up with this project, of like, 'if someone were to ask me what a blissful day is for me, this is what I'm envisioning'?

**Mona** I was in New York at the time. I'm in Philly right now, but I was in New York outside, sitting on a stoop, cold and uncomfortable. And I was thinking about cuddling with this one person and being warm and like, just having a nice, peaceful time. That was what I was imagining, but that was also like, not wanting to be in my specific circumstance of being outside in the cold. I don't want much, I don't really ask for much of my days.

**A** Yeah.

**M** I just really appreciate little things, and then if there's somebody else who can do that with me, that's really pretty, you know?

**A** Yeah. Responsive or reactive bliss is also very much a thing, right? Walking home from the bus stop in below-freezing weather, that first hit of warm air when I enter my room is bliss. The little things count, too.

**M** Exactly; it's not an aspirational thing for me necessarily. There's constant pain and beauty. There's a perpetuating cycle. So I'm not aiming towards bliss as my destination. When I feel it, I wanna welcome it, and when it leaves, I wanna have peace, you know? I don't think we have control.

**A** Word. I would love to hear you say more. I've been having a lot of conversations about our ability to "shape our realities"; life happening to us versus us happening to life.

**M** I mean, I believe in agency, decisions, choices, responsibility. So I'm not interested in like...

**A** Abdication of responsibility.

**M** Yeah. But I just don't think that we have control over as much as we think we do. In my own life, I need to be more steadfast about what I can control and ease off on the things I don't. I'm trying to really separate myself from linearity and accept the more spirally nature of life.

**A** Do you practice detachment?

**M** Hm...in a sense. I don't think it's healthy to hyper-fixate on things. 'What am I gonna do? What's gonna happen?' There is going to be a test coming up that you won't have the answers for. Someone's gonna ask you something that you can't respond to. There's gonna be strife. That's part of being here, to me. I'm just trying to choose to continue to be here. And if I'm choosing to be here, then I'm trying to be about it. I was listening to a philosopher on wax the other day, and he was talking about good versus bad. He was explaining how a lot of people think a good day is not having a bad day, but it's different. Good is not the absence of bad. It's a day that's good.

There's always some moment of tension or disappointment. I like the thesis because what it's saying really is to embrace the dualities of life. It can't not be all of it. It has to be everything or else it's not anything to me. If you just have a day where nothing bad happens...that's happened to me. And they've been horrible days, like deeply numb, dissociative days where nothing happened. And I'm like, 'yeah, I didn't get punched today'. That's good. But then I blinked and I'm hearing my friend talk to me and it doesn't sound like anything. What is that? We need velocity.

**A** Absolutely. In the spirit of choosing to be here, and being present: how open would you say a day is for you? To what extent do you plan out your time or anticipate things?

**M** Where is this audio getting published again? <laughs> I don't plan at all!

I wake up early, around six every day, and I take my time to come into my body, and then I just leave the house and I go until I'm exhausted and then I come home. I'll always go on a walk early in the morning, come back, do some work, go out again, be out. I need to be in the world, and it's all spontaneous for the most part... but this does not usually work out for me. I'll just be walking for miles on end and then I'm like, 'I haven't eaten anything and I'm dying'. And then I'll eat something and I'll be like, 'now I have have the itis and I have to go to bed' and I'll walk back.

**A** This is off-topic for the interview concept but related to what you just shared: do you have a step tracker?

**M** No...I don't keep track of anything. There's no documentation. It's whack.

**A** Not necessarily, I don't know. This is maybe a reactive impulse for me; generally I really care about documentation and storytelling, but over the past couple years, with the emphasis on archives, I'm more curious about ephemerality and things existing and being and disappearing.

**M** Yeah; I don't keep track at all. When I'm walking I go by landmarks and feelings: when I was in Boston, I'd wake up in Cambridge and I'd go from there. I'd look at the Prudential Center until I was in front of it, and I'd be like, 'Mm-Hmm. Okay.'



MONA-AELITA

**M** And then I'd spiral around it until the spiral got really wide, and I'd be out in Dorchester and famished. 'I'm gonna go to Ba Le and then I'll go home'. That type of shit. And that's a great day.

*MUSIC IN MOTION:*

**A** Are you a 'music while you walk' person or are you listening to the rhythms of the street?

**M** I'm listening to music 24/7. I was playing something until I was on this call, and when we get off this call, it's going back on.

**A** I heavily feel you; if I'm not actively talking to someone, I'm listening to music. Who are you into? I have no sense of your music taste at all.

**M** I listen to everything and I mean it. I don't like when people say that and they're like, 'except for...'. I will listen to anything. I just like stuff that is emotionally impacting. So I'll listen to whatever; for a really beautiful sweet day, I'll put on *"SHOWTIME" BY NELLY FURTADO*. It's romantic. It's a little intense at moments.

**A** Off the *Promiscuous* album?

**M** Yeah. On the one hand she said, 'wanna love you where I want to kiss you, where I want to touch you, where I want to...'. And on the other hand she says, 'it's not fair to love you in chains'. And I'm like—

**A** Damn!

**M** She really gagged me! Like that's crazy. I would also say *"STAY HOME" BY AMERICAN FOOTBALL* for this mood...very middle America. That's exactly how it sounds. And then the last one would be *"BURNING CANDLE" BY CINDY LEE*. Cindy Lee's my favorite artist of all time, are you familiar with her?

**A** Not at all.

**M** I love her down. When I hear "Burning Candle", I think about a friend of mine; we were talking about what a really nice day would look like for the two of us once upon a time...and we settled on just driving up and down the coastline of a beach in the winter in my truck, cranking the heat. Frozen beaches, gray, overcast days, ice tides, the works.

It's so empty, it's so desolate, but the energy of it is so sweet still, 'cause it holds all the joy of the summer, even through the winter. Mm-Hmm. Also desolate and sweet is very much our vibe <laughs>. I imagine playing that song and us dancing on top of the truck to it together.

MONA-AELITA

*CURRYING FAVOR AND CARE: A RECIPE FOR ROTI*

*ROTI*

*INGREDIENTS*

*FOR THE DOUGH/LOYAS:*

*340G PLAIN FLOUR  
2TSP SALT  
1TSP SUGAR  
1TSP BAKING POWDER  
1/2TBSP OIL  
175ML WATER*

*FOR THE FILLING:*

*500G YELLOW SPLIT PEAS/DHAL  
2TSP GROUND GEERA  
1TSP SALT  
1 TBSP GREEN SEASONING  
2-3 CLOVES GARLIC  
1 SCOTCH BONNET*

JAMES

When I think about bliss, I feel a surrounding warmth and coziness: being with someone I really love and just listening to music, sharing like a hearty meal. Maybe cuddling as we're doing all those things, with candles or incense burning, good lighting—setting the mood, as it were.


I feel like more recently, the most meaningful day of the week for me has been Saturdays—Saturday mornings specifically. I feel a deep satisfaction with the week, and I embark upon a resetting of my space. There's an inner pursuit to reclaim the spirit in my room in my organizing and cleaning.

I gather all the things, hang up all the fabric flotsam that landed around the room throughout the week as I was getting ready to go to different places. Also I'm a candle maker, so I really enjoy the flame of the candle and the fragrance-throw that candles offer, their ability to shift the energy of a space. Sometimes they can open a portal into another reality, and they help inspire my imagination, you know? Some scents take me to different places.

JAMES

I'll throw an album on too, and hop in the shower; lately it's been this Afrobeat artist named Bien, and Andre 3000's ambient album that play in my household. There were some tracks on the 3stacks album that almost inspired me to rap in their openness; he's creating new worlds for hip-hop. And I feel like there's a certain openness that I have in the shower in general; I find them to be very centering and meditative

The practice of listening while I clean is a way that I process or learn, as well. After I'm out and dry from the shower, I call my partner; I'm in a loving long-distance relationship right now, and calling them to check-in helps retain the intimacy of our connection. I plan out the rest of my day from there while I spend time with my cat, named Kenema for the third-largest city in Sierra Leone.



*TRACKS OF AFRO-IMAGINATION AND AFFIRMATION:  
 "CHIKWERE", BY BIEN;  
 "ASIBE HAPPY", BY TRINIX REMIX;  
 "MINA NAWE", BY SOA MATRIX & MASHUDU (FEAT.  
 EMOTIONZ DJ & HAPPY JAZZMAN);  
 "LOVE AND AFFECTION", BY PRESSURE BUSSPIPE;  
 AND "RED RUBY DA SLEAZE", BY NICKI MINAJ*

JAMES

I love to make candles... the most essential parts are the wick (I use cotton), the vessel (glass, aluminum, etc.) which holds the wax—I personally use 16 ounce glass containers—and the wax itself; recently I've been using coconut soy wax. It has a medium scent throw, which I find to be appropriate for my nose, and if you use fragrance oils you'll get a really good scent throughout, regardless. I've explored a lot of different fragrances in my practice. Most of them are like woody, airy scents, natural scents: cedar wood, tobacco...I have a couple Palo Santo scented candles I made, too. I combine fragrances pretty often too, the woody scents with more floral tones, and I have to measure depending on what I want to be most prominent in the smell. One of the candles I crafted has a certain percentage of Palo Santo, a certain percentage of white sage cedarwood, and so on. I think I assess and experiment as I test to smell what makes the most sense in my living space.

#### MAKING CANDLES AT HOME

PREP TIME: 20 MINUTES

TOTAL TIME: 2 HOURS

YIELD: 3 MEDIUM COCONUT SOY CANDLES

#### ITEMS YOU'LL NEED AT HOME:

MEDIUM SIZE SAUCE POT - FOR DOUBLE BOILER

LARGE SPOON FOR STIRRING UTENSIL

RUBBING ALCOHOL

PAPER TOWELS

#### INGREDIENTS:

5 CUPS COCONUT SOY WAX FLAKES

3 COTTON WICKS

½ CUP FRAGRANCE OIL OF YOUR CHOICE

#### OTHER SUPPLIES:

1 STAINLESS MELTING/POURING PITCHER WITH HANDLE

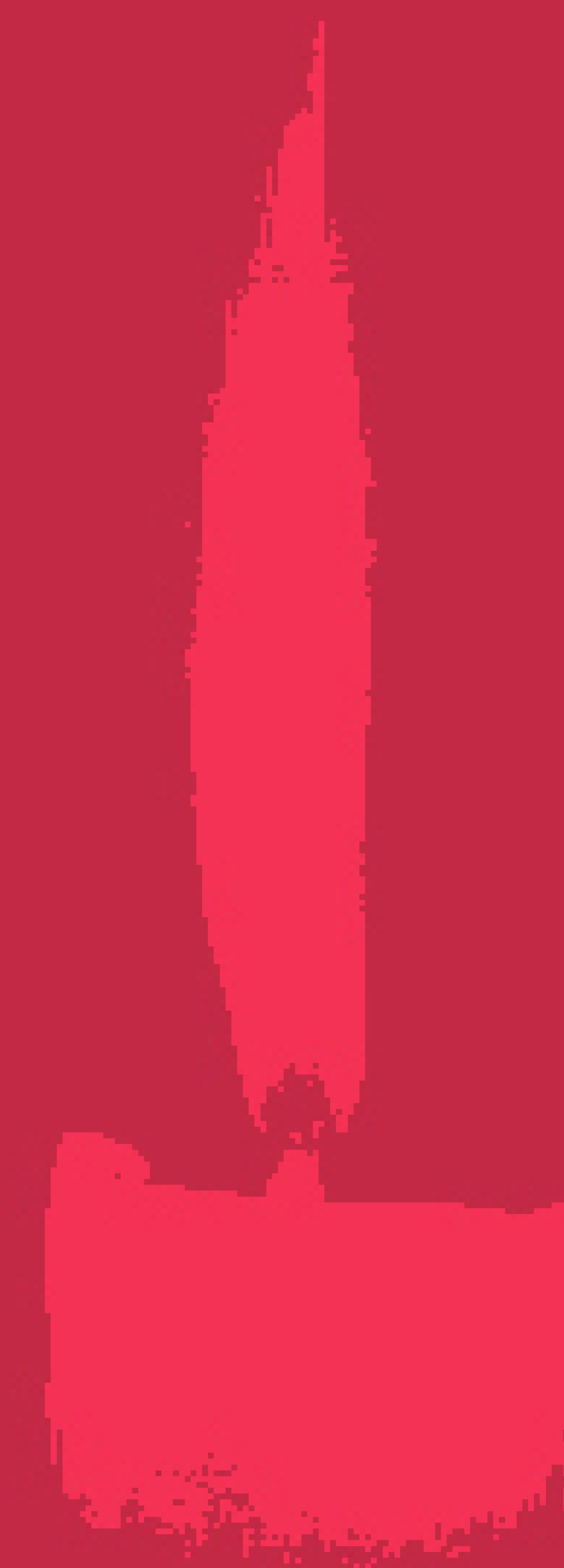
1 THERMOMETER TO DETERMINE PROPER MELTING AND MIXING POINT

3 VESSELS (16 OUNCE) (GLASS OR CLAY)

1 WOOD STIRRING DEVICE

3 WARNING LABELS

3 WICK STICKERS



**Alula Hunsen:** What does your ideal, blissful Sunday look like? Where are you, who are you with, and what are you doing? Walk us through your day, and what sorts of moods and energies attend the things you'll be doing (or not doing) in your weekend.

**Cierra:** My ideal Sunday is a walk through the park—literally. I wake up late — around 11 am, and I'll walk to the Black-owned coffee shop for an espresso or matcha. The best days are when lavender is in season, and I don't have to leave my neighborhood. Sometimes my partner and I wake up early to grab brunch before the restaurant gets too crowded. We try to arrive around the time they open, and sit on the patio (late spring or early fall is the best time for all this). We usually walk home, and take a detour around the park and try to stop at one of our favorite shops, usually a bookstore or record shop.

After brunch and a bit of walking — this is my ideal Sunday, of course — I'd invite friends over to join me in the park, or watch a movie in my home.

**A** Do you schedule yourself and your time to maximize efficiency and enjoyment, or are you lax and free-flowing? What principles or intentions would you carry through your day?

**C** I'm all about free flow! My only intention is to have a good day.

**A** Would cooking/eating be a part of your Sunday?

**C** I think my main Sunday meal is always a great breakfast. It's one of the things I like to do with

friends, or just for myself.

**A** What recipe do you like to make for your people?

**C** Check out [this drink recipe](#) by Small Format PVD in Fortunately!

**A** What songs play in your household throughout the day; do these songs set moods for you? Also: I was talking to James and he informed me that you are/were a DJ...so I'm really curious to know how you interact with music that you play for yourself--are the songs a soundtrack? Do they push you into motion? Are they just something to fill your ears?

**C** I have a few playlists that I make based on my mood, where I'm at geographically, or the astrological season. Here's what I'm listening to now:

"I'M GOING TO BROWNSVILLE" AND  
 "JOHN HENRY", BY FURRY LEWIS  
 "WILSON RAG" AND "I DON'T LOVE NOBODY",  
 BY ELIZABETH COTTON  
 "THEMBI", BY PHAROAH SANDERS  
 "INNER CRISIS", BY LARRY WILSON  
 "MY PEOPLE... HOLD ON", BY EDDIE KENDRICKS  
 "ALMUSTAFA THE BELOVED", BY BILLY COBHAM  
 "EASTERN MARKET", BY YUSUF LATEEF  
 "MAGGOT BRAIN", BY FUNKADELIC  
 "VOYAGE TO ATLANTIS", BY THE ISLEY BROTHERS  
 "WATER", BY TYLA  
 "I DEDICATE", BY BRANDY  
 "MAKE OUT IN MY CAR", BY MOSES SUMNEY  
 "FRENCH TOAST", BY WESTSIDE GUNN  
 "FREE", BY DENIECE WILSON  
 "FOCUS", BY BRANDY  
 "WEY U", BY CHANTÉ MOORE  
 "NAPPY DUGOUT", BY FUNKADELIC  
 "A CHANT FOR BU", BY ART BLAKEY  
 "BULL IN THE HEATHER", BY SONIC YOUTH  
 "SOLID AS A ROCK", BY SIZZLA

With all that being said... we offer much appreciation and gratitude  
to you for reading our 2023 Ujima Day offering!

We'd love to hear from you what bliss looks, sounds, smells, and  
tastes like. If you'd like a print copy, or if you want to share a  
recipe, a few songs, and/or a story that encapsulates joy and  
fulfillment in your life, head to [this Google form](#).  
And be sure tune in to [this playlist](#) with all of our joints and jams.

CHANNEL 1: BLISS  
BOSTON UJIMA PROJECT