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Oral History Project Title: Self-Care 2020. Maurice Passmore, Jr

Sophia V. Nelson (Interviewer): Today is Tuesday June 16, 2020 and my name is Sophia. I'm here in Atlanta, Georgia. And I'm talking to Maurice Passmore and you are in? What city and state?

Maurice Passmore, II (Interviewee): Currently I am in Herndon, Virginia.

SN: We are going to jump into this self-care and just overall life in June 2020 conversation. Well not conversation, but oral history interview. So, we'll start off - I want to know how you define self-care?

MP: How do I define self-care? Um...self-care is just making sure that you are mentally, physically, spiritually intact. Maintaining a level of care for all aspects of your being. So, how its individually described for different people it can mean different things. For me, it's keeping a good exercise regimen for the physical. For the mental its staying creative, its mentally challenging things like ...I love chess. It keeps the brain sharp. Reading, etcetera. And you know the creativity side I have podcasts, music - just being creative. The brains a muscle too so you have to keep it active.

Spiritual side which I need to...I need to put more emphasis on...that was one of the things that I...during this COVID time I, you know gotten into a little more meditation. Taking a little time before everyone gets up or before everyone needs you...I come down here in my man cave and I just...you know...zone, stretch. I want to get into the yoga a little more...haven't gotten into it as much as I'd like to but yeah that's my self-care. It keeps me even keeled.

SN: Prior to having to prescribe to quarantine...how would you describe your day to day life?

MP: Prior to the quarantine...prior to the quarantine it was hustle bustle. You go into work, fighting traffic. I'm a little outside DC right now in the suburban world. The family....you know what I mean...the wife, the kids, just you know getting them somewhere a little quieter a little more slower paced, I guess - slower paced, more relaxed, more greenery living. So for me though, going to work, getting back to the city...you know I'm fighting traffic. So, you spend half your life just getting through the traffic. Other one sitting in the office. Coming home, trying to you know what I mean...trying to make time for self-care. Which now you are trying to make more time for. You're trying to you know just fit it in. Between the traveling, between being in the office. Etcetera.

Prior to, I was just out here in that rat race doing the same thing everyday. Getting up. Waiting for the weekend to get you some still time. Which really isn't still time because during the week you weren't able to do most of the things that you needed to do. So, you are doing them on the weekends. So, there is not a whole lot of still time.

SN: Are you still able to work for your employer? Maybe remotely?

MP: Yeah, yeah...remotely. Which I think this whole quarantine is the double edged sword. You know....you find out that hey....you know, when you wanted to work remotely more often why weren't we able to do it when we've been able to maintain this long. Most people in IT especially...have been able to...you know, if you are in your office working on a computer what is the difference between being at home and working on your computer? So, that is what was found out during this quarantine time. That a lot of these, you know i'm sure companies are going to start making changes as far as being able to save money with physical space. And just create infrastructure where more people can work from home.

But the double edged sword is...something that could show up with that, some positions will start to get outsourced. So we have to find a way to be able to...I think the ultimate outcome with this will be able to continue to have you work from home. And not have a lot of people losing jobs because companies are trying to...you know they done saved on physical space, as well as now they are going to try and save on salaries by outsourcing to places where that minimum wage is a little lower. Things like that. So, hopefully that doesn't happen but we shall see.

I would love to be able to continuously 100% work from home. I mean you save...I mean just the time...I think personally, you're more....you're more... what's the word I'm looking for? You're more productive. You're more productive. You don't lose 2 hours in travel. Then you're talking about the 15, 20 minute, 30 minute set-up time just depending on how you are when you get to the office. The 20, 30 minute clean up time. So, you're talking about maybe another hour of not productivity time that you're rarely getting at the office. I just feel its a more productive...its a more productive workflow. Process. There is no setup time here. I can just roll out of bed. Go get what I need to get done. Walk downstairs to my setup and I'm right at it. I don't have to figure it out it's already...all of my stuff is good to go as soon as I get down here.

SN: Has that improved your work life balance and if so how?

MP: Absolutely. Like I said, I've cut 2 hours of commute time. I've cut off 2 hours of stress. You know, driving...I like to drive...like driving now during COVID...you know traffic is picking back up but prior...it's still light...but when it was in the heart of it and I would go somewhere you know...we used to drive. DMV man. It's crabs and football. You know, like my man said on Wedding Crashers, "Maryland. Its crabcakes and football."

I used to drive an hour and a half to go get crabs from out near the Chesapeake. I mean the most relaxing chill ride. Not too much traffic driving. Its calm. You get to listen to what you want to listen to...your music...you're just in your little space. Especially if you're car's clean. Keep your cars clean *laughs* But you get to relax and things like that. But, the difference in that commute going into the office. Having to deal with multiple personalities. And you're on the road driving there and having to deal with people who don't even want to be going where they are going. They're in a rush. It's a lot of road rage. There's a lot of negative energy that you have to thwart off first thing in the day. You know being here...being quarantined...being home working remotely...you don't have any of that energy. You keep a well balanced maintained

energy. You're here with your loved ones, you get up, you go and start working. You save two hours...two hours that I would spend commuting, I could spend them two hours with my family. Spend those....Those two hours that I would have spent at work, I spend those two hours now...our those two hours commuting to work shall I say. I spend those two hours now you know ...raising my children. Giving them quality time that they haven't ...they were unable to receive because daddy's driving to work...daddy's coming home.

As well as...for me personally..what's been the most rewarding is...I just had my son, Maurice Passmore the 3rd...MP3...on December 31. Last day of the year, coming into the new year. When I had my daughter who is 8 now, at the same time you know...she was born, you know a couple days off and then right back to work. We sending her to some kind of daycare because you know, we gotta work. We gotta work. We gotta make sure we have food and shelter for our little one. So, we end up missing a lot of those moments and she spent a lot of her time with care takers, where MP3 has been with us the entire time. He knows only that love of his parents this entire time which has been super rewarding.

Just the fact that of not having to send your child to some kind of caretaker and being able to give them...you know, nobody gonna take care of your child like you are. That's just simple. That's just a universal truth. But, yeah - that's how it's been for me.

SN: Wow, that's amazing. You talk about energy. So, I want to talk about two things that have probably been throwing off the energy of the masses. One, is COVID-19 is reportedly being more affected....or is affecting the african american community more. Do you have any thoughts around that, any concerns about it?

MP: Sure. You are always concerned for your community. We hear its the underlying issues so I guess that speaks to the underlying health issues of Black people in America. A lot of them being systemic issues based on undereducated, lack of resources, lack of job opportunities just the whole gambit. Which ends up causing these issues because essentially when you are talking about a people who are...who have just from the science of it...just genetically superior genes. You're talking about people when you look at all sports that dominate just because of ...just that melanin and that makeup that was given to you by whatever you believe your creator is.

So, the fact that diseases are destroying us faster or are hitting us harder than everyone else has to be some kind of...it only makes sense...its common sense. What's the variables that are causing this? And I would just...when you look at it you just have to understand that if we are having all these underlying health issues then why do we have all these health issues? Why aren't we getting taken care of? Why don't we have better eating habits, better exercise routines, you know better living situations? Why is the stress level so high? Its just so many different things. It's definitely concerning. Definitely concerning.

I um...its just one of the those things like "you don't got the answer, Sway." I don't know what...I don't know how to resolve it at the current state but I just...you know...health and mental state. That self-care. We gotta you know, we gotta make sure we are on top of our self-care and....you know just...as best as we can. Each one, teach one and get out here and walk. Get out here and...it's hard when you're living in these food deserts but you got to find a way to just...that fruit, vegetable intake. Just those things. Work on the preventative methods versus that reactive. Because we are being hit by *inaudible*

So it is really disheartening knowing we are being affected so disproportionately in comparison to everyone else.

SN: Something else that has affected the Black community and its really been showing its face throughout this lockdown is you know...police brutality. How have witnessing situations like Ahmaud Arbery and George Floyd. How have those situations affected you? If they have?

MP: Ah man. Well...well, obviously it affects you to see someone that you feel could have been you in a situation where they lost their life. This isn't isolated incidents. Definitely not new. Since police...since the inception of police we have been again disproportionately targeted and brutalized by the people who are air quote..."here to protect and serve your community." So, another...the rage and the outcries that are pouring out now because of these recent incidents its just expected outcomes. YOU can't expect people to be quiet or even more importantly to be well behaved in the manner that you feel they should be when they are watching their brothers and their sisters be...you know what i mean...being murdered, essentially.

I don't want to forget about the sister Breonna Taylor either because they tell you to...they tell you to comply and do xy and z. And I mean this sister was just in her home *laughs* in her bed. It doesn't get more compliant than that. The compliance level on that had to be at the highest order possible. So, it's you know...it's rough man. It's crazy that we live in a country where a global pandemic is happening and you know racism is still undefeated man. Racism is like 400 and 0. Like no other event is going to beat that out. The global pandemic was beat out by systemic racism in our country and people are out here protesting... that 6 feet distance, essentially they are out here risking their lives to let a system know that they're tired of losing their lives. So you know, just take that in. It's a dosy man. I don't...I wish I had the answers to to have a resolution for this but the only thing that I would say is...keep fighting, keep uniting, and nothing was ever given to an oppressed people. It's only been taken. And I'll leave it at that.

SN: After witnessing all these things and being in lockdown...quarantine...you described some of the things that you've begun doing like focusing on your creativity, walking, keeping a good exercise regimen. What are some of the specific things that you've had the opportunity to do since you quarantine. Which has been part of your self care....it can be anything. Did you ride a bike somewhere....did you go somewhere with your family? What are some of the specifics that you've experienced as part of your self-care?

MP: So um...that quarantine 15 is real. *laughs* That quarantine weight from being in the house, not going anywhere, not doing too much and just eating and trying to....I mean to the point where we are getting our groceries delivered. The normal exercise you would get from walking around a grocery store you are not getting. And you are inside trying to ...trying to be socially distant to quarantine and keep yourself healthy as well as your neighbor because they have this thing that just threw a whole monkey wrench in everything. Right. The asymptomatic...where you could be a carrier and spreading the disease but you not have any symptoms. So you know, okay...now yall...now its just turned into a marvel villain. COVID is the new Thanos. So um...we...so I started off not doing the exercising part and I gained a couple pounds. So, I went and purchased...purchased a bike before all the bikes were apparently on backorder. Now, you can't even get a bike. Purchased a bike....haven't road a bike in... since a child. I haven't ridden a bike...it's so funny that there is a saying that is *inaudible* when something is easy or something comes back to you fast you know..."it's just like riding a bike." *laughs* and I was like okay.

I remember riding a bike being totally different than what it is now. I could get on a bike and ride forever. Now, you feel every pedal. But, I enjoy it. I get out and ride. I get my exercise in. Me and the family we went and did....we actually went to the beach. Just to actually. We just pulled up and looked at the water. You know, took in the nature. Got some vitamin D and got out of there. You know, we didn't even stay long. But, it was a good drive...a nice drive. We went...I want to say we went around the wife's birthday. Because things still weren't open. There were no hotels, everything was closed. But we just went. Nobody owns the beach right? You would want to ...that's funny because you would think nobody owns it but you know...we monetize everything here. But, went to the beach sat there. And it was the first time my son, MP3 was to see the water, see the beach, see the sand and he enjoyed it. YOU could just see it. He seen all that water...he enjoys bath time, so when he saw all that water I know he was like "whoa."

And you know...got out there and got back, so yea man - specifically alot of driving, sight seeing, enjoying nature. I think this got a little closer to nature. Just being able to appreciate a drive. We drove through the mountains one time and just looked at all of that. We did the beach. I got on a bike. You know, creatively I...again like I said, I've got a podcast....always done music as far as being in emcee. But, now in this time I have gotten more into the production side. Creating...you know what I mean...actually making beats, creating melodies and things like that. I've gotten into videography a little more. Just trying to be productive and stay in being still but continuously moving forward, if that makes sense.

SN: It makes a lot of sense like it needs to be on a t-shirt or something type sense. Yea. Go ahead and put that on your YouTube channel. *laugh*

Well I think this is my second to last question.

MP: okay.

SN: I just want you to give me a bio. Who is Maurice Passmore the second?

MP: The second right. Who is Maurice Passmore the second? Junior....Junior, Junior. My man calls me. Well he calls MP3 Junior, Junior - umm...Maurice Passmore Junior is a son, a father, husband, friend. He's a provider, he is a motivator, he is a competitor, he is an athlete, he is a creator, he is MoChips, he is the artist, he is the emcee, the lyricst, he is theI never really have to think about myself in that space but yeah, I'mhe's complex and simple at the same time. He is...the dichotomy is crazy.

Like the person ...because I've lived so many like lives as they would say...which figuratively right...but, you know growing up when my father raised me pretty by himself for the majority of my life growing up in the neighborhood where a lot of people were born into circumstances that were challenging, you know what I mean. A Lot of people were born into circumstances where they didn't have many resources. So I've seen people get caught up in the environment in the streets. I've had to navigate all those of things to become...you know, the person...to become basically a professional, right. Just to become a working class citizen. Just to get there there was a lot of navigation early on, to survive. And from there it has been about...less about surviving and more about living. More about exceeding expectations and creating and you know being...I always say that one of the most important things in Black liberation or you know what I mean one of the most revolutionary things you can do as a Black man is take care of your Black family. Starting on the inside and working your way out. So, starting at your house and then work your way out to your community and beyond.

So, that's who Maurice Passmore, Junior is. I'm a creative, I'm a revolutionary. Revolutionist? Revolutionary? Which one would I go with?

SN: ARY.

MP: D. All of the above.

SN: There you go.

MP: *laughs*

SN: Is there anything I haven't asked you that you want to make sure we have documented?

MP: hmm.....I kind of said everything I had to say. No matter what question was asked, I just kept going. I wanted to make sure we did this and you lead me perfectly into everythingI think our job here may be complete.

SN: *laughs* thank you for the layered oral history, Maurice "MoChips" Passmore Junior, Thank you.