Shrink Rap Radio #573, October 26, 2017. A Jungian Confronts Racial and Sexual Injustice in Mississippi

Dr. David Van Nuys, aka "Dr. Dave" interviews Tony Caldwell, LCSW

(transcribed from www.ShrinkRapRadio.com by Jo Kelly)

Introduction:

Today my guest is psychotherapist Tony Caldwell, Licenced Clinical Social Worker who is in the last stages of preparing to become a Jungian Analyst and who has been doing pioneering community work in Mississippi dealing with issues of racial and sexual injustice.

More information extracted from the show notes at shrinkrapradio.com:

Tony Caldwell, LCSW is a psychotherapist in private practice in Oxford, MS. and a Social Work educator at the University of Mississippi. He is a member of the Memphis-Atlanta Jungian Seminar and a candidate of the Inter-Regional Society of Jungian Analysts. As a public speaker, human rights activist, project facilitator, town hall moderator, and workshop leader, Tony has partnered with The Human Rights Campaign, the W.W. Kellogg Foundation, the Southern Poverty Law Center, the Toyota Corporation, and many other organizations.

Tony and his colleague, Dr. Jandel Crutchfield, have enjoyed success in their grassroots Together Projects promoting interracial and interfaith dialogue across the state of Mississippi. They are currently co-authoring a chapter for the upcoming book *"United We Stand: Spirituality and Community Healing"*. Tony loves writing about the intersection of theology, depth psychology, and social justice. Tony is a guest contributor to socialjusticesolutions.org and various other print and online publications.

You can find some select writings at www.tonycaldwell.net

Dr. Dave: Tony Caldwell, Licenced Clinical Social Worker – welcome to Shrink Rap Radio!

Caldwell: Thank you Dr. Dave it's great to be here.

Dr. Dave: And you're a listener as well, am I right?

Caldwell: I am. I've literally listened to every episode of your podcast. I've spent a lot of hours listening to your voice so it's a little surreal to be talking with you in person.

Dr. Dave: Yes it's always exciting to me when somebody who's been on the listening end, when we bring you in "through the screen" – through the magic of the screen – here you are, you've stepped into the same room practically (laughing). So that's always exciting to me, and to accompany

you on your journey because you are in the process of becoming a Jungian Analyst.

Caldwell: I am. I've been in that process since 2012, and I've just returned from the Inter-Regional Society of Jungian Analysts Fall Conference in Minneapolis.

Dr. Dave: So as a long time listener you're probably aware that I put Jungian analysts kind of on a pedestal and so I think that's really cool too that I've been part of your journey – unknowingly – as you've headed in that direction. Maybe you can just tell us a bit about what it takes to become an analyst and what you need to do to finally finish up.

Caldwell: Yes. So I started that process in 2012 and that involves joining a local Seminar and there are several of those across the nation. I'm part of the Memphis-Atlanta Seminar and those are (?) weekends a month for training. You have to stay in your personal analysis and also do supervision during that time. I'm getting to the point where I'll take exams and move to the next stage, which is Control stage. Things start changing at that point where you move towards the final steps of that process.

Dr. Dave: So the Control stage, is that where you are being the analyst for a patient and you are being supervised in that process?

Caldwell: There is an increased amount of supervision and you leave Seminar at that point to focus mainly on the clinical aspects of the work.

Dr. Dave: So about how much longer do you think you have before …?

Caldwell: Oh gosh – this is a life long journey, so who knows.

Dr. Dave: It probably doesn't make sense even to look at it that way, right? Just, you're on the journey.

Caldwell: Right. I've tried that approach, and you know psyche and timelines just don't really work together very well (laughing), so I've given up trying to think of it that way and it's really freed me up a lot. If I had to guess I would think within the next three or four years I'll be moving towards completion.

Dr. Dave: OK. So I was struck to hear from you and to hear about the work that you're doing with racial diversity, sexual discrimination, oppression. How did these sorts of issues become so prominent for you?

Caldwell: From personal experience in childhood. For race: I grew up in a rural sort of marginalized neighborhood. I was the only white kid my age in the general area – I have a younger sister and there were two other white kids in the neighborhood around her age – so I didn't grow up knowing what it's like to be black, but I grew up with a front row seat watching the intersection of race and class in rural Mississippi as an observer. I almost feel like I did investigative reporting as a child and didn't know it. So I have a lot of stories from that angle that I've been telling in various capacities through writing and through town halls and workshops, and then just bearing witness to other people's stories.

There are so many stories out there and it's really amazing what dialogue can create as far as a shared experience – that arguments or speaking through the internet, social media and that sort of thing usually tears down conversation – but being in the same room really opens up dialogue in ways that sort of hit the heart level, and drop down out of the head enough to have a new shared experience.

Dr. Dave: Yes well if stories come to mind during the course of our conversation be sure to sprinkle them in, because as a Jungian you know the story is a very important element.

Caldwell: One comes to mind. Growing up – what I saw when I looked out of my bedroom window was a visual that stuck with me, and has sort of driven this work throughout my life. What I saw was a cemetery – so the view outside my bedroom window was a cemetery that started as a confederate cemetery. There had been a battle right there and a soldier had died and they had buried him there and made a memorial. Later there's a monument and a flag and the whole thing in a gated area, and that's the center piece of the cemetery. There's a line of trees that stretch north to south that intersect that monument, and it divides the property into east and west. So what I saw from my side was the east side, and this was the white cemetery and there was elaborate stone work, markers, benches, gazebos and it was very nice. What my neighbour saw – so I'll bring my neighbour into the story and I'll connect him in a second – so my neighbour that I played with out in the street, and out in the yard on a daily basis, he saw the cemetery from the west side and these graves were more rustic, handmade, a lot of them have the names of the deceased written in the wet concrete with fingers. So it's very much a different scene. A lot of those graves were hand dug so the ground's uneven and you just see a really ugly, appropriately ugly display of how the past is still present. So what he saw and what I saw were two different things. So we would play on a daily basis, but we never crossed the threshold into one another's homes.

Dr. Dave: And was he white, or black?

Caldwell: He was black. So I never went into his home and he never went into mine but we played out in the common areas and in the street, riding bikes and playing basketball. But there came a time later in life where we crossed the threshold. He had come out of federal prison for selling crack cocaine and I was doing transitional counseling for the federal prisons. When I looked at my intake paperwork I saw a name I recognised and a few minutes later he stepped through the threshold into the office and we were in the same physical space for the first time. And our conversations were very different than when we were children playing out in the common areas.

So we talked in some ways about our different experiences and that centerpiece that stood between my house and his being that cemetery with the confederacy being the centerpiece of it. You know really symbolically the difference in quality between the two sides of that cemetery really symbolizes the differences in quality of life between the races. That's what I've had the opportunity to bear witness to throughout a lifetime and there's a lot there that needs to be shared with the larger world.

Dr. Dave: Do your family roots go way back in the south?

Caldwell: They do. I know very little about my history on each side past two generations, but I think it goes back pretty far on my mother's side – there's a good bit of Native American heritage – obviously I don't know much of that. On my dad's side I believe people were originally from Europe, from England and came to the area. On my mom's side it's a mixture of Native American and Irish.

Dr. Dave: OK. The Jungian analysis in some ways always seems very rarified, very intellectual in some ways. So you've been doing a lot of work that's down in the trenches, down and dirty, right? So it's one of the reasons I was really looking forward to speaking with you is that juxtaposition. What is it that the Jungian perspective brings to your work on race and on sexual diversity?

Caldwell: That's a great question, because this work does tend to be pretty Eurocentric just given the roots of it, but also I believe this work gives a voice to the inner world that we all share no matter what our thoughts about what our external or biological heritage is. We all share in the fact that we have a conscience even if we don't have access to it at some points. We all have a sense of consciousness to some degree, and we all share a collective consciousness, as well as an unconscious and a collective unconscious. I think some of the dynamics that I've seen play out socially when I was introduced to the language of the personal collective unconscious has explained a lot. And the shadow, the personal and the collective shadows – that really opened up this work and really gave me language to talk about experience that just wasn't there before.

Dr. Dave: In fact you've spearheaded a number of events related to community healing. You did work in Tupelo Mississippi and Oxford Mississippi – tell us a bit about that.

Caldwell: A colleague of mine Dr. Jandel Crutchfield – she's an African American female and she and I also teach at University of Mississippi and so we were colleagues teaching there – and at any given point there was just a wall between us physically. Our offices were next door to one another, our classrooms were next door to one another and so at any given time the only thing that was physically between us was a wall but we never really connected relationally. And there came a time where we were both engaged in a conversation that drew out our mutual passion around privilege, and race and racial violence, and police brutality where we connected and we started talking about this shared passion.

So in Tupelo there was an incident where there was a white police officer that shot and killed an unarmed black man, and this was during the bloody summer where the conversations around this were being raised because it was happening in so many places around the country, and being talked about in the media. So we decided to have a town hall to discuss this and you know this is grass roots – five people could have shown up but we had over two hundred people show up.

Dr. Dave: My goodness. How was it publicised? Was there a flyer? What

did the flyer say that drew people?

Caldwell: We used social media a lot, we used local media – newspapers and TV stations. We even had interest come from Memphis which is a couple of hours away but really the fact that someone was doing something really generated a lot of interest. We quickly found out that there's a lot of people who have a lot of thoughts and feelings and passions but don't know where to put it, or how to connect. This gave all of us an opportunity to come together.

Dr. Dave: What did people think they were coming to?

Caldwell: We billed it as *"Together Tupelo"* which just means coming together to talk about what's going on, it was almost like a family powwow if you will, for the community. So we came together …

Dr. Dave: And both races came?

Caldwell: Absolutely, and it was multi-generational. One thing I like to do when we start out conversations like this is to break through the denial that's sometimes there, especially for those of us who are not marginalized or haven't had that experience. So what I started out with was the words from the Apollo mission "Houston we have a problem". If you look at the transcripts of that conversation it is "Houston **we** are having a problem **out here**" – so the people on the margins, the people that were in the most danger, the furthest from home base or safety were saying "hey there's a problem out here" and of course the people at mission control are going to say "OK I believe you, let's talk about this" instead of "oh no you don't!". Which sometimes is the response when there are issues of diversity – sometimes the majority is quick to say "that's not really a problem, get over it, work through it" – you know, something along those lines, denial. To open it up to say, you know if we want to know if there's a problem we need to ask more instead of talk more. We need to listen more. So we came together to listen, and to bear witness to one another's stories.

Dr. Crutchfield has this great exercise she does on privilege where you basically do math problems and you don't realise what you're doing or what you're getting into, so you get deeper into this conversation than you would choose to be, but then you're stuck there. So anyway she gives this list, this privilege score that measures the conditions you inherit at birth: did you have two parents in the household, did both parents have a job, did anyone in the house have a college education, and on and on and on. So at the end of that we split up the room by our scores – we end up in six separate categories – at that point the lowest group and the highest group come together and talk about it. That's a real game changer.

Dr. Dave: I can imagine.

Caldwell: It's very different than arguing through Facebook or something like that, it's face to face, bearing witness and just acknowledgement. I think that shadow work is bringing things in the consciousness that we'd rather not look at – things that need to be addressed and letting truth move up into our heads so it can then move down into our hearts.

Dr. Dave: Was the discussion civil the whole time? Or was anger an issue?

Caldwell: We had one lady who sort of had an outburst, but once it was processed we were saying some similar things. There was as much common ground as there was a contentious feel to it once we talked for a while. In retrospect I'm glad that that happened because I think it gave an insight to what that looks like, whether it's within an individual or between two people, or between groups.

Dr. Dave: To have a chance to demonstrate we can work this through, we can deal with it.

Caldwell: Right. Rationality can go a long way.

Dr. Dave: Somehow this strikes me as courageous on your part, and in the best of all possible worlds courage wouldn't even be an issue – but it is an issue in today's world I think. Did it feel like an issue for you, did you feel like you had to summon something up to go ahead and do this kind of work?

Caldwell: I don't feel like it's an option – it's a little uncomfortable using words like 'calling' but I do think that my life experiences have put this on me in a way that it's not really optional. I've had lots of support from friends and family, and a lot of partners who emerged in this work so it's really been beautiful but it has been challenging. Part of the downside, in some ways – I guess for the ego – parts of the downside to taking a stance is that you lose people, you lose connections. Sometimes, especially in religious communities or among more conservative friends the price of standing out is that you no longer fully belong. There's been social consequences for our family in that way. My wife joins me in this work and we raise our child along our lines of belief and we talk about social issues, and try to model ways of living and ways of addressing things for him. It's hard to be the life of the party when you're talking about such heavy topics.

So yes there are consequences but we happily endure them.

Like I was telling a mentor of mine – she's an older African American female – and she was saying something about the courage of this work, and I said nothing that I've been through can compare to what you've been through and continue to go through. So it's real easy to not get caught up in thinking about that because you just see the suffering of other people, but you do get a glimpse of how certain groups of people are treated when you stand with those groups of people because you start getting treated in a similar way. I've most especially experienced that standing with the LGBTQ community in this area. There's a sense of 'us and them', and if you stand with 'them' you are no longer part of 'us'. So relationally for me that's been the most difficult part of this work.

The scariest thing that happened is when we first did the *'Together Tupelo'* and this was following the police shooting, and there was the ongoing investigation and a lot of racial strife within the city – which is usually calm because it's not talked about – but this conversation is really stirred up and really divisive. I had a police investigator ask me to lunch, and instead of going to lunch we pulled over on the side of the road and I felt like I was

being recorded, but I know I was interrogated and intimidated and then dropped back off at my office. I really feared consequence there, and that conversation with him really opened my mind and my eyes to a new definition of white guilt, because I feel like that was part of what he was bringing to the table that was being projected onto me. Later on when we had the event he showed up in plain clothes and when the rest of the people in attendance were sitting in the lower level he sat in the balcony alone, just staring at me. So it was scary.

Dr. Dave: Yes, clearly intimidation attempted there.

Caldwell: There was never a threat, but lord knows my imagination could take that and run with it. But it was definitely scary.

Dr. Dave: Was there any difference between your experience in Tupelo versus Oxford?

Caldwell: Yes it was quite different. Oxford is a university town, University of Mississippi so it was much more of an academic crowd, more socially justice minded, more preaching to the choir in a way, but we had around 300 people show up for this thing that we basically advertised on Facebook and by word of mouth. We had some beautiful conversations and made a lot of connections. One of the best things about that is we made a list of attendees so now when anybody that's connected to this newly formed circle does anything along the lines of addressing race we can let each other know, so it's network building, community building.

Dr. Dave: OK. Are there action steps associated with this? It's totally significant what you're doing, even if it doesn't go any further than what you're doing, but it might be a tool to try to make some things happen in the community. Are you using it in that way?

Caldwell: Oh yes. Those meetings are definitely first steps and so the next question is always what next? Or what now? There's only so much one individual or a couple of individuals can do to keep that work going in addition to our own personal lives, and professional lives and everything. So part of what we've done is set up our racial diversity groups that we're convening and encourage other people to do that – to plant those seeds and take ownership of that and spread that model.

I recently with a grant through the Kellogg Foundation did one of these racial diversity groups with another colleague – Shiela Neighbours – and so it was another dynamic where an African American female and myself co-led this group. We brought together 36 individuals in the Tupelo area: 18 white, 18 black, anywhere from 16 to mid 80s in age. It's a neck of the woods where the racial makeup is not equal. So when we have an equal amount of people in the room it really changes the conversation and to hear multi-generational stories… We had a lady in the room who had a childhood memory of a family member being lynched.

Dr. Dave: Wow.

Caldwell: We had teenagers telling their stories of being young children and recognising racial difference – sort of leaving the garden in that way by

force because of the ways they were treated and trying to interpret that and understand that – ways their interactions with police officers have been different than the average white child or teenager.

You know the Mississippi Delta is an area where there was a lot of slavery and a lot of really bad things happened there. Once slavery was over there was a lot of white flight and that was just a lot of African American poverty and a lack of opportunity, poor schools and a lot of social conditions. We had several people in the group that lived in that area during the time of desegregation and had so many different stories about how aware they were of what was going on, or the perspective from which they experienced that and to come together and compare notes and share their stories was amazing. There was a lot of tears, a lot of anger, a lot of denial breaking out, a lot of hugs – the full spectrum of emotions in the room. It was intense enough that it was real but it stayed contained, it stayed safe.

One of the most touching things – it was a little less dramatic – but one of the most touching stories that came out of that was an older white lady who was paired up – because part of this was we talked in groups but we also paired off into paired interviews between one party from each race. So an older white lady and a younger black lady did their paired interviews – and these were all recorded and coded for research – but the older white lady says 'I don't like to go to the movies when I know a lot of black people are going to be there, because black people like to talk in the movies, and it's distracting'. So she was just being honest about her experience and what was going on with her, and this younger African American female said to her, 'can you imagine being so disempowered that the most power you thought you had was when you can be loud in a theatre and sort of agitate a little bit'.

Dr. Dave: That certainly shines a different light on it, because that's something I've observed as well, and I've never thought about it that way.

Caldwell: Right. My inner work and this outer work are constantly informing one another. As I'm working on division externally I'm working on division internally, whether it's between me and myself or me and other people it's just there. So the inner work and the outer work always inform each other.

Dr. Dave: Yes. Now you shared that you're working at the intersection of psychoanalysis, social justice, and spirituality. In the context you shared with me that you are a Christian. It sounds like Christian work that you're doing, but not many people practice that kind of Christianity in my experience.

Caldwell: Yes it's very interesting. What Christianity means to me seems to be very different from what it means to probably the majority of Christians, at least in my area. You know I always feel when I have these conversations like people around me or in this area are going to think I'm being overly critical of this area, but really all I can speak to is my personal experience – I don't know Christianity in Minnesota or Vermont, I just know it in Mississippi – that's where I live so I'm just speaking from my personal experience. It does seem that Flannery O'Connor the southern writer talks

about the Christ haunted south – and I feel like in some ways that's where we live, that that describes 2017 as much as it did the south during her time. That there's this feeling, or this talk about, or this belief in this original wholeness but we're not really walking toward this in a lot of ways, we're not trying to bring it about. William Faulkner says "to understand the world you must first understand a place like Mississippi" – and that's part of my work, is to try to understand what's going on around here, and what's going on inside of here and how those two can inform each other – and how that work can be simultaneous.

There's a guy named Taylor Kitchings who wrote a book – he's a Mississippi author – he wrote a book a couple of years ago called *'Yard War'* and in it one of the main characters is processing racism with his son. His son has encountered racism for the first time – and this is a white family – but the white kid's going, OK there's a difference here, what's going on? I feel the social difference that's making things between my friend and I weird. And so the dad says, 'you know it's like one day God took the best of what's good in the world, and the worst of what's bad in the world, stirred it all up and dumped it out between Memphis and New Orleans'. I think that's language for the shadow, that we see here in this particular time and place and he gives poetic language to that.

Dr. Dave: I've always loved the southern writers, and you've mentioned Faulkner and there are a number of others that just have such a gift of language – I'm remembering *"To Kill a Mocking Bird"* for example, a book and a movie that was very impactful for many people, and it painted a certain picture of the south, of Mississippi at that time. How has Mississippi changed, if at all? What does the 2017 Mississippi look like compared to 50, 60, 100 years ago?

Caldwell: I think our politics here are regressive. Whether it's our Governor or our Senators, each one is an individual but for the most part you see a lot of regressive action here. We just passed an anti LGBTQ law, and it's the law of the land now here in the State of Mississippi. It allows business owners and also therapists to refuse service to people who identify as anything other than straight.

Dr. Dave: Wow.

Caldwell: Yes, so that to me is very regressive and very scary. I was invited by the Southern Poverty Law Center to work on an amicus brief to the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals in the federal courts to try to fight this. My part of this was to describe how this is a really bad move for the mental health community. There's a lot of Christian counselors, or counselors who are Christians who will say, hey I don't want to work with you based on my faith. And I can't imagine being at my worst, being suicidal and coming to someone to unload this and get help and being turned away.

Dr. Dave: I have a son who is gay, and he is a member of the San Francisco Gay Men's Chorus and they just did a tour of the south, and I don't know if you got word of that or not but that was just in the past month. I was nervous about this, about them going down south to kind of witness if you will. Turned out it was a magnificent experience, they were really well received. I was afraid that some crazy would shoot, or that something really

received. I was afraid that some crazy would shoot, or that something really bad would happen but thank goodness nothing bad did happen.

Caldwell: Yes that's always the fear. My experience so far has been more along the lines of just not talking about it, it's been more my experience than violence. So I hope I can keep saying that because that is something I'm proud of about our state, is that fear of violence I haven't seen it manifest yet. I know it happens, but as far as in my personal experience around these issues – we held a town hall with the human rights campaign and I moderated that and it's where we invited LGBTQ individuals and couples, and transgender people to come be guests. I moderated the town hall, the community could come and we could get to know one another – it was called the *'Love Your Neighbour'* campaign. So my big fear there – because this area is a weird area – the American Family Association is based in Tupelo. They are possibly the biggest anti LGBTQ group in the nation – very conservative, evangelical Christian organisation – and their headquarters is less than a mile from where we held this town hall. My fear was that there would at least be picketing, but luckily there wasn't, and we had a beautiful night. Toyota sponsored it, and they loved it and they put more money into keeping that work going.

So there is progress being made. It's too slow, and it's not enough but progress is being made. I think the more that people that have a voice for this work come out, the more others of us come out and I think it's similar to being gay in a way – the coming out part. If you are progressive in some way and you come out, then other people are inspired to come out as well, and you form community around that sharing and that sense of being on the same page in some way.

Dr. Dave: Yes. You know I just mentioned southern writers, and you let me know that you're an avid writer and you've got an upcoming book *"United We Stand – The Role of Spirituality in Community Healing"*. So tell us about that. You've joined the ranks of the southern writers!

Caldwell: I hope so, that's my goal, it's a step in that direction. So this is a larger book – Jandel Crutchfield and I did it together – we have a chapter in this that we're co-writing. So it's stories from across the nation of people who have done social justice work that arose from their spirituality or their faith tradition or their religious convictions, basically. Our shared work came out of our Christianity. Our Christianity is very different – she comes from a more conservative background, I'm more of a progressive Christian but we've never talked about that because it doesn't matter. We're too busy building something together to mess with differences in theology or interpretation. We're just doing this work together in a way which is so important that why bother.

Dr. Dave: Yes that's beautiful. You mentioned white guilt at one point and I would imagine you have probably been accused of coming from a place of white guilt. Is that true?

Caldwell: Right, yes it's funny the police officer I was talking about earlier, on Facebook he referred me to as "Mr White Guilt" at some point (laughing) – so something really got triggered in this guy. So I'm glad it was that trigger and not a gun trigger that was going off.

Dr. Dave: Really, really. You say that white guilt is a real phenomenon but different than what people usually think of.

Caldwell: Right. Whenever I've heard the word "white guilt" – and I would challenge the listeners to test this – whenever I've heard the terminology "white guilt" it's always a defence – the accusation is that there is some inappropriate emotional burden based on past events that we're not responsible for, or something along those lines. That somehow we've watched too much CNN or something and we've developed a disorder of white guilt.

So whenever I hear this language, and when I feel these accusations coming at me what I always realise is that there's projection going on here. So if I think about – OK let's reverse this – what is the accuser guilty of? I don't know the answer to that but how do guilty people act? Defensive, accusatory, really invested in blaming, shutting down the conversation, stopping the conversation, changing the topic, somehow being defensive, angry – and so I never hear people use the word white guilt when they're not in that state of mind. I think the main thing that I've come to is that when someone's acting this way and saying these things it's a way to pathologize white compassion, and white empathy and white acknowledgement. And if you take it that way it's just a way to try to pathologize the heart, to caring. Because opening our eyes to these things – language among the younger folks these days is if you can see social injustice you "woke", your eyes are open, the scales have fallen from your eyes and you can see reality in a different way. There's consequences to that, and a lot of people don't want to cross over into that because it's heavy and it's difficult and it's painful, and you have to figure out what to do with all that.

Dr. Dave: Just for the first time I heard somebody use 'woke', and I don't remember where it was but I immediately got that the way it was being used was as about a kind of awakening, which is a very large concept in a way, and here it is at the street level just in a very succinct …

Caldwell: I think that's just more evidence of how the two worlds cross over, the analytic world awakening is seeing things as they are, and bringing it into consciousness. I think a lot of the strife we are seeing nationally right now, and politically is that we're all seeing things as they are. We can't deny racial violence – there's too many videos of it. We can't deny police violence, there's too many videos of it. So we have to figure out what to do with that, and we either jump over into defence mechanisms or we wake up. And when you wake you can see two camps along those lines, whether we're willing to acknowledge what's going on and take some shared responsibility for it or whether we're not.

Dr. Dave: Yes. You know speaking of psychological concepts, you say that race relations mirror attachment issues. How so?

Caldwell: Absolutely. I think that at the macro level – part of what I do in these *Together* meetings is talk about us as a human family, and divorce is not really an option, there's no other planet to move to so you know we're stuck together. So what are we going to do from there? If you just use a

family systems approach to that, you can use a psychoanalytic approach, you can use a lot of approaches but basically what you come down to is this dealing with the tension of opposites. In the Jungian world we talk about that a lot. How do you stand in the middle, how do you stay in the cooker when things get heated, and let transformation happen?

But you know as far as family dynamics – I think a lot of times you see scapegoating, target children, a lot of these other phenomenon happen if you speak up or speak out you might become the scapegoat, the target child.

If you look at the kneeling phenomenon with the NFL Colin Kaepernick is the target child at this point, scapegoated. If we put our hands on him, and put our sins into him and chase him down and kill him we don't have to deal with our stuff.

So there's some dysfunctional family dynamics going on within the nation, and until we own it – we can't even really look at it until we own it. I think that's part of the way that we get it backward. Sometimes we think we have to see something and then own it. But in some ways we have to own it so that we can look at it in a new way, a more three dimensional way – see our part in it, how we're complicit – how we benefit from certain structures.

A lot of times in power dynamics, who wants to give up power to someone else who may turn around and then they'll have it and you won't and what's the point? So this theme of sharing and trust is just central to the whole mess.

Dr. Dave: How did you get involved with LBT – I don't always remember all the letters – LBTQ?

Caldwell: It keeps growing, yes. The most recent one I saw as LGBTQIA

Dr. Dave: What was the I and the A?

Caldwell: I'll stay with LGBTQ for now anyway. I'm always having to update my knowledge and skills in this area, because it's a growing area.

But I had a cousin growing up, and an uncle. It's two different stories. My uncle didn't come out until after he had been married for 32 years I believe? I could be wrong on that but somewhere around that time. He'd been married with a child the whole time and that coming out was really different than my cousin who came out more as a teenager, and they had very different experiences. You could see my uncle benefitted from fitting in, or blending in or hiding socially, and my cousin went through a lot of the social consequences that happen when you come out at an early age – a lot of abuse within the family, within the community, beatings – just treated terrible.

My mother was woke and that's why I can see things, because she taught me how to see them. She always had a heart for the underprivileged, and the underdog and the marginalized because she knew that experience herself, she had a very hard life growing up. So on the heart level she knew how to have empathy and how to see things.

Dr. Dave: And that really helped to shape you!

Caldwell: Absolutely. Yes – who I am in this area came from those early experiences, not just seeing the world but having my mother interpret me to the world and the world to me in ways that made sense of this. And also mentors: I had a mentor in middle school, an African American female, and I was going to honor her at *"Together Oxford"* – she died a few days before that. But she really mentored me through adolescence in a lot of ways.

So one of the things I'll say is between that experience and my experience of my cousin – who later on he's been in a same sex partnership for over 30 years. So all I've ever really known since I was maybe 15 or younger, for a long time, almost as far as memory goes back is them as a couple – and when I was in college always feeding me and being great family members to me.

What I'll say to get down to the root of that is sometimes if you love people before you realize you weren't supposed to it's too late. You're inoculated – you've had an experience you can't undo. If we help our children have those experiences early, experiences of connecting and loving and being loved by other people whoever "other" people are, whether it's along the lines of grades, or class or sexuality or whatever – it's hard to undo that.

Dr. Dave: So what's your advice to listeners/viewers about how they could deal with some of these issues that you're dealing with, in their own lives and their own communities?

Caldwell: First thing I would say is take it inward. What's going on in here, what's going on with me - what's triggering me? What's bothering me? Bring it up into consciousness. Put it into words, write about it, talk about it, whatever you need to do but find a language for your experience so that you can find a way to process it, and deal with it.

But the most important thing I think is acknowledgement. That's part of acknowledgement on the personal level. On the social level I think intentionality. So acknowledgement and intentionality. By intentionality I mean find someone who's different than you and engage them and say hey, I want to learn. Be a student, you know in the Zen tradition they call it beginner's mind – just be a student. There's so much discomfort around that – I don't want to be offensive, or I don't want to appear stupid, or something along those lines. Some sort of inner talk that's not productive at all. To just cross that threshold just get in a room with someone and say 'tell me who you are and I'll tell you who I am' – and we're so alike on so many levels just because we have a shared humanity that the differences as a problem fade away, but differences as something to celebrate emerge.

Dr. Dave: You know we live in such a segregated world it occurs to me that many people don't have – I'm thinking of the racial divide right now – on both sides of that divide there can be pretty separate worlds of people not really knowing people on the other side, not being in social situations where that's likely to happen.

Caldwell: Right, yes. I think that's one of the things in Mississippi we've tried to cross. Jandel and I have also done work that's interreligious

interracial work. We were invited in by an episcopal priest to do work with the clergy of the town of Tupelo – so from every different denomination and all racial backgrounds. And the diversity in that room is more difficult to navigate than the racial diversity in the town, because theology – there was a lot of boxes in that room. … The work that Jandel and I do is about spirit, and it's hard for spirit to believe in boxes: it's wind, it's breath, it goes where it will. So that was difficult to navigate but some of the productive work that came out of that was that African American pastors by and large sent the message loud and clear that white citizens in the area need to listen – not talk, but listen – and that trust happens when there's prolonged communication and prolonged relationship. So that's been our work since then is to try to make that happen.

But to go back to your original question – yes we're very segregated, and at no time more so than on Sunday mornings, in the south, at 11 o'clock. Our congregations – there are interracial congregations here – but for the most part they are pretty racially divided, and I don't know that that's always necessarily by intention or choice at this point. I think a lot of it's just comfort level, and family history, and proximity to your house – there's all these factors that aren't necessarily where people are thinking 'hey, I want to make sure I isolate myself from people different from me'. But it is still happening either way.

Dr. Dave: I think comfort level really is a term that captures quite a bit of even what we call prejudice is 'hey I'm comfortable in this situation; don't rattle my cage – why would I want to do that'.

Caldwell: Right. It's hard to make people – well you just can't make people care enough to get uncomfortable. That's part of the challenge of the work is how do you help people find their desire to be uncomfortable? [unclear] says there's no coming to consciousness without pain. and if growth and healing is on the other side of pain – sometimes the work, whether it's in the analytic room, or whether it's in a town hall meeting, it's how do you help somebody even have the experience that they **want** to go through the pain to get to what's on the other side – if it's optional.

When that doesn't happen you have stunting and I think a lot of what we have is collective stunting, we're developmentally delayed when it comes to empathy and compassion sometimes. That language of special needs is something we really need to use when we talk about Mississippi because in so many ways we are a special needs state. We need extra special care and attention, and time and investment – we're always the last on the list when measuring poverty and education – all the bad list we're on the top, all the good list we're on the bottom. And that doesn't describe our people or who we are as citizens of this state, what it describes is the social conditions that we're wrestling with. And alive is the sins of the fathers and all that, but if we are truly a family here how do we take ownership of the brokenness here, and help one another figure it out and not just say 'good luck with that over there, as long as it doesn't impact me'.

Dr. Dave: Yes well I think the work that you're doing is so inspiring Tony, and I'm really pleased to have had this opportunity to speak with you . I wonder if there's anything more that you hoped to get in here that maybe

you didn't get a chance to say?

Caldwell: Oh gosh, let me think. I guess that's pretty much it. If I have a couple of minutes left I'll just use it thanking you for having me and for the service you provide. For someone from the analytic world to be able to listen to interviews with analysts, and gosh, talk about diversity!

Dr. Dave: I do strive for diversity!

Caldwell: I feel self conscious at this point because I listen to your podcasts a lot going to sleep, and I'll wake up and it'll be a few podcasts later and I'll have listened to them while I'm sleeping, and I'll have to go back and relisten to them or something.

Dr. Dave: Well, pleasant dreams is all I can say, or 'growthful dreams'. (laughing)

Caldwell: Thank you.

Dr. Dave: Thank you for the use that you've made of Shrink Rap Radio, and it's great to now have you be a guest here. So Tony Caldwell I want to thank you for being my guest today on Shrink Rap Radio, and God Speed in your work.

Caldwell: Thank you. And if anyone wants to check out my writing – tonycaldwell.net