

Transcript for World Playback Theatre’s “New Beginnings”

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This transcript is part of *Storytelling on Screen: An Online Playback Theatre Archive and Guidebook* and was derived from World Playback Theatre’s “New Beginnings” video available on YouTube at <https://youtu.be/BhQ6Tgkh518> and VTechWorks at <http://hdl.handle.net/10919/103915>.

Additional information on the Playback Theatre methodology is available in J. Rosin and H. Winters Vogel, *Storytelling on Screen: An Online Playback Theatre Archive and Guidebook* (Blacksburg: Virginia Tech Publishing, 2021).

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Production Credits

Conductors: Heidi Winters Vogel and Para Paranthaman

Musician: Linda Steuernagel

Actors: Pia Loriega, Roni Alperin, Radhika Jain, Pek Kuan Tai

About World Playback Theatre: <https://www.facebook.com/worldplaybacktheatre>

Video length: 121 minutes and 54 seconds

Transcript

Heidi: Thank you and welcome to World Playback Theatre's "New Beginning" show. We so appreciate you joining us. A reminder that we are recording this performance to be used as an educational resource for educators all over the world as they teach in their classrooms. [NOISE] Excuse me. This will be a free resource, so it is being recorded. We have asked everyone to sign a form to agree to have their likeness be included in the resource. If you haven't filled out that information, we will be in touch with you to make sure that it gets filled out. In the meantime, sit back and get ready to tell your stories. First, I'm going to turn this over to Bejoy, who is our tech person, and he will make sure that everyone is up-to-date on what they need to know for technology. Bejoy.

Bejoy: Thank you, Heidi. Hello everyone. Pretty sure that most of you must be familiar with the Zoom technology, the platform, and the controls over here. But just to make sure that we have a seamless experience and we're all on the same page, we'll walk you through a few basic instructions. To start with, the small window that you see with your name, you would see three dots over there. If you just click on that, you would see an option which says "Hide non-video participants." I would suggest you to please use that option. Just click on those three dots in your little window, go to the option, "Hide non-video participants," and just click on that. Then on the top right corner of your screen, you would see two views, the option to have two views. It's either a Speaker or a Gallery View. Please choose the option of the Gallery View. Choose the option of the Gallery View so that you have a much better viewing experience on your screen. Once you do that, a couple of other important controls, on the bottom left corner of your screen, you see two icons. One is the video icon, so this is for your stop and starting of the videos. During the performance, there would be times when the conductors would let you know when do you have to be on video, when do you have to be off video

and this is the switch you would use to get that right. Next to it is, of course, the option to have your mic on or off, so you can be on mute and you could be off mute. This is again something that you would be using through the performance. As the actors are performing, we would request everyone to please be on mute so that we all can just have a wonderful experience viewing this performance. Thank you all. With that, I hand it back to Heidi.

Heidi: Thank you, Bejoy. If anyone has any questions or is having trouble during the performance, Bejoy will be there and able to assist you with that. Thank you so much for attending. As Bejoy says, you probably are all getting familiar at this point with Zoom. Hopefully that you are familiar with Playback Theatre as well. If this is your first Playback performance, I wanted to let you know what Playback is. It is an improvisational form of storytelling. We, the performers, will listen to stories that you, the audience, offer us, and play them back for you. Unlike traditional theater, we don't have a script, you all will provide that for us by sharing stories from your life. You will share stories of your experiences. These are real stories of real experiences. I hope you enjoy this performance and a reminder that this is being recorded for educational use and we look forward to sharing this experience with you. I would like to turn it over now to Para, who is conducting with me this performance and he will give a little history of our group.

Para: Thank you, Heidi. In 2019, eighteen students from fourteen different countries met up in a historical place in UK called Buckden Towers to do their leadership in Playback Theatre. In 2020, when the pandemic struck, several of us came together and created World Playback Theatre. It was a new beginning for us. We have held at least one performance per month until now. This is our first performance in 2021. Now, I proudly invite the World Playback Theatre to introduce themselves.

Radhika: Hi, I'm Radhika from India. A new beginning was, for me, when I quit my corporate job and started my own theater company. It brought me closer to the real me and I found my true calling.

Pia: Hi, I'm Pia from the Philippines. New beginning for me is not happening at all. I'm so busy with work, it's like same day, same time, same month, everything is always the same. Can't find my new beginning. [NOISE]

Roni: Hello. My name is Roni. I'm from the United States and Israel. Fourteen years ago, I moved from Israel to United States to do my MA. Every day since I moved here I feel like a foreigner in this country, and I'm learning a new thing about this place every day. [NOISE]

Debbie: Hello. My name is Debbie. I come from Macau, and this year I will try to go more edgy and to make my life more happy. I hope I can do it and keep this habit.

Linda: Hi, my name is Linda from Germany. Fifteen years ago I had a cancer diagnosed. I thought that was it. But since then, so many new things came into my life and it was like a new beginning, a new life. One of the things was Playback Theatre and I love it.

Para: Almost thirty years ago, I had my first paid work here in Norway. I had to go to a small, beautiful island and work with the fishing industry. My work was to pierce bait in fishing nets. I was really looking forward to my newfound life.

Unfortunately, I had to work outside, and it goes freezing—almost minus 9–18 degrees. I had to stand all the way. Both my baits and fishing nets all of them were frozen. I have paid depend on how many buckets of fishing nets I prepare in each day. It wasn't a good beginning for me. My name is Para from Norway. [NOISE]

Heidi: Hello, my name is Heidi from the United States, and I am feeling hopeful. My daughter who works in the healthcare industry got her vaccine, both doses, and she feels fine. If we can just get the vaccine out to people around the world, maybe we can beat this thing. I am hopeful. Thank you and welcome everybody to our performance. I would like to invite everyone in the audience—I'm going to grab my

notes here. There we go—I would like everyone in the audience and the actors to turn on their cameras so we can see everybody in the room. It's almost like being in a real theater. We can see your faces. Hello. Welcome. Fabi, I love the stuff in your hair. Let's celebrate. Absolutely. Thank you all for coming. I know some of you are unable to turn on your computers, but those of you that are able, we appreciate being able to see your face. Also I would like to ask you all some questions. Those of you that are unable to turn on your computer, if you want to raise your hand or react in the chat, that will be great. But since we're all here together, let's get to know each other just a little bit. Let's start with a survey. Hello, Aviva, welcome. I'm going to ask you some questions. If option A is what you agree with, put your hand on your forehead. If option B is what you agree with, put your hand on your chin, and if you're somewhere in the middle, we can choose where in your face you would want to put your hand. All right? Just to break the ice a little bit. Do you prefer noodles or rice? Noodles or rice? You're welcome to just write noodles or rice in the chat if you can't turn on your camera. Very good. We've got a good mix of people, but it looks like noodles are winning. Now, we have a controversial one. Do you prefer cats or dogs? Cats or dogs? Elsa prefers both. Yeah. Somewhere in the middle, Roberta. Lots of cat people and dog people. Very good. Thank you. Do you prefer early mornings or late nights? Are you a morning person or a night person? Good. Thank you. Very nice. Do you like to stay in hotels or go camping? When you travel, do you like to stay in a hotel or camp? Hotels or camping? Some are both. They're somewhere in the middle. Actually, you just got this down. You've got this down. Wonderful. Now, let's get a little more personal. Are you an introvert or an extrovert? An introvert or an extrovert? Very good. Lots of different folks in the room, wonderful to see. Tea or coffee? Tea, coffee. Yes, and Aviva is right there with her coffee. Yeah, very good. The theme of our show today is new beginnings as you saw from our stories. Do you set new goals every year? If you set new goals for

every year, yes. If not, no. Yes or no on new goals. [LAUGHTER] Some people are committed to it, and some people are not so much.

If you do or if you thought about it, have you set a goal for this year? Yes or no? Very good. Thank you all for that. We are going to talk today about new beginnings. It's a new year. It's a time of the year that is traditional for people to talk about their goals for the year, for changes they want to make in their life, and not everybody does that. Sometimes it can lead to some frustration because we don't know what goals we want to set or we don't feel that we're good at keeping them, or then we think about last year where we didn't keep them. The past year, 2020, has been a very strange year with the coronavirus spreading all over the world. People suffering from the effects of that. We recognize that 2020 was not so great. Will 2021 be better? Are you hopeful or are you expecting more of the same? Would you put in the chat how you're feeling as we begin 2021, just give us a sense of what you're feeling is, right now, for 2021. Open up the chat and share it with everybody. Cautiously optimistic. Still a little apprehensive, hopeful, optimistic. Anybody else? How are you feeling? Full of trust, positive change. But it's not going to be easy. Absolutely, Roberta. Tentative hope. Hopeful, optimistic as a way of life. Good joke. Yes. Any other thoughts? I want to nuance it just a little bit. When you think about new beginnings, what does that conjure up for you? Did somebody want to share with me? When I say new beginnings, what you feel, what image comes to mind? Anybody want to raise their hand and share how that makes you feel? David, how are you feeling about new beginnings?

David: To me, new beginnings suggest that I am conscious and aware of what needs to be left behind, what can be left behind. It is as much awareness of the past as it is looking to the future. My new beginnings have to be anchored in what can be changed and what ought to be changed.

Heidi: You're dealing with two things in your mind at once, looking forward to the future and also recognizing what the past has been. Does that make sense? Very

good. Thank you. If everyone will turn off their cameras except for the actors, we're going to do this as a Pair. Thank you, David.

Roni: I know exactly what is not coming to this sphere. I know exactly what I'm leaving behind me. But I know what is coming. No. No, no. I'm looking forward to it. No. No, no.

Para: Know what is coming. Keep that. Never. But I hope, I hope to be—

Roni: Stay away.

Para: Will be a light.

Roni: Stay back.

Para: I'm looking forward. Come on. I'm gonna do that. I think I'm gonna do that. I'm going to do that. Look, it's the future. I'm going to do that.

Debbie: [NOISE] No. Sorry. Not yet. No.

Heidi: Thank you, actors. David, can you turn your camera on? Was that your story?

David: That was the core of it, what I think I failed to explain or share was the sense of using, I've needed to make decisions and making choices based on the past and awareness of what I can leave behind. It's the choice that I didn't see in those pairs, although the idea of giving up or getting rid of the past and moving forward was there, but how do I take what I know and choose for the future.

Heidi: Does that make you feel hopeful, optimistic? What is that feeling as you have that information in the past that's helping you move to the future?

David: Yes. If I can become aware of what I can now change and move forward, then that's where the hope comes from. That helps me feel hopeful.

Heidi: All right. Welcome to Playback Theatre. Sometimes we don't get it right the first time. I want to try this one more time as a Fluid Sculpture. David, thank you for clarifying your story for us and this Fluid Sculpture is this sense of hope because of what has happened in the past. Let's watch.

Pia: Oh yeah. If I can only know, that can be my danger. [NOISE] I need these things. I see.

Roni: These things didn't work and these two didn't work. I think this time I'm going to try from this. Yeah, here it is. Yeah, right there. Oh, that's good.

Radhika: Can I take you with me? Can I take all of you with me? Can I?

Heidi: Thank you actors. David, come back on. Second time's is a charm?

[LAUGHTER] Good.

David: Beautiful.

Heidi: Is that your story?

David: Yes it was. Thank you.

Heidi: Wonderful. Thank you. Can I get all the audience back on? Thank you for your story, David. Yes, thank you actors. There were some comments in chat about how people are feeling about new beginnings. Would anybody like to share more of what they wrote in the chat? Sarah had a beautiful image: being in a box with just a little window that she can see out. I find that image very powerful. In thinking about that image, does that bring up any feelings, any response for you? You're welcome to turn on your cameras if you're in the room and want to share a story. Sarah.

Sarah: Hi.

Heidi: Yes, thank you. Are you the one that wrote that beautiful image of the box?

Sarah: Yes.

Heidi: Wonderful.

Sarah: Hello, everybody. It was a difficult year. Let's say like that. 2020 was really difficult on many levels. Private, work wise, lost a lot of gigs, works, and so on. Still I am in a position that it's really difficult. Then we decided to go on a semi-world tour and do some projects on the way, but of course it's canceled too, and that's why we are a bit stuck, it's like there was always a small window when opening in my box. I can always look outside and see the bright light and feeling, okay, but stuck in the situation and I'll be able to literally move. Every month we are waiting. Now we can move, now, we can go. But there is some positivity, there's a bit of hope, what it's like to step forward and one step backward. That's a bit the new

beginning of 2021, still hoping for big transformation and a big change but not knowing when it's coming. That's longing for something that it will follow my luck but I'm at my open hands, waiting for it.

Heidi: You've got all these wonderful metaphors the open hands, the box, the hoping for spring, hoping for change. But right now you're still having to hold onto the hope because things haven't changed yet. Is that hard for you as you see all the things you want to do.

Sarah: Yes. It's really hard. At this moment, I'm frustrated. Let's say that. I'm really frustrated. Being in this situation and for a long time. Lost a lot of things; you think it's a material thing because a job is a job, but you have to buy your food, and you have to pay your rent and stuff like that. But it's still, we are okay, I'm okay. It's something that makes you frustrated in the whole of time. I don't know really when can I open this box? Who's going to tear it out, this opening on the top? Open this box? I want to really like jump out like a present, something like that but still inside. It's also cozy. It's not like there is a big pressure on me. Where I live at the moment. It's okay. It's outside. I'm from Belgium in Brussels. I was living in Brussels in an apartment. Left that, and now I'm outside in the countryside.

Heidi: Oh.

Sarah: Especially these moments of the pandemic. I'm so happy that we are able to do that. But yeah.

Heidi: You've got a whole lot of stuff going on inside that box and so many hopes, but also so many frustrations. Thank you, Sarah.

Sarah: You're welcome.

Heidi: We are going to play your story back as Perspectives. I would like my three actors for Perspectives to come on stage. Sarah, you can turn your camera off.

Radhika: Is it time to sprout now? Look at the sun. Is it time? Is it now? Now? When is the time? When will I see sun? When? Can someone tell me when is the time? When? [NOISE]

Debbie: This is good. Is this sour or sweet or bitter? [NOISE] I would like to try it. Do you want to try it? [NOISE]

Para: My hands are tightened. Oh, I see some more space to get out of, but still struggling. There's more about, maybe I try this way, still no space to getting out. [NOISE]

Heidi: Thank you actors. Sarah, would you like to join us? Thank you for your story. Sarah, was that your story or three different versions of your story? You are muted.

Sarah: Sorry. Yes, definitely. Thank you very much Radhika, Debbie, and Para for re-expressing my feelings and the moment in which I'm a bit stuck, I can say like that. There are different aspects of that; the leaves were coming up waiting for sprouting. Something like it's like the spring and maybe get the news here, spring as maybe the time to move. So we are really longing and waiting for that moment, that different tastes. Yeah. There was a bit of hope of tasting a lot of new things, but it's still somewhere. I could taste it and a bit tight stuck with, really sometimes, Para, it's like that. It's like really like stuck and not able to move. But altogether, it was really beautiful. Thank you very much. I really enjoyed it.

Heidi: Thank you for your story, Sarah. If we can bring the audience back on-screen. Para, I'd like to turn it over to you.

Para: Thank you, Heidi. Good. You were talking about new beginnings in one way or another. I'm still looking for the chart where you wrote different aspect of new beginnings. I see Roberto wrote, full of trust, positive change, and it is not going to be easy. Let's present for Roberto a Transformation Fluid, full of trust, positive changes, and it is not going to be easy. [NOISE]

Debbie: It is the beginning.

Sarah: I'm going to hold onto this. Yeah. I'm going to hold on. [NOISE] Holding on is not easy.

Para: [NOISE] Can audience switch on your videos, please. Roberta, how is it? Does that come close to you?

Roberta: Yes, definitely, because [LAUGHTER] even in the first part of the positive and full of trust, there was already the challenge of the noise, there was some technical issue as well. It was already nice since the beginning to see this contrast. I really enjoyed the use of the body, beautiful bodies to struggle, and it hits me more than words. Thank you so much, actors. It was beautiful.

Para: Thank you. We are talking about new beginnings. Some people start with a new beginning in the beginning of a year. Some people start new beginnings when their life needs it. Where and when do you start your new beginnings? Everyone needs a new beginning in their life, so where or when, which part do you start your new beginnings? Thinking about the changes you have done in your life. Thulasi, please unmute yourself.

Thulasi: Yeah. Hi. For me, there's always been something from inside telling me it's time for change. When I was much younger, I wouldn't listen to that. I would say, "Okay. This is what I've decided to work in this place. This is my job, this is what I have to do." That's how I was in my twenties. I would have these five-year, ten-year plans and I would try to follow them. But I think somewhere around the time that I turned forty, I started listening to what it is that I really want, rather than following what I should do or what people have told me. When I started listening to myself, when I listened to my body and my feelings and my emotions, that actually told me what I wanted.

Para: How do you feel when you start to listen to your body and your soul?

Thulasi: It's very, very exciting.

Para: Exciting.

Thulasi: I don't feel like whatever I used to think was impossible, "Oh, I can't fit it into my schedule, I can't deal with it because of so many responsibilities." When I start to listen to myself, I feel like I can achieve anything, it doesn't matter how old I am or where I am, what my other responsibilities are. Because it comes from inside, there is a trust that it will work out and it will be okay.

Para: You said that you started to think this way when you were around forty. Is there any particular incident connected to that or suddenly you realized that?

Thulasi: I think my daughter was about to leave for university. She was grown up enough to do her own stuff. I was in this job that I really liked, but still, there was no satisfaction. I was sitting at my laptop and then there was a moment where I felt like, “Is this what I want to be doing all my life?” and something said, “No, no, this is not what I want to be doing all my life. I should seek out what I want to do.”

Para: What did you do for that time? I’m thinking about work.

Thulasi: I was training teachers. I have been in the field of education for many, many years. I worked with dyslexic children first, then went into mainstream teaching, taught for many years, then grew in the job, then joined an organization that trains teachers. I was really enjoying it, but something in my heart kept yearning for those lost dreams. I didn’t know what it was.

Para: Is that looking for a new beginning or is it looking for a change in your profession?

Thulasi: It was a bit of both.

Para: Both. All right.

Thulasi: One was changing how I feel to wanting to be happier, but also looking for a new beginning, which was somehow cut off in my twenties. I did want to go into counseling therapy. I wanted to study counseling, but I couldn’t for many reasons.

Para: It’s an unfulfilled dream.

Thulasi: Yeah. I think I had forgotten it. To be honest with you, I had forgotten that that’s actually really what I wanted to do. I was quite happy with what I was doing. But when I started listening, I said “No, I should follow what really feels good inside.”

Para: What had happened when you started to think like your dreams and started to listen to your body and soul?

Thulasi: There was a lot of enthusiasm. I had started to feel quite old. I had started to get all of these aches and pains, and “Oh, I can’t do that, I can’t do this,” but once I had decided that, no, I want to follow my earlier dreams again, there was a new energy to go and get what I want.

Para: Is it a joyful one or is it looking forward to a new thing or looking forward to fulfill your energy toward your dream?

Thulasi: Yes, that’s exactly right. There was a joyful looking forward and I felt twenty again somehow in many ways. I started thinking and feeling differently. I was meeting younger people, I was learning new ways, exploring again.

Para: How did it feel?

Thulasi: It felt very freeing, almost as if I was liberated from the space that I had made for myself. There were no restrictions.

Para: Good. How are you now? You still have that?

Thulasi: Yes, I still have that. I’m still very excited. I’m still doing something new every year almost, and I’ve retrained myself and got some qualifications. I’m still getting more qualifications. I’ve started working in the field of counseling therapy and I’m really enjoying it. It feels very much like me. That’s the best part for me.

Para: Thank you, Thulasi. We will see your story as in Monologue. Can actors, please? You can, yeah. [NOISE]

Roni: Okay. [NOISE] I got to do this. That’s it. I took myself, I took this job on myself, and I’m just going to do this. I have a lot of responsibility and I have to be responsible, exactly, I have to be a responsible human being in this life. [NOISE] No, I can’t do that. No, I said I can do that. No. I can’t just go and follow what I want to do, I can’t do that. I have things that I have to carry. This is it. When you were a child, you had big dreams. When you were a child, you felt the world was open and free, [LAUGHTER] but that’s not the case. When we live in the adult world, [NOISE] you have to do things that you don’t like to do. That’s it. [MUSIC] I have to go to work.

Radhika: Dear Heart, are you wondering why I am writing to you? [NOISE] Let me feel you now, wait. [NOISE] It has been an easy journey. No. It hasn't been an easy journey listening to you. [NOISE] Yeah, it hasn't been an easy journey listening to you. [LAUGHTER] Do you remember that day when I was twenty-four and I wanted to join counseling and I didn't? You shouted, but I just couldn't listen to you. But now it is easier listening to you. I hear you. I'm listening to myself. I'll write it down. I'm listening to myself, I'm listening to you, it feels free. Just like that, it feels free. I didn't know all this was possible. That I would look back and write to you and listen to you. It's all possible now. Dear heart, I will listen to you. I'm listening to you, I am.

Heidi: [NOISE]

Pia: This is nice. I can remain in this, I want to cherish this. This is scary, but it is my dream. I really want to be in counseling, but they're all I've got. These all are blurring. If I will learn something again, it's not very clear. What shall I do? These are both precious to me. What shall I do? I don't know. I need to find myself in this. I have lost my dream. I want to find myself again. This is scary, but I think it will turn out okay. [NOISE] I will trust myself, so I can be happy again. I know I can be happy again. I know.

Linda: Listening to my inner self, listening to my inner self.

Thulasi: Thank you. Thank you so much. Every single part of my journey was captured so beautifully. I'm very, very grateful. The sequence of it, and what I felt in every moment was beautiful, very, very lovely. Heidi, I do find myself with my scarves now, [LAUGHTER] and I enjoy it. Pia, it was really difficult for me to choose and you captured that so beautifully. I do journal, Radhika, like [LAUGHTER] you did. That was wonderful to see. Roni, that's exactly where I was when I started. Really beautiful. Thank you very much.

Para: Thank you. Thank you, Thulasi for sharing your story. Thank you very much. Can we please have our audience? [NOISE] Forward to you, Heidi.

Heidi: Thank you all for your beautiful stories. We're not done yet, there's more in the room. I'm excited to hear more of your stories. I'm seeing lots of faces on-screen, but I also see that there's lots of people that haven't turned on their camera. Is there someone who has their camera off that has a story of a new beginning that they'd like to share? You can either just turn on your sound and we can hear your story or you can come on-screen for a bit or put it in the chat. We want to include everybody in the room. Is there anybody whose camera is on that has a story that they want to share, a new beginning, a new start, one that worked well? Like Thulasi's story or something that's sputtering? Aviva, yes. If everyone can turn off their cameras but Aviva. Let's hear from Aviva, our beloved teacher. Aviva, would you turn on your microphone? Sarah, would you turn off your camera, please. Thank you. Aviva, yes.

Aviva: Yes. Nice to see you.

Heidi: It is lovely to see you.

Aviva: But now it is my time to sit in the teller's chair.

Heidi: Wonderful.

Aviva: Yes.

Heidi: What is your story?

Aviva: It's about a new beginning, but sometimes beginnings are forced on us and then what do we do? Until I was twelve, I was living in Israel, in a very small town, lot of immigrants, refugees, people that just came to Israel, many languages, and I was very happy little girl and doing very well. Very quickly I learned the language and I was playing a lot in the yard, and I was on my bicycle and I was dancing and writing poetry. I was very little, successful, and happy girl.

Heidi: Sounds like an ideal childhood.

Aviva: Ideal, yes. That's what I thought. My parents were not very happy about the place we lived and we moved to the big town.

Heidi: This has happened when you were twelve?

Aviva: Yeah.

Heidi: Okay. So you moved when you were twelve to a big town.

Aviva: We moved to the big town. I went to a new big school. All the children were already in the same class for nearly four, five, six years. I was the newcomer. My language, Hebrew, was not in the same accent. They were all born in Israel. It's a different class, different atmosphere.

Heidi: Can I stop you just a moment? You were not born in Israel?

Aviva: No, I was not born in Israel.

Heidi: You're an immigrant, you've learned the language, and you were doing quite well with it but then you moved?

Aviva: Yes. When I was in this little immigrant town. But then when I moved to the big town and I went to school with all these born in the country children and also knowing each other and having their customs and their rituals and they play, I was very much outsider and also not, "Look, she's speaking very funny. Oh, she's that. This little funny girl that came from the little town." But I knew I can do so many things. But no place or no time and place to share it. Then one day, we had a gymnastic lesson.

Heidi: This is at your new school

Aviva: Sport. The sport, it was a running competition. I never did it before. It was not a running competition, like 1, 2, 3, ready go. We were playing sometimes catch up, but no. It was the first row, like six children, and 1, 2, 3, ready go, and I'm running and I came first.

Heidi: Oh, you won.

Aviva: Yes. You're so happy. I see.

Heidi: Yeah, I'm so happy.

Aviva: Yeah, you're happy, I see. Then the second row and from every row, the winners are coming together and they're running and then again and again. Then slowly like 1, 2, 3, go and ready, steady, go. Always, I'm coming the first. But it was a

big surprise to me. I discovered that I can run only because this was the new setting and I had to do it and I discovered that I can do it. But by doing it, I started to receive, “Aviva, great. Go, go.” It was the first time that all these children, “She can do it. Look at her.” It means I had to discover this, my running competition ability and also enjoying it and suddenly discovering that this is something I can do to make a new place for myself in this new environment and to be acknowledged and to have a place in this new place.

Heidi: Can I hold you just a moment?

Aviva: That’s the story?

Heidi: Yes, a wonderful story. Hold you just a moment. I want to bring on the actors for your story and I want you to pick someone to play you, Aviva.

Aviva: Don’t do it to me. [LAUGHTER] Now, I’m talking not as the teller, but as the teacher.

Heidi: [LAUGHTER] Too late. Roni, Para, or Radhika, would you pick one of them to play you. Is this too hard?

Aviva: Yeah. This is too complicated in this situation. Please don’t ask me to do it.

Heidi: [LAUGHTER] Actors, we’re going to change up the form because Aviva is our teacher and we listen to our teachers. If I could get the actors to turn off their cameras. Sorry, we’re going to change this and do this as Four Rooms. Radhika will be Aviva at the beginning and we’ll share Aviva’s story of the journey, the new beginning forced on her, but then discovering her place in this new place. Let’s watch.

Linda: Do you see me? Where am I?

Radhika: Where am I? I feel I’m nowhere. Nothing feels familiar. Nothing feels mine. Where am I? [NOISE] If only I could just go back to where I was. The land was just mine, the place was mine, the friends were mine. Everything. [NOISE]

Roni: Who is this little girl? She’s so weird. What is your accent? What can you do? Nobody sees you. There’s no point to hide yourself. Nobody sees you anyway.

You're basically unseen. What can you do? I'm a runner. There's a competition. Let's see what you can do. What we do is we count until three and we go. One, two, three, ready, go. [NOISE] Please go fast. [NOISE] Oh my god. Go, Aviva. Oh, her name is Aviva? Oh my god. [NOISE] Yeah, girl. Go. Go. Oh my god. Look at her, she's so good. Oh my god. This is amazing. Oh my god. Wow.

Debbie: Wow. Everyone has no place to hide because everyone has their path. You can swim, you can you run, you can climb, you can sit down, or you can sing or just listen. Peace, peace, peace, then you're fine. You will find a way. You can find that you can remember, you can do everything, you can do a lot of work. Yes, yes, yes. Although [LAUGHTER] people will say something, although still very fresh here.

Pia: See me, can you see me now? Hear me, can you hear me now? I am here. I am here. Discovering yourself is like spring day. I discovered I can do something. I can do it. When I was young, I feel like I can do anything, but now, it's done to me. You can always discover something within yourself. To make a place for yourself, you just go on and do it. You can run, you can dance, you can smile, have friends, and you can do it by just being yourself. [NOISE] Discovering yourself is always within you, you don't need anyone. You don't need any motivation from outside, but from within yourself. Discover yourself, and you can have a place for yourself.

Linda: Yes, I am. Yes, I am. Yes, I am Aviva.

Heidi: Thank you, actors. Aviva, if you would come back and join us. Thank you.

[OVERLAPPING]

Aviva: Thank you. Thank you. Okay, I'm going to say what I feel as a teller, not as the teacher.

Heidi: Please. We'll start there.

Aviva: Okay. [LAUGHTER] Both. It was very moving for me. I loved Radhika crying, I want to go back, what I'm doing here. I think it was very strong for me, and the [LAUGHTER] competition moment with Roni and Radhika running, their face and Roni, "Hey, she can do it." That was really enjoyable, and all the rest, more

philosophic, my inner voices. I wish it would be so nice, maybe today I can think so but running was not enough. It was still a big struggle, but it was a good beginning. Thank you.

Heidi: Thank you, Aviva. Thank you for sharing your stories.

Aviva: Thank you and thank you for taking the challenge to make the teacher's story. [LAUGHTER] Okay, but I think about myself now, not about you.

Heidi: Well, always a pleasure to have your stories, and if everyone wants to bring their cameras back on, we have time for one more story before we need to say goodbye. Yes, thank you, actors. Absolutely. Do we have another story in the room? A story of a new beginning like Aviva's that didn't go so well? We've also had stories of wonderful changes. Where are you at as you look at 2021 or you look back at new beginnings in your life? Who has a story for us, or even a feeling about what you've heard so far today in other people's stories? Roberta, yes. If can get everyone to turn off their cameras, but Roberta?

Roberta: Hello, Heidi. [LAUGHTER]

Heidi: Hello, Roberta, wonderful. Thank you so much for joining us.

Roberta: Thank you.

Heidi: What's coming up for you?

Roberta: It's not really clear yet, [LAUGHTER] but it's more what the last two stories brought to me. It's really a feeling of a change already since the end of the year.

Heidi: Oh, just in the last couple of weeks?

Roberta: Yeah, it's the last couple of months, but I really noticed a change in myself toward the end of the year, when I was in the Netherlands and then I managed [LAUGHTER] to fly to Italy to visit my family. Since the airplane, I felt different, like when I saw the mountains. I used to be more melancholic, like missing my home country, like the mountains, this strong energy.

Heidi: In the past, you have been [OVERLAPPING] very melancholic about missing Italy and the mountains [OVERLAPPING], but things are different now?

Roberta: Yeah, and I look at the mountains and I just saw the beauty, but that's it. I didn't have very strong emotions or attachments. It was really like a lot of peace, and I see things in a different way, so this makes life a little bit lighter, [LAUGHTER] and more acceptance, I guess, and also things really changing, and it's really like more subtle, like energy. Like I feel different when I talk to people, how I react. It's also something more inside, which also spreads outside.

Heidi: Can you give me an example of a way you treat people when you see them or how you react to them?

Roberta: That's a good question.

Heidi: In this new mode? Yeah.

Roberta: [LAUGHTER] For example, now, I'm at my mom's house and she doesn't know so much that everyone needs a space. [LAUGHTER] She just enter to the space physically and with our presence, asking when I do Playbacks, she open the doors like, "Hey, Roberta?" [NOISE]

Heidi: [LAUGHTER] How did you react to that?

Roberta: In the past, I could be very angry, [LAUGHTER] like a very Latin behavior, and now I'm just like [NOISE] a deep breath, and I understand that she's alone in the last few years, and she just very happy that there is someone in the house, and I'm here, and also her ways. She often [LAUGHTER] talks alone. She's really present in the house. [LAUGHTER] Now, I'm more quiet, like I just react differently and I really like it's more peaceful.

Heidi: You also are thinking of things from her perspective?

Roberta: About what?

Heidi: You're thinking of where she's coming from and that informs your response. You've found this sense of peace and quiet and less extreme emotions?

Roberta: Yes, I would say so. I sense that I'm getting more grounded, just very rooted, not only during the practice, because I always need to do practice to be grounded. Now, I feel that I'm more grounded without really thinking, [LAUGHTER] without doing it, and then this helps me to have a different reaction, and have a less strong reaction, emotionally speaking. It's really so cool. [LAUGHTER] It's really nice.

Heidi: That's wonderful. Actors, we're going to do this as Episodes, but before we start that, Roberta, do you have a title for this?

Roberta: A title?

Heidi: Yeah, for your new beginning, your sense of groundedness.

Roberta: The ancient roots.

Heidi: The ancient roots are? [LAUGHTER]

Roberta: The ancient roots are coming up.

Heidi: Very good. The ancient [LAUGHTER] roots are coming up. Thank you Roberta. If you would turn off your screen.

Roberta: Thank you.

Heidi: Actors, we'll do Roberta's story of the ancient roots coming up as Episodes. Let's watch.

Pia: As I watch those trees and mountains, I feel their beauty. But I don't feel melancholic right now. But they're still beautiful.

Roni: My heart. I know, mom. You've been alone in the house. You're happy to see me. This is why you're so . . . your presence is everywhere. I can hear my heart. I accept.

Para: Not always roots, I need to make some space. [NOISE] I'm not sure what I have . . . [NOISE] Let me work. Let me work and balance it. Let me balance. There you go. I'm not really complaining, but not always. Now I feel good. I am frowned at.

Heidi: Thank you actors. Roberta, would you come on and join us?

Roberta: [APPLAUSE] Thank you. Thank you so much.

Heidi: Was that your story?

Roberta: Yes.

Heidi: What resonated for you in that?

Roberta: It resonates the most the moments of silence that there were a few times. Especially Roni, there was some moments of, “Oh, yeah, there’s something there that’s very sensitive.”

Heidi: Thank you so much for your story, Roberta. Enjoy your time in Italy. I now turn it back to Para for our closing ritual. Everyone can turn on their video.

[APPLAUSE]

Para: Thank you very much Roberta for your story, ma’am. We World Playback Theatre come up with topic of new beginnings in beginning of 2021. We were starting with hope, giving some positive waves, even if we were in a box looking for some openings to get out of it. Even if we feel that we’ve got to trust and hope, but it seems very difficult in the future. Then we move to fulfilling their dreams when the time comes, when the body and the soul tell you to do so, and enjoying the light with this dream come true. We also heard a beginning which has been forced, it came from somewhere, and smile through a new place, without knowing, took out the positive impact in that and mingling with people, their own people. Then in the last, the silence, and the heart, and a girl that saw it. We will see all these stories, moments which has been shared with us today, which are always in the mutual room in an open window. Let’s watch. [NOISE]

Roni: Oh my God. I’m out of breath. You’re just going. What’s her name? I can’t even hear it anymore. I’m done.

Heidi: Why didn’t I do this before? It’s the right thing. Such joy and discovery in my life.

Para: I’m looking for light in these dark hours. Where is it? It’s difficult times. I will still look, but I know I don’t have just a lamp, but also a sunshine outside. I’m looking forward to it. [NOISE]

Radhika: [NOISE] Shall I hop on to the present? From the past to present shall I hop, hop, hop. Shall I from the past to the present.

Pia: Shall I do what is easy or shall I do what I want? I cannot lose my dream. I want to be happy. I want to feel happy. I want to fulfill my happiness. I will pursue my dream.

Roni: Mountain. It's so beautiful and quiet. When I look on the mountains I can breathe. I know where my home is. In my heart. This is where I start and this is where I will never end. It's so beautiful.

Roni: I see a pathway.

Linda: Mom, mom. I can see it clear now. Everything is the same, but all is different. Remember how I used to get angry? No more. Now it's soothing me. You're soothing me. You're part of me mom.

Heidi: I have hope. I have hope for the new year. I have hope for spring, for finding the light, for the world moving forward. I have hope.

Para: I have the hope too. Just looking forward. The hope will help us to find the light to new beginning from these difficult times. I am looking forward.

Heidi: Happy 2021!

Para: Thank you. [APPLAUSE]

Heidi: Thank you for joining us. [APPLAUSE]

Para: On behalf of the audience, [APPLAUSE] thank you very much for joining us today. We were happy to hear your stories and play back to you. The performance comes to an end now, but you can stay and mingle with us. Thank you very much.