

# GINA CLAYTON

Twitter - @GinaLClayton  
Twitter - @essie4justice

# PEACE

## IS LOUD

To book Gina Clayton for your event,  
visit [peaceisloud.org](http://peaceisloud.org)  
or email [ddeleon@peaceisloud.org](mailto:ddeleon@peaceisloud.org)



**“SOCIAL MOVEMENT DOES NOT HAPPEN WITHOUT MOBILIZED WOMEN.”**

– GINA CLAYTON

## FOUNDER & EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF ESSIE JUSTICE GROUP, ATTORNEY, & SOCIAL ENTREPRENEUR

Gina Clayton-Johnson is the Founder and Executive Director at [Essie Justice Group](http://Essie Justice Group), launched in 2014 to harness the collective power of women with incarcerated loved ones to end mass incarceration's harm to women and communities.

Gina has spent more than a decade advocating for Black communities as a community organizer in Los Angeles and witnessed the impact of incarceration on women both in her personal and professional life. Through the relationships she built with her clients at The Neighborhood Defender Service of Harlem, Gina recognized women who have loved ones behind bars face systemic patterns of harm. When someone she loves was sentenced to 20 years in prison, Gina began to look for organizations and publications that addressed criminal justice with a focus on women with incarcerated loved ones and found none. She founded Essie Justice Group for those women. Gina returned to California and recruited the 1 in 4 women and 1 in 2 Black women who have loved ones in prison to develop a model that both heals and unlocks the powerful advocacy potential of women with incarcerated loved ones.

At Essie, Gina's award-winning, isolation-breaking [Healing to Advocacy](#) model facilitates journeys of collective healing, provides resources that offer beams of support to women and families during crisis, and develops leadership in women with incarcerated loved ones to become fierce advocates for transformational change.

In 2018, Gina led a research team to co-author Essie's groundbreaking report [Because She's Powerful: The Political Isolation and Resistance of Women with Incarcerated Loved Ones](#) to answer the question, "Is mass incarceration the largest barrier to gender justice today?" The report found that the impact of incarceration on women is psychologically and physiologically damaging, and that incarceration is an undetected or ignored driver of emotional, mental, and physical health crises among women. With this expertise, Essie's [Healing to Advocacy](#) program, and [staff culture and wellness approaches](#) underscore the power of Black feminism, community, and Sisterhood.

Gina is also a formidable policy expert as the central architect for the BREATHE Act, the largest federal civil rights bill in history, through the Movement for Black Lives. The BREATHE Act also paved the way for the People's Response Act, co-authored by Essie.

Gina is an Equal Justice Works Fellow, a Soros Justice Fellow, an Echoing Green Global Fellow, a Harvard Public Service Venture Fellow, and a JMK Innovation Prize Awardee. Gina was named "Top 14 Women Who Rocked 2014" by Colorlines, a San Francisco Magazine Soldier of Social Change in their "Women In Power Issue," one of the "Woke 100 Women" by Essence Magazine, and is a 2016 recipient of JustLeadershipUSA's Redefining Justice Award. Gina is also featured in Ava DuVernay's acclaimed Netflix documentary 13th.

## Speaking Topics

- Fighting Mass Incarceration through Healing and Isolation Breaking
- Building Women-led Social Movements
- Unlocking Women's Potential for Advocacy
- Mass Incarceration and Gender Equity
- What is Political Isolation?
- Black Feminist Institution Building
- Staff team culture & wellness

To book Gina Clayton for your event, visit [peaceisloud.org](http://peaceisloud.org) or email [ddeleon@peaceisloud.org](mailto:ddeleon@peaceisloud.org)

To learn more about Peace is Loud and the other inspiring women-identified changemakers on our bureau, visit:

[peaceisloud.org/our-speakers/](http://peaceisloud.org/our-speakers/)